

The Ratified Minutes of
THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
6th Week Michaelmas Term 2017
Monday 13 November 2017
President's Office, 16:00

Present: **The President** (Mr Chris Zabilowicz, *Worcester College*), **The President-Elect** (Ms Laali Vadlamani, *Trinity College*), **The Librarian** (Ms Melissa Hinkley, *Keble College*), **The Librarian-Elect** (Ms Sabriyah Saeed, *Somerville College*), **The Treasurer** (Mr Gui Cavalcanti, *Pembroke College*), **The Treasurer-Elect** (Mr Stephen Horvath, *New College*), **The Secretary** (Mr Ed Evans, *St John's College*), **The Elected Member** (Mr James Lamming, *Exeter College*), **The Elected Member** (Mr Brian Wong, *Balliol College*), **The Elected Member** (Mr Julian Kirk, *Magdalen College*), **The Elected Member** (Mr Kaleem Hawa, *Lincoln College*), **The Elected Member** (Ms Grace Joel, *Balliol College*), **The Bursar** (Ms Lindsay Warne), **The Senior Treasurer** (Mr Stephen Dixon, *Downing College, Cambridge*), **The CDSC** (Mr Andrew Seow, *Lincoln College*), **The Access Officer** (Mr Aditya Badaya, *St Hugh's College*), **The Returning Officer** (Mr Neb Jovanovic, *St Peter's College*).

Attending:

The Chief of Staff (Ms Molly Greenwood, *St Hilda's College*), **The Oxford Brookes Officer** (Mr Guy Harris).

Apologies:

The Senior Librarian (Mr Sean Power, *Oriel College*), **The Elected Member** (Ms Shivani Ananth, *St Anne's College*)

Absent:

The Elected Member (Mr Jan Bialas, *Magdalen College*)

The President opens the meeting at 16:02

Requests to Pass Absences from Previous Meeting

The President moves that Mr James Lamming's immovable class be deemed good reason for his absence from the Ordinary meeting of TSC in 5th week.

Nem. con.

The President moves that Mr James Lamming's absence from the Ordinary meeting of TSC in 5th week be passed as with good reason.

Nem. con.

Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

The President moves to ratify the minutes from the Ordinary meeting of TSC in 5th week.

Nem. con.

The President

Meetings missed: 0, Missed without good reason: 0

Business of the President:

The President has no business.

Questions to the President:

There are no questions to the President.

The Librarian

Meetings missed: 1, Missed without good reason: 0

Business of the Librarian:

The Librarian has no business.

Questions to the Librarian:

There are no questions to the Librarian.

The Treasurer

Meetings missed: 0, Missed without good reason: 0

Business of the Treasurer:

The Treasurer moves that TSC pass DSC expenses of £1,030.33, as recommended by The Finance Committee, subject to the approval of the Bursar.

Seconded by the President.

Nem. con.

Questions to the Treasurer:

There are no questions to the Treasurer.

The Secretary

Meetings missed: 0, Missed without good reason: 0

Business of the Secretary:

The Secretary moves that the accounts of the Michaelmas Term Ball be approved by TSC, as recommended by The Finance Committee, with a contribution of £3,639.07.

Seconded by the President.

Nem. con.

Questions to the Secretary:

There are no questions to the Secretary.

Mr Lamming

Meetings missed: 2, Missed without good reason: 1

Business of Mr Lamming:

Mr Lamming has no business.

Questions to Mr Lamming:

There are no questions to Mr Lamming.

Mr Wong

Meetings missed: 1, Missed without good reason: 0

Business of Wong

Mr Wong has no business.

Questions to Mr Wong:

There are no questions to Mr Wong.

Ms Ananth

Meetings missed: 1, Missed without good reason: 1

Ms Ananth has no business.

Questions to Ms Ananth:

There are no questions to Ms Ananth.

Mr Julian Kirk

Meetings missed: 0, Missed without good reason: 0

Business of Mr Kirk:

Mr Kirk has no business.

Questions to Mr Kirk:

There are no questions to Mr Kirk.

Mr Jan Bialas

Meetings missed: 1, Missed without good reason: 1

Business of Mr Bialas:

Mr Bialas has no business.

Questions to Mr Bialas:

There are no questions to Mr Bialas.

