

Ratified Minutes of  
THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE  
2<sup>nd</sup> Week Michaelmas Term 2015  
Monday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015  
President's Office, 16:00

**Present:** **The President** (Mr Charles Vaughan, *St John's College*), **The Librarian** (Mr Robert Harris, *New College*), **The Secretary** (Mr Golooba-Mutebi, *St John's College*), **The Elected Member** (Miss Henna Dattani, *Brasenose College*), **The Elected Member** (Miss Mia Smith, *Oriel College*), **The Elected Member** (Mr Tim Cannon, *Wadham College*), **The Elected Member** (Mr Callum Tipple, *Hertford College*), **The President-Elect** (Mr Stuart Webber, *Somerville College*), **The Librarian-Elect** (Miss Niamh Coote, *Pembroke College*), **The Treasurer-Elect** (Mr Noah Lachs, *Lincoln College*), **The Senior Librarian** (Mr Sean Power, *Oriel College*), **The Senior Treasurer** (Mr Stephen Dixon, *Downing College, Cambridge*), **The Bursar** (Mrs Lindsey Warne), **The Returning Officer** (Mr Stanislas Lalanne, *Merton College*), **The Chair of the Consultative Committee** (Mr Michael Li, *Magdalen College*), **The Access Officer** (Ms Claire Butler, *Worcester College*), **The Access Officer** (Mr Harry Samuels, *New College*), **The Chair of the Debate Selection Committee** (Mr Jamie Jackson, *St John's College*).

**Attending:** **DRO** (Mr Jamie Lagerberg, *Corpus Christi College*)

**Apologies:** **The Treasurer** (Miss Verity Hubbard, *Lady Margaret Hall*), **The Elected Member** (Mr Jonathan Tan, *Exeter College*)

**Absent:**

*The President opens the meeting at 16:11*

**The President** apologies for the delay in starting the meeting, citing urgent matters which needed resolving.

**Requests to Pass Absences from Previous Meeting**

The President moves that TSC pass the absence of the CCC from the Ordinary Meetings of TSC of MT15 1<sup>st</sup> Week as being with good reason due to his pursuit of society business

*Passed nemine contradicente.*

The President moves that TSC pass the absence of the Librarian-Elect from the Ordinary Meetings of TSC of MT15 1<sup>st</sup> Week as being with good reason due to infectious illness

*Passed nemine contradicente.*

The President moves that TSC pass the absence of the Treasurer from the Ordinary Meetings of TSC of MT15 1<sup>st</sup> Week as being with good reason due to a compulsory class

*Passed nemine contradicente.*

**Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

There are no matters arising from the previous minutes.

**Ratification of Minutes**

The President moves that TSC ratify the minutes from the Ordinary Meetings of TSC of MT15 1<sup>st</sup> Week.

*Passed nemine contradicente.*

### **The President**

Business of the President:

Questions to the President:

There are no questions to the President.

### **The Librarian**

Business of the Librarian:

**The Librarian** gives the names of three members who wish to be appointed members of the Library Committee, namely Brian Wong (*Pembroke College*), Hannah Mooradian (*Worcester College*), and Monica Popa.

The Librarian moves that TSC ratify the appointment of Brian Wong (*Pembroke College*), Hannah Mooradian (*Worcester College*), and Monica Popa to the Library Committee.

*Seconded by the President.*

*Passed nemine contradicente.*

**The President-Elect** informs TSC that, following on from discussion last week, he and the Librarian believe that CiviCRM, the database used over the summer to invite speakers, needs improving and updating. He informs TSC that he has received a quotation from its developer, Mr Sam Haskell, of £9125 for 183 hours in total. The President-Elect informs TSC that the Bursar raised some valid concerns when he spoke to her about it earlier, one of which was that Mr Sam Haskell suggested several new updates which had not previously been considered necessary. The President-Elect wishes to ask Mr Sam Haskell why some of these problems were not anticipated beforehand but informs TSC that he is, otherwise, broadly happy to go ahead with things as quickly as possible.

**The President** expresses his concern that the figure given for the quotation to change the interface is higher than that for the creation for the whole database.

**The Librarian** explains that it is because the interface is an entirely new ‘front end’ to then ‘back end’ of the database, rather than a few changes. The Librarian informs the President that he and the President-Elect have already seen a concept of how this might look.

