

Meeting of Open Council – Wednesday Week 6 Trinity Term 2024

Attendance:

Zagham Farhan (**The President**, *University College*), Sebastian Evans (**The Vice President**, *The Queen's College*), Will Lawson (**The Treasurer**, *Mansfield College*), Felix Mottram (**The Director of Operations**, *St Edmund Hall*), Julian Wang (**The Returning Officer**, *University College*), Richanne Davies (**Ordinary Member**, *University College*).

The President opened the meeting at 20.07.

The Vice President poured Jack and Coke for himself, **The Director of Operations** and **The Treasurer**.

Business of the President

Confirm the nomination of Hayden Williams (*Oxford Brookes*) as **The Outreach Officer**.

Will also need to approve statement on Gaza and pass Standing Order Amendments.

The President moves to release the Gaza statement (*text of the draft statement attached below.*)

Potential for the **Senior Ex-President**, *Magdalen College* to add his signature depending on the final text.

The President moves to approve the Statement - motion passes unanimously.

The text of the Amendments is attached below.

The President moves Amendment 6, to change the campaigning period requirements- motion passes unanimously.

The President moves Amendment 5, to change the name of the Society to the Oxford University Liberal Association. Brief discussion from all Committee present, agreed to use both names interchangeably. The President is approved unanimously to pass Amendment 5, conditional upon making it clear that both names are valid. Amendment 5 comes into force Monday of 7th Week.

The President recommends a seventh amendment, to be written up post meeting to allow for the addition of Ex Vice Presidents, Ex Treasurers and Ex Returning Officers to the Emeritus conclave. Amendment 7 passes unanimously.

The President closes the meeting at 20.19.

Amendment 5 – at the Ordinary Meeting of Open Council in Week 6 Trinity Term 2024

29th May 2024- The Renaming of the Society

I, Zaghham Farhan (The President, University College) move the following amendment in my name:
{Seconded by Sebastian Evans}

This amendment will come into force from Monday of 7th Week, 3rd June 2024.

To replace every instance of the word Society with the word Association, with the exception of Standing Order 1. Therefore, there are 29 replacements.

To change the name of the Association to the **Oxford University Liberal Association** from the Oxford University Liberal Democrats. This will only replace the name on the Front Cover, leaving Standing Order 1 and Standing Order 7 alone in this regard. For all purposes going forward, the Association will be known as the Oxford University Liberal Association or OULA.

To amend Standing Order 7A Clause II from its current form:

- II. It shall encompass anyone who has served as President of the Oxford University Liberal Democrats since its inception in that name in 1990, who wishes to serve. Exceptions may be made for Presidents of other fairly constituted organisations that can be considered predecessors of the Society- at the discretion of a simple majority vote of Closed Council.

To read instead as:

- II. It shall encompass anyone who has served as President of the Oxford University Liberal Democrats since its inception in that name in 1990, who wishes to serve, as well as anyone who has served as President of the Oxford University Liberal Association. Exceptions may be made for Presidents of other fairly constituted organisations that can be considered predecessors of the Society- at the discretion of a simple majority vote of Closed Council.

This amendment will allow us to appeal to a wider range of potential members, as well as bringing us in line with our Cambridge equivalents. It is essential however that we continue to be sure that we maintain our presence as the Student Representatives of the Liberal Democrats at Oxford.

Yours,

ZaghhamFarhan,

The President, University College.

Amendment 6 – at the Ordinary Meeting of Open Council in Week 6 Trinity Term 2024

29th May 2024 – Amendment to the period of campaigning required for Executive Positions

I, Zaghham Farhan (The President, University College) move the following amendment in my name:
{Seconded by Julian Wang (The Returning Officer, University College)}

To amend Standing Order 4D from its current form:

VII. The Returning Officer shall have the following responsibilities:

- a. Ensure that candidates correctly nominate for election.
- b. Maintain the Standing Orders and provide impartial advice to members on its contents.
- c. Run any elections that take place, and take overall responsibility for their smooth process and the results.
- d. Remain generally independent on any Standing Order matters, and not seek to advantage any individual member.
- e. To ensure that candidates for The Executive have completed at least 1 canvassing session in an academic year before being allowed to stand, or 2 if it is an election year. The Returning Officer may choose to waive this requirement for all candidates or none - but cannot do so only for specific candidates.

To read instead as:

VIII. The Returning Officer shall have the following responsibilities:

- a. Ensure that candidates correctly nominate for election.
- b. Maintain the Standing Orders and provide impartial advice to members on its contents.
- c. Run any elections that take place, and take overall responsibility for their smooth process and the results.
- d. Remain generally independent on any Standing Order matters, and not seek to advantage any individual member.
- e. To ensure that candidates for The Executive have completed at least 1 canvassing session in the 12 months preceding the Close of Nominations, before being allowed to stand, or 2 if it is an election year. They should do this by receiving evidence of campaigning. The Returning Officer may choose to waive this requirement for all candidates or none - but cannot do so only for specific candidates.

This amendment makes it clearer the time period in which campaigning is valid for each election, as well specifying that evidence must be provided.

Yours,

Zaghham Farhan,

The President, University College.

Liberalism demands a belief that all of us are born with an inherent value- that nationality, place of origin, colour or creed make no difference to your rights and freedoms. These essential values are difficult to protect, and easily lost. However, there come moments in history when even this basic cause faces direct assault – now is one such moment.

The actions of the Israeli Government in Gaza, and in particular Rafah – represent the worst of what humanity is capable of. Though rightfully saddened and angered by October 7th, they are now blinded by rage. We see a nation willing to ignore the rules of war, International Courts and basic human decency in pursuit of their single-minded goals.

The Rules of War exist for a reason, they recognise that human conflict is inevitable, but that it can occur within basic moral parameters. the ICJ have issued a demand that Israel ceases its military offensive in Rafah since it may cause the “physical destruction in whole or in part” of the Palestinian people there. This ruling must be respected and implemented by Israel. The indiscriminate killing of civilians; including journalists, healthcare workers and children is wrong: in perpetuity. To claim to be a liberal democracy comes with expectations, and a standard of behaviour that is high, and justly so. Israel is not meeting that standard.

Under British law, arms cannot be exported if there is a clear risk of their use in a serious violation of humanitarian law. This is patently inconsistent with the UK Government continuing to send offensive weaponry to Israel, given events in Gaza and recent decisions by the ICJ. The Liberal Democrats have long been supporters of a two-state solution, we called for a bilateral ceasefire back in November, and have continued to be vocal and principled on this issue. Both main parties have a responsibility to follow suit, and we call on the Labour Party especially to be a global leader on this issue.

We remain a powerful nation, and rightly so, but that comes with responsibility. We must call out these heinous crimes, we must defend the right to Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness for **all** people. History will be the judge. British politicians must now make the choice whether they wish to be on the right side of it.

Yours – in sadness and in fear,
The Oxford University Liberal Democrats.