

ST. CATHERINE'S COLLEGE MIDDLE COMMON ROOM OPEN MEETING MINUTES

Sunday November 13th 2022, 7 pm, Ainsworth Graduate Center Top Floor

Committee Members Present:

Co-President: Felice Wallner

Co-President: Jeremy Sontchi

Secretary: Laurence Peinturier

Treasurer: Maximilian Langefeld

Social Secretary: Michael Hinz

Men's Welfare Rep: Juan Sandoval-Valencia

Catz House Rep: Katy Degtiareva

Minutes Taken by Laurence Peinturier

A. MINUTES

Meeting Opened: 7:10 pm

1. Approval of minutes from previous meeting

Meeting of October 23rd 2022: <https://mcr.stcatz.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Open-Meeting-October-23-2022.pdf>

2. Motion: Requesting Hall to provide food on Sundays, specifically the return of Sunday Roast Lunch

Motion proposed by: Jeremy Sontchi

Motion seconded by: Felice Wallner and John Kainer

The MCR notes:

Hall used to provide food on Sundays before COVID-19, specifically the Sunday Roast Lunch. It was noticed that this service has never returned since COVID.

The MCR believes:

Hall should return to providing food on Sundays, specifically the return of Sunday Roast Lunch.

The MCR resolves:

To request College to provide food on Sundays. Further details on mealtime can be elaborated once discussion with College has started.

Discussion:

Vivek: Hall is having staff issues, which is probably why we do not have food on Sundays. Could we, as the MCR, do anything about this issue?

Jeremy: Last year they were understaffed because of Covid-19. My perception is that they have been able to recruit a greater number of people this year.

Vivek: Does the MCR have any power over this request?

Jeremy: We have a right to request and demand things that the college has promised to us (ie. feeding us every day)

Vivek: Hall has never served food after 2-3 pm on Sundays

Jeremy: I am aware of that

Vivek: What are we looking for exactly? Lunch, dinner? What is the goal of the motion?

Jeremy: The motion is intended to add strength to our request once we bring it up to College.

Felice: There is no need to vote on the exact details/mealtimes of the motion. The Committee can do that later and do surveying within the MCR to elaborate the details.

Motion called to vote: Passed with a majority (44 for, 2 to revisit/resubmit, 2 against, 4 abstain)

3. Motion: Requesting Hall to allocate a greater number of seats for guest dinners

Motion proposed by: Jeremy Sontchi

Motion seconded by: Felice Wallner and John Kainer

The MCR notes:

There has been an extremely high number of sign-ups for guest dinners since the beginning of term (approximately 150 sign-ups for 50 seats).

The MCR believes:

Guest dinners cannot fulfill their stated purpose as they are right now. Hall should allocate a greater number of seats for guest dinners or find an alternative in collaboration with the MCR to improve the current guest dinner situation.

The MCR resolves:

To request Hall to provide a greater number of seats for guest dinners.

Discussion:

Jeremy: We have discussed about other ways to organize guest dinners. But nothing changes the fact that we just don't have enough seats (150 requests for 50 seats, every single Friday). Again, in previous years, there were staffing issues which is fair. But there are solutions: once a term we could get a lot more seats as a special one. Or increase number of MCR members servers. If we want the guest dinners to continue fulfilling their purpose, I don't think we can keep on going like this and still be able to provide a good service.

Motion called to vote: Passed with a majority (51 for, 0 to revisit/resubmit, 1 against, 0 abstain)

4. Motion: Requesting the upgrade of the Catz Gym equipment

Motion proposed by: Maximilian Langefeld

Motion seconded by: Pierfrancesco Lapolla Losasso

The MCR notes:

Currently there is no machine for leg workout, e.g. a leg press. This machine develops and strengthens several muscles, such as the quadriceps, hamstring, and gluteal muscles. Having a leg press would be a valuable addition, especially for people who are not advised to put weight on the upper body due to back problems.

Moreover, the MCR notes that some of the gym equipment is damaged or not suitable to beginners. There is not only a safety concern, but also a lack of accessibility to beginners.

The MCR believes:

This motion comes with two main concerns: welfare and safety. If College has the objective of promoting welfare and well-being for its students, the equipment in the gym should be revised. Moreover, the MCR believes that there is a lack of safety in the current gym equipment.