**The President-Elect** informs TSC that the figure given was a quote, not an estimate.

**The Librarian** disagrees, stating that it is an estimate.

**The President** urges the President-Elect and the Librarian to secure a fixed quote.

**The Senior Treasurer** states that he has no recollection of it being mentioned that making the database would be a multi-step process with additional costs and conveys his disappointment that now more money is needed for it.

**The Librarian** explains that this was never the case and that certain unforeseen issues became prevalent, despite the original package being delivered to specification.

**The President** explains to the Senior Treasurer that CiviCRM is a great system and that everything as demanded was received, with these proposals being useful improvements but, by no means, necessary measures.

**The Senior Treasurer** replies that it has been presented to TSC as if these changes are necessary and suggests that, if they are not, TSC should not pursue them and save the money instead.

**The President** states his view that making the interface easier to use would be helpful but that he agrees with the Senior Treasurer that the figure currently proposed is too great.

**The President-Elect** explains that there is very little time over the Christmas vacation anyway and that, given how long it took the committee to get to grips with the system, it needs to be changed before the vacation starts in order that speakers can be invited as efficiently as possible. The President-Elect agrees that the figure proposed is very high but reiterates his point that the Christmas Term vacation is too short to not make these changes. The President-Elect says that these changes would have a long term and short term benefit.

**The President** asks whether or not another developer who would do the same work for less money could be found.

**The Librarian** states that, following this and the President-Elect's meeting with Mr Sam Haskell, they soon realised that the proposed changes, with an estimated cost of £3,500, were insufficient, hence the much greater figure now being given. The Librarian suggests that it would be imprudent to use another developer as Mr Sam Haskell knows the system through and through and, since he and the President-Elect looked around initially for the best person anyway, it is unlikely that they would now find someone better who worked for less. The Librarian adds that, given months of working on the system, Mr Sam Haskell is now familiar with what the Union needs exactly so looking for someone else would not be worth the effort.

**The President** asks whether or not it could be possible to divide the project into a few separate parts with incremental costs, such that a few payments and improvements are made at a time, allowing the possibility of seeing how they affect the interface and whether or not other changes are deemed necessary.

**The Librarian** informs the President that this sort of work needs to be completed in one go and cannot be separated into different sections as the interface works as a whole.

**The Bursar** expresses her concern that, as this is only an internal tool with no public benefit, it does not seem worth the high cost to simply make it look better or be less complicated, especially since it has already been used to good effect. The Bursar suggests that it could be a problem of organisation and that, perhaps, the system should be used a bit more before any drastic decisions are made.

**The Librarian** explains that the issue is that only a few people know how to use the system very well and that, given that it takes so long to get to that level of competency, it needs to be made simpler.

**The Bursar** asks why what is essentially just a database should be so complex.

**The President** suggests that it is not that complicated but that the few days that it takes to get to grips with the system could be detrimental to a Christmas vacation. The President still, however, questions whether or not it is worth over £9,000 to try to change this.

**Miss Henna Dattani** asks if a list of specific changes could be given.

*The President-Elect reads out the list of required changes which he, the Librarian, and Mr Sam Haskell have identified that will help with regard to: facilitating termly handover by resetting invitation counts and archiving invitation statuses; requesting speaker assignments; preventing duplicated invitations; producing diversity reports; making debates easier to organise; simplifying the data presentation; highlighting invitation clashes within debates; providing an overview of pending invitation responses; giving more control to officers over invitation assignments; creating follow-up lists; and many more.*

**The Librarian** states that the goal is for it to be very clear to people what they have to do when they log on, removing all the steps in between.

**The Senior Treasurer** suggests that the President-Elect and the Librarian set a specific figure so as to force themselves to prioritise. The Senior Treasurer stresses that he does not again want to hear more demands for money for improvements to this system.

**The President** expresses his view that these improvements would help with the usability of the system.

**Miss Mia Smith** suggests that a lot of the improvements which the President-Elect did not sound indispensable and could be left out to lower the cost. Miss Mia Smith asks whether or not any other committee members shall be involved in the process of making these improvements.

**The Librarian** explains that he and the President-Elect compiled a list of everyone's complaints and any issues that were highlighted over the vacation, which they then used as feedback for Mr Sam Haskell.

**The President-Elect** states his desire for as many committee members to get involved with suggestions as possible over the process.

**The Bursar** asks what in this system could prevent committee members from promising inappropriate remuneration and expense payments in their invitations.

