

## **MCR Committee Meeting (Minutes).**

### **1<sup>st</sup> March, 6pm, Memorial Room.**

Present: Miles, Tim, Sarah, Ellya, Dan N, Joely, Charlie, Ed, Hamza, Julia, Andre, Kathryn.

Tim's emergency motion: Can anyone tell me if Riverdale is any good?

#### **Treasurer's Business.**

Miles: First, punt scheme. Every Trinity the JCR organises two punts to be organised from Magdalen Boathouse, available for MCR use as well. JCR Treasurer is doing the same this year: £2788. One-off levy for the JCR; last year, £5.40, but this didn't fully cover the cost, so they'll be revising this (don't know what to; probably increase by £1/2). I'll pass that on as soon as I know. It'll be an Opt-Out scheme. This will just be over Trinity; over the summer, we'll organise our own thing for DPhils/Masters/any undergrads who're here over the summer: Opt-Out for DPhils; Opt-In for everyone else. About £720.

Tim: Cheaper than term?

Miles: Much less demand. Got £936 for this last year; I'd argue that we should keep that the same, but we can discuss that closer to the time.

Charlie: Some people in the JCR opted out then used the punt anyway. Any way of policing that?

Miles: Last year there was a Google Document, so it'll be online.

Miles: Summer Dinner! Wanted to ask Guillaume when we should start organising Summer Dinner. Last year, we may payments to the photographers around the middle of May. I'll talk to Guillaume.

Ellya: If there's a surplus for the punting, can that be redistributed to the people who opted in?

Miles: I don't see why not – although when we get the money for this, I won't be Treasurer. [Plug for people to stand for Treasurer!]

#### **Motion: Items for the MCR.**

Tim: Back to my ridiculous motion! Priced up the paper cups; about 9p for cup and lid. Can make them slightly more affordable by buying in bulk, but not by much. Pros: convenient! Cons: don't want to get in trouble with people taking them into the library/Memorial Room, etc.

Charlie: Nothing actually preventing people taking mugs into the library, but people don't.

Sarah: Yes they do!

Tim: Another con could mean buying more tea/coffee, but that's not such an issue. Main issue: sustainability. Should buy proper mugs instead. Let's buy from IKEA, because I love IKEA! [Plug for IKEA.]

[IKEA banter.]

Tim: Let's buy ugly mugs to stop people stealing them! Miles also mentioned glasses; standard, stackable glasses. The only other issue is that of cupboard space. We could try to slim down on the

number of plates we have; we don't need that many. Pack them more efficiently, or give them to the JCR.

Andre: Our chopping boards have disappeared!

Tim: IKEA SELLS CHOPPING BOARDS.

Ed: Let's invest in artisan roof slates!

Julia: In New College, they have mugs printed in Comic Sans with 'Please Return to the MCR'. Might be an idea? Makes them easily identifiable, and means people are less likely to steal them.

[Andre and Julia have a discussion about whether Comic Sans is 'jovial' or not.]

Tim: We'll trial blank mugs, then if they all disappear we can reconsider the matter. It's only £9.50. Shall we buy the mugs?

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 1

Motion passes.

Tim: Brita filter! Let's buy a new Brita filter.

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 1

Motion passes.

Tim: Extension leads! Buy 2, because of fire regulations. [Plea for people to not 'daisy-chain' the extension leads.] Surge protection, because we don't want to be responsible for frying someone's laptop.

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 1

Motion passes.

Tim: Coatstands! Difficult to find one that looks sturdy enough to support coats and also not super ugly – so IKEA!

[Sarah displays various coatstands to the Committee.]

Miles: There used to be one, but it disappeared.

[Lights flicker: ghosts!]

Tim: Shall we approve £25ish for a coatstand?

For: 9

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Tim: There's a dumping ground in the corner near the TV; I've been trying to clear it for a while, because the scouts have been asking me to. Proposal: put a unit there to deter people from dumping

their stuff there, then throw away/recycle all the clothes etc. that are there. This is a relatively cheap wooden unit (so it doesn't look completely hideous). This is a bigger expenditure than the other things: £48.

Sarah: If we buy all of these things, how much will it cost in total?

[Poor attempts from Ellya to do basic addition.]

Miles: About £145.

Sarah: Do we have that money?

Miles: Yep.

Tim: This is part of my legacy.

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 1

### **Point for Discussion: Sanitary Products.**

Tim: The MCR/JCR have been putting money towards stocking the bathrooms in college with sanitary products. The JCR decided to submit a paper to college requesting that college considers doing this itself, i.e. providing sanitary items like they do with e.g. soap, toilet paper etc. Discussed at Equalities and Domus Committees. Decided at Equalities that it's not an Equalities issue; went to Domus. At Domus, the committee did not vote to recommend this to GB. This doesn't mean that it won't happen because GB has the power to override these things, but because it's not been recommended to GB it effectively won't. This led to a discussion in the same meeting of, if the GB has taken a decision on one issue, can the JCR/MCR directly oppose this decision? i.e. can the MCR/JCR continue to provide sanitary products in this way next year? And also biggest issues of how independent actually are we? For now, keep it to sanitary products. I managed to argue in the meeting that it should be at the discretion of the JCR/MCR as to how we spend our money; for now, we're still okay to do so. I did say that I would discuss it with the MCR, so that everyone is aware that we're making this decision despite college's feelings.

Kathryn: Clarification on point three? (Setting a precedent.) What does that mean?

Tim: The paper that was submitted cited St Johns, who buy in lots of household supplies, e.g. toilet paste, and sell them on.

Charlie: [Giggles.] You said toilet paste.

Tim: Basically the JCR paper got confused, and it seemed that this would lead onto college buying all kinds of things for everyone.

Kathryn: But everyone uses toothpaste...?

