

St Catherine's College Middle Common Room

Committee Elections Minutes

Sunday 7th February 2016
at 2000 in the MCR

Meeting Chair: Pete Forsyth – Co-President



Minutes taken by MCR Secretary, Phil Earp

I. Treasurer

A. Priyanka Bawa

Would like to give something back to the MCR. Is going to be here for the next year so would like to get involved in the MCR committee. The committee puts stress on the fact that non-execs can organise events, so is planning to put aside a small budget to assist people running their own events. Has experience; specialised in finance during her bachelor's degree. Currently doing a DPhil in social policy.

B. Serkan Birgel

Spoken to earlier treasurer about the job, so knows what it entails. Recommended to “wear a suit, and tell everyone you can count money” (Serkan was, of course wearing a suit!) A selection of ‘quotes’ from MCR members, including:

“He has such a strong tie game, imagine how strong his treasurer game will be” – Matthew Fisher, probably.

Won't promise us the world, like an MCR cat, but likes the idea of an MCR lunchbox – could be used to reduce food waste.

C. Richard Everett

2nd year PhD student in Cyber Security and Machine Learning. “The reason I'm running for treasurer is that, to me, the MCR means a lot, and I want to contribute towards that, but more than that I want to help other people contribute towards that. The Treasurer is a great position to allow that.” Has spoken to Katharine, the current treasurer and found out what is actually involved in being a treasurer; one thing is accounting and using spreadsheets. “I really do love spreadsheets!”. Last year created a personal accounting spreadsheet to manage his money.

Became a bar officer at start of the year, but wanted to do more. Has already helped plan whiskey tasting and wine tasting. Suitable for the job as has done research at the bank of England, minored in finance as an undergrad, and currently doing economics with machine learning.

D. Questions

Q: We currently have a surplus. What would you spend it on?

Serkan: Would continue the ‘fun bus’ idea. Previously went off to Cambridge. MCR lunchboxes. Not my role to come up with the new ideas – keen to listen to ideas from anyone.

Richard: Would like to echo Serkan. Has already put something on Facebook asking for ideas. Likes the idea of having a pot of money for non-execs to organise events.

Priyanka: Would save money towards the MCR scholarship. Allocate money to individual events each month.

II. Co-Presidents

A. William Beuckelaers and Julian Malisano

William: I'm Will and I want to be the new Pete!

Julian: I'm Julian and I want to be the new Lizzie! We have both been super involved in the MCR, holding posts of Sports and Leisure Officer, Social Secretary and Bar Manager between them. My 3 mains things are:

1. Improve engagement of members in the MCR. Want to encourage ordinary members to come up with and organise events. Will put aside a small weekly budget to go to anyone who wants to organise events. Want more diverse events, more regularly. (At this point Julian stumbles, turns over the page and exclaims "OOH, IT'S DOUBLE SIDED!!!") Would create a new position on the regular committee, *Events Officer*, to be a middle person between the MCR members and the Social Secretaries.
2. Would create a new position on the Welfare Committee, the *BME Officer* (Black and Minority Ethnicity). This would work like the other welfare officers, but specifically help those with these backgrounds. Would also help make waffles!
3. Look into improving facilities for associate members. Some have access to gym and hall, some don't. Will work with college to try and get a better deal for these people. Would create a register for visiting associate members from abroad, so when Catz students go abroad they may have a contact there already.

William: Main 3 points are:

1. Would like to get more people from Catz House involved. Big BBQ in Catz House in Trinity Term. Picnic in meadow during freshers' week, to get people involved at the start.
2. Further improve facilities for the bar, such as a bell. Have already got some nice whisky glasses. Improve audio and cinematic experience in MCR, with Chromecast Audio and potentially Chromecast TV to allow music/video to be streamed from behind the bar.
3. As co-presidents, would work with everyone in the MCR. At college meetings would try and get best deal for the MCR at all times. With experience as bar manager and social secretary, will try and keep all the great events running!

B. Questions

Q: How will you split the tasks?

Julian: We will split meetings so each of us goes to every other meeting. Still need to work everything out.

William: Need to find a good balance

Q: Will there be more regular porridge challenges?

William: Maybe, but if you have an award this year you should be proud enough!

Q: What is your philosophy on how to deal with conflict on the MCR committee?

