

Ratified Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Rules Committee

5th Week Michaelmas Term 2018

Monday 5th 2018

President's Office, 2.00pm

Present

The President (Mr Stephen Horvath, New), **Mr Adam Watson** (Ex-Standing Committee, Hertford), **The Returning Officer** (Ms Louise Kandler, LMH), **Mr Joe Sisson** (Deputy Returning Officer, St John's), **Mr Liam Frahm** (Deputy Returning Officer, Jesus), **The Treasurer** (Mr James Lamming, Exeter), **Mr Samuel Burns** (Ex-Secretary's Committee, St John's), **Mr Ray Williams** (Ex-Standing Committee, Wadham), **The Treasurer-Elect** (Ms Amy Gregg, Somerville)

Absent

Mr Patrick Cole (Ex-CCC, LMH), **Ms Alexandra Galloway** (Ex-Returning Officer, Magdalen), **The Secretary** (Mr Nick Brown, Magdalen)

Observers

Ms Gemma Timmons (Standing Committee, Magdalen), **Ms Mahi Joshi** (Standing Committee, Trinity), **Ms Anisha Faruk** (Standing Committee, Wadham), **Mr Hugh Bellamy** (Secretary's Committee, LMH), **Mr David Graham** (St John's), **Mr Thomas Laver** (Balliol)

Mr Williams opens the meeting at 2.02pm

Minutes

Ms Faruk enters at 2.02pm.

Mr Graham enters at 2.02pm.

1. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

No matters were raised.

2. Ratification of Previous Minutes

Mr Williams moves that the draft minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting on Saturday 27th October 2018 be ratified, seconded by the Returning Officer.

Passes nem. con.

3. Ratification of Absences

No absences to be ratified.

Apologies for absences are presented for Ms Galloway, the Treasurer, and the Secretary.

4. Secretary's Report on the Composition of the Committee

Mr Burns notes the dispute over the composition of the Committee at the last meeting and informs the Committee of the applications of Ms Joshi and Ms Timmons to join. He also informs the Committee that Ms Rebecca Collins (Standing Committee, Balliol) has withdrawn her application to join.

Mr Williams proposes a system for electing new members, whereby each applicant will be granted approximately two minutes to present themselves, followed by questioning from the Committee.

Mr Bellamy enters at 2.04pm.

The President and the **Treasurer-Elect** suggest that the President's business on the membership of the committee be discussed before attempting to elect new members.

Mr Williams brings forward the President's business.

5. The President's Business

The President asks that the Committee discuss what powers the Committee should hold, suggesting that it present recommendations on rules changes like the Standing Committee can.

The Treasurer-Elect says that it must be clarified as to whether the Committee's recommendations be on the workability or the desirability of proposed rules changes and indicates her preference for the former.

The President and **Mr Watson** agree with the Treasurer-Elect.

Mr Watson moves that Mr Graham be given speaking rights, seconded by the President.

Passes nem. con.

Mr Williams suggests that a motion to define the length of constitution of the Committee be brought to the Standing Committee.

The President raises the question of length of service, and whether he should resign when his presidential term ends.

Mr Williams says that it is up to the President whether he resigns.

Mr Watson raises where the proposed definitions be written.

Mr Williams suggests a Standing Order.

The President says that the Standing Committee could have undue control over the Rules Committee in that case.

Mr Williams notes that the House can overrule a Standing Order.

The Treasurer-Elect enters at 2.11

The President stresses that simplicity should be stressed in the Committee's rules, ideally imitating procedural aspects existing in the Standing Orders for other committees.

The President then directs conversation towards determining the number of vacancies on the Committee, suggesting that they be advertised in a formal process as other committees do.

Mr Watson moves that Ms Timmons be granted speaking rights, seconded by Mr Burns.

Passes nem. con.

Mr Watson moves that Ms Joshi be granted speaking rights, seconded by Mr Williams.

Passes nem. con.

The President says that it would be nepotistic not to have a formal process for advertising and electing new members to the Committee.

Mr Burns responds that the process by which the Committee's original membership was nepotistic under the definition implied by the President.

Mr Watson notes that any member may have brought an amendment to the original Private Business Motion establishing the Committee.

Discussion continues on the appropriate number of vacancies.