Mr Kaleem Hawa

Meetings missed: 1, Missed without good reason: 0

Business of Mr Hawa:

Mr Hawa has no business.

Questions to Mr Hawa:

There are no questions to Mr Hawa.

Ms Grace Joel

Meetings missed: 2, Missed without good reason: 1

Business of Ms Joel:

Ms Grace Joel moves that TSC pass the budget for the Wine and Cheese Social, as recommended by The Finance Committee, with a contribution of £253.44.

Seconded by the President.

Nem. con.

Questions to Ms Joel:

There are no questions to Ms Joel.

The President-Elect

Meetings missed: 0, Missed without good reason: 0

Business of the President-Elect:

The President-Elect has no business.

Questions to the President-Elect:

There are no questions to the President-Elect.

The Librarian-Elect

Meetings missed: 1, Missed without good reason: 1

Business of the Librarian-Elect:

The Librarian-Elect has no business.

Questions to the Librarian-Elect:

There are no questions to the Librarian-Elect.

The Treasurer-Elect

Meetings missed: 0, Missed without good reason: 0

Business of the Treasurer-Elect:

The Treasurer-Elect has no business.

Questions to the Treasurer-Elect:

There are no questions to the Treasurer-Elect.

The Ex-Officio

Business of the Ex-Officio:

The Ex-Officio have no business.

Questions to the Ex-Officio:

There are no questions to the Ex-Officio.

The Senior Librarian

Business of the Senior Librarian:

The Senior Librarian has no business.

Questions to the Senior Librarian:

There are no questions to the Senior Librarian.

The Senior Treasurer

Business of the Senior Treasurer:

The Senior Treasurer has no business.

Questions to the Senior Treasurer:

There are no questions to the Senior Treasurer.

The Bursar

Business of the Bursar:

The Bursar has no business.

Questions to the Bursar:

There are no questions to the Bursar.

The Returning Officer

Business of the RO:

The RO has no business.

Questions to the RO:

There are no questions to the RO.

The Chairman of the Consultative Committee

Business of the CCC:

The CCC has no business.

Questions to the CCC:

There are no questions to the CCC.

The Access Officers

Business of the Access Officers:

Mr Aditya Badaya notes that some weeks ago TSC considered vacation day allowances for members of the appointed committee. He observes that the main problem is that while members of appointed committee do fewer vacation days than members of elected committee, on a particular vacation day they work for a similar amount of time on similar tasks. He says that while £8 per day is not a large financial commitment on the Society's part, the Access Committee believes that the current system, in which appointed committee do not receive expenses, creates an atmosphere in which appointed committee perceive their work as less valued and less important.

The Bursar enters the room at 16:04.

Mr Badaya continues that the Access Committee proposes that the same expenses be granted to appointed that are granted to elected. He calculates that the cost per term, based on the current size of the appointed committee, would be around £2,040. He suggests, furthermore, that if this expense is excessive, the vacation day allowances of all members of committee could be lowered across the board.

The Bursar says that this has not been an issue in the past, as all those carrying out work for the President were granted expenses.

The Treasurer-Elect asks if Mr Badaya thinks expenses are the primary factor in making the appointed committee feel less valued than elected.

Mr Badaya replies that he thinks it a factor, if not necessarily a prime factor.

The Treasurer-Elect asks Mr Badaya to confirm that he does not see it as a primary factor.

Mr Badaya does so.

Mr Julian Kirk says he is unconvinced that the main issue in the discussion is of the appointed committee feeling hierarchically inferior, but rather whether the lack of expenses is an impediment to those less economically advantaged who serve on the committee.

The Treasurer-Elect agrees. He says that he does not want the problem to become making appointed committee feel more integrated, while this more substantive concern is not addressed.

The President-Elect points out that while Mr Badaya has made valid points, there needs to be a real reason for change if a change is to be made. She asks what the biggest reason is for the Access Committee proposing this change – in particular, if it is to make the Society more accessible.

Mr Badaya replies that this is a factor.

Ms Grace Joel leaves the room at 16:07.

The President-Elect says that paying expenses does not address the problem of the disparity in hierarchical position between appointed and elected committees.

The Treasurer-Elect agrees – he urges that two important issues are not conflated with one solution.

