

*Draft Minutes of*

THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE ACCESS COMMITTEE

1<sup>st</sup> Week Hilary Term 2018

Friday 18<sup>th</sup> January

The TV Room, 13:45

**Present:** **The Access Officer** (Amelia Harvey, *Kellogg College*), **The International Officer** (Alice Zhang, *Trinity College*), **The Socioeconomic Officer** (Millie Bircham, *Keble College*), **The Ethnic Minorities Officer** (Priyesh Patel, *St. Anthony's College*), **The Standing Committee Delegate** (Mahi Joshi, *Trinity College*), **The Standing Committee Delegate** (Rai Saad Khan, *Christ Church*), **The Treasurer** (Amy Gregg, *Somerville/Magdalen College*)

**Apologies:** **The Access Officer** (Brian Wong, *Wolfson College*), **The Elected Member and Librarian-Elect** (Sara Dube, *St Hugh's College*), **The Oxford Brooke's Officer** (Ollie Woodhouse, *Oxford Brookes University*), **The LGBTQIA+ Officer** (Mo Iman, *Somerville College*), **The Elected Member** (Naren Koratamaddi)

**Absent:** **The President** (Daniel Wilkinson, *Oriel College*), **The Disabilities Officer** (Elisa Gomez), **The Graduate Officer** (Garang Dutt, *St Catherine's College*), **The Women's Officer** (Priscilla Guo, *Keble Collge*)

*Access Committee opens at 13.58*

*The Treasurer enters room at 14:00*

**Absences**

No absences to pass from the previous meeting

**Ratification of Minutes**

The Access Committee decides to postpone ratification of the minutes of the previous until the next meeting

**Business of the Access Officer**

There is not a physical agenda to distribute at this meeting, The Access Officer, Brian Wong was to put it together and is absent. The Access Officer, Amelia Harvey says that in future weeks the Committee Secretary must send out the agenda.

The Access Officer Amelia Harvey opens a discussion on her main project for the next two terms, which is to build a lift within the Union. She recognises that this will be a long and difficult process, and expects it be painful, with many hoops to jump through and, much research needed. She says that she would appreciate any help she can get from members of the Committee to achieve this goal.

Similarly, the Access Officer says that since has had a lot of experience from previous events and societies, she too would be happy to assist the Liberation Officers with any of their projects whilst on the Access Committee.

**Questions to the Access Officer**

There are no questions to the Access Officer.

**The Business of the LGBTQIA+ Officer in their absence**

The Access Officer informs that the LGBTQIA+ officer would like The Access Committee to discuss the issue of gender neutral toilets in the Union. Opens up discussion on this issue.

Mahi Joshi says we should definitely have them, especially since Plush, the LGBTQIA+ club is now located in our Cellars, and we must ensure our practices resonate with their ideology.

The Treasurer asks what the toilet set-up is in Plush. The Committee informs the Treasurer that Plush has gender neutral toilets, with a separate section for urinals.

The Treasurer says that we should be wary of not making the disabled toilet the gender neutral one. Also raises issue of disabled loo being locked, with members having to ask for the keys in order to use it.

The Treasurer asks what the LGBTQIA+ Officer's plan or vision is for the gender neutral toilet, and if he wants a new toilet to be constructed, or simply a change of sign on the toilets?

The Treasurer, while recognising the merits of changing the sign on the toilets, makes the case for having a women's only toilet in the Union, and the need for an accessible safe space for women to use, especially at events such as black-tie dinners.

The Ethnic-Minorities Officer if there is a real need for a gender neutral toilet at all. The Access Officer responds by saying that the need, or the absence therefore, is not something we can assume. Whether or not there is a public/numerical need, there is a need to have the provision in place for any member who might need it.

The Treasurer outlines the following options to consider:

- Making the disabled toilet the gender neutral one- The Access Committee, including the Treasurer, agrees that one is not an appropriate substitute for the other
- Making men's toilets gender neutral
- Making all the toilets gender neutral
- Constructing a new gender neutral toilet

Mahi Joshi asks when this proposal would be taken to The Standing Committee. The Treasurer, The Access Officer and Rai Saad Khan agree that The Access Committee needs to provide the TSC with a firm plan, and take the proposal to them only once this is ready.

