

CORPUS JCR



MEETING MINUTES

Second Week, Trinity Term 2024

Sunday Fourth May, 7:30 PM

President & Chair: Michael Leslie
Vice-President & Secretary: Angelina Hong
Constitutional Oracle: Ben Wharton

1. Report from the President

Michael: Thank you all for coming. Everyone who had exams last term, I hope they went well. Best of luck to everyone who have exams this term.

Rio: Losers

Michael: I'd like that part to be minuted. Starting with my report, I will keep it fairly brief. Stanford lunch, met the new Stanford kids they will be around. Academic committee meeting - the most important thing which I will emphasise to all the freshers in the room is regarding trashing. It is obviously not allowed with the university, there will be an £150 fine and please be careful when celebrating around bodies of water. Please be sensible and use your judgment. I have a Prescom meeting this Tuesday and depending on if we affiliate with the SU, a potential conference of colleges meeting in 3rd week.

2. Questions to Officers

3. Reading from the Poet Laureate

Rage Gracefully

When I repose in pensive mood
upon a stair
or perhaps a chair
the springtime air
rises up to greet me
not austere
but patient.
Shadows mark the jagged sidewalk
where footfall disappears as music
notes in a silent cabaret.
Yet I feel another energy...
Some strange beast does dog my step,
slouching, as it were, somewhere-
though I am sure not towards
Bethlehem.
It is change... perhaps.

Its footfall light; its glide like feathers
of a downy plumage.
It swoops on great wings.
Dare I fear it...?
Its notes are foreign; its music strange. It tinkers
like an obscure knell;
yet it stoops at the cradle of the new morning.
Dare I fear it, even as it sings that body-- electric?
Or can I permit it to roar,
with that timeless mumble in its throat
that seems to me to proclaim:
'I must rage gracefully forever more'.

4. Ratifications from Previous Meetings

Oskari proposes procedural motion to bring the motion to ratify the new RO first

Vote:

For: 16

Against: 0

Abstain: 1

Motion passes

Oskari proposes procedural motion to appoint Ben Wharton as the Deputy Returning Officer

Vote:

For: 9

Against: 7

Abstain: 0

Motion passes

CORPEXIT

This JCR notes that—

- ❖ The recent proposed Bye-Laws of the SU include changes to the process of affiliation and the introduction of “Conference Collective Action” undertaken by the Conference of Colleges;
- ❖ Colleges under these proposed Bye-Laws will be automatically affiliated with the SU at the beginning of each academic year, regardless of their own Motions to disaffiliate (as Corpus did last Hilary);
- ❖ In order to then disaffiliate, Colleges must have a quorum of 20% of students reach a two-thirds decision, by vote through the SU's own website;
- ❖ This demands a much higher quorum than the SU's own referendums, and demands the use of their own dysfunctional website;
- ❖ Alongside this, the Conference of Colleges can demand collective action from all College if they reach a decision by a 50% + 1 majority on an action;
- ❖ This would mean that Corpus would be bound to act on something that we might not want, because the SU and other Colleges said that we have to do so;
- ❖ This includes things like political positions and actions against Colleges;
- ❖ These Bye-Laws represent a serious breach of independence for every College, including Corpus.

This JCR believes that—

- ❖ The Corpus Christi College JCR has existed since 1797;
- ❖ In that time, it has represented the interests of undergraduate students of Corpus Christi College to the best of its ability, and aims to continue doing so;
- ❖ Corpus owes no obligation to the irrelevant democracy of the Student Union, nor to the Conference of Colleges;
- ❖ Corpus owes no obligation to anything that the SU tries to force it to do, because Corpus is not a part of the SU;
- ❖ No SU Bye-Law should be allowed to force the Corpus JCR to do something that it does not want to do;
- ❖ Corpus has chosen to disaffiliate from the SU, and should not allow itself to be forcibly re-affiliated.

This JCR resolves to—

- ❖ Mandate the President to maintain the sovereignty of the Corpus JCR, and maintain that Corpus will not associate with the SU except through our own decision to do so;
- ❖ Ignore entirely the Bye-Law 5 proposed by the SU, even in the event that it is introduced fully, unless such amendments are made to Bye-Law 5 so as to render it, in the judgement of the Executive Committee, no longer affected by the issues named in the preamble to this Motion;
- ❖ Amend the Constitution to include a new Section 3, Clause VIII which will read as follows: “The only manner through which the JCR can be affiliated with the Student Union is through the successful passage of a Motion at a quorate JCR Meeting to affiliate with the Student Union. If the JCR is not affiliated with the Student Union, then the JCR shall neither recognise any action of the Student Union nor recognise any action of any part of the Student Union.”;
- ❖ Renumber the current Section 3, Clause VIII so as to become Section 3, Clause IX.

