

JCR Meeting Minutes – Sunday 2nd week TT09

Chair: Preeti Dhillon (JCR President)

Secretary: Nikki Hutchison (JCR VP)

MEETING STARTS: 7.45PM

Summary of Actions

Resolves:

- Update the constitution to allow for the new online voting system
- Mandate the JCR President to vote for the OUSU Graduate Tax motion, the OUSU Officer to vote against it, and the third vote to abstain, at OUSU council in 3rd week
- Make a trail run of using the Praxix Voucher scheme for buying Men's, Women's, Stanford and Welfare Teas in Michaelmas, and Mandated the JCR President to e-mail all the other colleges telling them we're doing the scheme and they should too
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Money:

- Approved of the Budget
- To allocate the Charities Budget of HT09 to charities as decided by voting poll [The Down's Syndrome Association, Friends of Kikwoko; The National Autistic Trust; Emmaus Oxford; The Tingewick Society; Oxford Development Abroad]
- To Buy Welfare Football a new football
- To give Reverend Productions a pro-rata loan of £220 and a straight loan of £580 to go towards theatre hire; and to go, if possible, to Edinburgh and see the show at C soco, 4.10pm, 16th-31st August.

1. Second reading: Constitutional Provision for Online Voting

This JCR notes:

1. That OUSU, and many other colleges successfully operate online voting schemes in their elections
2. That online voting would allow the introduction of voting by proxy for, for example, students on their year abroad at the time of elections.

This JCR believes:

1. That the use of technology to further democracy is a good thing.

This JCR resolves:

1. To make the following modifications to the JCR Constitution [*n.b. to see the previous constitutional part and the proposed amendments, see appendix 1*]:
 - a) Under Article 32 to add the following:
 - i) Choice of voting system
Voting may be by paper ballot or online voting, at the discretion of the RO
 - ii) Paper Ballot
After point ii)xi), add:
 - iii) Online voting
 - i) The order of names of the candidates to appear on the ballot papers shall be determined by the drawing of lots in the presence of the Dean.
 - ii) Polling shall take place between 8am and 8pm.
 - iii) Anyone may view the voters' register, on submission of a request to the RO, provided
 - a) He/she is a member of the JCR
 - b) It is viewed in the presence of the RO
 - iv) Elections shall be conducted in accordance with the online voting procedures used by OUSU
 - v) Any unauthorised interference with the online voting system shall be considered electoral malpractice and reported to the dean
 - b) To add the following to Art 33, after point ix):
 - x) The same formula shall be applied to the counting of votes cast through the online voting system.

Proposed: Katie Johnston (RO)

Seconded: Thomas Barker (Treasurer)

SFQs

Sophie Rees: Hasn't this been abused in the past?

Adam Salt: Not the OUSU system, which is what we'd be using.

Meg Powell-Chandler: So this means people on a Gap Year can vote by proxy? A: Yes

Rhiannon Ward: Do we have to pay OUSU to use it? A: No, totally free.

MOVE TO VOTE

NO OPPOSITION

MOTION PASSES

2. Corpus JCR's opinion on a graduate tax rather than lifting the tuition fee cap

This JCR notes:

1. That tuition fees are an important issue for students to discuss, as they affect them directly
2. That in 3rd week OUSU Council, there will a vote on the following motion: [SEE APPENDIX FOR EASE OF REFERENCE]

This JCR resolves:

1. To debate and vote on OUSU's motion, above, as it stands
2. To mandate the JCR President to vote for the motion, the OUSU Officer to vote against it, and the third vote to abstain, at OUSU council in 3rd week

Proposed: David Giles (OUSU Officer)

Seconded: Adam Salt (Welfare Officer - Male)

SFQs

[The Discussion, as often happens in the meetings, was jumpy and often with different points carrying on to later. To make it easier to understand I'm going to summarise the main issues brought up:]

Firstly, that we can't discuss, however important, exactly how we'd like the new system whatever it will be, to work, (e.g. what lower limit, what percentage of tax, etc. etc.) we can only deciding in what direction OUSU should push for the new review (i.e. lifting tuition fees or a graduate tax system.)

Meg PC said that she was on the planning committee responsible for researching and thinking about this and what the best way forward it, and that a) she's happy to answer questions and b) she encourages us to go and find out about it, as it's a ideological motion as much as anything (i.e. do you think you should pay for education while you're studying or while you're reaping the benefits?)

