

# St Catherine's College Executive Committee

## Open Meeting

Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> February 2015

Members Present: 53

Executive Officers Present: Serkan Birgel, Pete Forsyth, Martin Garthwaite, John Kenny, Stephanie Oerum, Emma Osborn, Carla Verdi and Jan Vonk.

Meeting commences: 19:35

### Meeting Aims:

#### 1. Minutes from Open Meeting 8<sup>th</sup> February 2015:

1.1. Matters arising from minutes

#### 2. Approval of Associate Member:

2.1. April Ablon:

April: From Australia, currently carrying out research in Oxford and would like to become an associate member of the MCR.

#### Questions:

- What made you choose Catz? Heard it was very friendly.
- Are you a friend of Julian's: Went to same university in Australia but did not know each other before coming to Oxford.

Membership approved

#### 3. Constitutional Amendments:

3.1. Proposal to Amend Article VIII (d) (iii) of the constitution to state that members of the Executive Committee cannot second nominations for MCR elections

Proposer: John Kenny

Secunder: Stephanie Oerum

Proposal introduced in order to increase transparency of the nominations process and increase sense of fairness. General sense of agreement among those present of merits of proposal. Some concerns raised that when you are very new, you might not know many people. Those on the executive committee may be the only people you get to know quite quickly so stopping executive members from seconding nominations may discourage people from putting themselves forward which is something you wouldn't want. Response from member that if you can't get two ordinary members so second you, should you be on the committee then? Discussion was then concluded for the proposal to be voted via ballot later in the evening.

#### 4. Committee Hustings and Elections:

##### 4.1. Executive Officers:

###### *Bar Manager:*

William Beuckelaers (seconded by Bora Durmaz & Aaron Primero)

William: Want to continue serving alcohol and no-alcoholic beverages and in particular have more Belgium beers. Would also like to continue wine and vodka tasting and to have a wider selection of teas. Glad that there are three bar officers running that will be able to help with bar duties.

###### Questions:

- Along with bringing in a wider selection of teas, would you consider stocking hot chocolate for the MCR? Open to suggestions for it if there is the demand.
- What is your stance on MCR biscuits? Potentially to recreate biscuit officer position to deal with this.
  - Comment from the floor that other colleges have similar officers, such as a cake officer in Christ Church.
- Can you make sure there is always ice in the bar?
  - Comments from the floor from current executive committee about developments in relation to having an ice machine for the MCR. We would need a machine big enough so that we wouldn't have to use the machine in hall at all, but that this won't fit in the bar and a smaller one would not be suitable for our needs.
- The fridges underneath the bar have been removed. Is there something else we can put below the counter? Suggestion to put recycling bins there.
  - Comment from floor that everything gets recycled anyway, but that the scout does it rather than us directly. This was disputed, as even though all glass bottles get recycled, plastic cups and paper do not and usually end up in the waste bin.

###### *Co-Presidents:*

Pete Forsyth (seconded by Isabel Diez-Sevilla & Matt Smith) and Lizzie Smethurst (seconded by Lisa Buziek & Julian Malisano).

Both second year DPhils. Pete did his undergraduate degree in Oxford and knows how things operate. He has been social sec since last Trinity term and has also been active with the college boat club. Lizzie is originally from Norway but been here for quite some time. She really likes the MCR, spends a lot of time here and would like to take a more active role. She is currently student rep for her department and hope to represent all well if chosen for the position.

Pete: Would like to make sure that renovation of bar is finished off. With opening of Catz House next academic year, priority would also to make sure we have an appropriate solution for accommodation. Would like to continue to attempt to get a 24-hour study room all year round that doesn't disappear to conferences during the summer and library access also important. Looking towards getting some sponsorship for the MCR like other common rooms have. This would be along the lines of sponsors donating money to the MCR in return for organise career fairs and related activities in college in return.

Lizzie: With redevelopment of Catz House for single graduates, want to ensure that we don't lose the accommodation on site that we already have. If anyone has anything they want to push for, will make sure that it comes across to college. In terms of the sponsorship, think it's

important to at least consider if it is possible to get some extra money to go towards MCR activities and to weigh up what companies can give us and what they want in return.

