

The *Ratified* Minutes of
ACCESS COMMITTEE
1st Week Trinity Term 2019
Friday 3rd May 2019
TV Room, 13:00

Present

Access Officer (Rabii Malik, *St Anne's College*), **Access Officer** (Felicity Graham, *Christ Church*), **The President** (Genevieve Athis, *Christ Church*), **The Librarian** (Sara Dube, *St Hugh's College*), **The Librarian-Elect** (Mahi Joshi, *Trinity College*), **The Secretary** (Spencer Cohen, *Brasenose College*), **The Ethnic Minorities Officer** (Kamran Ali, *Crist Church*), **The Woman's Officer** (Varuna Mitra, *St John's College*), **The Disabilities Officer** (Fletcher Ransberry, *Oxford Brookes University*), **The Temporary Membership Officer** (Maxwell Stuart, *Oxford Brookes University*), **The Standing Delegate** (Adam Wilkinson-Hill, *Jesus College*), **The Standing Delegate** (George Hargrave, *Hertford College*)

Absent

The President-Elect (Brendan McGrath, *Oriel College*), **The Treasurer** (Charlie Coverman, *Brasenose College*), **The Treasurer-Elect** (Shining Zhao, *University College*), **The Bursar** (Lindsay Warne), **The Senior Librarian** (Sean Power)

Apologies

No apologies

The Chair of Access Committee opens this ordinary meeting of Access Committee in the TV Room at 13:07

Requests to Pass Absences from Previous Meetings

There are no requests to pass absences from previous meetings.

Ratification of Minutes

The Senior Access Officer moves that the Access Committee ratify the draft minutes of the Hilary Term 2019 8th Week Ordinary Meeting of the Access Committee

Seconded by the President

The motion passes nem. con.

The Senior Access Officer moves that the Standing Committee Delegate (Adam Wilkinson-Hill) becomes Secretary of the Access Committee.

Seconded by the President

The motion passes nem. con.

The President reminds members of Access Committee to email the Secretary at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting regarding items for the agenda.

The Senior Access Officer suggests making a group-chat for members, in order to remind them of the times of meetings, and of deadlines for agenda items.

The President

Business of the President:

The President makes Access Committee aware that during an event from Former Congressman Barney Frank, there was difficulty of physical access, due to his need for a wheelchair.

The President says that the Union was not aware of Mr. Frank's requirement for a wheelchair and notes that the Union does not own a wheelchair for cases such as this.

The President thanks the Events Manager for their quick support in obtaining a wheelchair from the Natural History Museum although notes that it was an embarrassing situation.

The President notes that wheelchairs are not expensive and recommends that the Disabilities Officer researches the cost of a standard wheelchair, and that there is no need for the Union to purchase an extremely technical wheelchair, but that it is important for the Union to own one, for situations such as this.

The President notes that The Standing Committee would need to pass a motion to purchase the wheelchair and that Access Committee should recommend that The Standing Committee do this.

The Disabilities Officer enquires how many wheelchairs should be required.

The President responds that one should suffice, given the size of the building, and the number of events we have, which usually does not exceed two per day.

The President notes that it is an unusual situation, as the guest was not wheelchair bound, and says that usually the Union would be aware of any physical access requirements before the event.

The President reaffirms that one wheelchair should suffice for the purposes of Union events.

The Secretary notes that he was a Guest Liaison for the guest, and that the situation was problematic, especially as the hotel didn't have a wheelchair, either.

The Secretary says that we should better co-operate with the hotels we use to ensure this doesn't happen again

Ayman D'Souza (Standing Committee, Christ Church) and Noorie Abbas (ex-Secretary's Committee, International Officer) enter the room at 13.12

The President affirms that it was a unique situation, and that communication is usually better

The Temporary Membership Officer says that it was a unique event, and asks whether we could preference hotels with better access.