The MCR resolves:

To ask College to first, remove the damaged equipment in the gym (e.g.: broken metal bar and dumbbells) which will open space to new equipment. Second, bring in new gym equipment that is more beginner-friendly and in better condition (including a leg press and other additional missing equipment such as dumbbells, plates and elastic bands).

Discussion:

Felice: Would College be paying for this or the MCR?

Max: I think it's the responsibility of College. But if doesn't work out, we can all chip in (JCR, MCR, SCR, College).

Jeremy: Can we as an MCR buy something for the college? Because this would be used for the College, not the MCR specifically. Should we, and can we?

Felice: I think we shouldn't; there is a liability here: if something happens, it's our responsibility. Everyone chipping in might be better in that sense.

Vivek:

- Tried requesting this last year. Didn't work.
- Do we have enough space in the gym?
- We need more leg workout stuff other than the leg press: squat platform etc.
- College told me last year: work the machines until they break / there is not enough space.

Juan: Define what broken machine is? Those are not safe, not stable. Free-weights are not beginner friendly. Gym is very old, terrible dumbbells, not suitable for beginners. There is a need for an upgrade. If the college wants their students to focus on welfare and well-being; then this is a need. And there is a safety concern/beginner-friendly concern.

Felice: For the issue of space; College needs to deal with this.

Max: We can definitely do some re-arranging.

Someone suggested: putting machines on the top floor?

Felice: The current situation in the gym right now is that female-identifying people or beginners tend to go more upstairs since it is less "intimidating" (more experienced people tend to use more of the machines downstairs). Bringing a few machines upstairs could help beginning to feel less intimidated and be able to use some of the machines without having to go downstairs. Also, it could encourage more experience people to help and guide beginners.

Felice: We can raise the motion as one package with multiple details; safety, welfare, removing old equipment, creating space, adding new equipment.

Jeremy: will tell College that this motion comes with 2 concerns: welfare and safety

Pier Francesco: College did a safety check in May. It's not enough, there should be at least 2 safety checks a year.

Someone suggested: It could be good to have direct evidence and clearer proof that the current situation is unsafe.

Someone asked: Could we use the squash courts?

Felice: Floor is very different and putting machines there might be difficult.

Jeremy: Squash courts are in high demand. And additional work/expense for college to accommodate the squash courts.

Jeremy: College's focus is on Catz house right now. We could raise this for long term for gym upgrade.

Juan: If we all chip in (MCR, JCR, SCR, College), the amount given by each should be proportional to the gym use by each party.

Jeremy: Could also work with donations as well? From alumni etc

Motion called to vote: Passed with a majority (43 for, 1 to revisit/resubmit, 3 against, 5 abstain)

5. Info from the Committee

- Upcoming investments in the MCR: new furniture purchase:
 - o The MCR Committee will come back with more information to the MCR community to vote on design, ideas, and furniture.
- Second round of elections in Hilary for open committee positions:
 - o Social Secretary position
 - o Bar Manager
 - o Environment Officer
 - o Academic Officer
 - o BME Officer
 - o Merchandising Officer
 - o 4th Year Rep
 - o Sports Officer
 - o Digital Officer
 - o And we can create new regular committee positions as well if you want to get involved.

Meeting adjourned: 19:47 pm

6. MCR Committee Response to Online Google Form Comments

1. “Celebrations in kitchens during nighttime should be banned”

MCR Committee Response: As per the College Residential Agreement of 2022/2023, if there is noise on College Accommodation after hours (11 pm), this issue should be brought up to the Porter’s Lodge and they will be able to help you with this situation.

2. “Could we have bar snacks for sale in the MCR Bar please?”

MCR Committee Response: The MCR bar license does not allow us to sell bar snacks for health standards reasons unfortunately.

3. Guest Dinners: “if capacity cannot be increased, we could instead have two guest nights (Friday and Saturday)?”
4. “Really get more formal slots! Can raise price if needed”
5. “More seats for Catz Night”

MCR Committee Response: Thank you for all these points. The MCR Committee will engage the discussion with Hall and evaluate the potential options that we have. The conversation will be wide ranging.

6. “Can abstention be added to the list of responses in the future?”

MCR Secretary Response: Noted. I will make sure this option is added. Thank you for the feedback.

7. “Can we find a way to put on the music in MCR without depending on anyone?”

MCR Committee Response: We will try again and do our best, but we ran into stability issues with Wi-Fi last year when it was trialed.