

Committee Meeting (Minutes).
5.30pm, Memorial Room, 23rd November.

Present: Sarah, Miles, Joe, Iris, Dan N, Drew, Tim, Kathryn, Guillaume, Oscar, Ed, Lizzie, Charlie, Nicole, Andre.

Present at the other end of the table, actually doing his DPhil: Alex.

Motions.

1. Oxford Students Refugee Campaign.

Oscar: Trying to get lots of different MCRs and JCRs involved. A majority of MCRs and JCRs have already passed this motion. [Reads through the motion.]

Tim: Questions, clarifications?

Miles: The OXSCR representative: is that something that we would have to elect if this passes?

Oscar: I imagine so. Can check if that's 100% a prerequisite of the subsidy. Would people be anti that?

Joe: Is there a reason this isn't affiliated with the university? If we're going to be giving money to it, usually organisations like this are checked by the university so that members of the university can be sure that the finances are above board. Is this something this campaign is going to have?

Oscar: Currently run by Oxford students.

Joe: Any society can be run by students, but if it wants to be recognised by the university than it has to present its accounts. Is this something this organisation is doing?

Oscar: As far as I know, they're not doing that. Is that something you think that all societies have to do?

Joe: I personally support the cause, but I'd be wary of things like to, just to make sure that the funds were being used in the way it's stated they'll be used. I'm not casting aspersions! But it's important that we're sure that the money's going to the right place, and that the appropriate regulations are

Oscar: [From extra information.] A university bank account where all collected money goes, meaning that the students don't see the money themselves. This is why the university is now supporting the association. The bank account is affiliated with the university. There's no separate bank account that's just ours.

Tim: Would the university choose where the scholarship go? Or would it be a student panel?

Oscar: They have to get a place at the university, but the campaign decides who gets the money.

[Flickering lights.]

Tim: Has this campaign been submitted for the existing charities ballot?

Oscar: I didn't know that existed.

Guillaume: It's a lot of information and is a decision that needs a bit more reflection, because it ties the college to a big commitment. The charities levy might work better.

Oscar: How does the levy work?

Tim: Students nominate charities; we pick a couple.

Joe: Are you a UK registered charity?

Oscar: I can find out.

Tim: Have you spoken to college about this? There's a donations committee; the college gives a lot of money to charity.

Oscar: No.

Kathryn: Queen's had a fundraiser for refugees last year, and I wouldn't want college to be annoyed that we'd gone behind their back to donate in a different way. I'd feel more comfortable supporting this if it was merged with that.

Oscar: What kind of fundraiser was that?

Tim: To fund Syrian academics to study at Queen's.

Oscar: I think this is a pretty direct way of doing it, and means that we don't have to go through college.

Tim: They have more money than us.

Guillaume: About the representative, we struggle to fill normal committee positions. What would be that person's job?

Oscar: To mediate between the MCR and the campaign.

Iris: We have a charities rep who could do that.

Charlie: I think it's a great cause, and I don't think it would necessarily be an affront to the college if we did do this. In terms of the technicality of the scholarship, it says that it would be a maintenance stipend – so is the university expecting to get at least twenty asylum-seeking students applying through the normal system? What would happen to the money if it wasn't used?

Oscar: I presume it would be split. I can make a list of the questions. Don't know if there's a way of feeding back about these things.

Tim: Sarah can email around if needs be. One thing: there tends to be a backlash about opt-out levies, so this would be a fifth levy.

Miles: If it passes and we make it very clear that people can opt out, people might not be happy but it's workable, if annoying.

Guillaume: I feel that an opt-out levy isn't the best option here. Why not do a fundraiser? One that the MCR could support.

Sarah: A single fundraiser might not raise as much money

Iris: Also that's what college did.

Tim: In my opinion, the pre-existing charities levy would be the best way to do that. I think one of the rules is that it has to be an existing charity, so you'd have to check that.

Oscar: If people here do think that it's a good cause, even through the charities levy that doesn't mean that it'd get support from the wider MCR. Only 2/3 go through.

Joe: I'd say that I'm slightly in favour of the MCR supporting this thing, but I'm personally a bit worried about raising money for a non-registered charity within the MCR. Without understanding fully how this body runs, maybe fundraising within the MCR for a Queen's-specific yearly scholarship might possibly be a better way of going about this.

Dan: I agree, and I feel like we need more information before voting for this, especially concerning whether or not it's a registered charity.

Tim: Now we'll vote on whether this motion should pass based on how this motion is presented here, but if it gets changed and comes back at another committee meeting then we can vote again.

Charlie: Is there scope to address these technical points?

Tim: Maybe at the next committee meeting, which would probably be late January.

Dan: Have to be clear about what's going to happen.

Miles: The charge wouldn't be implemented until next term, so it wouldn't even show up on battels until Trinity term. Things could be fixed later even if it's decided now.

Andre: [Was late, so has questions that have been answered earlier.]