The President says that the Union uses two hotels regularly, and that they comply with the law as it requires of them concerning disabled access

The President reminds Access Committee that the Union has some exemptions from certain statute because it is a Grade B listed building and we are unable to build an elevator, although notes that a chairlift could be used.

The President says that a chairlift would be expensive, and that it could form part of the 2023 Fundraising Project.

The President moves that the Access Committee formally recommend to the Standing Committee purchase of a wheelchair to be kept at all times on the Oxford Union premises.

Seconded by the Librarian and the Secretary

The motion passes nem. con.

The President also wants to discuss Brookes Union membership and extension of life membership.

The President says that the issue of granting membership as a matter of principle has not been discussed, but that the issue of whether we are allowed to grant it has been discussed

The President says that currently Brookes is one of 7 institutions with temporary membership in Oxford but that Brookes does not have permanent membership.

The President thinks it reasonable to extend membership to Oxford Brookes students, as it is the other Oxford University, and that people are on longer courses than the other institutions with Oxford Union membership availability.

The LGBTQIA+ Officer (Joseph Sisson, St John's College) enters at 13.15

The President notes that The Standing Committee has recommended extension to permanent membership to the chamber for debate, though not to other institutions because of the reasons previously explained.

The President mentions that currently, those Brookes students who wish to become permanent members have to apply to The Standing Committee who decide on whether to grant membership on an individual case-by-case basis

The President explains that it would make the Union more marketable to Brookes students, and that it looks more inclusive to offer such membership

The President reminds the Access Committee that there is a key difference between the rights of Permanent Members and Life Members, primarily that Permanent Members are not able to run for office, or vote in Private Business Motions

The President says that lifelong Membership can be extended if decided, but that The Standing Committee continue to wait for legal opinion from the *Oxford Literary and Debating Union Trust* (OLDUT) and have already been provided with informal pro-bono advice from two trustees, but due to their position as ex-officers, they hold interest.

The President says that they met with the Chair of OLDUT and made her aware that The Standing Committee may be under the impression that OLDUT were dragging their feet on the decision, though the President reassured the Chair of OLDUT that she didn't think this was the case

The President made Access Committee aware that OLDUT are now seeking paid legal advice, which would increase speed, and that they would ask the Chair of OLDUT for an update in Week 4 of Trinity Term 2019.

The President thought their proposal was a good interim solution, and that the Union can hopefully now market itself at the Brookes Student Fresher's fair, as well as that Brookes Members can return to use Union facilities and attend events.

The President reminds Access Committee that The Standing Committee voted unanimously to provide permanent membership to Brookes students, and hopes that the motion passes when it goes to the Chamber.

The Temporary Membership Officer praises The President's move to extend membership and that it is appreciated by the Brookes Union members

The Temporary Membership Officer adds that the length of membership proportional to costs is the barrier to entry, and many Brookes students cannot justify large costs for the course of just their degree

The Temporary Membership Officer adds that they have questions, firstly, will there be an opportunity to have retrospective membership for those who have already purchased temporary membership from Oxford Brookes University?

The President replies that they plan to discuss the issue with the Bursar whose responsibility it is, though they are currently away.

The President adds that current students with temporary membership would simply convert and if any Brookes members returned, they could update their card and change it at the General Office

The President says that the Union would not reach out to members due to time constraints and practicality, but that everyone at Brookes could be reached out to via the Temporary Membership Officers and Student Union via a notice

The President reminds Access Committee that the Bursar is away, but that they will probably be happy with such an arrangement, adding that it is a sensible idea, and that it will be discussed at Standing Committee on Monday

The Temporary Membership Officer asks again about the potential of backdating

The President replies that temporary members should be able to become permanent in their opinion, and is happy to discuss practicality with the General Office, adding that the Bursar is happy with the change but the President wants further conversation

The President adds that for graduates, it would be difficult to reach out to all Oxford Brookes graduates who previously held temporary membership

The Temporary Membership Officer says that Brookes could take responsibility of advertisement

