

Draft Minutes of  
THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE  
1st Week Michaelmas Term 2018  
Monday 8th October 2018  
President's Office, 16:00

**Present:**

**The President** (Mr Stephen Horvath, *New College*), **The Librarian** (Ms Genevieve Athis, *Christ Church*), **The Treasurer** (Mr James Lamming, *Exeter College*), **The Secretary** (Mr Nick Brown, *Magdalen College*), **The President-Elect** (Mr Daniel Wilkinson, *Oriel College*), **The Librarian-Elect** (Mr Brendan McGrath, *Oriel College*), **The Treasurer-Elect** (Ms Amy Gregg, *Magdalen College*) **The Elected Member** (Ms Rebecca Collins, *Balliol College*), **The Elected Member** (Ms Sara Dube, *St Hugh's College*), **The Elected Member** (Ms Gemma Timmons, *Magdalen College*), **The Elected Member** (Ms Anisha Faruk, *The Queen's College*) **The Elected Member** (Mr Harry Webster, *Worcester College*), **The Elected Member** (Ms Mahi Joshi, *Trinity College*), **The Elected Member** (Mr Maxim Parr-Reid, *Trinity College*), **The Chair of the Consultative Committee** (Mr Patrick Cole, *Lady Margaret Hall*), **The Chair of the Debate Selection Committee** (Mr Andrew Seow, *Lincoln College*)

**Attending:**

**The Bursar** (Ms Lindsay Warne), **The Returning Officer** (Ms Alexandra Galloway, *Magdalen College*), **The Access Officer** (Mx Brian Wong, *Wolfson College*), Mr. Ray Williams (*Wadham College*), Mr Adam Watson (*Hertford College*), Mr. George Penny, *The Queen's College*, Mr. Joseph Sisson, *St John's College*, Mr. Liam Frahm, *Jesus College*, Ms. Louise Kandler, *Lady Margaret Hall*, Mr. Daniel Villar, *Wadham College*, **The Senior Librarian** (Mr Sean Power, *Oriel College*), **The Senior Treasurer** (Mr Stephen Dixon, *Downing College, Cambridge*)

**Apologies:**

**Absent:**

*The President opens the meeting at 16.11*

**Requests to Pass Absences from Previous Meeting**

The President notes that all elected members of Standing Committee were assisting with term card delivery.

The Librarian-Elect says that the Treasurer-Elect was also busy with Membership Drive duties.

The President moves that due to business of the Society of paramount importance, the absence from 0th week TSC of all 7 elected members of Standing Committee, the Chair of the Consultative Committee and the Treasurer-Elect be deemed to be with good reason

*Nem. con.*

**Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

There are no matters arising from the previous minutes.

**Ratification of Minutes**

The President says that there should be three sets of minutes to be ratified. He says the 0th week minutes have not yet been produced, but that this is because the Secretary has been unable to obtain the CD from the General Office.

The Bursar says that the CD should only be used as a backup.

The President moves on to the matter of the unratified Trinity Term minutes, and says that the 8th week minutes were due at the end of 8th week, and were not completed - the deadline for the 8th week minutes was extended by two further days, which would be the day upon which the Ex-Secretary's preliminary examinations would have finished. He says that this deadline was not met, and that this was followed up in the middle of August. The Ex Camera minutes were produced in time for 0th week, but were inadequate and the issues have now been resolved.

#### The President moves that TSC ratify the ex camera minutes of the 8th week Trinity Term 2018 Ordinary Meeting of TSC

*Nem. con.*

The President says that the in camera minutes were sent only three hours before this meeting, and so the ratification should be postponed to 2nd week Standing Committee. The President says he is unhappy with the lateness of the minutes, because the audit over the Summer could have depended on the proper recording of the meeting and for legal reasons it could have been vitally important. The President notes that members of last term's Standing Committee were left off of the circulation of the in camera minutes, including Mr. Robert Harris and Ms. Sabriyah Saeed. The President asks that the in camera minutes are circulated to all members of last term's TSC by Thursday, 4pm.

#### Business of the President:

##### **Ratification of Vacation Days**

The President says that the vacation day totals for members of committee have been sent to the Secretary, and that the list has been compiled in compliance with Standing Order B15.

The Secretary notes that recording of vacation days stopped on Friday 7th September, despite the fact that members of committee were still working in the office including The President, The Treasurer, The Secretary, Mr. James Dix - he says that it seems odd that these days are not recorded.

The President says that this is because the initial letter to candidates and the Google form which was circulated to new members of committee both said that Friday 7th September was the last possible day to complete vacation days because after this date there was not a large quantity of work to be done and what work there was, was ad hoc. The President was not able to supervise the work and says we were not running full vacation days, and that on the basis that the cutoff was agreed in June and never challenged it would not seem fair to change it. The President cautions the Standing Committee against making amendments, because records were not made after 7 September.

The Secretary agrees that full records do not exist, but thinks it should be noted that it was a misstep to fail to record vacation days in the week beginning 10 September.

The Treasurer says that some members of committee offered to do more work, but were sent home and are marked as such with a double asterisk in the vacation day record.

The President says it should be noted for the record that members have worked more days in the vacation, and that this specifies days up to 7 September, which were days the President required them to work.

The President-Elect notes that some members of committee did Membership Drive work after 7 September.

The Librarian noticed that there was a similar cutoff date last year.

The Secretary says that there were further general issues with last year's Summer vacation days.

The President moves to ratify the vacation day totals for all members of appointed and elected committees

*Nem. con.*

### **Comment about Vacation days**

The President would like to thank all officers and elected members of Standing Committee except Harry Webster, and says that The President has never seen so many members of elected Standing Committee work so diligently for so long in the vacation.