Proposer: Oskari Penttinen

Seconder: Ben Wharton

Questions:

Michael: This is not the motion for us to reaffiliate, it has already been passed in the last JCR meeting and this is the ratification. This is just a precaution and line of defence from the SU trying to impose on the JCR.

Debate:

Vote:

For: 11

Against: 0

Abstain: 3

Motion passes

5. Constitutional Amendments

CRYING OVER NO MILK

This JCR notes that—

- ❖ Every day at 4:00 PM, the JCR hosts JCR Teas;

- ❖ These JCR Teas provide free tea and biscuits to members of the JCR;
- ❖ Each JCR Tea is run by a member of JCR Committee, who is timetabled by the Domestic Officer;
- ❖ Currently, the Domestic Officer has Standing Order 13 as follows: “To buy biscuits, including suitable Vegan options, for JCR Tea”;
- ❖ Recently, the Community Officers have very politely purchased milk and biscuits for JCR Tea themselves as part of the order for Welfare Tea, while the Domestic Officer buys the actual tea.

This JCR believes that—

- ❖ Whilst this is polite, it makes sense that all three items, biscuits, tea, and milk, are bought by the Domestic Officer;
- ❖ This would keep everything that is part of JCR Tea, including timetable and food, under one banner, reducing confusion as to whose responsibility it is;
- ❖ It also means that the Domestic Officer can respond quickly when we run out of milk, so that there isn’t waiting for a scheduled order for Welfare Tea.

This JCR resolves to—

- ❖ Amend the Standing Orders so as to replace Standing Order 13 of the Domestic Officer with the following text: “13. To buy biscuits, tea, and milk, including suitable Vegan options, for JCR Tea”;
- ❖ Mandate the Domestic Officer to replace the biscuits, tea, and milk, whenever the JCR runs out.

Proposer: Oskari Penttinen

Seconder: Jacob Harvey

Questions:

JJ: What is the actual difference to the original one?

Michael: Basically it is not in anyone’s exact orders who buys the biscuits and milk. It’s supposed to be the DO but then during Liran’s term, he basically gave the responsibility to the community officers. It has over time become part of the welfare tea order. The issue with that is that it means that whenever we run out of milk, and we ask if community can buy more milk, we now have to wait a couple days before any milk arrives. Rather than the DO who can pop to the shops and get it. It just means that the job is very clearly in one person’s role and we can respond quickly whenever we run out.

Debate:

Vote:

For: 16

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Motion passes

6. Motions of No Confidence

RATIFICATION OF THE RETURNING OFFICER

Whereas the position of the Returning Officer is appointed rather than elected, whereas the outgoing Returning Officer has decided that Lucas is the most suitable candidate for this role,

whereas the President has therefore appointed Lucas to be the next Returning Officer, and whereas it is necessary for this JCR to function that it has a Returning Officer, this JCR hereby ratifies Lucas Kirk as Returning Officer.

Proposer: Jacob Harvey
Secunder: Rei Ota

Questions:

Debate:

Vote:

For: 14
Against: 0
Abstain: 1

Motion passes

7. Charity Motions

8. Monetary Motions

THE ACQUISITION OF MONEY

This JCR notes that—

- ❖ Money is a medium of exchange that can be traded for goods and services;
- ❖ The JCR requires a regular supply of goods and services;
- ❖ Money is the ideal means through which to acquire these goods and services.

This JCR believes that—

- ❖ Officers have a vital role in promoting the access, arts, clubs and societies, community, domestic affairs, entertainment, environment and charity, and international affairs of the JCR;
- ❖ Representatives have a vital role in promoting the representation of the JCR;
- ❖ Both Officers and Representatives need money, in order to acquire goods and services, for their vital roles in the JCR;
- ❖ The JCR should therefore provide money to Officers and Representatives in budgetary form.

This JCR resolves to—

- ❖ Pass the budget that is contained in the annex to this motion.

Proposer: Oskari Penttinen
Secunder: Jacob Harvey

Questions:

JJ: This is just quality of life question for me, is it possible to update the request form to add clubs and socs on the options?

Oskari: I will add it next term

Debate:

Vote:

For: 14

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Motion passes

AIRBEDS

This JCR notes that—

- ❖ The JCR normally has four airbeds, but recently the demand for airbeds has been increasing, with an average of five to six requests on the weekends.
- ❖ Though the box that is used for the airbeds is functional, it is a bit small for four airbeds, and any more than four will not fit.

This JCR believes that—

- ❖ The JCR should have four more airbeds for the benefit of the guests of the members of the JCR;
- ❖ The JCR should continue the use of lockable boxes to store the airbeds to ensure the safe maintenance of the airbeds.