Oscar: I'll be interested to know whether people have a genuine concern about whether or not it is a registered charity. 80% of JCRs and MCRs across the university have already agreed to this; it's affiliated with the university.

Tim: This is an unprecedented levy, with its own special status. This should probably go to a TGM.

Drew: Is there more literature available for the scholarship? A website?

Oscar: oxfordrefugeecampaign.org

Kathryn: This is just living costs, yes? Where do the tuition fees come from?

Oscar: There's only so much you can do.

Joe: The point is that if people are here and able to pay huge tuition fees, then we'd want to know how they're able to pay those fees. There's not enough information here about how the charity allocates its money.

Drew: Which is why coordinating with a college or university seems more effective, so we can supply tuition and maintenance? Can we ask college if we can support their efforts?

Tim: The donations committee, so yes.

Joe: How many members of the MCR are there? So if we were to charge all MCR members, how much would we get.

Miles: About 245 members. £4 a term. It's pushing £3000 across a whole year.

Tim: We're making a decision about how people spend their money.

Sarah: It's an opt-out levy, so they're making a decision about how to spend their money.

Andre: Online vote?

Guillaume: Will people read it?

Tim: Okay, so now a vote on whether or not this motion should pass in the form it's currently committed.

For: 5

Against: 5

Abstain: 1

Tim's deciding vote: Against. (The motion needs more details; the motion should go to a TGM.)

Motion does not pass.

Charlie: We can definitely bring this back again.

Andre: It's a good idea, but needs a bit more refining.

2. Funding for the short film *Cassandra*.

Lizzie: I'm working on this short film, we're all Oxford University students, and we're all asking our JCRs/MCRs for funding. Got £300, £200 from a couple so far. [Reads through the motion.]

Tim: Comments? Questions?

Andre: What's the film about?

Lizzie: It's a modern retelling of a myth; I'm head of sound so I don't know a huge amount about the plot. Modern retelling of the Cassandra myth.

Sarah: Yes!

Tim: Do you know the overall production costs?

Lizzie: I don't. We have a crew of about thirteen people, so everyone is asking for £200/£300 from their common rooms, and we also bid for extra funding. Not my department, really! All the equipment has to be hired, which is pretty expensive.

Joe: Can you provide a budget for the costs?

Lizzie: Don't think I have that.

Joe: How many other MCRs/JCRs have already agreed to this?

Lizzie: Four or five, I think. I know Magdalen has; can't remember the others.

Iris: Have you proposed this to the JCR?

Lizzie: I didn't know that I could!

Tim: We're all JCR, here.

Sarah: There's an Arts Fund which might be a good place for you to look for money.

Charlie: There'll be an Arts Officer, too?

Sarah: I think it's Henry Taylor.

Tim: College is looking into putting together a pot of money for this kind of thing. I don't actually know if we actually have money to do this.

Miles: At the minute, our estimated termly budget is about £4200, based on what I think college will give us and MCR subs we collect. I'm chasing up Gordon in the bursary about the money; he'll try to get it to us by the end of the week. He'll confirm when he actually gives us the translate. Seems like college is giving us £2200 rather than £2000, so it'll actually be £4400.

Tim: It's increasing because there's more members.

Miles: In terms of unassigned budget, we have some left unassigned, but by the sounds of it the alcohol budget will have gone over this term. There's some budget that's being chipped away, like the cinema scheme; this wouldn't completely hamstring the MCR.

Andre: How useful will this contribution be?

Lizzie: Very!

Tim: What is the cost for?

Lizzie: Mostly equipment, I think. Hiring studios for postproduction.

Andre: It'd be good to have numbers.

Charlie: The Arts Fund might be the way to go, and if that doesn't work out then maybe come back to the MCR.

Dan: If we have the money, then this should probably go to a TGM. We can't just provide free stuff to MCR members.

Miles: This is money that people have paid through their subs, so some of them might not be very happy with this particular use of their money.

Kathryn: Would you be happy with Charlie's suggestion?

Lizzie: Yes, I think so.

Joe: Are there regulations about what we're allowed to use our money for? College presumably wants our accounts at the end of the year to check?

Miles: The college checks the accounts once every three to four years. It's pretty irregular.

Sarah: It would be money that we're spending on our members.

Joe: There was an issue with St Catz JCR a few years ago, where the college got worried about being criminally liable for mismanagement of JCR funds. Spending on things that the college weren't aware of. Wanted to check our relationship with college.

Miles: I could go check with the bursary.

[Tim and Joe talk about money and trusts.]

Tim: Now we vote on whether motion passes in its entirety.

Dan: It would be nice to have more data to decide on before deciding to give our money. Another good point would be to ask the MCR if we can spend their money on this.

Andre: Not sure that's logistically that practical. How?

Dan: TGM.

Tim: The committee's recommendation would be to go via the Arts Fund first, then potentially come back. If that goes nowhere, come back.

