**St Catherine’s College Middle Common Room Open Meeting Agenda <3**

Sunday, May 5th, 2024, 8:00 PM

1. AGENDA

1. **Approval of minutes from previous meeting**

NOTES:

AYE

1. **Approval of Motion:** Motion to Address the college about the mold issue

Proposers: Juliette Zaccour and Clémence Lombard

Seconder: Alexander Sampson

***Synopsis:***

As Catz House and Welfare Representatives, we have received multiple complaints from students living in Catz House, who have expressed health and welfare concerns. One repeated concern is in regards to the mold in the building, with worries that the mold might be in the ventilation and have negative health consequences. Another common complaint is plumbing and heating issues.

This motion is in line with the MCR’s efforts in improving quality of life for Catz House residents, to make living situations less imbalanced compared to on-site college members.

***This MCR notes:***

a. Conducting a mold inspection would allow to proceed to necessary action before the issue worsens and affects student’s health, and would reassure students.

b. Appropriate maintenance of plumbing and heating, and a form of compensation for situations where students have to live without heating for several days without warning would enable students to live in better conditions

***This MCR believes:***

A full inspection of the mold situation at Catz House, proper maintenance of plumbing and heating, and proposing alternatives or proper compensation for situations where students are living in unsanitary conditions would enable students to live in better conditions.

***This MCR resolves:***

To address the college about the mold issue and make them aware of the unsanitary state of the Catz House buildings.

**NOTES:**

Tobias: Where is the modl? Is it at the top flours? 4 years ago there were problems where there was water and constant issues of leaking through the paintwork in the building. So, it has been around for a while

Alexander: It is a similar issue. They fixed roof in michaelmas. But in my room the paint int eh wall was peeling off. Not just in top floor, but across Catz house,w here that issues has been very clear. College just painted over it

Tobais: It si wroth noting that someone living there has experience similar issues. They said that they fixed it, so good luck

Clemence: Howeve,r we are seeing health actual issues. Some people have developed allergies and it can lead to pneumonia nad other issues if it is in the ventilation and lead ot bad things. So we should address this

Lorenza: Motion is to propose to talk to college about eh situations and I am sure welfare and Catz House rep will come with a list of demands

Vivek: I want to add on to what was said earlier. One of the issues is the mold in the ceiling, which was also present in my room. Pieces of plaster fall down on my bed. There is still mold in certain areas. And so what they did was move me to another room, where I resided in Catz House. And they only redid the POP, so the leaks or at least the structural issues, which led to these leaks, I don’t know if they have been addressed. To the best of my knowledge, I think not, because I coul,d not see any brickwork or any external water-proofing to be done. Given that, it is likely a reoccurance. PaND SECONDLY, TEHRE IS FUNGUS AND MOLD IN THE BATHROOMS AND AREAS, WHERE DESPIOTE THERE BEING WORKERS IN THE AREA, IT WAS NOT ADDRESED. ПPeople were here, they were doing this, it is good to do a thing that is more substantial. Second, plumbing and heatingissues have been going for a while. Owen lived in the same place. He moved out. Just like three people before him. The heating and plumbing problems have been bad. They supposedly fixed some of the boilers and they have improved since Hillary, but the entire first term and winter we had intermittent heating and no hot water on certain days. There are a number of other issues in general in Catz house that Alex has done a great job addressing. So, there has been significant improvement thanks to him, but there are a lot of everyday issues which you don’t face on site. For example, when the fire alarm was raised, we have to go outside immediately and somebody has to turn it off. This requires 20-30 minutes, as opposed to people on site, and then some of the devices are not working: heating shuts off until maintenance comes again to fix these issues. This is all last term issues.

Alexander: I think what me and Clem decided is that we can show the broad narrative of what has been happening to college. Since it is filled with 9-month postgrads, there is a lack of accountability, because of quick change of cohorts. So, I have been working with college to deal with some issues (boilers), but even the actual infrastructure of rooms is problematic. There is a secondary issue: we are quite removed from College. We are a subsidiary, not a main site central area. It is not the best place to live, and it feels a bit abandoned by college since they don’t really look after us. And I would like to see that changed for future generations.