This JCR resolves to—

- ❖ Mandate the Vice-President to spend up to £160 on purchasing two airbeds, on purchasing one lockable storage box, and on purchasing one padlock.

Proposer: Liran Dror

Seconder: Jacob Harvey

Questions:

Clara: Do we have five or six?

Michael: We currently have four but we would like to have two more. The box can fit four but it takes a lot of effort.

Saul: Do we have all four?

Michael: Yes all of them are safe and functional. Thank you everyone for taking care of them. It is just more people are wanting them so we can accommodate that. And because the airbeds are being returned, we are happy to spend the money to get more because we know that it will be taken care of basically.

Debate:

// proposes amendment to change 'four' to 'two'

Rio seconds

Vote for amendment:

For: 14

Against: 0

Abstain: 2

Amendment passes

Vote:

For: 12
Against: 0
Abstain: 2
Motion passes

AIRBEDS (final)

This JCR notes that—

- ❖ The JCR normally has four airbeds, but recently the demand for airbeds has been increasing, with an average of five to six requests on the weekends.
- ❖ Though the box that is used for the airbeds is functional, it is a bit small for four airbeds, and any more than four will not fit.

This JCR believes that—

- ❖ The JCR should have two more airbeds for the benefit of the guests of the members of the JCR;
- ❖ The JCR should continue the use of lockable boxes to store the airbeds to ensure the safe maintenance of the airbeds.

This JCR resolves to—

- ❖ Mandate the Vice-President to spend up to £160 on purchasing two airbeds, on purchasing one lockable storage box, and on purchasing one padlock.

Proposer: Liran Dror
Seconder: Jacob Harvey

9. Motions as Submitted

REAFFILIATION WITH THE OXFORD STUDENT UNION

This JCR notes that—

- ❖ The Oxford Student Union was founded in 1961 by Oxonian students in order to represent the interests of students at this University where these interests do not align along Collegiate boundaries;
- ❖ Since its official recognition by the University in 1970, the SU has had great successes in representing students' interests, such as the creation of a report on disparities between Colleges, the advocacy of environmental concerns, and the running of the Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service;
- ❖ However, the SU has also faced challenges, such as low engagement from students, an unclear identity in the University's Collegiate structure, and various scandals;
- ❖ In response to many of those challenges, this JCR disaffiliated from the SU in the JCR Meeting of sixth week in Hilary Term 2024, and the JCR decided not to pass a motion to reaffiliate in the JCR Meeting of second week of Trinity Term 2024;
- ❖ The motion to disaffiliate from the SU included the following clause: "This JCR resolves to— [...] Be open and willing to reconsider our position whenever a JCR member feels that sufficient or meaningful changes would make reaffiliation worth it.";
- ❖ The proposer of this motion is a member of the JCR that feels that recent changes to the SU through its process of transformation are both sufficient and meaningful and thus warrant reaffiliation;
- ❖ Therefore, this JCR should debate a reconsideration of its position.

This JCR believes that—

- ❖ The greatest systemic factor that has thwarted the SU has been the tension between the SU's existence outside the Collegiate structure and the Collegiate nature of the University;
- ❖ By adopting Bye-Laws featuring a Conference of Common Rooms, in which each Common Room can send a delegate to a forum for discussion and action, the SU can properly engage with the Colleges, while retaining a distinct identity to JCRs, MCRs, and GCRs;
- ❖ This is a marked distinction from the previous Bye-Laws of the Student Council, which included a number of different positions, many of which were unconnected to Common Rooms;
- ❖ The immediate cause of the collapse of the SU was an atmosphere of conflict between Student Council and the Trustee Board, in which the Board repeatedly prevented Student Council from hearing a motion of no-confidence against the President of the SU;
- ❖ As a result of the new Articles of Association, there are stricter requirements for the transparency in the actions of the Board, which means that the Conference of Common Rooms will be appropriately informed in the rare cases where the Board has a legal duty to prevent a motion from being heard;
- ❖ Furthermore, the new Articles of Association include in multiple places a duty for the Board to consult with the Conference, which will result in cooperation rather than friction between different institutions of the SU;
- ❖ Additionally, the SU now includes more powerful Representative Committees, which will provide significant capacity for the SU to work with Representatives, including those of this JCR, in supporting students of underrepresented groups;
- ❖ Throughout this process of transformation, the SU has been willing to work with the Presidents' Committee and with the students of this University;
- ❖ This JCR should therefore reaffiliate with the SU.

This JCR resolves to—

- ❖ Reaffiliate with the Oxford Students Union;
- ❖ Mandate the President to communicate this reaffiliation to the SU.

