

The Ratified Minutes of
THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
4th Week Hilary Term 2019
4th February 2019
TV Room, 16:00

Present:

The President (Mr Daniel Wilkinson, *Oriel College*), **The Librarian** (Mr Brendan McGrath, *Oriel College*), **The Treasurer** (Ms Amy Gregg, *Somerville College*), **The Secretary** (Mr Nicholas Leah, *Lincoln College*), **The Elected Member** (Mr Chaitanya Kediya, *Exeter College*), **The Elected Member** (Mr Shining Zhao, *University College*), **The Elected Member** (Ms Mahi Joshi, *Trinity College*), **The Elected Member** (Mr Jim Brennan, *St Peter's College*), **The Elected Member** (Mr Elliot Bromley, *St Edmund Hall*), **The Elected Member** (Ms Olivia Leigh, *Keble College*), **The Elected Member** (Mr Rai Saad Khan, *Christ Church*), **The President-Elect** (Ms Genevieve Athis, *Christ Church*), **The Librarian-Elect** (Ms Sara Dube, *St Hugh's College*), **The Ex-President** (Mr Stephen Horvath, *New College*), **The Ex-Treasurer** (Mr James Lamming, *Exeter College*), **The Ex-Secretary** (Mr Shanuk Mediawaka, *Lincoln College*), **The Access Officer** (Mr Brian Wong, *Wolfson College*)

Attending:

The Senior Treasurer (Mr Stephen Dixon, *Downing College, Cambridge*), **The Bursar** (Mrs Lindsay Warne), **The Returning Officer** (Mr Liam Frahm, *Jesus College*), **The Chair of the Debate Select Committee** (Mr Chin Lee Wee, *Trinity College*), Ms Louise Kandler, *Lady Margaret Hall*, Mr Christopher Sinnott, *Brasenose College*, Mr Charlie Willis, *Wadham College*, Mr Hugh Bellamy, *Lady Margaret Hall*, Mr Adam Wilkinson-Hill, *Jesus College*, Mr Adam Watson, *Hertford College*, Mr Samuel Burns, *St John's College*, Mr Mohammed Iman, *Somerville College*

Absent:

The Senior Librarian (Mr Sean Power, *Oriel College*), **The Chair of the Consultative Committee** (Mr James Dix, *Christ Church*), **The Access Officer** (Ms Amelia Harvey, *Kellogg College*)

The President opens the meeting at 16:11

Apologies

The President notes that apologies have been received from the Senior Librarian and the Chair of the Consultative Committee. **The President** also notes that the Librarian will need to leave the meeting in a few minutes to prepare for their interview with a guest speaker at 17:00.

Requests to Pass Absences from Previous Meetings

The President moves that the Standing Committee pass the President's absence from the 3rd week ordinary meeting of the Standing Committee due to a society business of paramount important with good reason

The motion passes nem. con.

The President moves that the Standing Committee pass the Chair of the Consultative Committee's absence from the 3rd week ordinary meeting of the Standing Committee due to a society business of paramount important with good reason

The motion passes nem. con.

The President moves that the Standing Committee pass the Treasurer-Elect's absence from the 3rd week ordinary meeting of the Standing Committee due to disabling and infectious illness with good reason

The motion passes nem. con.

The President moves that the Standing Committee pass Mr Chaitanya Kediya's absence from the 3rd week ordinary meeting of the Standing Committee due to a pressing and extraordinary engagement with good reason

The motion passes nem. con.

The President moves that the Standing Committee grant Ms Louise Kandler, the Ex-Returning Officer speaking rights

The motion passes nem. con.

The President moves that the Standing Committee pass Ms Louise Kandler's absence from the 3rd week ordinary meeting of the Standing Committee due to society business of paramount importance with good reason

The motion passes nem. con.

Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

None

Ratification of Minutes

The President moves that the Standing Committee ratify the minutes from the 3rd week Hilary Term 2019 Ordinary Meeting of the Standing Committee

The motion passes nem. con.

The President

Business of the President:

The President states that they have received a number of press requests. They begin by stating that they have received a request for commentary from Cherwell about the government's defence against clamping down on no platforming on university campuses.