The President says that the General Office update cards for those lost and the same method could be applied for Brookes memberships

The President adds that her previous comment was not a commitment, but that they will advise that

The Temporary Membership Officer says that Oxford Brookes students often feel like guests and not full members

The Temporary Membership Officer adds that they want baby-steps and not full equal rights immediately, but to spread opportunity as much as possible

The Temporary Membership Officer adds one reason for feeling like guests is the difference in card colour and asks if this can be changed as it results in a feeling of otherness

The President says that the original intention of different colour cards is to differentiate between those who pay in instalments for their membership

The President says they do not see reasons for different cards and that in the past, cards were originally paper but this has evidently changed

The LGBTQIA+ Officer says that Permanent Members cannot vote in Private Business Voting which is the reason for the different card colours

The President says the onus should be on the Union to verify the right of members to vote, and an announcement about eligibility to vote can be made at the beginning of the debate

The President says that the General Office would print new cards, and could change the colours if they came to the General Office, and that they will take it to Standing Committee to discuss it with Bursar

The Temporary Membership Officer wants to applaud and thank the President for the move, and praise it greatly.

The Temporary Membership Officer makes the point that with this, one of the main boundaries for a presence at the Brookes Freshers' Fair is the £2000 cost for commercial business but that they have

spoken with current members of the Brookes SU and the SU President, and has verbal commitment that as long as these steps are taken toward permanent membership, the cost can be brought down considerably, in a quid pro quo move.

The President says that they would love for the President-Elect (Brendan McGrath, *Oriel College*) to attend the fair before the start of Michaelmas Term and adds that they will continue to correspond with the Brookes SU President

The President says they are fairly certain that the motion will pass in the Chamber

The Librarian-Elect (Mahi Joshi, *Trinity College*) agrees that they will open discussions with the Brookes SU President

The Temporary Membership Officer says that the Brookes SU President has had a hectic term, but it is definitely something to which they are committed

The Access Officers

The Senior Access Officer says that the Union continues to host school visits, and adds that they have had communication with a few different organisations

The Senior Access Officer adds that three groups have expressed interest in visiting, 2 have been confirmed properly, though one wishes to change dates, and the third is still discussing dates

The Senior Access Officer tells Access Committee that one school was hosted this morning, and thanks the Standing Committee Member (Ayman D'Souza, *Christ Church*), Secretary's Committee Members (Nils Lovegren, *Magdalen College* and Alice Zhang, *Trinity College*), the Chief of Staff (Chaitanya Kediya, *Exeter College*)

The Senior Access Officer asks Liberation Officers if they would like to get involved, as has been recommended by the Temporary Membership Officer

The President thanks the Senior Access Officer for doing this and says that if the Liberation Officers want to be more involved, the Junior Access Officer has made an access friendly script

The President aims that although an access-friendly script may sound silly, actually discussing with minority groups who attend the Union should be important, to make sure they know that the Union is there for them

The Junior Access Officer says that they will put the pack in a dedicated Facebook group

The President says we shouldn't shy away from those like William Gladstone who helped found the Union, but we should still remember cool people who came

The Junior Access Officer tells Access Committee that they are locating photos of individuals on committee who may be of interest for this pack

The Librarian says that down the main corridor, the first pictures are all of white men, but when they see the changes which have developed in the constitution of members and committees Union, that is a good

thing

The Junior Access Officer reminds the Committee that the names remind us of our history

The President says that they don't think that is a bad thing, and that William Gladstone and William Morris helped found this society – their skin colour and gender is simply a fact

The President notes that the society has changed a lot since then, and we should be aware of and embrace this

The President requests help from all those willing to help identify figures to show who the average member may miss in the photos

The Senior Access Officer raises the issue of tiered pricings for Union Membership

The President says that Access Membership is around £170 and that normal membership is £278.10

The Senior Access Officer notes that to qualify for access membership, a prospective member must be in receipt of a full government loan