Proposer: Jacob Harvey

Seconder: JJ Fitzpatrick

Questions:

Michael: This is the reaffiliation motion with the SU. It normally comes around once every two years but both Jacob and I thought that it has undergone a massive transformation. While the SU is and was deeply flawed, the SU at other universities work and it can work in Oxford. The biggest boundary has been involvement and the lack of it. I do think it would be wise to try in the new form of the SU. We can disaffiliate very easily if it is negative, if it is neutral or, in the best, positive it will be worth trying the new conference system, that is just my opinion. I think it will be worthwhile. The first meeting for that will be on Thursday of 3rd week.

Saul: Can you run over the benefits and downsides

Jacob: In terms of downsides, we do not give any money to the SU, the only downside is we become part of the SU symbolically but no material cost. Under the proposed bye-laws that no longer exist, we can't be forced to do anything anymore. The upside is the conference and if we are not affiliated, we are not allowed in the building. Also, repcoms if we are disaffiliated we can't go there either. We are all individually members of the SU but we are currently not as a college affiliated with the SU.

Rei: What would happen to Michael's vote in the conference of colleges procedurally?

Jacob: I spoke with the CEO of the SU. The President's will be voting for their JCR and only vote on behalf of their JCR. It used to be a Facebook poll.

Michael: I think the easiest way to gather an opinion is a Facebook poll. I can only give my best guess but if we want something concrete it will be a JCR Facebook poll. We can also bring things to the conferences of colleges, we could vote on it in one of our meetings and then I can bring it up in the conference on behalf of Corpus.

JJ: If this motion passes, does all of the standing orders that relate to the SU become active?

Jacob: No, because some are inactive and the positions and campaigned they are referring to no longer exist.

Clara: We disaffiliated last year because of what?

Jacob: I was there during the last student council meeting. It was awful in terms of democracy and accountability. The SU ceased to function at that point. Now, there has been a very comprehensive restructuring. The student council is abolished, and the conference is new. What is positive for me, is the SU recognised what went wrong and was really engaging with students. They have now changed

Michael: Another benefit is that the JCR presidents already meet 3 times a term in an informal way. With the conference system, we can take greater action. The JCR presidents can vote on what the SU can do. JCR presidents and by extension JCRs would have more control over what the SU can do. Such as changing welfare policies or discussing with other committees. There will be in general higher student population involvement and student representation rather than the SU being a detached body

Debate:

Rei: I am against reaffiliation. This is not the first time the SU has collapsed. It has happened before and it is a repeated pattern. I am not confident in this new system. Last term the president of the SU resigned. The way the budget is split, read the Cherwell article. I am not confident that it is particularly beneficial. Not affiliating is a protest, but the SU should show that it has actually changed rather than us trusting them that they have changed under this new system.

JJ: I don't think there is really anything negative about reaffiliating.

Ben: In my capacity as peer supporter, one thing the SU can offer us in terms of welfare support is during lawsuits the SU is a separate option. You still have it regardless as you are all affiliated as individuals.

Oskari: Clarifying note about repcoms. Great in theory. I went to the treasurercom last term and there were 2 other treasurers out of 35/36 JCRs that we have. For context, engagement issues have probably not been resolved. This is just my own experience

Saul: If the SU collapses, would there be disadvantages for Corpus?

Rei: No there will be a particular disadvantage. We are not obligated to do anything.

Clara: We are choosing to reaffiliate because we think they have changed? Is this since last Hilary?

Jacob: Regarding the repcoms last term, these new rep coms are a distinct thing, they have their own budgets with the repcoms. You can run events on behalf of the repcom between different colleges.

It is not the same thing as the old rep coms. The name hasn't changed. On Clara's point, if we join, we do not have any more obligations, just more access. However, if they decide to condemn something, we are symbolically part of it.

Rei: Does Michael and others get bound by the code of conduct?

Jacob: This governs the paid employees. I would like to say that Rei makes very good points about the SU. I disagree with them. Its changes have been going on for a year now. This leap of faith will only work if we all engage in this new system.

Michael: I think it ultimately comes down to how much you think it is worth our time to engage with them and if we want to be associated with the SU.

Rafi: If we choose to disaffiliate, how hard is it to disaffiliate:

Michael: I just send an email. It is something we changed with their rules is that we can disaffiliate at any point by just sending an email

Vote:

For: 11

Against: 1

Abstain: 5

Motion passes

10. Emergency Motions

11. Any Other Business

Michael: We have two more points to bring up in any other business. Firstly, thank you to Jacob for the past 6 terms on exec. First as Vice-President, and now as RO. He has made sure that our elections have run smoothly, our no-cons have run smoothly. Thank you very much Jacob, your support has been invaluable. Our second thing in any other business is one other member of the executive committee, it is his birthday today. If everyone could join me in singing...

Everyone in the room sings happy birthday to Oskari

Some people in the room also try sing it in Finnish

- *Its not very good*