It was noted that the proposed Tax wouldn't include maintenance costs, so a student would still get a loan/pay upfront for this.

It was also noted that the current state of the government's money means that measures that *don't* involve them getting money asap from student wouldn't happen for awhile, though it was contended that that shouldn't stop us thinking about it and lobbying for a better system.

Katie Johnston said that in Australia they already have a graduate tax scheme, and a friend of hers in Australia find it works very well and effortlessly.

Adam S pointed out that really we need to decided whether we're going to put faith in the opinion of the committee that's taken two teams to research this properly, or not.

Eventually an opinion was taken of the JCR members present, to try and decided how to amend the motion to give the 3 JCR votes an exact voting mandate.

FOR: 12; AGAINST:12, ABSTAIN:2

Therefore David Giles moved to amend the motion to read 'This JCR Resolves: 2. To mandate the JCR President to vote for the motion, the OUSU Officer to vote against it, and the third vote to abstain, at OUSU council in 3rd week.'

The apparent pointlessness of turning up and voting this way was mildly protested, but it was also pointing out that it is important for the JCR to register it's option, even though that might be divided.

The Vote FOR this amendment was OVERWHELMING.

AMMENDMENT PASSED.

NO OPPOSITION.

MOTION PASSES.

3. The Budget

This JCR resolves to:

1) Approve the budget of HT09

THE BUDGET.

General account

Income

College Grant 4000

Arts Levy 1500

Charities Levy 1500

Coke Machine 200

Total 7200

Expenditure

Newspapers, both student and national -800

Coffee Machine -500

Entz -200

Welfare -200

Women's Tea -150

Men's Tea -150

ISO -100

Admin/Committee -150

TV Licenses -36

Arts/Clubs/Societies payouts -1500

Charities payouts -1500

Total -5286

Net income over expenditure 1914

Private account

Expenditure

Charities -500

Arts motions -200

Total -700

Net income over expenditure -700

Proposed: Tom Barker

Seconded: Nikki Hutchison

SFQ

James Marsden: What are the balances of these two accounts?

Tom Barker: General: £13,500; Private: £9000.

POD

MTV

NO OPPOSITION

MOTION PASSES

4. Introduction of Voucher Exchange Scheme

This JCR notes that:

- 1) The use of supermarket vouchers for asylum seekers on section 4 is an inefficient way to administer financial support and contributes to the destitution that many asylum seekers find themselves in whilst waiting for their applications to be judged.
- 2) Being provided only with supermarket vouchers prevents the recipients from using public transport, buying medicines, purchasing cheaper food from other sources, such as local markets, and a variety of other benefits that full citizens take for granted.
- 3) There are several ways in which the JCR can engage in charitable work other than simple fundraising.

This JCR believes that:

- 1) We should be engaging in charitable schemes other than simple fundraising as this provides benefits for the recipients at very little cost in time and effort for the JCR
- 2) This can add another dimension to the charitable role of the JCR that will distinguish Corpus JCR from that of other colleges
- 3) Exchanging a proportion of supermarket vouchers into cash at face value is of huge benefit to asylum seekers as it will enable them to enjoy access to the areas and activities previously prevented due to the inflexibility of the supermarket vouchers and help improve their living standard
- 4) Using supermarket vouchers for JCR food expenditure, such as Men's and Women's Tea, Welfare and Stanford Tea, is easier than the current system which relies upon individual members of the JCR having to wait for reimbursement.

This JCR resolves to:

- 1) Engage in the Praxis Voucher Exchange Scheme for a trial period in Michaelmas 2009
- 2) Exchange £440 at the beginning of Michaelmas term for £440 of Sainsburys and/or Tesco vouchers from Praxis.
- 3) Use these vouchers when buying food for Men's and Women's Tea, and Welfare and Stanford Tea
- 4) Review the scheme mid way through Michaelmas term and be ready to address any problems that arise
- 5) Mandate the Treasurer, Welfare Officers and RAG Officer to ensure that that above is implemented.
- 6) Mandate JCR President to e-mail all other colleges telling them we're doing the scheme and they should too.