The Senior Access Officer reminds the Committee that there is a huge difference in the regular and access price and that many fall in between such costs, as they find nearly £300 unaffordable but aren't eligible for access

The Senior Access Officer says that there is a proposal to tier the membership and have a number of levels

The Senior Access Officer says that the plan is to start with domestic UK Home students as it's easier to verify and international student maintenance fees are more difficult

The Senior Access Officer says that they hope to include the Graduate Officer in this plan, once the office is filled

The Standing Committee Delegate (Adam Wilkinson-Hill) says that Welsh student maintenance loans differ from the English system, and that most students receive £9,000 in maintenance, which is divided between a loan and grant, depending on family income

The Senior Access Officer says that it is important to look at the Welsh system and see how it would fit in to the full tiered scheme

The President says that whilst this is evidently an advantage for Welsh students, the scheme should not differentiate and the loan portion of the maintenance payments is what should be taken into account for the tiered system

The Junior Access Officer says that there is a long list of rules concerning fees and that staggering may be difficult, saying that rules changes may be required

The President says that the Access Officers could attend the next Standing Committee meeting, and that they could discuss it with the Bursar

The President says that the plan will inevitably create more admin, and that whilst they would support as many bands as possible, the reality is that it is more likely to be one or two, though says this is better than nothing

The Senior Access Officer says that they want as much feedback as possible

The President says that there should perhaps be a meeting with the Bursar and General Office rather than springing it upon them, especially as the Access Officers want their support

The President says that whilst the Standing Committee can pass a motion, the General Office still have to do the groundwork

The President encourages the Access Officer to set up a meeting with the Bursar as soon as possible, and to bring it to Standing Committee in the Third Week meeting

The Access Officers confirm they will set up a meeting

Liam Frahm (Ex-Extraordinary Returning Officer, Ex-Returning Officer) enters the room at 13.33

The Junior Access Officer discusses the workshops for those wishing to get involved and says that they have made a booklet similar to the tour booklet

The Junior Access Officer says that getting involved in the Union can be quite an intimidating process

The Junior Access Officer says that they will send the new documents they have created to the dedicated Facebook group

The President reminds those present who attends the workshops, viz. the President, President Elect, the Returning Officer and Access Officers, as well as a representative of the Debaters

The President says that a workshop has been set up for 6th May and that the event will be advertised on Facebook, and has been in the term-card

The Senior Access Officer asks who should be reached out to for the debate representation

The President recommends the current Chair of the Debate Selection Committee (Lee Chin Wee, *Trinity College*) but notes that as the Chair intends to run in election, such attendance may be odd, so recommends Brian Wong (ex-Standing Committee, *Pembroke and Wolfson College*) or the Debate Training Officer, Rachel O’Nunain (Ordinary Member, *Trinity College*)

The Junior Access Officer says that the Access Page on Facebook will be established and all documents discussed will be included in it

Disabilities Officer

The Disability Officer asks about wheelchair access into the chamber

The President responds that there is ramp access to the Chamber both into the lobby, and the main chamber

The Disability Officer asks about debate dinners, and the accessibility of such events

The President responds that the reception for Barney Frank was held in the Library and that the Librarians are happy to do this when it's not super busy, especially as the Library is wheelchair accessibly

The President says that the Bursar has told them that debate dinner access has been fine in the past, and that usually speakers coordinate with the Union prior to their attendance, though the situation can still be unideal

The President says there should be money for a chairlift, but that this would need to be part of a bigger fundraising effort such as the 2023 Project

The Disabilities Officer enquires about whether there is a hearing loop in the Chamber

The President replies that they don't think so

The President recommends the Disabilities Officer researches the wheelchair and hearing loop costs before the Standing Committee meeting on Monday

The Disabilities Officer enquires about the usage of single use plastic cups and plastic straws in the bar, and the possibility of recycling more