*The Treasurer-Elect enters the room at 16.21*

The President says it is a note of real concern how poor the completion rate of vacation days for Secretary's Committee were, and that although it did not hinder planning for the term, for another President with different plans it could have been a serious handicap. The President says the average completion rate was about 45%, and says that in future that it needs to be emphasised more to candidates that vacation days are necessary.

The Returning Officer says that she is not sure how much more can be done, as candidates already sign a declaration saying they will complete vacation days.

The Treasurer moves a motion of thanks to The President, Mr. Charlie Coverman, Mr. Hugh Nicholl, Mr. Nick Leah and Ms. Alexandra Galloway for exceeding vacation day targets

*Seconded by The President*

*Nem. con.*

The President-Elect asks whether the declarations are effectively meaningless.

The President says that he is happy to codify the declarations in the rules, but they are not meaningless as he believes a disciplinary complaint may be successfully brought against a member of committee for lying to an Officer if they fail to complete vacation days.

The Treasurer asks whether the declarations represent binding contracts.

The President notes that it may be wiser to bring a disciplinary complaint under the Union's rules, rather than a lawsuit.

The Chair of Consultative COmmittee asks whether fines can be imposed of £10 a day for members of committee.

The President says that he only plans on issuing a fine to Mr Parth Ahya, as many members of committee gave good reasons for absence during the vacation and have indicated and started proving that they will go above and beyond in term to make up for this. The President says he will reflect further on the matter of Mr. Parth Ahya and has reached no easy decision.

## **Ratification of Appointed Officials**

The President moves to ratify Mr. Nicholas Leah as the Chief of Staff for Michaelmas Term

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Ms. Megan Bennett as the Director of Press for Michaelmas Term

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Mr. Hugh Nicholl as the Director of Research for Michaelmas Term

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Mr. Charlie Coverman as the Chief Partnership Officer for Michaelmas Term

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Mx. Brian Wong as the two-term Access officer for Michaelmas and Hilary term

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Ms. Francesca Odgers as a Guest Liaison Officer for Michaelmas Term

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Mr. Ray Williams as a Guest Liaison Officer for Michaelmas Term

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Mr. James Golding as a Guest Liaison Officer for Michaelmas Term

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Mr. Matthias Hoffman-Vagenheim as a Guest Liaison Officer for Michaelmas Term

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Ms. Olivia Leigh as a Guest Liaison Officer for Michaelmas Term

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Mr. Tim Krupa as a Guest Liaison Officer for Michaelmas Term

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Ms. Alexandra Galloway as a Logistics Officer for Michaelmas Term

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Mr. Joe Sisson as a Logistics Officer for Michaelmas Term

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Mr. Guy Harris as a Logistics Officer for Michaelmas Term

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Ms. Alyssa Nathanson-Tanner as a Logistics Officer for Michaelmas Term

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Ms. Amber Seaward as a Logistics Officer for Michaelmas Term

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Mr. Nikhil Shah as a logistics Officer for Michaelmas Term

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Mr. Daniil Ukhorsky as a Press Officer for Michaelmas Term

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Ms. Adithi Shenava as a Press Officer for Michaelmas Term

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Ms. Minal Haq as the Women's Officer for Michaelmas Term

*The Secretary objects, and the motion is withdrawn following discussion.*

The Secretary questions the rationale for ratifying a member of committee who has completed 0 vacation days.

The President says that Ms. Haq has offered to organise a women's drinks event after a female speaker this term, perhaps Obi Felten. The President says that no work was required of her over the vacation.

The Secretary says that work is required of all members of appointed committee over the vacation, and that in Standing Order C7 it says that required vacation days shall be "not less than three".

The President accepts this.

The Secretary says that The President has breached Standing Order C7.

The President says that Ms. Haq's situation is similar to that of Lee Chin Wee and Antonia Heng, who also did no vacation days but agreed that they would do more to help in term. For example, Lee Chin Wee offered to help with the International Students' fair during the Membership Drive.

The Secretary says that Mr. Lee Chin Wee did not turn up to the International Students' fair.

The President says he has no strong views, and believes that these individuals are well placed to represent the voices of those they are meant to represent on the access committee.

The Librarian-Elect says that in a term with notably few female speakers, it shows disrespect to the role of Women's Officer to appoint someone who does not take the role seriously.

The President rejects the characterisation of the term as having notably few female speakers.

The President asks if the Librarian-Elect has ever spoken to Ms. Haq about the role of Women's Officer.

The Secretary says that he has, and that she said explicitly she would complete what he regards as the bare minimum requirements of the role during term, a single social event that is required of the office in the rules. He says that it seemed implicit that even this may not be completed. He says that when he asked what Ms. Haq's plans for the role were, she laughed, noticed he was not laughing, said 'women's drinks' and continued to laugh.

The Librarian says that this conversation took place at a social event and perhaps should not be relied upon.

The Chair of Consultative Committee says that it seems odd to fail to ratify someone who has done no vacation days because any replacement would also have done no vacation days.

The Secretary says that this is not a fair comparison, because the replacement did not have the chance to do vacation days, and that the point now is not the completion of the vacation days but the person proving they can suitably fulfil the role.

Ms. Faruk asks whether the three individuals had good reasons for not completing their vacation days.

The President says that all three were completing internships.

Mr. Parr-Reid says that he thinks Ms. Haq is suitable and able to organise an event in term.

The President says that Ms. Haq has previously been on committee for two terms and has confirmed speakers in both of these terms.

Mx. Wong says that it is an interesting epistemic claim to infer from the failure to complete vacation days a lack of competency to complete the role. They say that if the officials do not fulfil their work related to access or fail to attend meetings of access committee, then their ability to serve as a member of access committee would be compromised and that would be the time to challenge their appointment.

The Treasurer-Elect asks whether it would be possible to ratify the officials without vacation days subject to a burden to do more than the bare minimum during term.

The President says that this seems eminently reasonable.

The President-Elect suggests whether until such targets are achieved, the officials should not receive the perks of being on committee.