**The President** states that this is an issue of trust with committee members that they not do so and make sure to copy the President into every email which they send.

**The Librarian** suggests that it just needs to be stressed what is and is not allowed to be offered.

**The Bursar** says that the solution needs to be that everything get approved by the President, which is difficult with more and more automation.

**The President-Elect** adds that not everything shall be automated but that doing so with things such as PDF invitations actually gives the president more control.

**The President** reiterates that it is just a matter of making sure that the President is informed at every stage about how email correspondences are going and that everyone knows what is not to be offered.

**The Secretary** expresses his view that the biggest issue with the system is not that it is complicated but that all of the admin parts of it take a long time so making changes won't really increase productivity since all of the admin will still be required.

**The President-Elect** explains that all of the administrative processes will be streamlined by these changes and reiterates his desire for as many committee members as possible to get involved in the process.

**The Librarian** reiterates the President-Elect's sentiment regarding reducing some of the steps required.

**The Bursar** states that it sounds like a bad design.

**The Librarian** explains to the Bursar that that is just how CiviCRM databases are and that there plans are to change the software to resolve this.

**The Bursar** reminds TSC that a different software company had been disregarded for being too expensive but now, with these changes, using CiviCRM will turn out to have been the more expensive option. The Bursar suggests that TSC just find a way of working around the system.

**The President** suggests that the most important things needed are a simpler interface with fewer steps, something that works better with the creation of debates, and having tiered access rights for different committee members to the information within the database. The President expresses his view that he likes the idea but that the current cost would be too high, suggesting that the Librarian and President-Elect ask Mr Sam Haskell what the best price he could offer is for the aforementioned three improvements.

**The Librarian** explains that the cost is based on an hourly rate of work so that it is not really possible to haggle.

**The Secretary** expresses his view that, in principle, improvements would be good but that the cost is far too high, considering that the changes won't make a difference to some of the core elements of using such a complicated database that make it a tedious and time-consuming system.

**The President** agrees that there is no way to simplify or expedite data input, which is necessary for a society such as the Oxford Union, but adds that the difference between the current committee and future ones is that the current committee had to do a lot of the 'leg work' in terms of initial input, whereas future committees shall simply be editing what already exists.

**The Bursar** adds that having a database can be problematic as it can lead to people simply going back to the same people and companies again and again, which can put them off.

**The President** states that that is not an argument against keeping contact details, but against going back to the same people too often.

**The Librarian-Elect** expresses her view that it would actually be very useful in terms of indicating whether or not current details need updating if they are repeatedly unsuccessful.

**Mr Tim Cannon** asks if there shall be a way of keeping a history of invitation responses.

**The Librarian** says that the responses get saved on the database and that this will only get built up over time.

**Miss Mia Smith** expresses her concern that, since the current committee has had to do all of the 'leg work', future committees might not experience as many problems.

**The President** disagrees, stating that there is a difference between the time required to input information and procedural mechanisms, which are a long term issue.

**The President-Elect** adds that this current committee also had the luxury of time over the long summer vacation, which the two upcoming committees shall not.

**The Librarian** states that he and the President-Elect wish to have further talks with Mr Sam Haskell and secure a fixed quotation before any concrete decisions get made.

*The Librarian-Elect leaves the room at 16:52.*

*TSC expresses approval of this suggestion.*

Questions to the Librarian:

There are no questions to the Librarian.

**The Treasurer**

Business of the Treasurer:

The Librarian-Elect, on behalf of the Treasurer, moves that TSC pass the DSC expenses, totalling £370, subject to change

*Seconded by the President.*

*Passed nemine contradicente.*

Questions to the Treasurer:

There are no questions to the Treasurer.

**The Secretary**

Business of the Secretary:

**The Secretary** informs TSC that Ms Suzanna Mason has applied for Residential Membership of the Oxford Union.

*TSC reads through her application letter.*

**The Senior Treasurer** informs the Secretary that he must meet her before TSC take a vote on her application.

**The President** suggests that TSC approve her application after the Secretary meets her and recommends that it do so at the next Ordinary Meeting of TSC.

The Secretary moves that TSC approve the application of Ms Suzanna Mason for Residential Membership subject to his retrospective recommendation of TSC approving it.

*Seconded by the President.*

*Passed nemine contradicente.*

**The Secretary** informs TSC that he has received offers from two club night companies in Oxford for an ‘official after-party’ for the ball but he is disinclined to press ahead with them as it appears that costs to the Union might be involved, which might not be worth the expenditure.