Miles: If these aren't within the provisions of college as an educational charity, very little of what we spend is within those realms.

Hamza: Such as coatstands...

Miles: If we go by this logic, we can't buy anything. Also, we receive more money from our members than we do from college.

Some points from Julia:

1. The opinions of menstruating members of our MCR, and of the committee, should be at the forefront here.
2. Disappointed that the college has decided not to support the scheme, and very strongly disagree that the JCR and MCR should be disallowed from providing sanitary products

- from their respective budgets – we are not solely funded by college.
3. The argument that it is not an equalities issue perhaps has not given enough consideration to the financial position of all students in the college.
  4. I think the argument that ‘it could set a precedent for other items of a similar nature to be requested’ (WHAT ITEMS?!) is unnecessarily patronising, and it comes across as trying to prevent student representatives asking for welfare provision from college.
  5. The MCR committee should continue to support the women’s officer, and welfare officer, in caring for the needs and welfare of menstruating members of the MCR.

Andre: It does disadvantage the menstruating members of college!

Julia: It sounds like the JCR paper didn’t set out very well how this is an Equalities issue; it *is* an Equalities issue.

Miles: Is the college Equalities Committee concerned with all elements of equality among students, or is it about admissions and access?

Tim: This is not Admissions/Tutorial Committee. There isn’t a legal definition of Equalities for the Equalities Officer, but she’s responsible for an Equalities Public Section Review.

Julia: Do you go to Equalities Committee?

Tim: I do. At the moment, the committee is mainly dealing with making college wheelchair accessible. An issue that was quoted as an Equalities issue is if there were an issue with accepting students/employing staff because of their background. That’s there’s definition of Equalities, i.e. something that college is at fault with because of their stance on the matters. An Equalities issue for the MCR could be different, as it has more of a Welfare scope.

Andre: Irrespective of what GB and college think, we should still continue providing sanitary products.

Julia: [Applauds.]

Charlie: Do college people read the minutes?

Sarah/Miles: They can.

Dan: I can check who’s downloading them...

Tim: This paper has effectively killed the discussion with college. On a personal level, I think I agree with college’s discussion, as we have more provisions for welfare/wellbeing of students; it’s a more workable way of doing it. In which case, I think the committee should allow this to happen for next term, but we should bring this to the next TGM.

Sarah: I disagree, because it comes out of the Women’s Officers budget, it’s not hurting anyone, and it’s a big help to female members of the MCR.

Miles: I’d understand if this was an issue that was causing inconvenience or damaging college property, but it isn’t. This is a very small amount of money, and up until now college had no opinion on it. I think we should be okay to just go ahead with it. As soon as we put this to the MCR, it opens us up to the whole MCR voting on every item of the budget – which would be a nightmare.

Tim: On Sarah. Fine for next term, because the liberation officers have their own budget. Want it to be discussed at a TGM for it to be mandated for every Women’s Officer to continue doing this – and even if the vote is no on the mandating issue, it’s still up to the Women’s Officer to do so.

[Essentially, Tim phrased himself badly and Sarah and Miles misunderstood.]

Hamza: It would be a very strange system if college not giving us something meant that we couldn’t have it.

Tim: Their worry in the first part was whether, if they say they won’t do something, can they give money to people who will then do that?

Hamza: That makes us a puppet committee...

Tim: College rarely gets proposals like this, usually it’s just a breakdown of the budget.

Charlie: I don't think this is a radical break with the JCR/MCR-college relations. If college are really shaken by this, then maybe that's a conversation that needs to be had, but to me this seems fairly uneventful. Not a constitutional crisis! The first objection gets trotted out quite regularly by college to shut things like this down. It's not necessarily a huge issue; it doesn't require the whole MCR to vote on it.

Andre: Let's not poke college!

Dan: If we decide to bring it to general voting, we should be careful not to phrase it as doing something in opposition to college's decisions.

Tim: So everything continues next term as planned, but then do we want to bring this to the AGM next term, i.e. should the MCR mandate every committee to do the same? This is an important issue, so it shouldn't be a fairweather thing.

Sarah: We can discuss all the issues at the next TGM/AGM.

Andre: Can't we just get Nicole to tell the next Women's Officer to do so?

Tim: That's word-of-mouth; this would be stronger than that, because this is an essential issue. I'd potentially make this a constitutional motion if it went to a TGM.

Charlie: Would potentially we just get people who identify as female to vote?

Tim: Getting a list of those people would be difficult. And we don't have it in the constitution to split the vote. So, voting on mandating me to propose a constitutional amendment at the next TGM for the Women's Officer to provide sanitary products.

Ed: And if it doesn't pass, that doesn't mean no sanitary products?

Tim: Correct. It'll just be up to the Women's Officer each time.

Hamza: Would there be a monetary amount in the constitution?

Tim: I'd put an upper limit.

Charlie: Is that necessary?

Kathryn: The balance of menstruating members might change with the new intake.

Tim: Voting on mandating me to propose a constitutional amendment at the next TGM for the Women's Officer to provide sanitary products.

For: 9

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

### **Any Other Business.**

Ed: I have an honorary member! My friend Dawn, a friend of mine from the Imps. Not a student, but is very excited at the prospect of becoming a member; has lived in Oxford all her life, and has spent time in Queen's and likes the place. She works in media, so could "pimp out" the MCR.

For: 9

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Miles: Before the hustings, I sent Archna a breakdown of MCR spending from MT. Tim, Dan and I spoke about it and agreed that it shouldn't go on the website, so if people want to see that, email me and I'll send it to you.

Tim: People who are interested can make a Freedom of Information request through the college if needs be.

Charlie: Could still conceivably email it out to MCR members.

Tim: And these things are discussed at TGMs/Committee Meetings.