#### Questions:

- For Lizzie: Mentioned that you are a representative in your department. Would this role interfere with being able to do work as Co-President when things get busy? This departmental role is only for another six months with one meeting per term, so it wouldn't be an issue (Lizzie).
- Are you going to continue pushing for kitchen improvements in graduate Staircases? If it is something people want, then yes. May become less of an issue with the Catz House development (Pete).
  - Comment from floor: MCR staircases this year might not be MCR staircases next year, so can make pushing for development of MCR kitchens difficult. Response: If JCR also has this concern, then can work with them and push for it (Lizzie).
- Are there any things you think you will both be rubbish at? Essentially, think will balance each other and would work quite well together (both).
- Ronja: Have you thought of distribution of the duties of the role? As both are always in Oxford almost constantly there will be less things that will need to be divided, so will decide things and distribute them when they come along (Pete).

#### *IT & Publicity Officer:*

Christoph Dorn (seconded by William Beuckelaers & Aaron Primero)

Matt Smith (seconded by Ella Gunn & George Ntentas)

Christoph: First year DPhil student in maths. Was working in IT role in former university where they were building website and web applications. Sees building a website a bit like drawing a picture and building a house of Lego at the same time. Can be cool and would like to make an appreciative contribution. Would like to give round of applause for current IT & Publicity Officer Jan who just got his dream job in Montréal (Warm applause given from floor). Would look forward to keep the website up-to-date, design posters and everything else that comes with the job. Also has wider visions for MCR. Would like to give webpage a little facelift and extend it by inserting login facility which would allow us to have content only accessible to us. Can have sign-ups in one place, league tables for Fifa and also academic research profiles for the website. As for implementation, can use same process as Single-Sign-On which uses the same protocol that he used in Zurich. Hopes that he has convinced that he would put a lot of energy into the role, grow closer to everyone and make MCR more beautiful.

Matt: First year DPhil in cybersecurity. In Warwick, as part of photography society, did quite a lot of committee work being President, Secretary and IT roles. Took what was largely built of manual processes into a system that helped people to automate it and designed freshers' fair flyers, yearly hoodie and so on. General committee experience would be beneficial for being on MCR committee. The MCR has been massive part of his life since coming to Oxford. Would quite like to make the website hub of information and get more information on there, especially for new starters. Jan did a great job moving from old website to new website this year and would advance on this. Publicity-wise, this would be more about making himself available to the rest of the committee to work with them when they needed him. Would also like to work with merchandise people and get merchandise section on website.

## Questions:

- Would you put the hall menu on the MCR website?
  - Matt: JCR website already has it and there is no reason as to why it couldn't be mirrored. Would like to integrate the guest dinner more into website as well.
  - Christoph: No hurdles if you want it there. Not sure if there is interface between JCR, but could make it work on MCR website.
    - Comment from floor: JCR has online booking system for hall that we may not want to take on.
- Would you consider setting up a secure online voting system?
  - Christoph: Can be done. Current system of voting in abstentia by email not ideal. Can spoof email addresses, but not as easy with server.
  - Matt: No reason why you couldn't.
- Stephanie: How are you going to make people look at website for events:
  - Christoph: Currently, we're always putting links to google docs for sign-ups. If these were all in the one place, would make things much easier for people.
  - Matt: Don't want to force people to use the website, but to have facility where people can get information on the one page would be very useful. Could also have information on the website that would automatically update. Currently, where Facebook group is used a lot to inform people of notices, MCR members that are not on Facebook may often miss out on such information and having information on website could deal with this.
- How good are you with search engine optimisation?
  - Matt: Doesn't really work, though people will sell it to you. There are some things you can do, but overall not very effective.
  - Christoph: Agrees that doesn't really work. The key is to get a lot of sites to link to your page.
- How do you envisage using Social Media for the MCR:
  - Matt: Facebook group when big can get unamenable, so could look into creating a Facebook page and getting Twitter and Instagram accounts used more.
  - Christoph: Definitely up for discussion. Facebook account differently integral and shouldn't move everything.