**The President-Elect** expresses his view that, if any expenses shall have to be borne by the Union, the proposal should not be pursued.

**The Secretary** adds that neither club would be open that much longer anyway so it does not seem worth it, given that people would not be allowed in by the time they would get to either club unless they left early, which would not be ideal.

**The Treasurer-Elect** expresses his view that there will be nothing to gain from having a ‘club after-party’ but something to lose in terms of people leaving early to get changed in order to go to the club.

**Mr Tim Cannon** says that there is no point in doing so unless there shall be a significant financial gain for the Union.

**Miss Henna Dattani** adds that an after-party would detract from the ball.

*TSC decides that an official club after-party should not be pursued.*

*The Librarian-Elect enters the room at 16:56*

Questions to the Secretary:

**Miss Henna Dattani**

Business of Miss Henna Dattani:

Miss Henna Dattani has no business.

Questions to Miss Henna Dattani:

There are no questions to Miss Henna Dattani.

**Miss Mia Smith**

Business of Miss Mia Smith:

Miss Mia Smith has no business.

Questions to Miss Mia Smith:

There are no questions to Miss Mia Smith.

**Mr Tim Cannon**

Business of Mr Tim Cannon:

Mr Tim Cannon has no business.

Questions to Mr Tim Cannon:

There are no questions to Mr Tim Cannon.

**Mr Callum Tipple**

Business of Mr Callum Tipple:

Mr Callum Tipple has no business.

Questions to Mr Callum Tipple:

There are no questions to Mr Callum Tipple.

**Mr Jonathan Tan**

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Business of Mr Jonathan Tan:

Mr Jonathan Tan has no business.

Questions to Mr Jonathan Tan:

There are no questions to Mr Jonathan Tan.

**The President-Elect**

Business of the President-Elect:

Questions to the President-Elect:

There are no questions to the President-Elect.

**The Librarian-Elect**

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**

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:

Questions to the Bursar:

There are no questions to the Bursar.

### **The Returning Officer**

Business of the RO:

*The RO presents the IDC shortlist to TSC and explains the categories, i.e. Category A contains ex-officers who are currently enrolled in institutions specified under rule 3a, Category B contains former ROs who are also enrolled in said institutions, Category C contains ex-officers who are no longer enrolled in said institutions but have not met the requirements for being on the SDC list, and Category D contains former ROs who also have not met the requirements for being on the SDC list.*

**The President-Elect** asks why the ex-Secretary, Mr Alexander Trafford (*Pembroke College*), is not on the list.

*The Treasurer-Elect leaves the room at 17:01*

*TSC debates whether or not Mr Alexander Trafford is eligible to be on the IDC list.*

*The RO provisionally accepts the amendment to add Mr Alexander Trafford, to Category C.*

*The Treasurer-Elect enters the room at 17:02*

*The RO presents the DRO shortlist to TSC.*

**The President-Elect** informs the RO of a spelling error in the name of Alex Chalmers (*Oriel College*), which should be spelt with an 'l' and not an 'r'.

*Miss Mia Smith leaves the room at 17:08*

**The RO** informs TSC that any objections to any candidate must be presented to the President within 48 hours.

*The Librarian leaves the room at 17:10.*

*The President recommends that TSC pass the DRO shortlist*

*Passed nemine contradicente.*

The President moves that TSC pass the IDC shortlist subject to the insertion of Mr Alexander Trafford (Pembroke College) in the event that he be eligible to sit on the IDC shortlist

*Passed nemine contradicente.*

Questions to the RO:

There are no questions to the RO.

### **The Chair 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 President proposes that TSC ratify the appointment of Mr Joe Hill (Lady Margaret Hall) to the Access Committee

*Passed with one objection.*

Questions to the Access Officers:

There are no questions to the Access Officers.

### **The Chair of the Debate Selection Committee**

Business of the CDSC:

Questions to the CDSC:

There are no questions to the CDSC.

### **Changes to the Composition of this Committee**

#### **Any Other Business**

There is no other business.

#### **Date of the Next Meeting**

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> Week Michaelmas Term 2015 (Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2015), 16:00, in the President's Office.

*The President closes the meeting at 17:13.*

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ssuuna Golooba-Mutebi', written in a cursive style.

**Ssuuna Golooba-Mutebi**  
*St John's College*  
Secretary