Lorenza: But some positives have happened. We have a common room with decorations and balcony, and if we continue with this, we can make Catz House a beautiful place. So, is everyone in agreement with this motion? Does anybody have any questions, addenda? Should we go with Yes

VOTING: Unanimity – 24 YES; 0 NO; 0 Withhold

3. **Approval of Motion:** Motion to Amend the Default Dietary Selection on the Dinner Signup Website

Proposer: Ronald Cvek, Ilia Curto Pelle

Seconder: Lorenza Wolska de la Torre

***Synopsis:***

As representatives concerned with the welfare of participants using our dinner signup website, we have received multiple feedback entries expressing issues with the default vegetarian option. Users have reported frequently overlooking the pre-selected option, resulting in numerous instances of incorrect dietary preferences being recorded. This has not only led to operational inefficiencies but also detracted from user satisfaction, as meals did not meet the dietary expectations of the attendees.

This motion aligns with our efforts to enhance user experience and accuracy in meal selection, ensuring that all dietary preferences are actively and correctly chosen by users without default assumptions.

***This MCR notes:***

a. Reverting the default vegetarian selection to a neutral, choice-required option would reduce the number of incorrect meal selections, addressing user complaints about receiving meals that do not align with their dietary preferences.

b. Ensuring that users actively select their meal preference will lead to more accurate catering orders, reducing food waste and administrative burden caused by last-minute meal changes and corrections.

***This MCR believes:***

Allowing users to actively choose their meals without a preset default will increase satisfaction and efficiency, reflecting true dietary preferences and reducing the logistical challenges currently experienced due to the default vegetarian setting.

***This MCR resolves:***

To update the dinner signup website by removing the default vegetarian option, thereby requiring all users to actively select their dietary preference during the registration process. This change aims to directly address and rectify the issues of user dissatisfaction and operational inefficiencies as currently experienced.

NOTES:

Ilia: This is a serious issue and has been causing problems with guest hosts. The reason for this motion is the decision of the MCR form back in 2018 (?). This will not impact the choice available to MCR members, but just make it more likely people wanting to make their dietary preference clear, will dos o

Lorenza: Comments? Questions? Concerns? Ready to put this to a vote

VOTING: UNANIMITY – 16 YES; 1 NO; ABSTAIN - 7

4. Approval of Associate Memberships

The MCR has the option of giving MCR memberships to Alumni, Visiting students, and mature JCR students. Applicants must contact the Secretary for this. Associate Members must be approved by the MCR in an Open Meeting. Applications for Michaelmas term were processed before this meeting, so the vote will be held retrospectively. The following applications require approval:

Whitney Deng – associate

Manuel Shreiber – associate

Yuchen Yao – associate

NOTES:

Lorenza: First two are recommended by Catz Fellows. Third has been very enthusiastic.

Lorenza Wolska de la Torre proceeded to read out Whitney Deng’s statement

Jonas: What does MCR membership entail

Lorenza: Basically, they have access to the room. They can sign up to formals and guest dinners, and I think that is about it?

Pierfrancesco: What does JCR mature mean?

Lorenza: IF you are above 21 and undergrad, you can kinda hang out with us. So, like fourth years. Vote for Whitney DENG

VOTING:

UNANIMITY -24 votes YES

Lorenza read out the blurb for Manuel Schreiber

Ilia: Seconded. He is a cool guy.

VOTING:

UNANIMITY – 24 votes YES

Lorenza reads out the blurb for Yuchen Yao:

Jonas: She said she would be an approved members of Catz in Hillary.

Lorenza: It is OK, we will approve her for Trinity. That is OK.

Jonas: What is her link to Catz?

Lorenza: She is excited, doesn’t seem formal

Mel: Didn’t say she is Law faculty. Maybe she saw the buildings.

Lorenza: Yes, she is supper close,

Mel. But someone has clearly done their research

VOTING:

– 18 YES; 1 NO; 5 ABSTAIN

5. MCR Committee Elections

*Regular Committee*

1. Non-executive (interim) Bar manager

Adam Gumieniczek

Seconders: Clémence Lombard, Mélanie Steen

NOTES:

TOBIAS: Would you be able to run for positions and not tell the senior tutor that Ashok that this person has run for a position?

Owen: DO people have to be in Oxford during the summer to fill this role?

Ilia: NO

Vivek: Last time we had a ramp up; so a lot of things get booked a month in advance; brainstorming meetings in Trinity; 1-2 over summer; then you have more focused and frequent meetings in the month leading up to it; this is what happened last time and you can tell us how it worked out. The regular committee is also involved in this. 4 people on freshers’ committee. But committee continue having authority, so they need help on this issue.

Lorenza: Have a thought about this. We will have a meeting in a month to elect these positions, so tell your friends, think about it, but for now we will be voting for one new, well, kind of, regular committee members, who is the non-executive interim bar manager.

Adam proceeds to make his speech.