## *Secretary:*

Alice Wang (seconded by Ella Gunn & Hege Larsen).

Alice: From New Zealand, currently doing masters in development and starting a second masters in September. Is currently the MCR OUSU representative and you may have received emails from her already in that role. Has really enjoyed the being part of MCR community, with the current executive having done an incredible job of running things. As Secretary, would support the executive and keeping things as easy as possible for them. Would also be a good contact point for the wider university. Has relevant experience from working in law and being president of a number of student organisations in Auckland. Would love to give back and hopefully will do a great job.

## *Social Secretaries:*

Serkan Birgel (seconded by Philippa Collins & Christoph Dorn)

Moctar Kané (seconded by Bora Durmaz & Aedan Pillai)

Julian Malisano (seconded by Ben Abraham & Alex Barbaro)

Carla Verdi (second by Wojciech Kozłowski & Lizzie Smethurst)

Serkan: Here to persuade you that right person for the job. Through exceptional set of circumstances became current Social Secretary in November. Feel fierce sense of loyalty and allegiance to the MCR. Has also been organising the Catz conference. Last time that he stood before MCR for election, gave advantages and disadvantages of electing him and the only thing that has changed now is that he is more experienced. As Social Secretary has organised pizza evenings, three exchange drinks, sorted out the PS3 (which was a platform he ran on), cheese for Friday nights and been in discussions about the Fun bus. Was also involved with the joint Bop with Jesus MCR and now organising the joint BOP with New MCR. Also organising Ice-Disco night that is happening shortly, and trying to become close to Christ Church with view to organising exchange dinner with them and trying to become close to St Antony's with view to having joint BOP with them. During rest of current term, will also be organising FIFA tournament and Thirsty Meeples outing. Wants to expend film night, but does not want to reinvent the wheel with main idea being to get a projector screen.

Moctar: First year MPhil student. Some people thought manifesto was like job application so hope not all people think like that, but if you do also hope you are not wrong in thinking that as has the skills for the role. Spoke to Stephanie and John and heard that less than a third of MCR community is active. Believes in having variety of activities. Had opportunity to observe and reflect from not being on committee and have identified areas that can be improved upon such as diversifying pizza evenings, having cultural nights, holding intervarsity exchange drinks and so on. Diversity can only improve things. Would like to congratulate current Social Secretaries, but would like to push boundaries and bring the position to the next level. If you believe MCR cannot do better, then don't vote for Moctar. If you do believe it, then please vote for Moctar. This ballot will shape the experience of next year's freshers and hope you pick the best.

Julian: DPhil in materials from Australia. Basically, has very close ties with the MCR as pretty much his living room. Loves it and want to make it more fun. Currently Sports and Leisure officer. In the past, has been Social Secretary of University of Queensland Boxing Club (Have some regional support in the back!). Basically, organised t-shirts, socials and put on plenty of barbeques. Want to keep with all events that are currently going on such as exchange dinners, drinks, BOPS, pizza nights and so on. Friday drinks are most important as there is great sense of community because everyone gets involved, but would like to add few ideas to basket. Would like to add cocktails and food tastings: Reckless Eating and Get Rich or Die Frying! MCR will appreciate barbeques. Intercollege paintball with whoever we hate the most and an MCR escapade rather than a fun bus. Can organise trip to Gloucester Cheese Race or the beach in summer. Would get IT officer to set up Fifa platform. Another plan to have library exchanges – seems farfetched but can manage it. Stayed during Christmas during vacation and there was not much on so would like to have more out of term events. Hope to make you proud.

Carla: In second year of DPhil in Material Science. Has been here for a year and a half and been social sec for the past two terms. The current committee has done good work with a good, lively MCR atmosphere in place. As Social Secretary, has fun when she has fun but is serious and organised when there are events to organise. Would bring valuable experience to the role again and, already knowing how to go about things, this would speed things up in the new committee. Plan to collaborate with the new IT officer to innovate sign-ups as currently people may lose track of them. Would like to discuss with the new Treasurer what we can do beyond standard events. Want to make people understand than they can suggest events they would like to put on and get active support to help put such events on. Would like to continue to do other exchanges with other colleges. We had a great BOP in Michaelmas term and have another BOP

coming up in two weeks, so would like to continue organising these as there is an amazing space in the MCR for this. Happy to organise more out of term events and drinks.