Mr Badaya replies that while he agrees, his proposal is a step forward, even if it does not solve the hierarchical issue entirely. He recognises that the job of elected committee is different, but since it constitutes a similar amount of work to that carried out by the appointed committee, the Union should show a similar approach to both committees.

Mr Brian Wong points out that he agrees, but that there needs to be a formal reason for why the change is being made. In this case, the reason should be that it is an improvement from the access side of things.

The President says that he is concerned this change is being suggested merely for the sake of bringing change, rather than making a change about which those on the Access Committee feel passionately, since Mr Badaya has already said that it is not necessarily a primary reason for the appointed committee feeling less valued than the elected committee, and it is a large step to add about £2,000 of expenditure each term for the sake of something that is not of primary importance. He says it seems that this proposal is being made without any solid justification. He suggests that additional vacation days to the 3 or 5 (depending on the vacation) completed by the appointed committee could be expensed, so that those that go above and beyond get expenses.

Mr Kaleem Hawa agrees that more meaningful changes can be made for access, but he thinks this proposal is sensible, both as an access issue and as a point of principle that individuals who are working should be granted expenses.

The CDSC leaves the room at 16:11.

The Bursar would like to research what practice has been in the past. She notes that the additional expense suggested by Mr Badaya constitutes a large proportion of what is spent on vacation days for an entire year.

Mr Hawa notes that Mr Badaya's figure is a maximum amount.

The Librarian thinks the disparity between the elected and appointed committees comes from the fact that some members of elected committee are working in the Union for 30 or 40 days over the vacation, while appointed are here for 3. She notes that while some members of committee might be able to absorb the cost of 3 days, this would not be possible for much larger periods of time. She notes that expenses are not meant to pay for food, but rather to contribute to its cost to negate the overall problem of paying for food and accommodation over large periods of time.

The President-Elect points out that members of committee are always told that they will be helped to find accommodation if needed. It is because some members of elected committee stay for such long periods of time that they have expenses, whereas appointed can more easily arrange to stay with friends, for example, since it is only for 3 days. She opposes reducing expenses overall, since the elected committee do a great deal of work during term as well, where the level of commitment is vastly different from that of appointed. She says that submitting an application to be on appointed committee is itself very different from what is required in standing for election, and in the vacation elected committee generally take on more work (though she understands that some members of appointed take on a lot more than others), as well as having significantly more work in term than appointed, in inviting people to events, attending meetings, and having to do last-minute help as well as other duties. She says that a sense of hierarchy is not about the inherent value of the elected and appointed committees or what each deserves, but instead reflects the fact that one group does a lot more than the other. She notes that the Society is fundamentally democratic, and some years ago there was in fact no appointed committee at all.

The Treasurer-Elect agrees that more should be done to make the appointed committee feel more included and to decrease any sense of hierarchy, but notes that if a member of appointed did 3 days and received £8 per day, this would not come close to covering their expenses of travel among others (especially if they lived some way from Oxford). He argues the change would have little impact on those actually worse-off economically.

Mr Badaya replies that anyone applying for appointed committee understands what this entails if they live a long way from Oxford. His suggestion may not be the primary way to resolve the access

issue, but he believes that it is a step that will contribute to it. The Access Committee did not look into entire solutions to the problem, but rather acknowledged that there was a problem in the rewards for work and proposed an improvement.

The Senior Treasurer says that he finds it hard to believe that people should not be rewarded equally for work done for the Society. He says that his concern is that there should be a mechanism to ensure that those that claim money are in fact entitled to it, as this has been a problem in the past when people expect expenses while not having done a sufficient amount of work. He argues there needs to be an authority in place to check this.

The President replies that a vacation day requires signing off by the President. He says that on the work point, without finding fault with the appointed committee, because they are obliged to work only for 3 or 5 days, the work completed is generally more menial and of a lower quality – members of the Secretary's Committee, who stay for longer, have more time to be trained, so they are able to put in more work during their vacation days. He says there is insufficient time to train appointed committee at each of the times during the vacation that they come to do their vacation days. He agrees that on the face of it everyone's work should be rewarded, but the level and quality of work is different between the elected and appointed committees.

The Senior Treasurer asks if the allowance is a contribution.

