

Ratified Minutes of
THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
4th Week Trinity Term 2018
Monday 14th May 2018
President's Office, 16:00

Present: **The President** (Mr Gui Cavalcanti, *Pembroke College*), **The Librarian** (Ms Shivani Ananth, *St. Anne's College*), **The Treasurer** (Mr Daniel Wilkinson, *Oriel College*), **The Secretary** (Mr Brendan McGrath, *Oriel College*), **The Elected Member** (Ms Cecilia Zhao, *St. Catherine's College*), **The Elected Member** (Mr Eric Sukumaran, *Pembroke College*), **The Elected Member** (Mr Nick Brown, *Magdalen College*), **The Elected Member** (Mr Musty Kamal, *Harris Manchester College*), **The Elected Member** (Mr Ray Williams, *Wadham College*), **The Elected Member** (Mr Robert Sutton, *Magdalen College*), **The Elected Member** (Mr Maxim Parr-Reid, *Trinity College*), **The President-Elect** (Mr Stephen Horvath, *New College*), **The Librarian-Elect** (Ms Genevieve Athis, *Christ Church*), **The Senior Treasurer** (Mr Stephen Dixon, *Downing College, Cambridge*), **The Bursar** (Mrs Lindsay Warne), **The Returning Officer** (Ms Alexandra Galloway, *Magdalen College*), **The Chair of the Debate Selection Committee** (Mr Andrew Seow, *Lincoln College*).

Attending:

The Ex-Elected Member (Mx Brian Wong, *Pembroke College*), **The Ordinary Member** (Mr Thomas Laver, *Balliol College*)

Apologies:

The Senior Librarian (Mr Sean Power, *Oriel College*), **The Chair of the Consultative Committee** (Mr Matthew Vautrey, *Magdalen College*), **The Access Officer** (Ms Kirsten Stewart, *Trinity College*), **The Treasurer-Elect** (Mr James Lamming, *Exeter College*)

Absent:

The President opens the meeting at 16:07.

Requests to Pass Absences from Previous Meeting

The President moves that TSC pass the Librarian's absence at the previous meeting of TSC as with good reason due to her engagement with Society business of paramount importance

nem. con.

Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

There are no matters arising from the previous minutes.

Ratification of Minutes

The President moves that TSC ratify the draft minutes of the 3rd Week Trinity Term 2018 Ordinary Meeting of TSC

nem. con

The President-elect asks the Secretary about his progress on writing 7th and 8th Week Hilary Term draft minutes.

The Secretary replies that they are due at the next meeting of TSC and they are underway.

The President

Meetings missed: 0, Missed without good reason: 0

Business of the President:

The President reports that he was asked a question by the press about the cancellation of the Identity Politics panel. He was asked if the cancellation was due to the subject matter, and replied that it was in fact due to a short-notice speaker cancellation. He notes that the question came from a small Oxford-based student news outlet.

Questions to the President:

There are no questions to the President.

The Librarian

Meetings missed: 2, 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 ratify DSC expenses, as recommended by the Finance Committee, of £256.80

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 has no business.

Questions to the Secretary:

There are no questions to the Secretary.

Ms Zhao

Meetings missed: 0, Missed without good reason: 0

Business of Ms Zhao:

Ms Zhao moves that TSC pass the accounts from the Jazz and Chocolates social, as recommended by the Finance Committee, with a contribution of £730.76

Seconded by the President

nem. con.

Questions to Ms Zhao:

There are no questions to Ms Zhao.

Mr Sukumaran

Meetings missed: 0, Missed without good reason: 0

Business of Mr Sukumaran:

Mr Sukumaran says he has produced the terms of reference for the informal working group which he was mandated to in the previous meeting of TSC. He describes the purpose of the working group, including to survey members. He notes that the terms are open to amendment by TSC, and that the group should contain four members, including the RO, selected by TSC. He recommends the group surveys the work done by the Access Committee on the issue, and reports on its recommendations by Friday 1st June 2018. He clarifies the scope of the group does not include changes to the actual operation of the elections.