#### Questions:

- For Moctar, can you serve alcohol? If not, how can you go about the job if you cannot serve alcohol as constitution states that you have to help run the bar during the term?
  - Moctar: Main aim to have more diversity and introduce wider variety of event. Through teamwork would be able to find a way around it.
    - Comments from floor: If constitutional impediment, can we change it? If this is an issue, then we should have an extra person. Workload can be spread out.
- For Serkan: What is the Funbus.
  - Serkan: It's a plan to have day trips to various locations starting during Easter.
- How can you fund the Funbus?
  - Serkan: Would rent a bus and have an MCR driver.
  - Julian: Would need to decide where we go based on places people want to go.
- What has experience been of working in three person team from Carla and Serkan, and for Julian and Moctar how you would fit into this?
  - Carla: There are certain standard tasks that can be divided and non-standard tasks that would have more collaboration on. There is an almost constant email exchange ongoing and so Social Secretaries need to be in front of the computer all the time.
  - Serkan: When took over the reins in November, found that even with a good check-list it is something you learn on the go; not a one-man job!
  - Julian: Already Sports and Leisure officer and have been involved in organising things to some extent, so main difference would be to work in team which he already does in other areas.
  - Moctar: Has observed a lot of things and tried to identify areas that we could do more. Definitely has team spirit and would be a good team member.
- How do you make sure that old students, who tend to be less and less involved, get involved again?
  - Julian: One of the most important things is first week orientation. Can hopefully bring the dinosaurs in then.
  - Serkan: Lot harder to bring in older students; can only advertise as best as we can the events that are put on.
  - Moctar: Main plan would be to increase variety of events that are on and thus increase the interests of dinosaurs.

#### *Treasurer:*

Katharine Biddle (seconded by Jennifer Byram & Lera Mutc)

George Ntentas (seconded by Ella Gunn & Pernille Sogaard)

Katharine: First year MPhil student from Hong Kong. Really love Catz and really passionate about serving it. Even though degree isn't finance based, have done a few finance based internships in banking being involved in revenue and year-on-year comparisons. During undergrad, was a member of union and went into planning committees working closely with treasurer to make sure budgets were used as efficiently as possible. Founded own society in final year and, as president, worked very close with treasurer also. Current MCR committee has inspired her to get involved. The MCR is so warm and welcoming and wants to continue

that legacy. Really enthusiastic, determined and a solution finder: if something doesn't work, how can we make it work?

George: First year DPhil in population health. Wants to give something back to the MCR. Felt so nice when first came and have developed good relationship with people in the committee already. Would be able to find common ground when people ask for crazy things and find a middle way. Also, responsive with emails. Has been treasurer and chair in student organisations before. For Young Science Network Institute of Physics and Medicine, was Treasurer with budget of £7,000 and so brings quite a lot of experience doing exactly the same job. Quite an organised person that would be easy to work with. Very keen about sponsorship; can attract sponsors for sure to make most of budget and organise more events.

Questions:

- What financial balance would you give to different aspects of areas such as BOPs, the Bar and Welfare and how would you fund Welfare?
  - Katharine: Need to find a careful balance, looking at both the shorter term and the longer term. Would like to extend welfare brunch to weekly event and really interested in trying to get a college cat; would need to go to Bursar and ask about it. There are welfare aspect to petting cats which lowers blood pressure and stress and increases concentration.
  - George: Should focus on BOPs and parties as that is what makes money. Should spend money as an investment in order to generate more funds.
- What key qualities would you bring to the new committee?
  - Katharine: Personality, enthusiasm, reliability and ability to make things happen.
  - George: Importance of being responsive and previous experience that would bring. Will be here for next three years, so can build on experience for future years.

3.2 Regular Officers:

*Academic Officer:*

Emma Osborn (seconded by Lisa Buziek & Greg Walton)

Emma: Currently the beer fairy. Want to take experience into organising academic events. Would continue with events in freshers' week plus would have an event at the beginning of next term to help with people who will be starting their masters' theses.