Vivek: Lots of concerns. We know that the biscuits we eat all the time, he has always been on time, he has always been in the back and stashed. Adam has stayed online with the machine people for two days. He is a qualified candidate and he has done a lot of stuff on time in which he is super good. And those who eat biscuits and drink tea can see that.

Mel: On a more serious note, you have mentioned that you have learned from the best. I have seen you work from juan, so I think you are in a better position than anybody else to fill this position.

Adam: I started the Japanese Slipper as a cocktail drink.

Enes: Would a 50% personnel cut in the tea and biscuits officers seriously minimize the quantity of tea and biscuits.

Lorenza: Are you staying as tea and biscuits?

Adam: YES

Vivek: It is like a sous-chef.

Lorenza: Voting

VOTING:

UNANIMITY - 24 -YES

6. Voting on proposed Furniture changes by Furniture Secretary, Mélanie.

i. Presentation

ii. Voting

NOTES:

Tobias: I see a lot of silver. Is the question to have silver finishes on all the metalic stuff.

Mel: Yes. I know you had the specific issue for fitting everything together. Unfortunately, we do not have brass finishes on these chairs and I think if we have them, it will be something we have been limited on from college. The color is not what we will go for. We will look for something similar to the wall. For exmaple, the collor of the chairs will nto stand out. But finding brass-finished furniture is near impossible and the reason we are using the furniture we are choising is the discount we are getting from college, which is about 50%. It is favorable value for money. And that is something we might do in counter, but is not too much of an issues. The reason for the big silver side-counter is that we need to have something that is kitchen-level and sanitary. So we need something that can suppor the weight of the coffee machine.

Tobias: It is not decided yet what the coffee machine will be?

Mel: No, it has been ordered. If we are talking about prioriyt of order, everything in red is not halved (but will be). Additional things (e.g. bras finishign can be added later), but for the current priority, we need a space for the mugs, a trolley to move them to the dishwasher, and the coffee machine space, which needs to accommodate its size and length

Vivek: I am asuimng that the picture show where in the room they need to be put?

Mel: Hopefully most will be movable, because with bops and such they need to be moved. The only thing that cannot be moved is the last comfy sofa that is more than half of the demands we had in the survye. So if the sofa goes there you can push it against the wall and push it back to keep it at safe and clean as possible.

Vivek: Two things. 1. Curerntly ,t he MCR has three sofas. What are we doing?

Mel: It will be a gradul phase out. The current conversattion is that I don’t think it reasonable to have a “swan” sofa, which are beautiful, but super uncomfortable and expensive. I don’t think it was good for budget. However, Kat brought it up and the master was very excited and happy to allocate more budget specifically for this. So, if she wants to put money for this, which I think is not a good use for money, then that’s fine and I will not refuse that sofa, but it is not in line with what was added on the survey. So we will keep two grey sofas (or replace one with a bench), but to replace one of them with a sofa

Vivek: That’s very clear. I think that if we have another sofa, it can be used both as a bench, whereas the opposite is difficult.

Mel: The reasons is the difficulty of carrying these during social events. This was something raised on Sunday, when we presented this to the committee. Ilia made the point that the bench does not make much of a difference, since it is still there and may not even be used.

Vivek: What is this Sunday meeting?

Mel: We had an executive committee meeting and I presented this to let them know what will come in front of this event. And they gave us some feedback.

Vivek: Would it be possible to have those meeting notes?

Mel: Sure

Vivek: You said the portion on the right is study space.

Mel: I don’t have a card, so I am using powerpoint. The semicircle is taking the floor plan and applying things. Those are small, 90-cm tables that allow for individual study spaces, which was an important point on the survey.

Vivek: On ething I want to argue is that ciruclat tables is very coffee-like, which leads to less surface area for putitng htings like a laptop. Secondly, if you like an individual sutdy space, but if a tbale has multiple uses, but can be used also as an individual table, that is better than a study tbale.

Mel: The idea of a circle was a continuity from the fact they were similar in style to the ones we have rn. Also, circulat has disadvantages, but also advantages. You can fit more than 2-3 people around it. Secondly, there are a few in college. The problem is that people take tables and not returned as they are returned for study. If we had tables that look like they belong here, there might be a chance they will be taken less frequently. The other thing is that we need to be resourceful with the MCR as a study space, becausee the library is closed. Hopefully, when the library reopens, it will become more a relaxing and less a study space, so they might me more usable in the future. But if you are adamant about square tables, we are willing to budge.