Julian: Best way is to solve it democratically on the committee. Depending on what the wider committee thinks, we will have a vote. If that fails, then the issue would be brought to an open meeting. (And if that fails, we'll have to settle it in the gym!)

William: It's not regular to have a big disagreement.

Q: What do you think is the most challenging part of being president?

Julian: For me, time management. I will try and stay on top of my work. I will also aim to deal with things from the third person; not to take things personally.

Q: What brought you together?

Julian: Already worked together on the committee.

William: Already worked a lot with Julian, we get on well together so we are in a good position to be co-presidents.

Q: Do you complement each other?

A: Well, he's on bow side, I'm on stroke side...

Q: Who can do the most pushups?

Julian: Probably William, he's been training with Christoph!

Q: Do you think you're too similar to run together?

William: We are from opposite sides of the world, so we're not that similar!

Q: Is it coincidence that BME sounds like Body Mass Index?

Julian: Yes.

III. Secretary

A. Phil Earp

At this point, whilst trying to say that I am a competent secretary, I failed to take any minutes, and so failed to be a competent secretary. Oops. I'm sure I didn't say anything important!

B. Questions

Q: The Cosmopolitan subscription, do we need that?

A: I hope you do read the magazines in the rack. If you have any suggestions for magazines that you would like to subscribe to, then let me know! (Lizzie points out that there will be a survey to send round on this very point!)

IV. Social Secretaries

A. Elisabeth Gram

Decided to run for a simple reason. The MCR have made a great effort to ensure you get the real 'Oxford Experience' including Friday night dinners, exchange dinners, Yoga, etc. There are friendly faces, and it adds fun to our heavy work schedules.

Wants this role to provide new and current members with the same great experience. Is a good planner (organised a trip to Peru during her undergrad at Durham), and is keen to organise events here. Will learn on the role. Has been very happy with the events this term, but would like to do more trips out of Oxford, and more movie nights and cinema trips.

"As mentioned before, I would be a facilitator, and it would be great if I could, along with the committee, continue to bring you good times"

B. Jenny Hwang

Studying MPhil in development studies. Currently the class rep for that. Has lived in all 5 continents, and is hoping to diversify ('Jennify') the MCR by including as many cultures as possible. Wants to include everyone, including those with different food preferences.

Would organise more potluck dinners, to celebrate international days; for example this week was Chinese new year, we could have celebrated that. Movie nights, trips to the cinema and trips to London to watch musicals. I have more ideas on my manifesto. "I promise to commit myself to this, I'm always on my emails, and if you don't do Facebook, I'll chase you down and let you know!"

Let's diversify and Jennify the MCR!

C. Florian Zobel

“For those of you who saw my poster, I’m unfortunately not Leonardo DiCaprio, but the resemblance is uncanny!”

As the name implies, the role brings people together by organising different events. Don’t want to make too many big promises, but want more exchange events with better mingling before and after. Bring back movie nights! Has a trip in Michaelmas term to Bath, need an equivalent trip in Trinity Term – thinking Stratford-upon-Avon. 2 hours on the train, and can be subsidised.

Why am I suitable? When I decide to do something I’ll give 100% to it. I’m picky for detail, for example at guest dinners we should add the names of the guests to the labels on table. I have talked to the other social secretaries; I know what the job involves. Lots of emails, staying on top of messages, and organising events as quickly as possible, as far in advance as possible.

D. Questions

Q: Your main job is to *fight, for the right, to party!* What is the main threat? What will you be doing about this?

Florian: One threat is people not showing up, not necessarily at parties, but at other events too. Need good communication about events to get people excited about things. Apart from that, this college is great!

Serkan: *Banning Junior Deans!!*

Jenny: Biggest threat to me is how far away I live. Would be good to organise a group of friends to go with to events.

Q: How do you feel about themed formals (Downton Abbey / Harry Potter)?

Elisabeth: Love the idea, I’m all for dressing up!

Florian: “I’M ABSOLUTELY UP FOR IT, YEAH!”

Jenny: If a lot of people are keen, we can make it happen!

Thought provoking question from Pete: “Ok, you look in the MCR store room and you find a smoke machine there. You bring it to a place with 200 people enjoying a bop. Do you turn it on?”

Q: How do you feel about Eurovision?

Elisabeth: I don’t have strong opinions personally, but if people are keen we can organise something.

Florian: Personally not extremely interested, but job involves encouraging people to do what they want to.

Jenny: I grew up watching it, I'm all for it!