Mr Graham asks whether this can be set via the House.

The President responds that the original motion cannot now be amended.

Mr Williams moves that Ms Faruk be given speaking rights, seconded by the Returning Officer.

Passes nem. con.

Ms Faruk asks what the upper limits of the membership of other committees are.

The President and **Mr Sisson** describe the size of the membership of the Finance Committee and Library Committee.

The President argues that the Rules Committee is more similar in purpose to the Finance Committee than the Library Committee, and so should have a similar size.

The Treasurer-Elect asks whether the Committee will be expected to discuss all business as one, or whether it would be able to break into smaller groups.

The President says that a system of subcommittees would upset the carefully built political balance on the Committee.

The President moves that the membership of the Committee be limited to 12 members, seconded by Mr Watson.

Mr Burns objects.

The President, Mr Watson and the Treasurer vote in favour.

Mr Burns votes against.

Mr Williams, the Treasurer-Elect, Mr Sisson, the Returning Officer and Mr Frahm abstain.

Passes 3-1.

Mr Watson says that he is aware some members are interested in joining and suggests advertising the existence of the Committee and seeing which members regularly attend.

The Treasurer-Elect agrees.

Ms Joshi asks for clarification on what Mr Watson means.

Mr Watson says that advertising would raise awareness, encourage members to bring proposals and suggests his openness to the idea of adding members to the Committee who show interest.

Mr Williams suggests outsourcing membership issues to the Standing Committee.

Mr Watson says he would prefer a Schedule that gives the Committee control over its own composition.

Mr Williams suggests that the Returning Officer draft such a Schedule.

The President expresses his sympathy for the difficulty of the Returning Officer's job.

The Treasurer notes that a lot of the Returning Officer's time will be taken up by organising the upcoming Election.

Mr Williams suggests that the Returning Officer appoint one of her deputies to do it.

The Returning Officer agrees.

6. Mr Burns' Business

Mr Burns introduces his rules change. He notes that he is aware that it would be difficult to change Rule 33 this close to the opening of nominations.

Mr Watson states that it would be possible to bring this change as an amendment to an existing, counted-out rules change on the Notice Board.

Mr Burns continues that under the current rules, no member may produce a campaign video. This Rule resulted in an Election Tribunal being almost successful against a candidate to the Secretary's Committee for posting a humorous campaign .gif image. The Tribunal panel had asked those present to reform this rule to remove ambiguities, so Mr Burns suggests simply removing it as it he believes it serves no useful purpose.

Mr Williams returns to the Treasurer-Elect's earlier point of whether the Committee should discuss just the viability and workability of the change, or also consider its desirability.

The President argues that if a Tribunal Panel has recommended a Rule be reviewed, it is appropriate for the Committee to make a normative judgement.

The President leaves at 2.30pm.

Mr Sisson notes that attempting to solicit votes by banned campaigning methods mentioned under the rules changed by Mr Burns' proposals should be added to the motion.

Mr Graham notes a typo in the motion, where "day-to-day" is written as "day-today".

The Treasurer asks if it would be appropriate to attach the substance of the motion as an amendment to existing counted-out motions and leans against that idea.

Mr Sisson agrees that the current motions should not be made any more complex.

Mr Williams believes that should this change be desirable it should not come into effect in the current term regardless.

Mr Williams moves that the recommendation of the Rules Committee be that Mr Burns' proposed motion not be put forward immediately and that should it pass come into effect at the earliest for the Hilary Term 2019 Election, seconded by the Returning Officer.

Passes nem. con

Mr Watson suggests that Ms Faruk's business be discussed next, rather than Mr Williams' as the agenda says.

7. Ms Faruk's Business

Ms Faruk proposes that every term a workshop on how to get involved in the Union be run. She says that Access Committee has already agreed that the Returning Officer, President, President-Elect and Access Officers run the event.

Ms Timmons leaves at 2.37pm.

The President enters at 2.37pm.

The Treasurer-Elect returns to the question of whether the Rules Committee should be discussing the desirability of the proposal, considering this the remit of the Standing Committee.

The President says that the policy is agreed in principle already by the Standing Committee, so it is right for Ms Faruk to seek the Committee's advice.