The President-elect thanks Mr Sukumaran for preparing the document. He raises the concern that the group is similar to a Special Committee, given that it elects members and gives a reporting deadline. He suggests TSC form a formal Special Committee, or a more informal working group. He also argues that the deadline is excessively tight to carry out all the operations described in the document. He expresses scepticism that a survey of members would be useful.

Mr Sukumaran says he is indifferent between these options, but is keen to have a specific reporting deadline.

The President suggests that other members of TSC not in the group could also be consulted. Further, he argues that considerations on membership and accessibility of events may be too much to include in the group's remit.

Mr Sukumaran says that a narrowing of remit may also make a survey more useful.

The President-elect doubts that the survey responses would be helpful. He says that members would likely respond only if they had strongly negative opinions about some aspect of the Union.

Mr Sukumaran suggests interviewing members of note, rather than a broader survey.

The President claims that ex-Officers would be good to interview.

The President-elect raises the similarity between this group and TSC.

The President draws attention to the specificity of the group's mandate in comparison to TSC.

Mr Kamal asks why four members would be chosen, and about the mechanism for selecting them.

Mr Sukumaran replies that four is a sufficiently small group to retain focus.

The Bursar agrees that survey responses would be predominantly negative, particularly given the openness of the questions posed.

The Librarian leaves the room at 16:19

Mr Sukumaran agrees it might be best to take the survey out of the project.

The Senior Treasurer says members are largely concerned with being 'hacked', and makes use of the bar uncomfortable.

The Bursar agrees that this makes the bar less busy.

The President-elect responds that 'hacking' in the bar is banned, and that this ban is effectively enforced. He returns to the issue of the group, and raises the concern that if the group fails to reach specific recommendations that this would look bad for the Union.

The CDSC leaves the room at 16:21

The Bursar wonders whether the previous week's discussion was more broadly concerned with a general rules review.

Mr Sukumaran clarifies that the remit was narrowed to give the group focus.

The RO agrees that a general rules review would be infeasible.

The Bursar recalls a dedicated rules review group which operated in the past.

The Senior Treasurer recounts a story by which two ex-Presidents rewrote the rules in full, and that their rewrite was rejected.

The President-elect asks Mr Williams if this group would address the key issues causing discontent. He argues that involvement in elections is less important to members than a more general discontent about the substance of elections.

Mr Williams moves that TSC grant Mx Wong speaking rights

Seconded by President

nem. con.

Mr Williams says a technocratic response would not address the concerns of members. He worries that an informal working group might appear toothless, with recommendations having little genuine clout.

Mr Sukumaran responds that the power of the group could only be judged once it had completed its work, and the recommendations have been made.

Mx Wong makes the observation that this work could be incorporated into the remit of Access Committee. They worry that a group could result in over-bureaucratisation with a duplication of work. They suggest that Access Committee could spearhead the project, in consultation with TSC. They say this move could empower Access Committee.

Anisha Farukh enters the room at 16:28

The President-elect asks any members of the press to identify themselves.

Anisha Farukh identifies herself as a member of the press

Mr Sukumaran stresses the importance of a deadline.

The President-elect says that though a committee on some aspect of the Society's election could be useful, the issue being discussed is primarily one of access. He recommends that the Access Committee report on its work on the issue to avoid duplication of work.

The President says that an informal group could consult directly with Access Committee.

The Bursar notes the benefit that TSC has wider knowledge of wider the Union than the Access Committee does.

Mr Sukumaran suggests asking the Access Committee to formally investigate and report on the key issues.

The President-elect suggests first asking for a report on what the Committee has already discussed

Mr Brown notes that the issue of elections was not discussed in the 1st or 2nd Week meetings of the Access Committee.