Q: Do you define yourself as 'social'? People feel welcomed if you are welcoming.

Jenny: I have been described by others as social. I love meeting people and to network. I'm always in here late at night so if you're bored, come and have a chat!

Florian: Yeah I would consider myself social otherwise I would not have run for the position. I'm very open minded so I'm open to suggestions. Excited to meet new people!

Elisabeth: Yes, I would consider myself social. We have had very welcoming social secretaries this year, want to provide the same for all current and new members. But the role requires you to have other skills as well as being social.

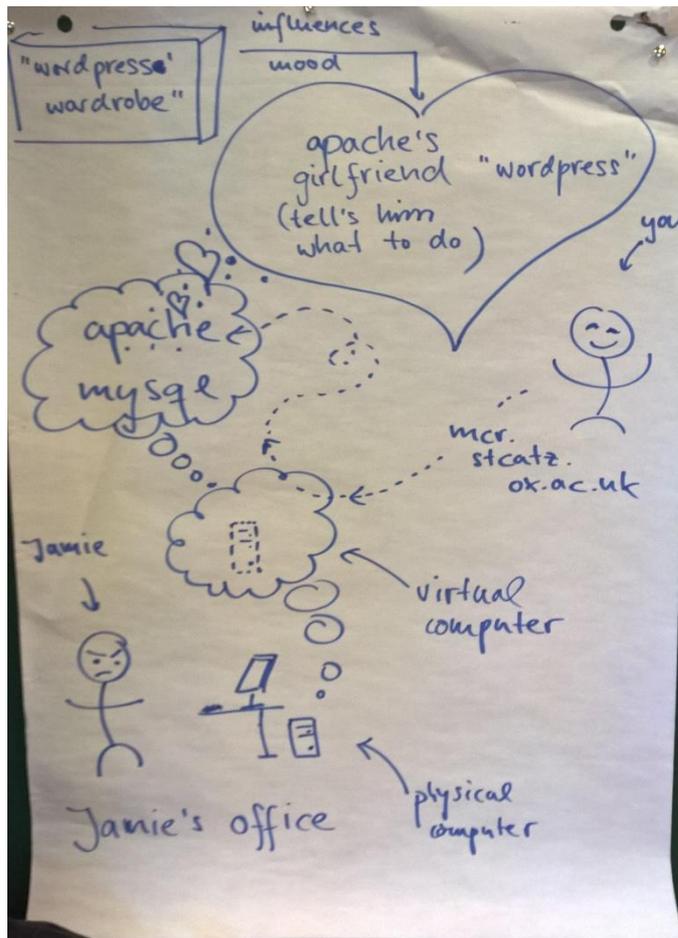
V. IT and Publicity Officer

A. Christoph Dorn

Standing for re-election. Studying a computer science DPhil, so this is the most applied thing I do! I thought I'd give you an idea of what I do in this role. About 2% of my time is spent on 'useful' stuff, such as redesigning the website, and designing posters for MCR events. The remaining 98% is trying random things which often don't work, but some do!

Job difficulties include dealing with the restrictive system, and deciding to make the MCR website offline today!

This is basically how the website works..



Thanks for filling out the guest dinner survey! This term we will also have a new online term card. Many under-the-hood changes still to be made – I would not give it to any successive officer in its current state!

B. Questions

Q: Is the aim to be in a position at the end of the next year to hand over the website to the next officer?

Christoph: Yes, maintainability is the key!

Q: If you would be a combination of two animals, which would they be, and why?

Christoph: A mule, because I like to appreciate things like the sun.

Q: Why not a camel?

Christoph: A camel gets that all the time, but a mule will appreciate it when it happens. And my second animal would be an eagle, because it's cool!

Q: When you're in the gym, do the bars creak for you? The pull-up bars creak for Jamie.

Christoph: Hmm, no, I don't think so.

VI. Bar Manager

A. Gilad Amzaleg

I think this poster says everything. I know this poster is not serious, but it did take me hours... I'd definitely take this seriously, it's not a joke, it's alcohol...

Has been on committees before; physics soc and Jewish soc as an undergrad. I care personally; the bar is the heart of the MCR, and I don't want to break it!

B. Questions

Q: What would you do for non-alcoholic drinks?

Gilad: A non-alcoholic option will be available at all events.

Q: St Peter's college have a college drink. Can't we have a St Catherine's cocktail?