The Ex-President asks the President if they responded to OxStu about the article written by Kayek Tours Oxford about the Steve Bannon visit. **The President** responds that they didn't know about this.

The Ex-President expresses concerns about the private email that was allowed to go to publication on the part of the Treasurer. They describe this as potentially very dangerous for the society. **The President** states that they will look into it. **The Ex-President** responds that it

needs a proper investigation. **The President** adds that they will discuss with the Returning Officer. **The Ex-President** states that they are not sure why the Returning Officer would be needed in this situation.

The President proceeds to discuss student societies. They note that Jewish Society has got into contact regarding hosting of Prime Minister of Malaysia. They add that this it is not only student bodies but also ordinary members who would appreciate prior warning before we host controversial speakers. They further add that if the committee knows that an event could considerable discomfort then it ought to be necessary to get in touch with them. This they think is a perfectly fine and reasonable idea, but they hoped to bring this idea before the committee for a proper discussion.

The Bursar asks if speakers are going to be disinvited if they are not liked. **The President** responds that this is about challenging speakers with questions, not about disinvitation.

The Treasurer-Elect asks whether they will be informed before the Standing Committee. **The President** notes that this would be in line with notifying people, not circumventing the Standing Committee.

The Senior Treasurer asks if there is a risk of other societies being contacted about protests outside the Union.

The Chair of the Consultative Committee enters the room at 16:19

The Chair of the Consultative Committee leaves the room at 16:19

The President states that they do not think that protests can reasonably be prevented. **The Senior Treasurer** questions whether or not the Union would be actively encouraging protests in these circumstances. **The President** reaffirms that it would just be about letting people know.

The Ex-President suggests that it is a good idea so long as it's an anodyne case. They do not want the society to be seen as giving in, but rather as a gesture of good will. **The President** adds that people would appreciate more warning.

The Ex-President asks whether there was a rules change passed last term by the President-Elect concerning the notification of the Standing Committee about speaker visits. **The President** states that they are not sure.

The Ex-Treasurer is concerned that it might push societies to advance other people who could prevent events at the Oxford Union. **The President** responds that you cannot stop people protesting, but that the society needs to do better than it has done in previous terms.

The Bursar adds that most members are not here in Oxford, and thus you only see representation from a small group. They express concern that what may start out as a matter of courtesy very quickly becomes something more developed as these things are likely to grow over time. They do not, however, disagree with principle. **The President** replies that they do not want this to develop a kind of affair that would be more serious than what they have outlined.

The Librarian leaves the room at 16:25

The Ex-President states they remember when Yvonne Ridley came to a debate in HT18 and a member put across powerful floor speech. They note that questions of condemnation of the

speaker's invitation were asked at the time and it was right that president met with the relevant societies.

The Ex-President adds a point about the Oxford Students Union call for protest and the need to contact council. They further add that people protesting in peaceful manner is fine but people obstructing gate is intimidating behaviour and against the University Code of Conduct under statute XI.

The Ex-Secretary states that the Students Union have previously shared pages with the title 'Keep X speaker out of Oxford'. They agree with the Ex-President and asks the President what societies he wishes to extend this to.

The President replies that they do not wish to extend this to the Students Union, but only to minority societies.

The Elected Member (Mr Jim Brennan, *St Peter's College*) agrees with the President.

The Elected Member (Mr Shining Zhao, *University College*) asks whether or not they would be members. **The President** responds that they should be members.

The President asks whether or not they should move to endorse something. **The Ex-President** states that nothing needs to be done in legislative terms, rather they best thing is to communicated with the Standing Committee. **The President** understands this, but wonders whether the Standing Committee should properly agree on their proposal.

The Ex-President states that they are not sure whether you can codify caveats of some being student societies or political groups as there are no mechanisms for defining controversy. They further add that Presidential discretion does not require the endorsement of the Standing Committee.

The President reaffirms that they hope that Standing Committee will endorse their idea. **The Ex-President** adds that this is logically invalid as the Standing Committee require a policy document to endorse something in the absence of a motion.

The President states that they wish to move on and keep the meeting brief.