The President-elect says members of committee work on projects individually which may not have been raised already. He suggests that Access requests reports from individual members on their work.

The Secretary leaves the room at 16:33

Mr Brown is appointed secretary for the remainder of the meeting

The President-elect expresses a desire that it would always be so easy to become the secretary.

Questions to Mr Sukumaran:

There are no questions to Mr Sukumaran.

Mr Brown

Meetings missed: 0, Missed without good reason: 0

Business of Mr Brown:

Mr Brown has no business.

Questions to Mr Brown:

There are no questions to Mr Brown.

Mr Kamal

Meetings missed: 0, Missed without good reason: 0

Business of Mr Kamal:

Mr Kamal has no business.

Questions to Mr Kamal:

There are no questions to Mr Kamal.

Mr Williams

Meetings missed: 0, Missed without good reason: 0

Business of Mr Williams:

Mr Williams introduces an SO change to amend SO F6 to allow Oxford Brookes students to be eligible for life membership.

The President highlights that under the Rule 67(b)(vii), no motion can be moved to change content of Rule 2 without permission of OLDUT. He says it is his understanding that this proposal would change the Union's mission statement. He says he appreciates effort to improve access for Brookes students, but that this is premature as it does not have the written consent of OLDUT.

The Senior Treasurer says the purpose of the Society and OLDUT is for the benefit of Oxford University. He is concerned about opening the Union to other organisations. He is further concerned about Brookes students being treated on equal grounds in the Union's competitive debating operations, particularly that competitions may be unhappy with non-University of Oxford students competing as Union teams.

Mr Williams does not believe that passing the SO contravenes the Rule, as it is not written in an exclusive way. He notes that the Union already allows non-University of Oxford students to attend events, which under the Senior Treasurer's exclusive reading of Rule 2 would also contravene said Rule. He argues that widening membership of the Society could contribute to the education of University of Oxford students.

The President-elect says that the Union's charity status generates special responsibilities. He argues that were the Union to recognise Brookes students as Life Members, it would not be able to discriminate between the interests of Oxford Brookes and University of Oxford students. He further contends that it would be odd for the Society, aimed at the education of University of Oxford students, could then be run by students from another university.

Mr Williams says that although something may seem odd, that does not imply it contravenes this Rule.

The RO requests more time to investigate the Rules.

The Senior Treasurer questions the principle of extending Life Membership to Brookes students, claiming it is perverse.

The President-elect asks if the RO can ensure that SO F6 is updated regarding the institutions it mentions. He also asks why Brookes students should have greater privileges than visiting students, members of Ruskin College and others.

Mr Williams argues that if a member pays the same fees as a Life Member, they should enjoy the same privilege. He says that the argument also applies to other institutions, and he would be happy to apply it, but that this is a good first step.

The President-elect replies that this is not incremental, it is a move to grant special privileges to some students but not others, with no coherent principle behind it. He claims it is unfair for Mr Williams to claim to speak for Brookes students when the Union has a Brookes Officer. He points out that Mr Williams has not advanced a principled argument for Brookes students being eligible for Life Membership, but not students from other institutions.

Mr Williams responds that some groups deserving something which they do not have is not a reason to deprive some other group of the same thing. He says he never claimed to speak for Brookes students.

The Bursar asks in what way Brookes students are disadvantaged, given that they can be appointed to many posts. She claims that they are not missing out by being ineligible to run for election, as they do not have the time.

Mr Williams says that the Bursar is now purporting to speak on behalf of Brookes students.

Mx Wong says that the issues are whether granting this privilege is normatively just, and how Brookes students could be made to feel included in elections without being able to run in them. They agree with the President-elect in that they ought not necessarily be granted the privileges of a Life Member, but also with Mr Williams in that there is currently a feeling of exclusion among Brookes students. They think the solution is to improve Brookes access operations, allowing them to participate but not run in elections. They argue that Brookes students should not be perceived as second-status members, but that they should nevertheless not be granted the privileges of members from the University of Oxford as per Rule 2.