Proposed: Tom Barker
 Seconded: Francis Carr

INTRO:

Asylum seekers are currently given £35 in supermarket voucher to live in the UK. These aren't accepted in all supermarkets, and can't be used for travel cost etc. Because such cost are essential, often £35 worth of vouchers are sold for (the average rate of) £20. The Charity PRAXIS, as well as lobbying alongside Citizens of London for this to be changed, is running a scheme whereby the vouchers can be exchanged for cash of the same value. Thus we pay for voucher of the same value (in the form of a card similar to gift card you might use on i-tunes; they can be topped up and you don't have to spend to the nearest £5 etc.,) that can be used in Tesco, Sainsburys and ASDA.

We're proposing we buy, in Michaelmas, that term's welfare food budget (£100 Stanford; £100 Welfare Tea; £120 each Women's & Men's Tea), and use them to purchase said foodstuffs. Magdalen JCR are already doing similar to what we propose with no problems.

SFQS

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|-----------------|---|
| Tom Barker: | Amends the motion to read '£440' instead of '£200' (This is what it should have read.) |
| Meera Desai: | What happens if we don't spend all our budget? A: You can carry it over; just use up the money on the card the next term. |
| James Pontifex: | Why are we limiting ourselves as to where we can buy food? |
| Jane Sancinito: | We can still buy elsewhere and hand in receipts juts as normal. |
| Adam S: | We always shop at Sainsburys & Tesco anyway. |

POD

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|-------------|--|
| Katie Doig: | We need to make sure we don't <i>always</i> roll over money ot the next term, i.e. end up having far too much money we don't use on the voucher-cards. |
|-------------|--|

Meg PC: Do the Officers still have to hand in receipts, to check their not just having a great food shop one week? A:Yes.

Rhiannon W: Can we distinguish ourselves somehow from the other colleges if we're going to do this? Proposes amending motion to mandate JCR President to e-mail all other colleges telling them we're doing the scheme and they should too.

AMMENDMENT TAKEN AS FRIENDLY.

MTV

OPPOSITION

FOR: OVERWHELMING

MOTION PASSES

5. Charity Money Allocation

This JCR notes that:

1. 96 people took part in an online vote on which charities to donate money to.
2. The following charities emerged (in no particular order) as the most popular:
 - The Down's Syndrome Association
 - Friends of Kikwoko
 - The National Autistic Trust
 - Emmaus Oxford
 - The Tingewick Society
 - Oxford Development Abroad

This JCR believes that:

1. These charities represent a good mix of local, national and international causes.
2. That money raised by the JCR should be allocated according to the wishes of the JCR

This JCR resolves to:

1. Split all of the money raised by RAG last term equally between the above
2. mentioned charities.

Proposed: Francis Carr

Seconded: Lisa Blundell

MOTION PASSES NEM COM

6. A Football for Welfare Football

This JCR notes:

1. Welfare football does not currently have a football

This JCR resolves:

1. To give Francis Carr £9 with which to purchase one

Proposed Francis Carr (Clubs & Socs)

Seconded Jeremy Lloyd (Football captain)

SFQS

Meg PC: Suggests writing 'welfare-y things' on the football to distinguish it, such as 'Do you want to talk?'

MTV

NO OPPOSITION

MOTION PASSES

7. Emergency Motion – Pro-Rata Loan for Reverend Productions

This JCR notes:

- That Reverend Productions, the people behind the recent productions of 'Sense and Sensibility', 'Dracula' and 'The Philadelphia Story' are taking a new adaptation of Jane Austen's /Emma/ to the Edinburgh Fringe this summer
- That going to Edinburgh is an expensive business
- That Reverend Productions have made the JCR a total of £220 over the last year in profit on pro-rata loans

This JCR Resolves

- To give Reverend Productions a pro-rata loan of £220 and a straight loan of £580 to go towards theatre hire. [A pro-rata loan means Corpus JCR gets the same proportion of the gross takings as it puts up of the budget - in this case, 22% of whatever we make.]
- To go, if possible, to Edinburgh and see the show at C soco, 4.10pm, 16th-31st August.

Proposer: James Marsden, theatrical impresario

Seconder: Ellie Matthews

SFQS

Meg PC: Likelihood of profit?

James Marsden: This is Edinburgh! We're not going to make a loss, because we've salvaged to make our budget TINY, but it's doubtful we'll make a profit. Worst case scenario: we lose £200. Best case scenario: we gain £100.

James McDaid: Reverend production didn't bring us Sense and Sensibility, Jane Austen did! Proposes amendment: '...the recent productions of...'