The President notes that they will not be able to ratify that yearly budget and the Hilary Term 2019 budget until after the emergency meetings of the Finance Committee and Standing Committee later in the week.

Questions to the President:

There are no questions to the President

The Librarian

Business of the Librarian:

The President notes that the Librarian's desire to discuss a change to Standing Order D11; however, in the Librarian's absence this is not able to be moved.

Questions to the Librarian:

There are no questions to the Librarian in their absence

The Treasurer

Business of the Treasurer:

The Treasurer moves that the Standing Committee pass DSC expenses to the value of £890.45, as recommended by the Finance Committee

Seconded by the President.

The motion passes nem. con.

The Ex-President asks the Treasurer why they forward a private email onward to a student publication. **The Treasurer** provides no comment.

The Ex-President further asks the Treasurer why they decided to make a meme out of it. **The Treasurer** provides no comment.

The Ex-President asks the Treasurer if they are a fan of the anime genre. **The Treasurer** provides no comment.

Questions to the Treasurer:

There are no questions to the Treasurer

The Secretary

Business of the Secretary:

The Secretary has no business

Questions to the Secretary:

There are no questions to the Secretary

Mr Chaitanya Kediya

Business of Mr Chaitanya Kediya:

Mr Chaitanya Kediya has no business

Questions to Mr Chaitanya Kediya:

There are no questions to Mr Chaitanya Kediya

Mr Shining Zhao

Business of Mr Shining Zhao:

Mr Shining Zhao has no business

Questions to Mr Shining Zhao:

There are no questions to Mr Shining Zhao

Ms Mahi Joshi

Business of Ms Mahi Joshi:

Ms Mahi Joshi has no business

Questions to Ms Mahi Joshi:

There are no questions to Ms Mahi Joshi

Mr Jim Brennan

Business of Mr Jim Brennan:

Mr Jim Brennan has no business

Questions to Mr Jim Brennan:

There are no questions to Mr Jim Brennan

Mr Elliot Bromley

Business of Mr Elliot Bromley:

Mr Elliott Bromley has no business

Questions to Mr Elliot Bromley:

There are no questions to Mr Elliot Bromley

Ms Olivia Leigh

Business of Ms Olivia Leigh:

Ms Olivia Leigh has no business in their absence

Questions to Ms Olivia Leigh:

There are no questions to Ms Olivia Leigh in their absence

Mr Rai Saad Khan

Business of Mr Rai Saad Khan:

Mr Rai Saad Khan has no business

Questions to Mr Rai Saad Khan:

There are no questions to Mr Rai Saad Khan

The President-Elect

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

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 Librarian-Elect has no business

Questions to the Treasurer-Elect:

There are no questions to the Librarian-Elect

The Ex-Officers

Business of the Ex-Officers:

The Ex-President (Mr Stephen Horvath, *New College*):

The Ex-President wishes to discuss the private business motion proposed by Mr Samuel Burns.

The Ex-President states that they have serious concerns about a split election.

The President moves that the Standing Committee grant Mr Troels Boesen speaking rights for the duration of the meeting

The motion passes nem. con.

The Elected Member (Mr Jim Brennan, *St Peter's College*) asks to speak on behalf of Mr Samuel Burns. The Ex-President states that Mr Samuel burns is not a member of this committee, but that The Elected Member is able to say what he wants on behalf of private member.

The Ex-President lists the following five reasons of broad substantive objection to the private business motion of Mr Samuel Burns.

First: They state that it will decrease voter turnout and no added benefit to quality of candidates running. They could appreciate the proposal if it would smoothen the running of the process; however, they are concerned that people will be less engaged. They argue that the presidential run and the official hustings that are required in the rules make it more exciting. They add that people only go down to the Union on one day to vote.

Second: They state that the timing of hosting the proposed junior committee elections is problematic. They note that the seventh week termcard is impressive but very busy. They posit that there will be no time to host an election on the Thursday evening with an event at 5pm and the debate at 8pm. They also note that with the official photograph normally taking place in the Goodman Library, and the Macmillan Room would be needed as the venue for the dinner, even though on election days it is usually used by the Returning Officer team. They further note that there are two events taking place the day before, in fact there are two events everyday that week. They question when the election could actually be held given how busy the event schedule will be.

