

Minutes of St Catherine's College Open Meeting

Sunday Week V Michaelmas Term 2015 (8th November)

Executive Committee members present: Elizabeth Smethurst, Pete Forsyth, Julian Malisano, Carla Verdi, Christoph Dorn

Members present: 31

1. Minutes of previous meeting

No comments

2. Elections

ES gave thanks to Alice for her services to the committee.

a. Secretary – Phil Earp

Phil he thinks the secretary role is not very glamorous but needs to be done. It goes on in the background. Has experience with organising timetables and rotas for a society his was previously involved with.

Questions

Q. Can this be done with current role as Merchandise and Gadget Officer?

A. Would like to find someone to take over M&G Officer role

Q. What are your thoughts on the bulletin and making it interesting

A. Likes the single weekly email from secretary. About priorities: post some things to Facebook; others to bulletin. Will continue some form of cartoons. Short and concise.

Elected by a show of hands

b. Sports and Leisure Officer – Steve Pates

Member of the football. Would like to support MCR sport

Q. Will you still be able to score goals?

A. Will improve on one

Elected by a show of hands

3. Associate membership application – Anthony

Here for 5 ½ months from Greece. A student, about to obtain BA.

Passed by a show of hands

4. Transfer from JCR to MCR membership – Alistair Adams

Unable to attend meeting.

5. Motion

This MCR RESOLVES: To express support for the Fall of Rhodes as outlined by RMF Oxford - "standing in support of the fall of Rhodes" as a student body

Proposed: Roseanne Chantiluke Seconded: Rivka Micklethwaite

Both are organising members of RMFO, which aims to decolonise Oxford and make it more inclusive. A recent debate at the Oxford Union concluded that Oxford was racist. CRAE found 60% of ethnic minorities felt alienated at Oxford. Propose change by removing racist iconography. Friday protest for RMFO. Want to petition CRs.

Questions

Q. Are you looking at the wider situation?

A. First and foremost relating to Rhodes for solidarity with the RMO movement in Cape Town. But does not end at Rhodes

Q. Forgetting the terrible things of colonialist past, good and bad; what do you think is achieved by writing out history?

A. Taking down the statue doesn't mean end to colonialism in Oxford. Trauma doesn't go away because the statue comes down. Taking statue down and talking bring it to light. History is not erased by removing statue. Decolonising history and opening it up. This point is brought up a lot.

Q. What is your attitude to the Rhodes's Scholarships?

A. Needs to be reformed. Cannot give concrete evidence

Q. What racist structures are in place in Oxford?

A. Curriculum. Especially in the humanities. Eurocentric texts, the Classics. Staff representation (in the Africa Institute) – all academics are white

Q. Does this make it racist?

A. Yes. Ignores non Greco-Roman world (curriculum). Goes hand in hand with staff make up

Q. Should we take more black academics, or take people based on their merits?

A. Shocking shortage of black academics in the UK. Result of racist ideologies. Helped by selecting academics. People in Oxford should be more involved, and those from outside brought in.

Q. Who is the opposition to the Rhodes statue falling?

A. Oriel. As it is a listed building, there may need to be involvement with the council

Q. Is RMFO campaigning with the council?

A. Focusing on the university and Oriel College

Q. Have you received complaints about the statue?

A. CRAE survey results. 200 people at a meeting in Trinity term discussed their experiences. People don't feel comfortable at Rhodes House

Q. Have you talked to Oriel?

A. Yes. Fighting on all fronts

Q. What did Oriel say?

A. Cannot discuss this.

A comment was made from the floor that the values of Rhodes represents have no place in the 21st century and that like walking past a statue of Hitler and considering it fine.

Q. Support principle of supporting minorities and making them comfortable. Don't agree with all the principles of RMFO. What are we actually supporting?

A. If you believe in the removal of racist iconography is right, support us. Discuss and analyse at many meetings about how to decolonise Oxford. RMFO is organised by PoC – these are the people who's place it is to say how to remove racism.

Q. Have you considered the positive effects of the Rhode's Scholarships? What about the good that comes from them?

A. 'Good' not a word used to describe Rhode's Scholarships. Bad aspects outweigh any good

Q. What is the MCR signing up to by passing this motion?

Motion amended to *This MCR RESOLVES: To express support for the Fall of the statue of Cecil Rhodes on High St as outlined by RMF Oxford - "standing in support of the fall of Rhodes" as a student body.*

Vote by secret ballot. Passed by 13 votes to 12.

6. AOB

None