Andre: Could we have an online vote?

Tim: If it doesn't go with the Arts Fund, then maybe come back.

General consensus: Delay the vote.

Points for Discussion.

1. Election of Hamza Alawiye to Sports/Games Secretary (joint with Jack Cowling).

Tim: Hamza asked to join the committee, so he can formalise what he's already doing with the board games night. The Sports Sec is technically Sports and Games.

Joe: Is that what it says in the constitution?

Tim: Games could be anything!

Joe: Games = public schoolboy slang.

Kathryn: I don't think that's a relevant point. [Banter.] Will he vote?

Tim: Yes, a vote split between the two of them.

Miles: Check with Jack?

Tim: Yep, it's fine.

Miles: What's the objection to him being Social Sec?

Joe: Easier to not spread the role. Is he not fulfilling the role as it's stated in the constitution?

Tim: Jack does Sports. Hamza does Games. Budget: around £80 a term.

Miles: I'll speak to Hamza and see what he needs.

Iris: If he organises more Thirsty Meeples then it could be more.

Sarah: Shall we vote on this before we have banter?

Joe: Should we have a Board Game committee member?

Miles: You have to get it through the constitution.

Kathryn: Jack doesn't really come to meetings, so at least one of them votes.

For: 9

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

2. Languages on the computers in the Moffatt Room.

Sarah: I received an email from an MCR member requesting that languages other than English be made available on the Moffatt Room computers. I figure this is probably something for Dan to deal with.

Tim: Ask if they want operating system, or just languages on e.g. Word.

Iris: If it's just Word, it's not hard.

Tim: Could be issue with the OS.

Sarah: I'll clarify with the member and get in touch with Dan.

3. Alcohol Budget.

Tim: I had an email from the Dean saying that it's great you're drinking a lot, but maybe a bit too much.

Joe: That's what he thinks.

Tim: I emailed back explaining that attendance at parties has gone up, that we're buying more beer than before which has a higher price per unit, that we're buying wine from college which comes to about £200/£240 over those four weeks, that we have two parties where we're spending about £145.

Guillaume: Figures from Bookers. Last time I went, college staff raised concerns. I thought they wouldn't do anything, but they spoke to the Dean. The last JCR bop was a bit of a mess. Because our party happened at the same time, the Stewards freaked out a bit.

Tim: Wasn't telling us to buy less or drink less, just make sure that we're not encouraging members to drink in excess. I said we could provide detailed figures; he said that's not needed at the moment.

Joe: When Guillaume bought alcohol for MCR parties, that's for a couple of parties next term, too. Going to be a party in 9th week.

[Discussion about when the next MCR party will be.]

Tim: Next Friday.

Sarah: Really? That's the day after the EOTE.

Joe: Saturday?

Miles: Last year the MCR was batted £2400 for buttry stuff.

Guillaume: We have a total of nearly £1900 at Bookers. Beers, nearly £200. Hard alcohol, bit more than £600. A bit more than £800 for parties. Then the wine is just under £300. Exchange dinner: just under £100. Matriculation dinner: £250. Guest dinner: bit more than £400. These are pretty reasonable, but combined together it makes a bit figure.

Tim: Is that for parties for next term, too?

Guillaume: Should be at least two parties next term.

Sarah: Generally the point is that we've been buying alcohol in advance and it looks worse than it actually is.

Guillaume: We just bought too much in one go!

Miles: Is that battels or receipts?

Guillaume: Everything from Bookers is on battels.

AOB.

Charlie: Just to keep you up to date with what I'm doing as MCR-JCR Liaison. Trying to set up a scheme whereby MCR members get paid for doing revision sessions for the JCR. The JCR will request revision sessions. College has agreed to pay the tutorial rate for this, £25 an hour. Adam and I going to submit a paper to academic committee for next term, then hopefully this will be up and running by Trinity/maybe even the Easter Vac. If you have any questions or ideas about how to make this work, let me know.

Dan: I think this is a good idea. I can set up an online request system.

Charlie: Need to think about things like in humanities subjects where the teaching is broader, some of these things might have to be offered to MCR members in other colleges. Some might be more on-topic, some might be more revision/study skills.

Tim: Party clean up. This was going to be more of an issue if the party was going to be this weekend because I'm not here.

Joe: When will it be?

Iris: Saturday of 8th week, 3rd December.

Tim: Party clean up. Me and Guillaume have been cleaning up on Sat/Sun morning, plus other members of the MCR. We could probably really do with setting up a cleaning rota among the committee. You do it once a year. Then go to breakfast afterwards.

Kathryn: Can the committee member who's cleaning stay on your sofa?

Iris: I volunteer for the next party.

Tim: There's a Google Calendar for events. I want this running from next term.

Kathryn: When do we have to submit stuff to college for events for Hilary?

Tim: We'll figure that out in the January meeting. Early/mid January.

Kathryn: Drinks event with SCR in 9th week; currently working on it.