Mr Samuel Burns enters the room at 16:35

Third: They state that there would be a significant cost attached to this change with financial implications in the rules.

Fourth: They state that the proposed motion is illiterately written given that a second election already concerns a potential RON election, so it would in fact be a third election.

Fifth: They state that there would be severe burnout from the Returning Officer team if they have to work on separate evenings.

They conclude by adding that the policy proposed by the Treasurer has no serious benefits, but only substantial concerns.

The President moves that the Standing Committee grant Mr Samuel Burns speaking rights for the duration of the meeting.

The motion passes nem. con.

Mr Samuel Burns states that it would be one election with two polls. They add that they can read and write.

Mr Samuel Burns offers a brief summary of arguments that they intend to present on Thursday. They state that it is not sufficient to support the banning of slates without a radical change to the political culture of the society. They add that political pacts see personal betrayals and negative relationships, which badly effect the smooth-running of the society. They further add that the slate ban is pointless without cultural change - candidates need to be discouraged from forming political pacts and appointed officials should be protected from dangers of these pacts. They propose that existing candidates will find a level playing field under this proposal, even though it will reduce turnout and prove logistically challenging. They think that this is an unfortunate price to pay, but it is what people wanted last term and the society has a responsibility to make it work. They do not think it will work long-term and the system could soon to return to a single election. They add that they have confidence in the Returning Officer team and they ask the Standing Committee for any amendment suggestions. They particularly like Mr Joe Sisson's suggestion that there be one count rather than two.

The Ex-Treasurer asks the Returning Officer if this proposal is feasible. **Ex-T. The Returning Officers** responds no.

Mr Samuel Burns refers to a conversation he had with the Returning Officer who said it could be done in principle. **The Returning Officer** states that they have never said this.

The Ex-Treasurer states that this is on the basis of hearsay and adds that Mr Samuel Burns has lied to members of the society. **Mr Samuel Burns** responds that they may have overstated what the Returning Officer said.

Mr Adam Watson leaves the room at 16:44

The Ex Treasurer says that do not know why Mr Samuel Burns has not told ordinary members this. **Mr Samuel Burns** states that if this is passed by the House then the Returning Officer has a responsibility to make it happen.

The Elected Member (Mr Jim Brennan, St Peter's College) states that the strong and heated language is not needed. They add that it is important to respect what members think. They speak of the Ex-Treasurer who has according to the Elected Member been shaking their head and attempting to filibuster during the meeting. They stress that the point of the matter is that Returning Officer team will need to enforce the opinion of the members.

The Ex-President says that Mr Jim Brennan makes a fair point and respect their view; however, they note that this proposal is being dressed up as only way as enforcing the rules. They add that it is it toxic to have sitting officers deliberately designed to benefit from them.

Mr Adam Watson enters the room at 16:47

The Treasurer asks the Ex-President what they mean by 'deliberately designed.' **The Ex-President** replies that there is a clear desire to change rules and the manner with which election would be conducted to bring about electoral change is a deliberate design. They add that there is a current ban in place on electoral pacts and there are rules in place. They cite rule 33(a) and state that electoral offences can be amended if people think that slates are being formed. They question why two election dates will change the toxic culture and what the Treasurer sees as the solution is to change more rules.

The President invites Mr Samuel Burns to respond.

Mr Samuel Burns states they are giving advanced notice with their proposal. They add that it should be eight days for a motion as that is built into the rules. They further add that they have heard people in the queue at park end discussing the slate ban so people are aware. They stress that there will be debate and they are confident that it will be harder to form electoral pacts.

The Returning Officer notes that they have a few points to discuss. The first is a factual point regarding costs. They estimate that the added cost would be around £430 per term.

The Returning Officer clarifies that they think it will be difficult or infeasible. They state that they have a role in 32 to ensure the smooth-running of the election. They express concern that they could not manage a team of eight people across two days without sleep. They note that the proposal would mean that polling would take place for members of the Secretary's Committee and Standing on Thursday and the Officers on Friday. They would therefore need to lock the ballots in the basement for a day without access. They express their concern further by adding that they have got four Deputy Returning Officers who have never done a count. They state that it is not a question of numbers even if they had thirty Returning Officer Assistants. They note that they have lost a lot of experience and this would be an incredibly hard task to undertake this term.