The Librarian-Elect notes that expenses are not meant to be a reward, since rewards come during term through a paper speech, for example. Instead, the expenses are an enabler, to help committee carry out vacation day work, rather than any sort of payment for work.

Mr Kirk suggests as a potential compromise that members of appointed committee who do a vacation day of work to the satisfaction of the President or their deputies should receive an allowance of £8 each day, as long as they are on access membership.

The Librarian argues that if access is the issue, the focus should be on access membership rather than on which committee the individual in question serves.

Mr Badaya says that he welcomes consideration of the issue. He says that he does not dispute that the quality of work by appointed committee is different from that of elected, but he notes that the hours of work are similar.

The President-Elect suggests the point is that elected work a great deal more during term.

Mr Badaya says that again he does not dispute this, but the way the Access Committee considered the issue was that expenses were being made available outside term. On the cost point, while he says he does not want to argue that the appointed committee is appointed inefficiently, he suggests in the longer run paying expenses presents a financial incentive to make committees lean and efficient.

The President asks Mr Badaya to clarify his point.

Mr Badaya argues that a large appointed committee with equal expenses to the elected committee is less beneficial, and this proposal incentivises a smaller and more efficient appointed committee in the future.

The Treasurer-Elect asks what the Access Committee wants – whether a rule change, an informal recommendation, or something else.

Mr Badaya replies that he wanted TSC to help decide the best approach.

The Treasurer-Elect asks why Mr Badaya thought this issue fell under the remit of the Access Committee.

Mr Kirk replies that the issue can be a legitimate access proposal even if it was not originally envisaged as such by the Access Officer.

The Treasurer-Elect agrees, but notes the proposal does not concern access members or the Access Committee, but rather members in general – he asks why this falls under the remit of the Access Committee.

The President observes that the proposal has nevertheless been brought, so TSC can consider how exactly the Access Committee should act on it. He asks why the Access Committee has made the proposal.

Mr Badaya replies that the Access Committee's main point was to address the perceived hierarchical situation, and it was of course approached from an access standpoint. The Committee wanted TSC's guidance on whether the situation was fair or not.

Mr Hawa says that he would like further information on what the Access Committee has achieved, since it is now late in the term and he suggests it could be doing more important work. He does, however, believe that the idea is a good one, and depends on whether expenses are seen as an entitlement or a reward.

The Treasurer-Elect leaves the room at 16:27.

Mr Hawa continues that the allowance is not seen as a perk, but rather as an entitlement given that the individual in question is carrying out work over the vacation. He does not, for that reason, agree with Mr Kirk's proposal – the system should not apply only to access members, but to all. Additionally, he argues members of committee should not have to identify themselves as access members unless they choose to do so.

The Treasurer-Elect enters the room at 16:27.

Mr Hawa adds that he himself did not claim vacation day expenses as he felt these were needed more by others, and he believes other members of committee felt the same way. He argues the proposal is fair and without significant cost, though he would urge the Access Committee to address more meaningful issues.

The President-Elect thinks the hierarchy issue is a different point that should not be considered here. If what is being discussed is vacation day expenses and whether they are seen as a perk or as a support system, she would suggest it is a necessity that committee members should be given expenses in order to enable vacation work. She suggests it might be fair, based on previous discussion in TSC, that members of appointed committee are given £4 each day instead of £8, since they work shorter hours, and if an access member this figure could be increased to £8 per day. She thinks there is no need to make members of committee declare that they are access members, as they can simply submit their membership number confidentially.

Mr Hawa says that he does not see why the expenses should be reduced to £4 each day.

The Returning Officer interjects, as a note to TSC, that under rule 30.d.i. the function of the Access Committee is not specifically about access members, and the Committee has a broad remit.

The Treasurer points out that as it stands, there is no set of specifications by which a President should allow expenses or not – it remains at the President's discretion for members of both the appointed and the elected committee. He suggests this should not in fact be institutionalised – while it is important that presidents should be made aware of the issue under discussion, it has always been the case that expenses are at the President's discretion and they should remain as such.

The President agrees, and confirms there is no guidance in the rules on this issue.

The Treasurer says there is a small clause in the Standing Orders, but it lacks detail.