The President agrees but suggests that if the targets involve social events held later in the term, this may not be fair and suggests that it could be placed at the discretion of the Access Officers.

The Librarian-Elect suggests whether the decision should revert to The Standing COmmittee.

Ms. Joshi suggests that we ask the Access Officers to set measurable targets that Standing Committee can review.

The President suggests in the cases of Ms. Heng, Ms. Haq and Mr. Wee, the Access Officers should set specific targets, including potentially assisting with the access survey.

The Secretary says he thinks it seems silly to ratify people who have failed to complete 100% of the work required of them so far, and suggests the ratifications are postponed.

The President agrees that it is fair to postpone ratification until Standing Committee is satisfied that the individuals have completed something substantial.

The Treasurer-Elect asks for clarification on how the members of committee will be treated if they are not ratified.

The President says that the individuals should not receive perks, and that they would behave as acting access reps without vote.

Ms. Faruk asks whether they would attend Access Committee.

The Secretary says that any member is welcome to attend Access Committee.

The President says that they should be told to attend Access Committee and it would be wise for them to do so.

The President moves to ratify Ms. Rebecca Wright as the Disabilities Officer for Michaelmas Term  
*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Mr. Dominic Gray as the LGBTQIA+ Officer for Michaelmas Term  
*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Mr. Thomas Crook as the Graduate Officer for Michaelmas Term  
*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Ms. Olly Woodhouse as Brookes Officer for Michaelmas Term  
*Nem. con.*

### **Ratification of Standing Committee delegates**

The President says that he has spoken to the elected members of Standing Committee, and that the proposed allocation of delegates has been decided on the basis of seniority. He says that the purpose of the delegates varies by committee, but that most will be asked to act as Secretary to that committee and that delegates should also report back to Standing Committee on the business of each committee.

The President moves to ratify Ms. Rebecca Collins as a Standing Committee delegate to the Access Committee  
*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Ms. Sara Dube as the Standing Committee delegate to the Debate Selection Committee  
*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Ms. Gemma Timmons as a Standing Committee delegate to the Finance Committee

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Ms. Anisha Faruk as a Standing Committee delegate to the Access Committee

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Mr. Harry Webster as the Standing Committee delegate to the Wine and Spirits Committee

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Ms. Mahi Joshi as a Standing Committee delegate to the Finance Committee

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify Mr. Maxim Parr-Reid as the Standing Committee delegate to the Library committee

*nem. con.*

#### **Rule 24(g): Required vote on the size of Standing Committee**

The President says that the provisional increase of Standing Committee, from 5 elected members to 7 elected members last year, requires a vote in Standing Committee now on whether it becomes permanent. He says the rules changes was passed in a Special Private Business Meeting and proposed by Mr. Will Barnes, ex-CCC, ex-RO, ex-Treasurer. He says that whilst there was controversy surrounding the interpretation of the rule, this was no comment on the legality of the rule. He says that the circumstances under which the rules change was passed was not by ideal, but that nevertheless he thinks the rules change was a good idea. He clarifies that the change will come into force for the Michaelmas election, meaning that only 5 spots will be filled on the following term's committee.

The Secretary says he supports this motion because firstly, a larger standing committee means more members of committee are sending speaker invitations in the vacation and working for the term card meaning that there is more likely to be more confirmed speakers and a better term card. Secondly, he thinks that a larger number of members of standing committee means there is more potential for contested elections and notes that over the last year the Union has seen a developing culture of contested elections. He thinks that contested elections are good for the Union, giving members a real choice over who governs the Union.

The Librarian says that the Secretary made good points, and that she thinks we should vote to keep seven standing.

Ms. Faruk moves that TSC grant Mr. Ray Williams speaking rights

*Nem. con.*

The Chair of Consultative Committee asks whether any members of committee are not in favour of maintaining seven members of standing.



The President-Elect says that he is in favour, but does wonder whether maintaining seven standing may encourage inexperienced people to run for standing and 'skip' Secretary's committee, and says that the hierarchy of Standing Committee over Secretary's Committee might be blurred.

Mx. Brian Wong says that they think being on TSC requires very different skills to being on Secretary's Committee, and that being an excellent chair-mover may not qualify you to be a good member of Standing working on individual projects. They say that expanding Standing might open up the committee to those with a wider range of experience than Secretary's Committee including Guest Liaison Officers or Partnership officials. They say that the Standing Committee needs to be representative of the members, and that expanding the committee makes it more likely that diverse interests are represented.

The Chair of Consultative Committee agrees with the points on diversity, but echoes the concern that members might feel ready to 'skip' Secretary's Committee, and that those who have been on Secretary's Committee have experienced the hard work and commitment required to serve on the governing body on the society.

The Treasurer-Elect says that many people are still encouraging for Secretary's Committee and that there were 30 candidates for this committee in the most recent election.

Ms. Faruk says that as someone with no position in the Union before running for Standing Committee, expanding Standing allows those with experience from elsewhere than the Union to serve and their more diverse experiences can be a benefit to the Union.

The Bursar says that she notices a marked difference between those who have served in many Union positions and those who have not, and that the deeper understanding of the Union acquired by those who have is important. She says that it seems odd that

Ms. Collins says that she doesn't think going through Secretary's Committee is the only way to get the experience acquired for Standing Committee, and that going through the appointed committee could even give you a deeper understanding of how Union events are run. She agrees that a larger committee allows for greater representation of different views, backgrounds, and colleges and that a more diverse set of members of committee can only be a good thing.

Ms. Timmons agrees with Ms. Collins, and says that having a larger Standing Committee gives members a greater chance to influence the direction of the Oxford Union.

Mr. Parr-Reid says that he agrees with the Secretary, and that it is good that Union elections can be contested.

Mr. Williams says that looking at the evidence of the trial period, those elected to the 6th and 7th positions of Standing Committee have invested themselves in the Society and contributed to the society.