Vivek: I was looking for functionality, not aesthetics, since other people know better. These are things that I look for in a study space. Square tables over round. Larger tables, so it can seat two people, since those can be used as coffee tables as well as study tables. I think there are only 1-2i in college. The silver ciruclar ones are outside the JCR and I am not sure if there are elsewhere. It is garden-esque furniture. Differentiation might be worth. And secondly, square is larger and useful, both for coffe and study. So, that was one thing

Ilia: Shape needs to be foldable, since they need to be moved.

Vivek: This is a space that needs to be used for lots of stuff. If we had small ciruclar tables, that would be best for things like painting.

Mel: There could be a lot of details that can be argued. But, for now, it is Trinity term and we need to move forwward with this. If the tables are a huge concern, please come and talk to me, but the time for specific demands was in the survey. I understand the concern about the limitations on time, but we need to order it as soon as posisble so we can use it at list a bit before we go. So, please come after to talk to me, if you have huge concerns.

Vivek: There are argumetns in the earlier meeting

Mel: We talked about the bench in particular and the sofas. This is mostly what we spoke about. But more on that meeting can be elucidated.

Vivek: I think I misunderstood.

Mel: Yes, tahtw as the extent.

Adam: Why did you decide to go for swan chairs? Are there no other designs? Egg might be more expensive?

Mel: Swan chairs, because downstairs in the SCR they use what I can best des ribe as airpot chair, a think, not very fun, not very comfy chair. The swain chairs would work in a circular room, si a bit more fun, and is for a younger age group than the professors right below us. This would also reflect this is a more equal space, but it implies seats. And they are stackable.

Alexandra: Just a quick point, which might be individual. If we are undecided between sofa nad bench, from accessibility point of view, with bench, you have no back support, so people like me cannot use a bench.

Mel: That is a very good point you have raised.

Alexandra: So for some people it might not matter and I am the only one, but other people com ein as well. And I always find benches inaccessible, so if you are undecided, this might be better.

Mel: That is a very good point, because the bench was brought in mind with Ilia. If you feel that is important, we can take it into consideration. And the budget is not a huge change, which can be used for stands or speakers, or anything else we might need. If you would like this sent out, please feel free to do it.

Lorenza: We will also post it in the minutes.

Mel: If some of you see this for the first time, you might need some time to think about it before we go forward with it.

Alexander; In a normal year, the bottom two floors, hwo were they used?

Tobias: Bottom floor is a bookable space, including MCR. In years gone by, it waas just us. Moving ofrward, I don’t know what they plan to do. But when the building was opened, anybody could book it, especially MCR with priority for late-night event. The ground floor is a nice open space to not worry about accommodating 100 people, since large-capacity events were held on the ground floor. I don’t know what will happen, but this is the precedent.

Alexander: What about Raptakos?

Tobias: It is a seminar room. I don’t think the peoople who designed this building knew what they want to do, but it was much more studuy- and teaching-oriented. You would need to be a fellow or SCR to book it during previous times.

Vivek: Raptakos is dead set against booking. Ther eason is that the one they rent out for conferences and that there are a lot of bookings for teaching. As a consequence, they don’t want us to trash the place. The ground floor was used for some of the parties in the past year and I hope that after the SCR is moved out, it will again be available to us, with the caveat that the walls should not be trashed or taped against. The graduate center, despite being called the graduate center, two floors of it are used by college for college thigns: conferences, teaching, events, and other small meeting. And the MCR is the only space where we have more complete control over.

Alexander; I was just thinkign with the library reopening, since we have put a lot of long-term vision, for making this a multifunctional social space. I don’t think the tables are great. But that is just me.

Vivek: What about bean bags?}

Mel: There are a lot of details being left out. Lights, speakers, TV, not on, so they don’t fall into the cattegory. I don’t care about a bean bag room.

Lorenza: Proposed voting

Mel: I would like to see it taken to the fabric meeting next week, but if you feel like there are still discussions to be had about it, that is also ok.

Max: When is the next fabric kmeeting?

Mel: Fine point, since I have not selected as ofa yet. I find it hard on me to make a choice that is OK for everybody, so I am happy to have part two, where we agree on some of the esential stuff (coffee machine, need for study space), and then a second vote after fabric meeting on things that are not clear. So, let’s divide a vote on things that go on the fabric.

Vivek: IF I understand correclty, the Coffee corner is set, since the aesthetics are approved in discussion and nobody disagrees on that. Do you think that would enable you to get started?