The Treasurer-Elect agrees with the Treasurer. While he does not have a strong view on particular amounts to be granted, he believes the President's discretion is important. He suggests what should be considered subsequently is how vacation day expenses are advertised during the application process for appointed committee and in the vacation itself. He does, however, believe appointed committee should have expenses of some quantity.

Mr Kirk agrees, but disagrees on the Treasurer's point about institutionalisation. He argues that the Treasurer-Elect's emendations to Standing Order B15 makes institutionalisation easy from a practical perspective – if the President or their deputy is happy that a vacation day has been completed, the individual completing it should be eligible for expenses. He suggests the amount should also be put into the Standing Order to be adjusted when necessary, such as to adapt it for inflation.

The Treasurer-Elect asks the Bursar when the system of £4 for lunch with an additional £4 for dinner was instituted.

The Bursar does not know, but says that it was some time ago.

The Senior Treasurer notes that the system does get reviewed.

The Bursar says she feels strongly that vacation day expenses should not be institutionalised. They have always been at the President's discretion, and it should be up to them to deny expenses if members of committee have not done sufficient work. She argues writing expenses into the rules will create problems in the future.

The President adds that there is so little coverage in the rules that the fact that expenses are at the President's discretion is not even formally institutionalised. He agrees that they should not be institutionalised in detail in the rules, but thinks they should be in there to some extent so that it is clear that they are at the President's discretion.

The Treasurer-Elect suggests that a new Standing Order be introduced regarding the expenses of elected and appointed committees.

The Treasurer replies that the issue could probably be added to Standing Order A14, on accommodation and food.

The Treasurer-Elect suggests a new one.

Mr Kirk thinks it should be added to Standing Order B15, now that this contains the mechanism that decides what constitutes a vacation day – it could be easily tied to expenses.

The Treasurer-Elect points out that, for the sake of expenses, what he would classify as a full vacation day for a member of appointed committee is not the same as that for a member of elected committee.

The President agrees.

Mr Kirk suggests the amount be set as a standard £4, with a discretionary increase of a further £4.

The President agrees.

The President-Elect notes that she intends to implement a general 9am to 5pm working day for the appointed committee over the next vacation.

The President observes that accordingly the point about the number of hours worked stands.

The Treasurer-Elect adds that expenses of £4 constitutes a recognition of work, as the Access Officer noted. He recognises that members of appointed committee incur lunch expenses.

Mr Badaya asks it to be confirmed that the proposal is £4 per day for everyone, with an increase to £8 in the case of doing more work.

The President-Elect adds that even for elected committee expenses are £4 with a discretionary extra £4.

The President says that the Access Committee needs to consider the wording of the Standing Order to be amended.

The Treasurer-Elect suggests that TSC recognise the proposal, and suggests that the Access Committee can consider how to bring a formal change to the Standing Orders.

The President-Elect says that it should be the Access Committee's job to bring a full proposal to TSC. She appreciates that this has been a preliminary discussion, but now the Committee needs to work with its Standing Committee delegates and with the Returning Officer on how to structure prepared proposals for TSC.

The Treasurer suggests that as guidance, the Committee should refer to the minutes of Access Committee meetings in previous terms, to see how the Committee structured proposals that were to be submitted to TSC.

The President asks the Access Officer to bring a proposal to TSC to implement into the rules, and says that he should talk to the Returning Officer if guidance is required.

Mr Badaya raises as an additional point that the cost of membership for Oxford Brookes students was discussed as an issue in the Access Committee. The Access Officer recommended that the Oxford Brookes Officer bring the point to TSC.

The President says that it should be the Access Committee who discuss this point and suggest a solution, rather than bringing problems to TSC.

The President-Elect adds that the delegates on the Access Committee from TSC should help with this.

The Treasurer-Elect points out that it is the job of the Access Officer to represent the views of the committee.

The Bursar says that the Access Committee should speak to others first to find out the reasoning behind situations, rather than spending time discussing issues without the appropriate knowledge.

The President recommends that members of the Access Committee talk about issues to the Bursar, who knows about the workings of the Society in great detail.

The Treasurer-Elect suggests that given the Oxford Brookes Officer's presence at TSC, and his long wait, he should be heard.

The Librarian-Elect leaves the room at 16:44.