Mr Sukumaran asks how many Brookes students Mr Williams has spoken to.

Mr Williams replies that he has spoken to two.

Mr Sukumaran questions whether this is a sufficient evidence base. He argues that is a large change, and that it must be determined whether Brookes students genuinely wish to be eligible to become Life Members.

The Librarian-elect argues that there is sufficient evidence for this, including the former Brookes Officer Guy Harris, and Brookes students who spoke out during the Society's previous election.

The Bursar notes that the fees paid by Brookes students are the same as those paid by visiting students and students of other institutions.

The President-elect recalls the claim of Mr Harris that frustration arises out of the fact that 3-year membership for Brookes students is the same price as that for Life Membership.

The Bursar says that Brookes members get exactly the same benefits as Life Members apart from running in elections, for the duration of their course.

The President-elect notes that this issue was raised in last term's elections, showing that members do wish to discuss the issue. He makes the technical point that IDC shortlists make reference to matriculated students, which would create conflicts for a Brookes student who, though an Officer, could not sit on the IDC. He further notes that the Union cannot select competitive debating teams comprised of non-University of Oxford students, and that this inability would force the Union to discriminate between different groups of members; this would make the CDSC liable for an SDC.

Mr Williams says that if membership is materially the same, this makes the proposed change even more feasible. He asks whether, were there a route to bypassing the debating issue, the change would work.

The President-elect highlights the need to check with OLDUT to see if this change is possible within the rules. He states that he does not agree with Mr Williams' position, and that he believes the Union is for members of the University of Oxford.

The Senior Treasurer agrees, as does **The RO**.

Mr Sukumaran argues that there are ramifications to this issue, and that more work must be done to investigate how it interacts with the Union's complex rules.

Mx Wong suggests a working group to discuss the issue.

Mr Kamal asks when Brookes students became eligible for any sort of membership.

The Bursar claims it was more than 20 years ago.

The Librarian-elect asks if he would agree with a change that made Brookes students eligible for Life Membership, with the provisions that they could not run for Office and could not enter into debating competitions. She says this would give them the long-term membership which they are currently deprived of.

Mr Williams replies that he would be willing to consider that.

The Bursar foresees a situation where TSC then queries these discriminations regarding Office and debating.

The Librarian-elect responds that unlike the current discriminations there are good reasons for these proposed discriminations.

The Senior Treasurer asks what the benefit to the Society would be, aside from greater membership fees.

The Librarian-elect replies that greater Brookes membership is a worthwhile project, bringing greater engagement and diversity.

The President-elect notes that not all Brookes students are on three-year courses, so do not see the current system as disadvantageous. He agrees with the Librarian-elect that greater membership and engagement is a good thing. He says that Brookes alumni would be genuinely interested in returning to the Union to attend events. He argues that this change would require a large-scale undertaking.

Mx Wong argues that, under Rule 2, non-University of Oxford students should not be able to run for election. Regarding debating competitions, the problem is to do with external eligibility rules, not the Union's policies.

The President-elect is concerned that he will have difficulty offering local colleges temporary membership, while Brookes students are eligible for Life Membership. He raises doubt that the Union should even have a Brookes Officer, rather than an Officer concerned with institutions eligible for temporary membership more broadly. He claims the Union may become constrained in its relations with other local colleges were this change to be undergone without specific principled justification.

The RO highlights a mechanism available only to Brookes students whereby temporary membership can be replaced with permanent membership.

The Bursar says that merely attending events is not sufficient to be granted permanent membership, but that this is reserved for those who have significantly contributed to the Union.

The President-elect asks if she can retrieve the number of Brookes members compared to those of other temporary members.

Mr Williams suggests that the change being discussed would allow the later inclusion of other Oxford-based institutions.

The President-elect replies that the issue is promoting Brookes over other institutions.