Mr Sisson comments that Ms Faruk is correct to propose this as a Standing Order rather than a rules change.

Mr Williams says that the proposed Standing Order should be registered as D3, under Elections, rather than B17, under Committees.

Mr Sisson reconsiders whether the proposal be best presented as a Standing Order, rather than a Rule.

Mr Watson thinks that it should be a rules change.

The Returning Officer suggests recording it under Rule 32.

Mr Williams thinks the principle of having a workshop should be written into the rules, with the mechanics elaborated in a Standing Order.

Ms Faruk notes the workshop is about getting involved in the Union more broadly, and not just running in elections.

Mr Williams now agrees with a Standing Order being written as B17 rather than D3.

There is discussion of whether the Returning Officer's overall responsibility for the event implies handling its logistics.

Mr Watson indicates his discomfort with the idea of a workshop teaching people how to run in an election.

Ms Faruk says it is unfair to characterise the workshop as teaching people "how to hack".

Mr Williams suggests that "workshop" is a bad word to describe the event, as it implies it will contain the training that other "workshops" (such as that for debating) in the rules offer.

Ms Faruk says the event will take place on Wednesday of 5th Week

Mr Burns says that ordinarily it should be held earlier, to grant potential candidates more time to complete nominating speeches.

Ms Joshi says the responsibility of who runs the workshop was discussed in the Standing Committee.

The President notes that the Librarian-Elect had argued that specific positions should not have responsibilities for the event written into the rules, as the best-placed people will vary from position to position each term.

Ms Faruk argues that as the President and President-Elect cannot run for election again, they have the fewest conflicts of interest when running such an event.

The Treasurer laughs ominously.

Mr Williams says that if the event were just about elections, it would make sense for the Returning Officer to run it. With a broader remit, that may be unfair.

The Returning Officer says that she sees the event as an access issue, and therefore should be the responsibility of the Access Officers.

Mr Williams notes an Access Officer could later choose to run in an election.

Mr Watson agrees, saying the Access Officers could be biased. Any advice given would have to be strictly codified to reduce the risk of Election Tribunals.

The President asks Mr Williams to adjourn discussion on this issue so that the Standing Committee may discuss it.

The Treasurer-Elect suggests banning members who have previously held elected office from attending the event.

The President repeats that this should be an issue for the Standing Committee to discuss.

Ms Faruk, the Returning Officer and the Treasurer agree that any Standing Order proposal should be drafted after the event on Wednesday has taken place.

Mr Williams proposes a timeline where the event takes place, the Standing Committee discusses it and then potentially asks the Rules Committee for its opinion.

Mr Laver enters at 2.53pm.

Mr Williams asks if the meeting can be moved elsewhere once the 3pm meeting of the Finance Committee has started in the President's Office.

The President refuses.

Ms Faruk leaves at 2.54pm.

8. Any Other Business

The President says that the Rules Committee should pass a motion saying that Ms Rebecca Collins' proposed rules change that would allow MBA students to nominate for election to the Standing Committee in their first term of membership is procedurally invalid. He then criticises the rationale for her change, saying it is suggestive of pork barrel politics.

Mr Watson moves that the Rules Committee recommend that Ms Collins' motion in the form it was circulated on Saturday 3rd November cannot be validly brought to the Public Business Meeting on Thursday 8th November 2018, seconded by the Treasurer.

Passes nem. con.

9. Mr Williams' Business

Mr Williams says that his business should be discussed at the next meeting.

The Returning Officer agrees, saying that there is insufficient time to standardise and reformat the entire set of rules given the time commitment of the upcoming elections.

Mr Watson suggests a non-binding Schedule be written that recommends how motions be formatted.

10. Date of the Next Meeting

The Treasurer-Elect suggests the morning of Monday of 12th November.

Mr Frahm suggests 2pm on Friday 9th November.

The Treasurer-Elect and **Mr Sisson** agree that holding all committee meetings on the same day (Monday) is ideal.

Mr Sisson thinks that holding it before the Standing Committee's meeting is ideal, so that the latter meeting may immediately consider the Committee's recommendations.

Mr Williams closes the meeting at 3.02pm

Samuel Burns

St John's College

Ex-Secretary's Committee

Secretary of the Rules Committee