Gilad: We could have a night where everyone makes a different cocktail. Everyone could judge them and the winner could be the college drink.

Q: Would you up for wine recommendations for guest dinners?

Gilad: More wine is always good! Always welcome recommendations. I will make sure there are bar officers at events.

VII. Tea and Biscuits Officer

A. Carey Pike

(speech read out in her absence – was doing a shift working in the library!)

I am the current Head of Tea and Biscuits. I'm sorry I can't be here for the election tonight but I please don't think that means I don't take Tea and Biscuits very seriously! I started this position in Michaelmas Term and would like to stay involved in the committee, and be able to provide you all with biscuits, until I finish my MSc in September. Please vote me back in so that the tea party can continue! Speaking of which, I hope you all enjoyed the Mad Hatter's Tea Party yesterday! :)

Elected by show of hands

VIII. Environment Officer

A. Ankita Shanker

I want to run for this role as I think the planet is essential for our survival! If we **** up, I don't know where we can get a replacement one! I have been hassling housekeeping to get the pamphlets updated for the recycling bins.

B. Questions

Q: How can we reduce single use plastic?

Ankita: We should look at recyclable alternatives.

Q: Should be not get paper cups instead of plastic ones?

Ankita: We won't necessarily be able to recycle paper cups. Paper cups are not entirely made from paper, and have a plastic lining, so cannot be recycled. Most plastics in Oxford can now be recycled.

Elected by show of hands

IX. Bar Officers

A. Luca Bertinetto

I'm an Italian 2nd year engineering DPhil. Loves MCR and activites, feel part of big family! Feel like it's time to give something back, after helping in freshers' week. Ideas include diversifying the drinks during guest dinner – not just champagne

Elected by show of hands

B. Carla Verdi

I'm not ready for retirement yet! As social secretary, one task was to run the bar, so I'll keep doing that. As I'm not having to organise as much, I'll have more time to help.

Elected by show of hands

C. Matt Smith

Currently a social secretary. Looking to get more interesting options on spirits, including gins, rums and whisky.

Elected by show of hands

X. Catz House Rep

A. Anushka Halder

Someone needs to represent Catz House as we sometimes get isolated. Good cement area (basically our common room!) for proposed BBQ in summer.

Elected by show of hands

XI. Editorial Officers

A. Georgina Edwards

Speaking on behalf of all 3 candidates. Working with Christoph as a team, already know how it works, so it's good for us to continue!

Would be good to have a record of events on our public-facing page. It's more official than the Facebook group, and would be useful to prospective students.

Hoping to start a Humans of St Catz series.

Elected by show of hands

B. Faidra Faitaki

Elected by show of hands

C. Jill Hanley

Elected by show of hands

XII. Sports Officer

A. Stephen Pates

Current sports officer, I'd like to keep doing it. We could get involved with the JCR too.

Elected by show of hands

XIII. Academic Officer

A. Elizabeth Smethurst

3rd Year DPhil in medical sciences. Currently helping run Catz Exchange with Serkan, and helping with Pint of Science. Hoping to organise some new events, in a new format!

Elected by show of hands

XIV. Unfilled Positions

A. LGBTQ Rep

Position unfilled

B. Men's Welfare Rep

Yossi Singer stood for the role. Cares about welfare of MCR. Has the recipe for waffles!

Elected by show of hands

C. Women's Welfare Rep

Katharine Biddle stood for the role. Done this role before. Welfare is important in a stressful place such as Oxford.

Elected by show of hands

D. OUSU Rep

Position unfilled

E. Merchandise and Gadgets Officer

Position unfilled

F. 4th Year Rep

Position unfilled

XV. Election Results

A. Co-Presidents

William Beuckelaers and Julian Malisano elected.

B. Treasurer

Round 1:	Richard Everett:	18
	Priyanka Bawa:	16
	Serkan Birgel:	14

No candidate reaches the quota of 24 votes, so need 2nd round of counting.

Round 2, (after eliminating 3rd place candidate and redistributing their second-preference votes.)

Richard Everett:	24
Priyanka Bawa:	20

Richard Everett elected.

C. Social Secretaries

Elisabeth Gram, Jenny Hwang & Florian Zobel elected.

D. IT & Publicity Officer

Christoph Dorn elected.

E. Secretary

Phil Earp elected.

F. Bar Manager

Gilad Amzaleg elected.