*Mr. Liam Frahm leaves the room at 16.58*

Mr. Williams says he is worried that reducing the size of the committee could put out a bad impression and generate bad press for the Union, and damage the society's reputation.

The President moves to extend the provisions of rule 24(g) permanently

*nem. con.*

**Oxford Women's Open Naming**

The President says that the Women's Open is a debating competition usually held in Trinity term that has been moved to boost participation. He says that the event has been held for about 5 or 6 years, and that the event is often run successfully and attracts sponsorship. He says that without consultation with the Standing Committee, the name of the competition was changed to the Wom\*n's open, and that he thinks such a controversial rebrand shouldn't occur without the Standing Committee having a say. He says that this is an ideological maneuver with potential implications for the Union's standing. He says that there has now been a divergence of two names, and that in the term card and in sponsorship contracts 'women's' has been used, whilst in the Facebook event and other publicity, organised by Ms. Gemma Timmons and Ms. Olivia Railton, 'wom\*n's' has been used. The President suggests that in future such changes should come to the Standing Committee, to resolve to use one name for the remainder of the competition and to determine what that should be.

Ms. Timmons says that the change to 'wom\*n's' has frequently occurred on the debating circuit to imply that the event is open to both female and non-binary speakers. She says it is common to explicitly acknowledge and encourage the participation of non-binary speakers. She says there is precedent for this, that it has been used by Cambridge and more broadly on the debating circuit. She says the decision was taken by her and Ms. Railton, the convenors, in discussion with the CDSC. She thinks it would reflect well and would fit in with common practice on the debating circuit to replace 'women's' with 'wom\*n's'.

The President asks why the asterisk makes the event more welcoming for non-binary speakers, when the event description says that the event is open to female and non-binary speakers.

Ms. Timmons says whilst she is not non-binary, she has found that having the asterisk is an explicit visual representation that we are open and welcoming to non-binary speakers and moving away from traditional gender norms.

Mx. Wong says that the asterisk is one way of representing non-binary people, but that it is not a unique or particularly useful way of doing so.

The Senior Librarian says that he has to leave, and so requests that The Standing Committee move on to financial matters

### **Discussion of Financial Matters**

The President moves to authorise the CCC to spend £20 for a presentation remote control, as recommended by The Finance Committee

*nem. con.*

The Treasurer moves to authorise expenditure of £348.44 for DSC expenses, as recommended by The Finance Committee

*nem. con.*

The Secretary moves to pass the budget for the Michaelmas Term ball as recommended by the Finance Committee, with accounts to be presented in the Ordinary Meeting of the Standing Committee in 6th week

*Seconded by the President*

*nem. con.*

*The President returns to discussion of the Women's Open*

*The Senior Librarian leaves the room at 17.13*

The President says that he agrees it is important to include a broad variety of people from the debating community, but isn't sure how the specific change advances that goal.

Ms. Faruk asks whether removing the asterisk would mean changing the name of the Facebook event.

The President says that he would personally like to, but that this would needlessly cause controversy and that we should continue to refer to 'women's' in invoices and contracts.

Ms. Faruk asks where the name appears in general.

The President says it appears on Facebook, the debate ranking software, the email circulation, invoices and contracts, internal signup lists.

The President-Elect suggests that we maintain the official name as 'women's' but keep publicity as 'wom\*n's'.

The Treasurer says he will liaise with Mr. Redmond, the DSC sponsorship officer, to ensure this is possible.

The President suggests it may look odd to those we contract with to refer to the event by two different names, of which one is a bit strange.

The Librarian cautions that changing public-facing material back to 'women's' may appear as a political statement.

The Secretary says that contractors thinking it odd that the event is referred to by slightly different names is not as bad as the potential fallout from changing public-facing material.

The President says that he is satisfied that there exist contractual workarounds, and no motion needs to be passed on this specific event. He suggests a motion that no debating event shall be renamed without a majority vote of the Standing Committee.

The Treasurer-Elect asks about other, non-debating events.

The President says that there are distinctions between debating and other types of events that mean we do not need to be consistent throughout. He says that the names of events including women's drinks and the women's open exist in the Standing Orders, and that if we wish to change them we should do so via a change in the rules. He starts to move a motion that renaming any event named in the Standing Orders shall require a majority vote of Standing Committee.

The Secretary points out that if such names exist in the Standing Orders, they should require a two thirds vote as with other Standing Order changes.

The President says that re-namings are not amendments to the Standing Orders.

The Secretary says that the Standing Order is being changed.

The President says he is not sure that the Standing Order is being changed.

The Treasurer-Elect asks whether the Standing Order contains the name of the event, and if so says that it is an amendment.

The President exhorts everyone to follow the Standing Orders.

**Unacceptable use of the Oxford Union's brand without prior permission of the President**

The President says he was surprised to see an article in the 'New Straits Times', an East Asian newspaper, about debate coaching by 'Oxford Union representatives' Chris Zabilowicz, Isabella Risino, Chris Garner and Charles Cheesman. He thinks this is a serious issue and became seriously concerned when he saw a multi-paragraph comment from ex-President Mr. Zabilowicz which did not have his permission, which described the Union's policy on hosting controversial speakers. The President says he has raised this as part of a broader pattern, that the Union is receiving many more requests for representatives in Asia and that these are almost always denied because of potential branding liability issues. The President says he wants to caution committee members and ex-committee members on how they use the brand of the Union, and keep in mind responsible ways to maintain brand image.

### **Report Ratification**

The President says that interim reports issued under Standing Order A1 have been circulated by email by the Secretary. The President notes that a couple of reports are late, but does not hold it against anyone because everyone is very busy in freshers' week.

#### The President moves to ratify the interim report of the President

*nem. con.*

*Mr. Villar leaves the room at 17.30*

#### The President moves to ratify the interim report of the President-Elect

The Treasurer asks whether the vacation day total was agreed with the President before the vacation.

