

St Catherine's College Middle Common Room

Open Meeting Minutes

Sunday 22 November 2020
at 19:00 over Zoom

In attendance:
30 MCR Members

Executive Committee Members Present:
Isavella Vouza - Co-President (Meeting Chair)
Chloe Colson – Co-President
Lucy Bartel – Secretary
Edward Yee – Treasurer



Minutes taken by MCR Secretary, Lucy Bartel

I. Approval of minutes from previous meeting

Minutes approved, no matters arising.

II. Elections

Social Secretary: Tobias Hurst [Seconders: Kalina Naidoo and Karl Frey]

TH: I'm a grad med first year. Made aware of the role through Kalina; this role reminds me of a role I held at Imperial-- Junior Dean & Social Sec combo. Why I'm interested: I really enjoyed being a part of and contributing to a community. I want to engage by organizing things, being proactive by bringing people together, creating a vibe, meeting new people, and offer something back. Read my manifesto for more points as to why you want me for the role. I don't want to overpromise in COVID time, but I want to be resourceful and creative with budget and logistics. For example I want to update the MCR website calendar so people don't lose track of what is going on—offer a cloud based calendar that people can subscribe to and more easily access what's going on in the committee. On the issue of MCR vs JCR events, I want to champion the MCR student body to make sure we can make the most of the social side of Oxford; take advantage of the community.

IV: any questions?

CC: We were discussing the calendar idea at our last meeting so we are definitely on board with that and with everything else you've said.

CC: Any objections to Tobias filling the role? This is not an official vote/ election because that has technically passed.

Tobias was unopposed and there were no objections to his confirmation as Social Secretary.

Bar Manager: Max Von Gierke [Seconders: Kalina Naidoo and Karl Welzel]

MG: I just started master's in mathematics. Why bar manger? It would be nice to have an open bar; when the restrictions lift, want to be able to have the bar open. The main purpose of the BM is to get the bar open.

TH: will your German heritage help us get some good beer?

MG: Yes! I will help with educating the MCR.

SS: Will there be mulled wine at Christmas time?

MG: Great idea!

E: What is at stake if we don't have a bar manager?

MG: not sure what will happen if we don't have a BM?

CC: The reason the MCR bar wasn't open was due to the liability issue for bar; have to have paid staff. Bar manager discusses with JCR manager so we can safely open bars; communication between BM and JCR to get logistics set up for HT; big part of the job will be opening the bar and setting it up with the JCR. COVID liability concerns won't be an issue if we logistically figure it out.

IV: Any other questions, objections?

Max was unopposed and there were no objections to his confirmation as Bar Manager.

Male Welfare Rep: Parth Patel [Seconders: Zhilin Liang and Wolfgang Stockinger]

PP: I'm a 2nd year DPhil in Physics. Why Male Welfare Rep? As an international student, it is a hard thing to settle down, harder as an international student. I found it quite stressful during first year especially with COVID; however Catz community was wonderful and helpful and a good experience. I want to do something for the college and help out towards the welfare of the college members. I looked at previous welfare records: Sunday brunch with waffles, dog walking, movie nights—not much that could happen. I want to change that and arrange as many events as we can. I understand that being here during term is quite stressful so I want to have something at least once a week to take a break and relax away from academic stress.

NW: how do you plan to help out Ananya (female welfare rep) with welfare events?

PP: I'm keen to help out with organizing games initiatives; I'm sure there will other things I can help out with.

HA: As a welfare officer, you will be asked to undertake Peer Support training—do you have time, has supervisor given the okay for that?

PP: Last year I did apply for training but didn't get to learn it; would be great to get it this year!

IV: Time commitments? Anything that would interfere?

PP: Nothing that interferes

IV: What are some other examples of events that you would help plan?

PP: Example would be a board game night to socialize and have fun and relieve stress

AS: There is the issue of taking the social secretaries' jobs when it's something like a game night; maybe just a suggestion to help them arrange it. Do you have welfare plans that aren't the social secretaries' jobs for during COVID?

PP: I would help with existing things that have been planned like walks and movie nights.

SS: What is the difference between male and female reps?

AS: All reps responsible for procuring items for sexual health and menstrual health; but it helpful to have gender reps who are approachable as well as an LGBTQIA+ rep.

NW: There may be male welfare and sexual health concerns that people might come to you with

KN: explained a little bit about social sec jobs vs welfare reps; You would fill your welfare role first, but capacity to help out with social events would be helpful on the committee. Board game idea sounds cool.

CJ: Is the BME rep a welfare rep as well?

AS: Apparently not. Not a welfare, just a BME rep

Parth was unopposed and there were no objections to his confirmation as Male Welfare Rep.

Food Rep: Noah Wescombe [Seconders:]

NW: I wanted to make sure someone was representing food interests within the MCR, college. Authored a food report in HT—priorities for sustainable and inclusive food options. If anyone has questions or concerns about diet, nutrition, ethical, sustainable eating; come to him in the interim; if anyone else is interested, come fill the position!

IV: Any questions?

KN: this is a great idea. I would like to be more wary about what I eat and the ethics behind it. Would you be interested in doing a mini introduction about eating better/more ethically? Share some recipes, make it accessible?

NW: Good idea. Part of my own personal welfare so happy to share stuff

IV: Objections?

Noah was unopposed and there were no objections to his confirmation as Food Rep.

III. Discussion of Catz House Access proposal

IV: Proposal to allow Catz house students to access college through Magdalen grounds. This is something that was discussed at Student Liaison meeting.

GO: One of the main drawbacks of Catz House is that it's so far away. Something that could help is to make that commute to college shorter. There is a potential route over the bridge by the music room, but it is locked and there are gates in the Magdalen grounds. I inquired why we couldn't access and was told no access allowed. There is potential that we can cut through if Magdalen allows access, and we would need keys for Catz house students not whole grad community. I don't know where the committee stands so it would be helpful if you could update us.

IV: Basically the committee was positive; thought it was a good idea. Emphasized some safety concerns about the bridge—need to make sure it is a sound bridge, then communicate to Magdalen, then grant access.

CC: In the doc you sent; do the Magdalen students currently have night access to the area?

GO: They have something called 'late gate keys' so yes.

CC: The issue is that the bridge doesn't have railings or lights so concern about night safety; need to see how easy to fix it; the College had already been to check it out to see feasibility, so they are taking the proposal seriously. They are following up on the safety issues and getting back to us. They had no COVID-related objections. We don't know what Magdalen will say, but the Catz side only had the safety concerns.

GO: The FAQs in my doc were in response to communications with College; they had originally said it was due to COVID but now it is about safety.

CC: Now we have forced them to consider it.

IV. AOB

E: Can I propose an idea to the men's welfare officer: men suffering from lack of haircut during lockdown? Can we organize a barber to come?

PP: Good proposal; we can look into it

AS: Will the women then ask for haircuts?

PO: I saw a good article about how to cut own hair.

EY: Might be financially not feasible.

EH: On the social media side, I wanted to alert people about the FB page and Instagram (St. Catz MCR). Feel free to like and share and keep updated with what's going on.

IV: Can confirm it is up and running

SS: if you can like the posts, people are more likely to see them!

IV: One of our social secs has resigned, so now we have two

E: what about the party?

CC: I don't think we can plan that far in advance. If it is possible (COVID), we will have our usual MCR party. Unfortunately the party that was advertised will not be occurring. Good to have ideas for when it stops, but better focus on what we can do now.

Meeting closes at 20:10