Rai Saad Khan compares this to the discussion at his college, where a similar agreement on the range of options was reached.

The Access Officer agrees leave the discussion here, and return to it once the LGBTQIA+ Officer is back in the country. If any members have any thoughts and feelings on the issue in the meantime, they should feel free to contact the Access Officer. She also stresses that she would be happy to carry over the project of Gender Neutral toilets into next term.

Turning to another item of business from the LGBTQIA+ Officer in his absence, the Treasurer says she is aware of a Rules Change he is writing regarding the introduction of a Welfare Rep, or a Welfare Committee to the Union.

### **Questions to the LGBTQIA+ Officer**

There are no questions to the LGBTQIA+ Officer in his absence.

### **The Business of the Treasurer**

The Treasurer informs the committee that she has been working in conjunction with the Chair of the Debates Selection Committee(CDSC) to bring back Women's Public Speaker Workshops. She attended the first of these workshops, and reports that it was very successful, covering a wide range of issues including general public speaking tips, tips on voice, posture etc.

The Treasurer asserts that she would like to introduce Graduate Public Speaking workshops alongside these,

since several graduates speak English as a second language, and this would be of help in terms of confidence etc.

The Socioeconomic Officer agrees that there would definitely be a demand for this, especially considering increased graduate involvement in the Union in recent times, which having these workshops will only help improve. The Treasurer highlights that beginners' debating workshops were an access issue, and often came across as quite intimidating, whereas these workshops are a lot more relaxed.

Rai Saad Khan asks about the content of these workshops. The Treasurer says that they cover everything from handling Points of Information, dealing with nervous ticks etc. Says that they were clearly different from debating.

Rai Saad Khan thinks that he, along with the general membership, would benefit from these too. Asks if there is any scope at all for general workshops of this nature. The Treasurer says it is a potential, though this would have to be next term.

The Treasurer then turns to the topic of state school visits at weekly, main debates. The Treasurer says that the since the weekly debates are normally busy, but never normally full to capacity, there might be some merit in opening them up to 10/15 state school children per week with the aim of enhancing outreach to Oxbridge. The Treasurer said that she mentioned putting this in place for this term, for Thatcher debate, but the President wasn't massively keen. The Treasurer said she would continue to try and push this, and that we have good a relationship with local outreach and debating organisations, and can try and engage with debaters.

Rai Saad Khan mentions 'Into University' as a potential access scheme, the Treasurer concurs, and says that there are several potential access schemes we could go through for this.

The Socioeconomic Officer says that while access schemes may be beneficial for individuals, they do not necessarily benefit schools in the same way.

The Treasurer agrees to go and work on this, and says that she will be open to accepting ideas from any members of Committee.

### **The Business of Mahi Joshi**

Ms Joshi informs the committee that she would like to work on a project to increase state school outreach from the Union as well, and has come up with the idea of debate and public speaking teaching packs which could be circulated around schools. An alternative suggested is that of filming and distributing debating workshops which could then be used by state school to aid their debate coaching.

The socioeconomic officer says that she is keen on organising a general debating workshop, suggests that this could just be filmed and go online.

The Treasurer raises the issue that debaters are normally paid to do these workshops for private schools, and therefore might not be happy for the workshops to go online.

Mahi Joshi says that these workshops do not necessarily have to be uploaded to the Youtube channel, and can simply given to the schools.

### **Business of The International Officer**

The International Officer informs that Committee she is working on an joint event with the Korean Society, where one of the options is inviting a K-Pop Group to the Union. The event is unlikely to happen this term but will be very interesting.

The International Officer asks how speaker leads can be passed on from one committee to the other. The Access Officer informs her that she should contact the President-Elect and the Librarian-Elect(who will also be sitting on Access Committee as an Elected Member this term.

### **Questions to the International Officer**

There are no questions to the International Officer

The Access Officer thanks people for coming to the meeting, and closes the meeting at 14.32.

Signed,

Mahi Joshi

**Standing Committee Delegate to Access Committee**

*Trinity College*