The President says that it was.

*nem. con.*

#### The President moves to ratify the interim report of the Librarian

*nem. con.*

#### The President moves to ratify the itnerim report of the Treasurer

*nem. con.*

#### The President moves to ratify the interim report of the Treasurer-Elect

*nem. con.*

#### The President moves to ratify the interim report of the Secretary

*nem. con.*

#### The President moves to ratify the interim report of Ms. Sara Dube

*nem. con.*

#### The President moves to ratify the interim report of Ms. Gemma Timmons as amended with 'sponsorship raised' changed to 'treats negotiated'

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify the interim report of Ms. Anisha Faruk

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify the interim report of Mr. Harry Webster

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify the interim report of Ms. Mahi Joshi

*nem. con.*

The President moves to ratify the interim report of Mr. Maxim Parr-Reid

*nem. con.*

### **Business of the Librarian**

#### **Life Membership for Oxford Brookes Students**

The Librarian notes that last term discussions were had in Standing Committee about whether it might be possible to extend Life Membership of the Society to students of Oxford Brookes, and that it was necessary to discuss this with the trustees. She asks whether any progress has been made in those discussions.

The President says that those discussions took place in the 7th or 8th week Trinity term Standing Committee meeting, and that he raised the issue with the OLDUT Steering Committee on Friday of 8th week, and that it was raised formally with OLDUT on Saturday of 8th week. He says that the issue was not properly discussed at this meeting because the chair of the trustees was not present. He says that it was raised again on Thursday 0th week Michaelmas term in Steering committee, and that the chair of the trustees said that OLDUT is seeking legal advice from a barrister, after which we can move forward with a clear legal stance.

The Librarian asks if there is a time frame for this process.

The President says that the chair of the trustees will begin looking into the issue once she is back in the UK, and will ask Fraser Campbell to identify an appropriate barrister to ask for legal advice on the issue.

*The President and the CCC leave the room at 17.40, the President vacates the chair to the Treasurer*

The President asks that the Brookes Life membership issue is not discussed in his absence.

#### **£1 Scheme**

The Librarian says that she was approached by a student from Lincoln college who is associated with the Breast Cancer awareness charity, and that the student recommended the charity for the 'What's a Pound' scheme in association with the Michaelmas ball ticket sales. The Librarian notes that this year the charity is focusing particularly on those under 40 this year, and thinks it would be an appropriate charity to allocate the 'What's a Pound' donations to.

The Secretary says that he has been considering the 'What's a Pound' scheme, and has been considering different charities that might be appropriate, and says that he thinks the Breast Cancer awareness charity is a good recommendation.

*The President and CCC enter the room at 17.44, and the President resumes the chair*

The President suggests that an issue with operating the scheme is that the society is not allowed under its own rules to raise money for charity.

The Secretary suggests that the scheme was in the past made optional so that members could choose to donate if they wished, and recalls that such a system was in place for the Hilary ball ticket sales.

### **Lifetime Membership for Oxford Brookes students (cont.)**

The Treasurer-Elect asks for clarification on what the legal advice is being sought on, and whether it is on potential amendments to the current rules or the existing rules.

The President says that advice is being sought on the interpretation of the existing rules under the trust deed and rule 2. The President says that OLDUT is taking no stance on the issue, but seeks clarification on what options might be possible under existing documents.

The Secretary asks whether there is a definite date we will hear back about the issue.

The President says that there is not, but that the chair of the trustees will contact a barrister once she is back in the UK, in two weeks. He says he imagines it will happen during this financial year.

### **£1 scheme (cont.)**

The Bursar says that the society's funds cannot be given to charity, so the £1 payment must be entirely separate to the ball ticket and the money cannot come through our accounts.

The Librarian says that the student offered to paint face glitter at the ball if her suggestion were taken up.

The Secretary says that this sounds good.

Ms. Joshi suggests that if this is to become a regular occurrence, then perhaps a shortlist or regular system of charity choice should be set up.

The President says he is worried that this could put the society in an awkward position of promoting some causes as more worthy than others. He suggests that in future it might be better that the scheme can be applied if a member of the Standing Committee chooses to suggest a charity as has happened here. He says he has concerns about the principle of donation at all and that it might open the Union up to the politics of how to choose a worthy charity.

The Secretary says he is not sure the Union is going to come under attack for seeking to bring about donations to any particular charity.

Ms. Faruk says she agrees and thinks the Union will look good if the Union promotes charity at all.

The Librarian moves that TSC recommend Cancer Research UK as the optional donation members may make with their ball ticket purchase under the 'What's a Pound' Scheme, pending technical compatibility of FIXR as a platform

*Seconded by The Secretary  
nem. con.*

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

The Librarian says that Library committee has space for 6 senior members and 12 junior members, and that the qualification to be a senior member is holding an undergraduate degree. She says that there has recently been vacancies for junior members, but a waiting list for senior members. She said that Library committee discussed this issue today and recommended that a rules change be brought to change the arbitrary distinction and numbers of the two types of members. She says that as one example, Mx. Brian Wong had served as a good member of library committee as a Junior Member for several terms, and that it seems silly that they are now unable to serve as a Senior member because they have completed their undergraduate studies. She says that she is seeking Standing Committee's opinions on this, before a rules change is brought next week.

The President-Elect asks for clarification on whether the total number of members is to be changed.

The Librarian-Elect suggests that the distinction between Junior and Senior members is maintained, but that lower sets of each are maintained.

The Librarian moves to ratify the appointment of Mr. Daniel Villar as a Junior member of the Library Committee

*The Treasurer seconds the motion*

The President moves for a secret ballot on the motion

*The Secretary objects*

*The Motion for a secret ballot fails, 5 for, 4 against and 1 abstention*

*The Librarian-Elect attempts to vote on the motion for a secret ballot*

The President says that Mr. McGrath does not have a vote on committee under rule 33(d)(x)(2) and reads the relevant section of rule.