The Treasurer-Elect notes that this proposal is meant to stop lining but there are four officers, and thus are they meant to have seven days of elections.

Mr Samuel Burns states that the proposal is not a complete panacea.

The Ex-Secretary notes that they would need to change the rules to reflect the fact that election would take place over two days. They ask if there is a provision in the wording of the election to reflect the hustings. They express concern that turnout in Union elections is already low and do not think that two days help with the existing problem.

Mr Samuel Burns states that the presidential debate will take place in sixth week. **The Ex-President** responds that the all presidential candidates are offered the unconditional right to speak in the seventeenth week debate.

Mr Samuel Burns argues that it is not an enormous issue if people might need to vote during debate dinner on Thursday.

The Ex-Secretary express their concern with a with vote on Thursday and presidential hustings.

The Bursar says that the proposal would cause a logistical problem and they would have to move the Thursday debate.

The Ex-President asks if the members of the scrutiny committee were aware of commitment before removing a Deputy Returning Officer from the shortlist who had extensive experience from prior counts

The President states that they had not made that connection.

The Treasurer says that an objection to Deputy Returning Officer would not have been influenced by workload.

The Ex-President draws the committee to how events might play out on the Friday of seventh week where certain people have been elected onto the committee and others have lost an election. They state that the incentives of the losers become quite different to enforcing electoral pacts. They note that cultural change is needed but this would open up another avenue for electoral malpractice.

Mr Samuel Burns states that the Ex-President has never lost an election. They add that losers are in a situation where they do not care. They further add that it is not as big a problem as the Ex-President has made out.

The Treasurer notes that the Ex-President's argument is more a criticism of two counts rather than split election.

The Ex-President notes that as soon as polls close and when count is announced, there is an incentive for people to work out who has voted for them and engage in electoral calculations.

The Ex-Returning Officer says that there is no guarantee that the first count will be complete before second day of polling starts. They ask if the Returning Officer is meant to stay in count or oversee second poll day.

The Bursar completely endorse what the Ex-Returning Officer said. They add that it introduces another opportunity for more interference.

The Ex-Treasurer notes that there will be no electoral pacts but under this system there would be situations where people are binning their friends because they are concerned about the voter share.

The Ex-President asks the Returning Officer if they think it would be more easy or more difficult to get enough poll clerks.

The Returning Officer notes that resources need to be strong for the poll clerks and it would be a learning experience for many people.

The Ex-President asks Mr Samuel Burns if they are aware of any societies that have multiple day elections that are not online. **Mr Samuel Burns** responds that it does not end up having horrible incentives that happens with slate politics. They note that the extent to which people betray is why the society has a slate ban.

The Ex-Secretary states the Union is a prestigious institution and legislative change will need result in cultural change.

The Treasurer notes that the Union does attract ambitious people, but this proposal makes it harder for people to engage in horrible activities. They add that they would need to ramp up the rules and have more tribunals. They suggest that is a way to be preventative rather than resolve the problem afterwards.

The Returning Officer is not entirely convinced that people will not cheat. They express concern about their own ability to enforce the rules with the lack of sleep. They end by saying that it would be unfeasible.

The Ex-President notes that a picture has been cast of doom and gloom. They point out, however, that the termly elections are going from strength to strength with there being potentially three or four presidential candidates this term. They acknowledge that the term cards have been really strong and stress that although they do not agree with the changes being put forward by the Treasurer, they respect that it comes from the right place. They maintain that the society needs to make sure the members feel valued and the committee has a fiduciary and legal duty to put on high quality educational programmes for the society's membership.

The Ex-President asks Mr Samuel Burns if they were to change part of Rule 33(a) then what would they change.

Mx Brian Wong enters the room at 17:14

Mr Samuel Burns states that they are not familiar with that particular rule.