Mr Guy Harris says that it is an issue that Brookes members feel separated at the Union because of their temporary membership. He argues that since they pay a similar price, Brookes students should be given life membership as this would make them feel more comfortable coming to Union events, as currently students do not feel that they have the same membership level as students of Oxford University. He argues that since Brookes is the largest source of membership after Oxford University, out of those institutions that are associated with the Society, Brookes students should get life membership. He highlights that this would not cause problems for the Society, since it is only a minority of Brookes students that are interested in it, so giving life membership to them will not mean that the membership demographic is radically altered, but at the same time it will help those students to interact socially and to feel like they fit in.

The President is concerned that this proposal suggests the institutions with a right to temporary membership will all ultimately be granted life membership.

Mr Harris argues that there is a difference between Oxford Brookes and the other institutions – the former is a university, for example, and has close geographical proximity to the Society.

The Bursar says that this issue has come up in the past. She says that the problem is that there are many other institutions with temporary membership, and others have in the past had their eligibility for life membership revoked. If one is allowed life membership, this must be granted to the rest. Additionally, the proposal undermines the point that the Society was originally intended to serve Oxford University. This is why there is a system in place whereby students from Oxford Brookes who put a great deal into the Union, are able to have the end date of their temporary membership removed, such that they effectively gain permanent temporary membership. This is, however, conditional on the student's showing their interest in and commitment to the Society, such as by serving on committees.

The Senior Treasurer does not approve of Oxford Brookes or the other institutions with temporary membership gaining life membership, since the Society serves Oxford University. He adds that changing the position may bring complications with OLDUT, which relates only to Oxford University. This in turn might cause problems in areas such as fundraising.

The Treasurer-Elect points out that Rule 2 of the Society concerns only members of Oxford University, and the trustees have the power of interpretation of this rule. He argues that TSC does not have the authority to make this decision.

The Senior Treasurer comments that he would oppose this change in front of the trustees.

The President-Elect says this would potentially be a major change to the Society, through enabling students from Brookes to run for election, for example.

The Librarian says that while TSC may not have the power to implement a rule change, it can nevertheless make a recommendation to OLDUT. Without TSC having any stance, OLDUT has no source of information.

The Treasurer points out that part of the reason for the Oxford Brookes Officer bringing this proposal is that the cost of membership for Brookes students is very similar to that for life membership for students of Oxford University. He suggests the Society look at reducing the cost of membership for Brookes students.

The Bursar replies that this cannot be done, since it would make the termly membership costs out of synchronisation. She adds that very few Oxford Brookes members join for longer than a year, though there are a few that do.

The Treasurer-Elect suggests that more is done to engage Brookes students, but thinks that ultimately the Society is essentially a Society of Oxford University, and its history has been closely tied to the University.

The Librarian points out that the Cambridge Union allows students of Anglia Ruskin University to join as life members.

Mr Brian Wong says he thinks it worth the Access Committee looking at increasing the role for Brookes, but they should not change it through membership which is tied to a number of historical points, while there are other approaches that can result in a win-win situation.

The Treasurer-Elect says that in July there was a meeting about the Brookes membership drive, but a significant problem is that Oxford Brookes Student Union does not allow the Society into its freshers' fair. He adds that efforts are being made on this front.

The Bursar adds that the Society used to be at the fair, and this was stopped recently. She notes that the Society spent a great deal of money for little result on a Brookes membership drive. She adds that students need to understand that they have no fewer privileges, since they get exactly the same as life members except that they are unable to run for elected office, though they can serve on other committees.

Mr James Lamming leaves the room at 16:54.

Questions to the Access Officers:

There are no questions to the Access Officers.

The Chair of the Debate Selection Committee

Business of the CDSC:

The CDSC has no business.

Questions to the CDSC:

There are no questions to the CDSC.

Changes to the Composition of this Committee

There are no changes to the composition of the committee.

Any Other Business

Mr Kaleem Hawa asks if the Access Committee minutes are passed onto TSC.

The President says that they are just circulated internally within the Access Committee.

Mr Hawa replies that he would be interested in receiving digital copies. He would like TSC to be updated on some of the work being done by the Committee.

Date of the Next Meeting

Monday 20th November 2017, at 16:00 in the President's Office.

The President closes the meeting at 16:56.

Signed,



Ed Evans
St John's College
Secretary