The Librarian-Elect asks the Returning Officer on the validity of this claim.

The Returning Officer says that the President is correct, and whilst she has emailed the tribunal panel many times over the vacation no report has been issued.

The Librarian-Elect asks if the interim report that has been issued qualifies, and what measures are being taken to correct this.

The Returning Officer says that it is open to the Librarian-Elect to bring a request for an appellate board, and that measures are being taken to contact the tribunal panel.

The President says that the Returning Officer should chase the panel and that the situation is the unfortunate, and that perhaps a disciplinary complaint against the chair of the tribunal panel is more appropriate.

The Librarian-Elect says that he would rather not take advice from the President on this issue.

The Librarian says that the Standing Committee might not be the most appropriate forum for discussion on this issue.

The Librarian-Elect asks when the Treasurer and President realised that this situation existed.

The Treasurer says that he realised a few hours prior to the current meeting.

The Returning Officer says that there are a number of options open to resolve the situation.

Ms. Faruk asks whether in future it might be a good idea to make it common practice to inform people of situations like this, because it is not good to find out just before a vote that you are unable to vote.

The President says that it is not his or the Returning Officer's job to police the rules.

The Librarian-Elect says that if a member of Standing Committee finds out before a meeting that another member cannot vote, it would be courtesy to inform them of this.

The President says that it seems we no longer follow courtesy.

The Librarian moves to ratify the appointment of Mr. Daniel Villar as a Junior member of the Library Committee

*The motion passes with one objection*

The President-Elect suggests that for future votes, it might be worth postponing them until future weeks whilst the Librarian-Elect does not have a vote if they are close.

The Treasurer says that individuals may feel uncomfortable with the situation, but that we can only follow the rules.

The President says that if non-sensitive votes within a margin of one vote come up, it might be a good idea to postpone them.

### **Business of the Treasurer**

The Treasurer has no business, save the already passed DSC expenses

### **Business of the Secretary**

#### **Proposed Amendments to Standing Orders B3 and B16**

The Secretary says that his proposed amendments to Standing order B3 and B16 make the Standing Committee more accountable. He explains that the first amendment requires that the Secretary in Standing Committee record the identities of those voting for and against motions, and that the B16 change makes it more difficult to hold secret ballots on substantive motions in Standing Committee. He thinks the two go hand in hand to ensure those elected to the Standing Committee are accountable to the Members who have chosen them to govern the society.

The President says he thinks the B3 amendment is sensible and good for transparency. He asks about the exclusion of motions held in camera from the amended provisions of B16.

The Secretary says that this is a good question.

The President says that he sees that it might be desirable to make it harder to call secret ballots to prevent people voting in the opposite way to how they promised to vote, but says that as a reflection of this secret ballots can allow members of committee to be free from pressure that might be applied to them in an open vote.

The Secretary says that it is important to ask about the circumstances under which pressure might be illegitimately applied that might affect the votes of individuals in an open vote. He also says that in camera minutes can only be seen by a very small group of people anyway, and so it is not important to accountability under such circumstances to record votes.

The Librarian says that members of committee may feel more at liberty to vote for what they feel is in the interests of the members in a secret ballot, and not feel pressured by other members of committee.



The Secretary says that he accepts this is the chief counter-argument to the proposal, but says he thinks pressure to vote a particular way can be both prohibitive but also legitimate.

The Bursar says that she thinks this incentivises people to vote for the publicity rather than with their conscience.

Ms. Collins says that the sentiment behind this was seeing the Oxford Union as a members' society and that members of committee are elected by members based on manifestos to fulfil policies, and we should be held accountable for the things we vote for in Standing Committee.

Ms. Joshi says that she doesn't think the Standing Committee is the place for people to vote with their consciences, but is a place where people should represent the members who have elected them and sent them to Standing Committee.

The Chair of Consultative Committee says that he doesn't think manifestos are comprehensive enough to give elected members of Standing Committee exact mandates, but that it is more reasonable to think that those elected are elected to use their own consciences.

*The Chair of Consultative Committee leaves at 18.20*

The Librarian says she agrees with the sentiment echoed by Ms. Collins, but that what is more important is how the sentiment manifests itself.

Mr. Williams says that it is important to see how those elected use the mandate given to them, and that a vague manifesto is not an argument for reduced accountability. He says he understands the concerns about the amendment to B16 and sees that there may be use for secret ballots.

The President says that he does not think this is a question about representative democracy, but about good governance and transparency. He says that we are here on behalf of members to govern, but not to represent specific constituents.

*The President vacates the chair to the Returning Officer and leaves the room at 18.24*

The Treasurer-Elect says that she does not buy into the idea that preventing the recording of names means members vote according to their conscience, and thinks that having your name on record means you are much more likely to vote in line with what your perception of what the members want.

Mr. Parr-Reid says that he doesn't think this measure should be implemented this term because candidates last term didn't know they could potentially be 'named and shamed' for their votes.

Mr. Williams says that the opinions of most members of Standing Committee will already be in the minutes because of the preceding discussion, and that this change ensures that members of committee cannot make a public declaration one way and vote in another way.

The Secretary moves that Standing Order B3 be amended according to his proposed change

*nem. con.*

The Secretary moves that Standing Order B16 be amended according to his proposed change

*nem. con.*

**Business of Ms. Collins**

Ms. Collins has no business

**Business of Ms. Dube**

Ms. Dube has no business

**Business of Ms. Timmons**

Ms. Timmons has no business

**Business of Ms. Faruk**

Ms. Faruk says that she wishes to open up a discussion about the Private Business Motion proposed by Mr. Ray Williams, hear the opinions of members of Standing Committee and any potential amendments.