The Ex-President moves that the Standing Committee express formal concern over the private business motion of Mr Samuel Burns

Seconded by the Ex-Secretary

The motion passes, with eight (the Ex-President, the Ex-Treasurer, the Ex-Secretary, the Librarian-Elect, the Treasurer-Elect, Mr Shining Zhao, Mr Elliot Bromley, Ms Olivia Leigh) in favour and zero against

The Ex-President notes that no single person does not disagree with this motion and the Standing Committee are unanimously concerned that this is not feasible.

The Ex-Treasurer moves that the Standing Committee invoke Standing Order B5(c) to vote for or against the proposal

Seconded by the Ex-President

The motion passes, with eight (the Ex-President, the Ex-Treasurer, the Ex-Secretary, the Librarian-Elect, the Treasurer-Elect, Mr Shining Zhao, Mr Elliot Bromley, Ms Olivia Leigh) in favour and one against (The Treasurer)

Questions to the Ex-Officers:

There are no questions to the Ex-Officers in their absence

The Senior Librarian

Business of the Senior Librarian:

The Senior Librarian has no business in their absence

Questions to the Senior Librarian:

There are no questions to the Senior Librarian in their absence

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 Returning Officer:

The Returning Officer moves that Mr Lachlan Hinley be appointed as Deputy Returning Officer

Seconded by the President.

The motions passes nem. con

The Returning Officer moves that Mr Lewis Roberts be appointed as Deputy Returning Officer

Seconded by the President.

The motions passes nem. con

The Returning Officer notes that they have received a formal request from the Librarian about the validity of the slates ban last term. They note that they may be issuing a ruling this week to overturn the ban on slates.

Questions to the Returning Officer:

There are no questions to the Returning Officer.

The Chair of the Consultative Committee

Business of the Chair of the Consultative Committee:

The Chair of the Consultative has no business in their absence

Questions to the Chair of the Consultative Committee:

There are no questions to the Chair of the Consultative Committee in their absence

The Access Officers

Business of the Access Officers:

The Chair of the Debate Selection Committee requests that the Standing Committee allocate £75 to the Debate Selection Committee to co-host the upcoming access workshop.

The Chair of the Debate Selection Committee explains that they event will feature ten experience and ten inexperienced debating speakers at the event, all for the benefit of about thirty to forty society members.

The Chair of the Debate Selection Committee moves that the Standing Committee allocate £75 for the event

Seconded by the President.

The motion passes nem. con.

The Senior Access Officer (Mx Brian Wong, *Wolfson College*) states that there is an access workshop is due to happen this Wednesday and that both Access Officers will be in attendance, including the President, President-Elect, Returning Officer, and Chair of the Debate Selection Committee. They add that existing and current committee members should not attend.

The Senior Access Officer (Mx Brian Wong, *Wolfson College*) adds that a flag is being prepared for the Union, pending discomfort from potential members.

The Senior Access Officer leaves the room at 17:25

Questions to the Access Officers:

There are no questions to the Access Officers

The Chair of the Debate Selection Committee

Business of the Chair of the Debate Selection Committee:

The Chair of the Debate Selection Committee updates the Standing Committee on the Trinity and Warwick IVs, both of which saw Oxford debating teams in the final.

Questions to the Chair of the Debate Selection Committee:

There are no questions to the Chair of the Debate Selection Committee

Changes to the Composition of this Committee

The President welcomes Mr Liam Frahm as the new Returning Officer

The President move that the Standing Committee pass a formal motion of thank you to Ms Louise Kandler for their work as Returning Officer

The motions passes nem. con.

Any Other Business

Mr Hugh Bellamy states their intention to bring forward a private business motion that means that standing orders cannot be changed once nominations have opened. **The Ex-President** thinks that this is a very sensible idea. **The Ex-Returning Officer** adds that this makes complete sense for the nomination pack as electoral rules have changed in the past between the issuance of the nomination packs and the elections.

The President moves that a Public Business Meeting be held on Thursday 7th February 2019

The motion passes nem. con.

Date of Next Meeting

The President will call the next meeting for Monday 11th February at 16:00.

The President closes the meeting at 17:27

Signed,



Nicholas Leah
Lincoln College
Secretary