The President says that recycling bins are around but not everywhere

The President says that eco-friendly equipment can be more expensive and says that the Disabilities Officer should bring the issue to the Bar Strategy Committee which will be called more regularly this term than it has been in the past

The Secretary says they will loop the Disabilities Officer into the emails relating to discussions on the matter

Ethnic Minorities Officer

Business of the Ethnic Minorities Officer:

The Ethnic Minorities Officer has no business

LGBTQIA+ Officer

Business of the LGBTQIA+ Officer:

The LGBTQIA+ Officer has no business

The Women's Officer

Business of the Women's Officer:

The Women's Officer has no business

The Graduate Officer

The President reports that the former Graduate Officer, Priyesh Patel (ex-Graduate Officer, *St Anthony's College*) has resigned

The President says that the role has been advertised on the Union's website, and the notice board, and was mentioned at the debate

The President says that there has been considerable interest in the role following the announcement at the debate

The President promises to keep the Access Committee and Access Officers in the loop

The President has to keep the role open for at least a week, but in the interim, perhaps the Senior Access Officer can fulfil the roles

The Senior Access Officer says that the Graduate Officer can help with Graduate Access Membership scheme and that the Senior Access Officer will assist with this

International Officer

Business of the International Officer:

The International Officer has no business

The Temporary Membership Officer

The Temporary Membership Office enquires as to whether there will be a Google Doc for proposed policies and matters of discussion

The Senior Access Officer says that the rules of Access Committee should be formalized

The President reminds those in attendance that the Secretary will send out the agenda

The President says that those wishing to send business to the Secretary must do so 48 hours before the meeting and that the Secretary will then circulate the agenda to the e-mail list

The President lets attendees know that the request for agenda items does not need to be hugely formal

The Temporary Membership Officer says that if the Committee requires help to improve structure, that they serve as the Chair of the Student Union Council so can provide experience

The Ex-Extraordinary Returning Officer indicates that the Returning Officer team can help with such changes

The Senior Access Officer says that if anyone else wishes to help formalize rules, they are happy to take it on board

The Temporary Membership Officer asks if the number of people who resigned is a cause for concern

The President says that there were three resignations; the Graduate Officer due to Vacation Day requirements, the second was an elected member of the Secretary's Committee who resigned for personal

reasons and before Vacation Days commenced; and thirdly the Secretary.

The President says she is of the opinion that the new Secretary will do a good job

Standing Committee Delegates

Business of the Standing Committee Delegates:

The President makes everyone aware that there is a new Standing Committee delegate (George Hargrave, *Herford College*) following a change in the composition of the Standing Committee

Elected Member

The Librarian lets everyone know that they have resigned as an elected Access Committee member and asks if you can be an elected member whilst also a member of The Standing Committee

The Librarian-Elect states that rules for Access Committee are not as clear as other committees, so there is a need to formalize

The Senior Access Officer says that there is space for 5 elected members of Access Committee

The President says that many elected members join the committee and then do not attend meetings

The President reminds that after 3 meetings, members are deemed to have resigned and the date of Access Committee following popular nights out in Oxford results in many deemed resignations

The President says it is important that those applying should be made aware of the requirements of their role

The Senior Access Officer asks about the process of electing members

The LGBTQIA+ Officer says that voting takes place through secret ballot and the advertising of the post is at the discretion of the committee

The LGBTQIA+ Officer says that positions are put on the notice board

The President says that the positions can remain open until filled

The President says that they will announce vacancies at next week's debate

The Senior Access Officer asks those in attendance to encourage others to apply

The President says they will put it in the mail-out on Sunday

The Senior Access Officer asks if anyone present wishes to put themselves forward

The Standing Committee Member (Ayman D'Souza) indicates they wish to put themselves forward

The LGBTQIA+ Officer confirms that Standing Committee members are able to become elected members

The LGBTQIA+ Officer reads out those with voting rights: Access Officers, Liberation Officers, Standing Committee Delegates, Junior Officers (provided they have notified the Chair 24 hours in advance)