Mr. Williams says he thinks the motion is a great idea and that is why he proposed it.

The Treasurer says the proposal seems eminently reasonable.

The Secretary asks why Mr. Williams has now proposed a slate ban with a trial period, given that he has previously proposed similar motions without the trial period.

Mr. Williams says he thinks that this is a more appealing strategy to other members, and that perhaps the time has come for a more consensual approach.

The Librarian says that a lot of the issues previously raised in opposition to a slate ban are conditional objections based on what might happen, and that having a trial period allows those to be tested. She says that such issue can then be fixed with further changes as the trial period goes on, or the idea can be rejected entirely.

The President-Elect asks whether this is an endpoint to the goal of redesigning the society's electoral structure.

*Mr. Parr-Reid leaves the room at 18.40*

Mr. Williams says there is a lot more that could be said about reforming the Union's elections. He says that when he first brought proposals about electoral pacts, he envisaged a significant debate that would last a couple of weeks. He notes that he was wrong about this, and therefore that this may be the last opportunity he personally has to bring reforms to Union elections.

The President-Elect says that he is nervous that this two-term trial period may encourage other members to hold back from proposing their own reforms.

Mr. Williams notes that he had considered this, but says that he does not believe this will be the case, as he does not think the barring of electoral pacts is that game-changing to the operation of the Union.

The Treasurer-Elect says that reforms can continue to be made and that it doesn't have to stop every other effort.

The President-Elect suggests that it might make more sense procedurally to bundle together multiple reforms that might represent an end state, and then have a two term trial period on such a package. He suggests it seems procedurally odd to have a two term trial period on one aspect of reform whilst leaving the rest to move along at a different pace.

Mr. Williams says that this argument is similar to one put forward to Mr. Sukumaran last term. He says such a suggestion is very open-ended and does not accept that there might be a 'final end-state' for reforms of the Union.

The Treasurer-Elect says that passing this change doesn't mean that other things can be passed in time for the trial period next term.

The Librarian says she thinks it is unrealistic to suggest we could fix everything wrong with the rules in one term, and also that it is unfair to think that this particular committee might have better ideas about how to change the Union than other committees.

The President-Elect says that he is not proposing we fix everything at the same time, but that there is an opportunity to solve multiple problems at the same time.

Mr. Williams says that he is not clear on what the 'extra fixes' to attach in a bundle of reform could be, and because these are not obvious it does not seem clear that we should move forward in this way.

The Treasurer-Elect asks the President-Elect to clarify that he is suggesting that another change be brought in one or two weeks with a couple of other things added.

The President-Elect says that in the next week we might decide on a couple of particular additional reforms to add to the change, and that in the following week we can decide exactly how to do those so that from that point there is a more substantial rules change to come into effect in approximately 4th week.

The Treasurer-Elect accepts that the President-Elect is not seeking a delay, but says she sees why Mr. Williams is hesitant to accept such a strategy given his former experience attempting rules reform.

The Librarian asks whether the President-Elect supports this motion and therefore what exactly it is that he is seeking.

The President-Elect says that he is suggesting a debate next week in Standing Committee on exactly what committee members think should be done to reform the process of Union elections, and what can be done in a couple of weeks to be added to this measure.

The Librarian asks whether the President-Elect thinks that having such a discussion necessitates the delay of the current motion.

The President-Elect says that he thinks the passing of the motion should be delayed, but not its implementation.

The Treasurer believes it is unlikely that  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the Standing Committee would be able to agree on a large package of reform as the President-Elect suggests.

The Secretary says he thinks it is a shame that the slate ban attempt has been reduced to this trial form, and that if we believe that the Union should be a place where people shouldn't have to be selected by exclusive slates and should be able to involve themselves regardless of the position they are in, then he doesn't see why this reduced measure is necessary, especially because he believes that the reason for the change's prior failure was not a failure to win a vote in the house but because of a procedural motion whose presence in the rules he questions. He says he will support the motion on balance.

Mr. Williams says that the Oxford Union is a work in progress and has been for almost 200 years. He says we must agree that this is not the final piece of reform, and he doesn't think it matters whether this is the last motion even he himself brings. He says he agrees that it is unfortunate that we were

unable to do what he believes the members wanted as the members technically did vote for a slate ban. He says that he thinks this is the most amenable way of accomplishing the goal that the members arguably have already supported.

*Ms. Mahi Joshi leaves the room at 18.57*

The Returning Officer says that there are some logistical issues with the motion and that there are some amendments that she wishes to make to make the referendum process a practical one.

Ms. Collins wonders whether we might end up in a situation with a lot of tribunals and whether the focus of the Union will start to revolve around the electoral process and the debate towards the end of Trinity, rather than the events and the debates that the Union should be known for.

Mr. Williams says that he thinks the Union referendum could provide a good discussion as to how the Union works, and make members feel like they have a say in how the Union works. He says he would be happy to defer to the experience of the ROs to ensure that it is operated smoothly and is willing to accept amendments to ensure this. He says that he thinks during a trial period there would be less discussion of the issue than has previously been had in Trinity term. He does not think this process will crowd out other discussion.

*The Librarian leaves the room at 19.01*

#### **Mr Harry Webster**

*Mr. Webster has no business*

#### **Ms Mahi Joshi**

*Ms. Joshi has no business in her absence*

#### **Mr Maxim Parr Reid**

*Mr. Parr-Reid has no business in his absence*

#### **The President-Elect**

The President-Elect postpones his presentation of the Membership Drive report until the Bursar has brought graphs of membership signups.

#### **The Librarian-Elect**

#### **The Treasurer-Elect**

#### **The Ex-Officers**

#### **The Senior Librarian**

#### **The Senior Treasurer**

#### **The Bursar**

## **The Returning Officer**

The Returning Officer presents the IDC shortlist for Michaelmas term, and says that objections to individuals cannot be made but that she is asking members of committee to check for errors or omissions.