Mel: The coffee corner is the least controversial of this demand and the most pressing because of the coffee machine. So let’s move and vote that today and with the study spaces and our-colored charis for individual study, I will move this to next week’s meeting. Those things involving Fritz Hausen orde,r which we can order in bulk and get the discount in bulk, and the order arriving in bulk. The sofa will not be a Fritz Hausen sofa for monetary reasons. I am happy to pick out the plant. But if we could agree on the items from that big order and address those two main areas, that woul dbe best. So, items: Tables and chairs for individual study and the two swan chairs, sturdy coffee table, and items of furniture supporting coffee machine. And we can come back to discuss the sofa. And I am happy to axe the agenda.

Tobias: I think coffee corner should happen. For me, the series 500 chairs, I don’t know, just htinking about the space and about what the sofa’s going to look like and how the chairs will form with it. Yes, the chairs are stackable, but I don’t know if it might be a bit incongruate, if we don’t yet know what the sofa will look like.

Mel: The idea for the sofa is to be the most comfortable, unobtrusive, understurbing sofa that can be found within the means of the budget. I understand you have specific design concerns about finishes, about brass, and I love that detailed mind, but the problem is that whne I took this on, I removed part of me that cares deeply about this in favor of making this a project for everybody. So we need to accommodate the needs, within reason, of everybody. And sadly, these detials inhibit that and I don’t think it is reasonable.

Tobias: I wouldn’t have an issues, it is just because the college has given us this buydget and ti is a big commitment. And this is a big commitment that will be inherited for many years and you want to gauge what the general student population wants, not one personally. But I don’t know, I have said my bit and I appreciate your pragmatism with these things.

Mel: My concerns for this also is that the factor people need to approve these things. The only thing I have not found eslewhere are the round tables. Most of the other stuff is in college, so the likelihood of them saying no is unlikely.

Tobias; AM I right in saying that a lot of what has gone into this plan is college’s reticence to something else than Fritz Hansen.

Mel: No. It is also that in the survey. It was the largest decider of what went into that. I wanted this to be the feedback of everybody. The second was the consideration of factory people. First was choosing furntiture to address the needs of people and secondly furniture that will be approved.

Lorenza: We have been going for a while. As per the constitution, an open meeting reuqires a decision of voting.

VOTING:

Lorenza: Should we vote to take a vote on this? Is anybody except Vivek and Tobias concerned? I don’t’ want to have a back and forth discussion;

Vivek: let’s split it into 1, 2, 3.

Mel: A little bit, but the ideal would be to arrive at the fabric meeting with one order of furniture. So if today we can crunch through some of these concerns and address everything we need from a single manufacture, then we can make a big order, we can get them quickly. I want us to agree that a study space is a need and that is what we will vote on and that the coffee space is a meet. I am willing to have a vote on sofas and other details.

Vivek: Yes, I agree, those things are important and should be resolved quickly. You will be going to fabric committee anywhere, even if everything is voted on. You will still attend that meeting in 4 weeks. Even if you put the full order, the constraints of the current vote will concerns what we can do afte.r Firstly, if we can discsus quickly. Second, next fabric meeting is in the next 4 weeks

Mel: Next meeting I want to approve ths ofa.

Vivek: Yes, but you have to vote for everythiing.

Mel: Yes, but do you get I need to order all the stuff from a single manufacturer?

Vivek: Yes, I do. Do you undertsand what I am saying/

Mel: I hear 2 separate order from same place

Vivek: Yes, I say we make two votes for two approvals

LORENZA: WE VOTE

VOTING: COFFEE CORNER (trolley with mugs on it, isde-table that will accommodate the kitchen, the coffee machine tabole, a replacement for the coffee table made from wood, and two chairs to fulfill the demand of Jakobsemn furniture)

23 – YES UNANIMITY

Max; I think it would be best for everybody we pull up the powerpoint agaiun.

MEL: It would be great if we can discusss study space and seating in one go. If the majority are happy with it and have no concerns, then we proceed.

Vivek: How have you used small tables as work places?

Adam: The height is the problem.

Vivek: So, if you use them, there is a litmus tes.t

Mel: Yes, they do not have square tables. So we are doing round tables.

Lorenza: Let’s agree if we should vote on this rn (round vs Jakobsen charis for study)

YES – 14; NO – 2; ABSTAIN – 3

Lorenza; Who is in favor of this dsesign (Meel’s?)

YES – 15; NO – 1; ABSTAIN – 3

Both motions pass.

Lorenza: Now we have the meeting reserved for other bussiness.

1. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Any other comments not pertaining to the agenda may be brought up at this point.

NONE Raised.

Lorenza: Good night. Thanks for everybody for coming.