Mr Williams clarifies that he is proposing a Rules change which would be followed by Standing Order changes to include specific institutions. This change would be to create a new type of extended membership in the Rules, and then define by Standing Order which institutions would be eligible for this new type of membership.

The President-elect suggests easier provision for the conversion of the existing temporary membership to permanent membership.

The Librarian-elect highlights the importance of engagement by Brookes students in the Union. She does not foresee Brookes members returning in excessive numbers following their graduation.

The Bursar argues that, functionally, Life Members who do not return after graduation receive the same return on their fees as Brookes temporary members who are not permitted to return.

The Librarian-elect emphasises the issue of perception, that even if a Brookes member did not return to the Union after graduation they would still perceive themselves to be getting a better deal if their fees permitted them lifelong access to the Union's events.

The President-elect suggests lowering the 3-year membership fee.

The Bursar argues that University of Oxford students would opt for the lower fee.

Mr Williams asks if there is a mechanism for the RO to investigate the issue before it is voted on.

The President-elect replies that the mechanism is to stop the discussion.

The Senior Treasurer references the steering committee meeting in 8th Week, which could be the correct forum to discuss the issue.

The President-elect says there are other aspects of the issue which would also require discussion at the meeting.

The Senior Treasurer asks why the issue has been brought forward in such a rush.

Mr Williams responds that no rush has been made, and he was bringing forward the change by appropriate mechanisms in order to have a discussion which proved to be worthwhile.

Questions to Mr Williams:

There are no questions to Mr Williams.

Mr Sutton

Meetings missed: 0, Missed without good reason: 0

Business of Mr Sutton:

Mr Sutton has no business.

Questions to Mr Sutton:

There are no questions to Mr Sutton.

Mr Parr Reid

Meetings missed: 0, Missed without good reason: 0

Business of Mr Parr Reid:

Mr Parr Reid has no business.

Questions to Mr Parr Reid:

There are no questions to Mr Parr Reid.

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: 0

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:

The Access Officers have no business.

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 President notes that the CDSC has left the room, and asks Mx Wong to give a brief report on DSC.

Mx Wong mentions the recent Women's Open, and that the External Officer was appointed to be Deputy CA at EUDC.

Mr Sutton says there were a number of issues with the Women's Open, and that it has become smaller in recent years. He says that DSC has decided that the Open would be better placed directly after the Oxford IV, and asks for TSC's opinion.

The President-elect notes that it is common practice in the debating circuit to place Women's Opens the day before IV's, to allow female debaters to gain experience at a comparatively low cost. He says that the details of the Oxford IV would necessitate the Women's Open being placed on the day after. He suggests alternatively delaying the IV by one day and placing the Women's Open the day before. He notes that this would require the length of the competition to be shortened, but that it would take pressure off the Women's competition convenors.

The Bursar agrees this is a good idea, as does **Mr Sutton** and **The President**.

Questions to the CDSC:

There are no questions to the CDSC.

Changes to the Composition of this Committee

There are no changes.

Any Other Business

Mr Williams says that notice has been given for the upcoming Public Business Meeting, but not the motions. He asks for assurance that this will be given for all motions this term.

The President points out that 'notice' does not require an announcement on the notice board, and that the inclusion of the motion in the term card is sufficient notice.

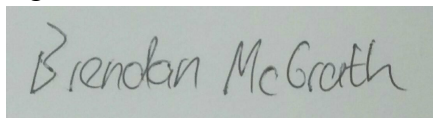
The President-elect notes that notice must be given of the 'Fear versus Love' debate, which is presumably being delayed to generate maximal enthusiasm for said debate.

Date of the Next Meeting

Monday 5th Week Trinity Term 2018 (21st May 2018), 16:00, in the President's Office.

The President closes the meeting at 17:17

Signed,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in dark ink. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Brendan McGrath".

Brendan McGrath
Oriel College
Secretary