AMMENDMENT TAKEN AS FRIENDLY

Katie Johnston: Where is the other money coming from?

James M: Variety of other sources; inc. Magdalen £1000 (voting on this in 4th week.)

Meg PC: Thinks it should be a loan, not pro-rata.

James M: We have an excellent history of making money for the JCR.

Katie J: If he's asked us for a gift of £200, which it will be if he loses £200 of ours, then we would have given it to him with no problems.

Meg PC: Disagrees; think this is different as going to Edinburgh isn't putting on a production in Oxford. Corpuscles won't be able to go and see it.

Nikki Hutchison: We want to encourage Arts in Corpus, our bank balance is *extremely* healthy, and Reverend productions have made us money in the past.

Meg PC: But we shouldn't have to lose money.

Adam S: If you lose money, where ultimately will it come from?

James M: If we don't make a penny, I'll be paying for it. This simply isn't going to happen!

Ed Brown: They've made us £220 in the past, why not given them £220 pro rata and £580 loan?

Adam S: Suggest a preliminary option poll as to who thinks:

VOTE FOR GIVING THEM A PRO RATA LOAN OF £800: 7

VOTE FOR GIVING THEM A PRO RATA LOAN OF £220 AND A LOAN OF £580: 15/16

VOTE FOR GIVING THEM A LOAN ON £800: 3

Adam S: Suggests amendment: 'To give [them] a pro-rata loan of £220 and a straight loan of £580.'

FOR: OVERWHELMING

AMMENDMENT PASSES

MTV

OPPOSITION

FOR: OVERWHELMING

MOTION PASSES

MEETING FINISHES: 8.45PM

APPENDIX

Council Notes

1. That at present Universities can charge a maximum of £3000 for a full time undergraduate course for home students. The system sees students repaying their 9% of their gross income over £15,000 with the interest linked to the RPI and the debt to be forgiven after 25 years. Institutions charging the full fee must give bursaries of at least £300 to all students in receipt of the maximum central means tested support.
2. That a review of the cap has been promised for 2009
3. That the Higher Education Policy Institute forecasts that if the cap was lifted to £7000 the average fee would be set at £4300 and factoring living costs the average student would have acquired a debt of at least £25000.
4. The recent Universities UK paper conceded that if the cap was set above £5000 students will become more price sensitive and would especially impact students from poorer backgrounds as they tend to be more debt averse.

Council Believes

1. That the current repayment terms are in effect subsidised from public funds but if the cap is lifted to £7000, a figure which a significant amount of Vice Chancellors are calling for, then this subsidy will have to rise by £380m (30%) which would be unsustainable leading to a likely abolition of the zero real rate of interest and less favourable repayment terms for students.
2. That the current repayment terms are benign and everything should be done to lobby against making those terms less favourable to students.
3. That the creation of a market where Oxford University will probably charge more than the average will reinforce the perception that Oxford is a more expensive place to study. Furthermore it will deter those who come from risk averse families.
4. Those who would not be eligible to receive a full bursary may have to take out commercial loans with commercial rates of interest further putting those students into more debt if the cap is lifted.
5. That the costs of higher education for Universities will continue to rise and that a moderate cap lift will still see the continuation of a funding gap.
6. That abolishing the cap completely and allowing a full market to
7. emerge is not an acceptable alternative.
8. That funding higher education from public funds with no charge to the graduate is not acceptable as it is recognised that there should be a graduate contribution towards the cost of a degree.
9. That in principle a graduate tax system is the fairest way at present to fund higher education. This system will introduce a tax on those who went to higher education and the proceeds of the tax will fund higher education, with the amount of tax levied to be proportional to income.
10. There should be a clear plan from the University that there will be a well funded and carefully thought out campaign to educate students, parents and teachers about University Finance and entry into higher education in general.
11. That there should be a significant expansion of the Oxford Opportunity Bursary. The University should lobby the government to ensure that:
 - There is a minimum level of bursary support available to students nationwide
 - Such financial support is expanded to encompass more students.

Council Resolves

1. To mandate the President and The Vice President (Access and Academic) affairs to write to the relevant minister in Parliament, The Vice Chancellor and Incoming Vice Chancellor and every head of house outlining the position of the students of Oxford.
2. Lobby the NUS to adopt the graduate tax alternative and direct its research in that direction.