The Ex-Extraordinary Returning Officer asks if the Chair should define quorate

The Senior Access Officer says they do not know what quorate is

The Senior Access Officer confirms that the Librarian notified them with enough notice, although the President did not do so

The President administers the Secret Ballot and establishes which box affirms support for the election of Ayman D'Souza to Access Committee, and which Re-Opens Nominations

The President says they are concerned as thus far, Mr. D'Souza has not attended Standing Committee meetings and that in nominating for another election, it creates additional burdens of time, especially as a medical student

The President makes it known that they would vote against the election of Mr. D'Souza

The Standing Committee Member (Ayman D'Souza) defends themselves and outlines the reasoning for their absence at Standing Committee meetings, *viz.* not being in Oxford for the first, and a one-off tutorial during the second meeting

The Standing Committee Member reminds Access Committee that they don't have labs from 13:00 on a Friday so is free for the commitments of Access Committee, and that the tutorial time which previously interrupted Standing Committee has been changed

The President reminds Access Committee that the absences were passed validly and again questions why the Member wishes to take on the role

Vote on the election of Mr. Ayman D'Souza to become an elected member of the Access Committee

Votes in favour: 7

Votes against: 4

Mr. D'Souza is therefore elected as an elected member of Access Committee

Any Other Business

The Junior Access Officer asks which Liberation Officers are not in attendance

The Senior Access Officer says that the Socio-Economic Officer (Mehr Farhan, *Christ Church*) did not see her email but is now aware of the timings of Access Committee meetings

The President says this is not a good excuse

The Senior Access Officer assures that the Socio-Economic officer will attend in the future

The Librarian-Elect has questions about the plans of the Liberation Officers and enquires about requirements for projects

The President says that certain liberation officers are required to have projects, though others aren't

The President provides the example that the Socio-Economic officer was asked to invite speakers related to their portfolio, and confirmed the co-founder of Black Lives Matter

The President said that some were asked to organise social

The President says that they and the Ethnic Minorities Officer decided against holding an ethnic-minority social

The Ethnic Minorities Officer spoke with the President prior to this meeting and said that few people would attend a social for ethnic minorities, especially those in the black community, and would find it unreasonable if the only attendees were friends of the Ethnic Minorities officer

The President says that the Temporary Membership Officer and Disabilities Officer do not have to organise anything

The Women's Officer says that they were going to do a Women's Social, but that the House Manager made them aware that it is not possible to ticket an event for an exclusive demographic

The Women's Officer has looked into organising a Women's Poker Evening and has had interest from some famous poker players, viz. Liv Boeree but unfortunately finding a suitable time was difficult

The President reminds Access Committee that the Women's Officer did Vacation Days and arranged events, as well as inviting guests related to their portfolio

The Senior Access Officer says that next term's committee may want to take up the idea of a poker social through the Officers-Elect, as next term's Women's Officer has not been chosen

The International Officer focused on inviting guests related to their portfolio and is currently negotiating the visit of another international speaker

The LGBTQIA+ Officer has organised an event called *Catwalks & Cocktails* in 6th week alongside the ex-Secretary (Amelia Harvey, Kellogg College) and that they are currently confirming drag queens for the event

The President says the event will be very exciting and welcomes cooperation with Plush Nightclub

The President adds that Plush and the Union agreed that everyone at the Social will receive a free queue-jump pre-midnight, and after midnight, a cost of £2 (down from the usual £5 entry cost) will be imposed, which will be donated by the Union to Oxford Pride

The President welcomes the ties that the Union is forging with Plush given their new occupancy in the Union's basement

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held Friday 10th May in the TV room at 13:00.

The Senior Access Officer closes the meeting at 14:04 in the TV Room.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Wilkinson-Hill', written in a cursive style.

Adam Wilkinson-Hill

Jesus College

Secretary of Access Committee