Questions:

- How would you increase turnout at academic events? Would hope to have conversation about this with relevant people in college before going into graduate committee meeting next Friday about how this can be best archived.

*Bar Officers(x3):*

Lisa Buziek (seconded by Wojciech Kozłowski & Benjamin Remy)

Aaron Primero (seconded by Ben Abraham and Mark Ekinde)

Yossi Singer (seconded by William Beuckelaers & Julian Malisano)

Lisa: Current bar officer and would like to stay until she leaves at end of academic year. Position is a supportive one to help the Bar Manager. Would like to add German beers to the bar. Advantages of having Lisa is that she is usually one of the last to leave the bar on Friday nights and is responsible for looking after the bar as well as being fun. May be a bit German, but still feels responsible. Also would help clean up things after Friday nights to MCR would be pleasant to enter on Saturday mornings.

Aaron: Very flattered to have been nominated. Completed three-month long bartending course at Columbia and is bartender certified. Having Aaron working behind bar would be beneficial for everyone.

Yossi: Spent quite a lot of time at the bar this year; has come to a lot of the events and stayed quite late. Have already done the bar-training course and helped out. Would like to make this role more formal. Suggestion of extending tea facilities and possibility of reinstating Tea and Cookies officer.

Questions:

- Would you consider some halal beers?
  - Yossi: This question is one that is more relevant for the Bar Manager.
  - Lisa: Wouldn't refuse to serve halal beers.
- Could you do mocktails as well as cocktails? More non-alcohol drinks would be nice.
  - General nodding of heads among candidates.

*Welfare Officer (Men's):*

Junsong Lin (seconded by Wojciech Kozłowski & Alice Wang)

Junsong: As current welfare officer, organises welfare nights, brunches, condoms, pregnancy testing kits and talks to college about welfare issues. If you have any concerns, you can come and discuss them. Would also like to talk briefly about peer support. There are four peer supporters in the MCR – Junsong, Elizabeth Ruolong and John – each which have thirty hours training and are supervised every other week in order to be able to listen to concerns and so know about issues that may concern people and resources that may be able to help. Feel free to approach any of the peer supporters to talk at anytime.

*Welfare Officer (Women's):*

Fleur Stolker (seconded by Ella Gunn & Hege Larsen)

Fleur: Have most of the same things to say as Junsong. Would like more money for different events and thinks that can do more welfare things such as the Tea Hive. Would also like to get more money for training of more peer support volunteers as there are a shortage of available spots but not enough money currently to provide for more.

*4<sup>th</sup> Year Undergraduate Representative:*

Matthew Fisher (seconded by Moctar Kané & Wojciech Kozłowski)

Matthew: 4<sup>th</sup> year undergrad masters student in chemistry. Currently thirty of 4<sup>th</sup> year undergraduate members of the MCR, but only one here tonight! Want to bring other 4<sup>th</sup> years to events on a regular basis. Also, would like to let MCR know what goes on in the JCR as has lots of relevant events on for us, especially the Entz. Whiskey tasting in the JCR is also an undersubscribed event that we may be interested in. Because he has worked on the JCR



committee and has been here for a long time, has a lot of experience and can help out with broader issues. Would also like to get more undergraduates participating in conferences.

5. AOB – None

Meeting Concludes 21:00

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*Election Results:*

Executive Officers:

Bar Manager: William Beuckelaers

Co-Presidents: Pete Forsyth & Lizzie Smethurst

IT & Publicity Officer: Christoph Dorn

Sectary: Alice Wang

Social Secretaries: Carla Verdi, Moctar Kané and Julian Malisano.

Treasurer: Katharine Biddle.

Regular Officers:

Academic Officer: Emma Osborn

Bar Officers: Lisa Buziek, Yossi Singer, Aaron Primero.

Welfare Officer (Men's): Junsong Lin

Welfare Officer (Women's) Fleur Stolker

4th Year Undergraduate Rep: Matthew Fisher

*Proposed Constitutional Amendment also Carried.*