The Treasurer asks whether the membership joining dates have been checked, as he would be surprised that almost all those on the list had joined in Michaelmas terms.

The Returning Officer says that joining dates affect the order on the list, which can affect the order in which those on the list are invited to take part in an IDC. She suggests that the Treasurer might check the joining dates as it could have important implications.

The President-Elect queries that individuals have remained on the list despite the fact that the report of the most recent IDC which should have been written by them, has not been issued.

The Returning Officer says she does not have power to alter the list.

The Returning Officer suggests that the list be approved pending the checking of membership joining dates.

The Treasurer moves that the IDC shortlist be ratified pending checking that the joining dates of those on the list are correct.

*Seconded by Ms. Dube*

*Nem. con.*

## **The President-Elect**

### **Membership Drive Report**

The Bursar explains what is shown on the presented graphs, indicating current joinup rates and the level of new memberships.

The Treasurer asks if the graphs show that we are at an all-time low.

The Bursar responds that this is correct.

The President-Elect says that we have more email signups than previous years, and that new software allows us to see how many of our emails have been opened. He says that from the groundwork end, he is very happy with how the Membership Drive is going but that time will tell how this translates into joining rates.

The Treasurer-Elect suggests that her and the President-Elect sit down and discuss what can be done in terms of publicity in the next week.

The President-Elect asks whether TSC has any views on the use of promoted Facebook events or adverts. He says that such advertising is geographically based, and so it would be targeted at Oxford.

He says he would like TSC's opinion on what specifically should be promoted, and whether it might be particular events, the Union video or infographic.

The Treasurer-Elect points out that if upcoming events are not events that people are interested in, then people will not join and so it might be better to promote the Union in general through videos.

The Bursar says that the Membership Drive should place more focus on post-graduates.

The Treasurer-Elect says she thinks the Membership Drive has done better than previous years at trying to engage graduates.

The President-Elect asks whether the video in the Union's lobby should be changed to the new Membership drive video.

The Bursar says that the MD video is general promotion, but that the video currently playing contains specific details about what Union membership gets you.

The Treasurer-Elect says that she thinks the new MD video is more attractive and modern, and would look better.

The Treasurer says that one issue is that the current video contains Tariq Ramadan, who is charged with rape, and that we should probably consider getting rid of him.

The President-Elect says that because the new video is slick and modern, it would be better to display it.

Ms. Timmons says that in her experience, MCR students have been happy to hear about how many graduate students are involved and that there are many SBS students who are members of the Union.

### **The Returning Officer**

The Returning Officer presents a proposed Standing Order change to D12, which would alter the seniority of DROs to equate being an Officer candidate representative in the count with being an ROA for the purpose of DRO seniority.

The Treasurer-Elect asks the Returning Officer to outline the role of an ROA, because she says as that as she understands it this role is very different to that of a candidate representative.

The Returning Officer says that the motivation behind this is to attract more people to become ROAs and DROs, and this is intended to open up RO world to those who have not been previously involved.

The Treasurer-Elect asks whether this allows more people to apply to be Deputy Returning Officers.

The Returning Officer says that anyone can apply to be a DRO, but that this will alter the order in which people can be DROs.

Mr. Liam Frahm says that garnering enough interest for RO world is a serious issue, and with the potential for a referendum on the banning of slates on top of the ordinary Trinity term elections it is necessary to attract more people to RO world.

The Returning Officer says that in her experience in the last election, it would not have been possible to run it without the unexpected and exceptional service of a small number of individuals. She says she thinks there is a real shortage of those interested in getting involved with the RO team. She says

that there is a process by which DRO applicants can be objected to, if there are those who object to this on the basis that it could create bias.

Mr. Williams asks about the reasoning behind including representatives of candidates for Office but not those for other positions in the change.

The Returning Officer says that the role of Officer representatives in the count develop much greater understanding of the election rules than those for other positions.

Mr. Williams asks whether scrutiny representatives should also be included in a change of this nature.

The Returning Officer says that the standard for deciding the seniority of DROs should be as objective as possible, and that bringing in measures such as this may make this more difficult.

*Mr. Webster leaves the room at 19.25*

The Returning Officer moves to grant Ms. Louise Kandler speaking rights

*Nem. con.*

Ms. Kandler says that she believes a term's experience as an ROA should still be more valuable than as an Officer candidate count representative. She asks why they have been equated.

The Returning Officer says that she believes the duties undertaken in the count by an ROA or count rep are broadly similar.

Ms. Faruk asks that Officer representatives may be biased as they are in a count to support their preferred candidate.

*Ms. Collins leaves the room at 19.26*

Ms. Galloway says that ex-ROs and ROAs often also fulfil a role of representing candidate in both scrutiny and the count.

Mr. Frahm says that he is sure many members of RO world have many friends on the elected side of the Union, and says that ROs try to step back from that when they fulfil their role as an RO.

Ms. Faruk says she thinks this makes it harder for people to be impartial as DROs.

The Returning Officer says that almost any member can apply to be a DRO, listing clearly their experience, and that these can be objected to on the basis that they are unsuitable. She says that in specific cases where bias is suspected objections can be made as occurred last term.

The Treasurer moves to amend Standing Order D12 according to the Returning Officer's proposed change

*The motion fails, with 3 votes for, 1 against and 2 abstentions*

### **The Chair of the Consultative Committee**

*The Chair of Consultative Committee has no business.*

### **The Access Officers**

*The Access Officers have no business.*

**The Chair of the Debate Selection Committee**

*The CDSC has no business in his absence.*

**Changes to the Composition of this Committee**

*There are no changes to the composition of this committee*

**Any Other Business**

*There is no other business.*

*The Returning Officer closes the meeting at 19.36*

Signed,

**Nick Brown**  
*Magdalen College*  
Secretary