



St Catherine's College Middle Common Room

Open Meeting

Minutes

Monday, 25 May 2026 at 7:00pm

Hybrid: Middle Common Room, Ainsworth Graduate Centre and
via Microsoft Teams

1. General Business

Item	Led By	Related Documents
1.1 Welcome	Co-presidents	
<p>Meeting opened with 30 attendees.</p> <p>The Presidents thanked everyone for having them as presidents for the past year, and hoped exams were going well.</p>		
1.2 Approval of previous Open Meeting Minutes	Co-presidents	Pages 2-4
<p>Members approved the previous Open Meeting minutes.</p>		
1.3 Accommodation Fee Increase Update	Co-Presidents	
<p>As a preliminary point, it was reported that the College had been asked for clarification on guest room price increases, and noted that the Committee was still awaiting a response. It was hoped that there may still be some movement on this.</p> <p>Lara noted that, following the last Open Meeting, negotiations with College in relation to the accommodation fee increase were ongoing. The original proposed increase had been 6.8%. The MCR had indicated that 4% would be a more reasonable figure, but College had responded that 5% was the lowest increase they would accept. Lara explained that there did not appear to be much further room for negotiation within the current meeting context.</p> <p>It was noted that, if the MCR collectively considered the proposed increase unreasonable, there could be scope for a collective response. Members asked what leverage the MCR had in practice, noting that rents had not increased the previous year. Lara responded that, in order to have a meaningful impact, any response would need to be considered and coordinated, potentially including action such as a rent strike, although similar efforts had not progressed far in the past.</p> <p>Sunny added that College <i>does</i> care about the impact on students, but noted that the MCR was not involved in the final meetings. Members observed that many colleges are currently increasing fees, and that the Oxford SU can help coordinate responses and share material between colleges. A coordinated intercollegiate response may have more impact, particularly where it is more visible externally. The Oxford SU also holds information about what forms of action have and have not worked elsewhere.</p> <p>Sunny noted that the MCR's position is complicated by the fact that there had been a rent freeze for the past couple of years. While the reduction from the original proposed increase was positive, the outcome remained less than ideal. It was noted that there may be limited scope for official action beyond submitting an official letter to College ahead of the relevant meeting.</p> <p>The Presidents will communicate the outcome to the student body, although it was acknowledged that this is difficult when conveying unwelcome news. It was also suggested that individual students may have particular circumstances, arguments, or evidence that could be raised with College.</p>		

Members interested in pursuing further action on this issue were encouraged to contact the committee.

2. Motions

Item	Proposed By	Related Documents
2.1 Motion to Support Catz Bike Nurse	Rizqullah Rasyiddin	Page 5
<p>Riz reported that the Sunday bike-fixing initiative, introduced in Michaelmas, had been very successful and had seen significant demand. However, he noted that many of the parts used had come from personal supplies, and that personal funds had been used to repair students' bikes. He expressed the hope that the initiative had provided a useful service to the community.</p> <p>It was noted that the initiative had not received any financial support to date. Riz requested approximately £50 to reimburse costs incurred so far, with receipts available for items purchased. He also requested a further £50 for the following year, should the initiative be supported and continued.</p> <p>Elena strongly supported the initiative, noting that the organisers had effectively kept many students' bikes running throughout the year. She described it as a valuable initiative that supported students and advocated in favour of continuing it.</p> <p>It was clarified that the request was for £50 for the current term and £50 for the following year. Riz explained that he was hoping to pass the initiative on to someone else, although a successor had not yet been found. When asked whether anyone was available to take over, he noted that he was currently speaking with someone from the JCR.</p> <p>Motion passed (26 votes in favour, 1 abstain)</p>		

3. Committee Elections

Item	Led By	Related Documents
3.1 Co-Presidents <i>Jasmina Silmemaj and Lucas Irwin</i>	Co-Presidents	Pages 6-7
<p>Jas reflected on attending the MCR elections at the beginning of the year, noting that the room had initially felt much larger and the community less familiar, whereas many faces were now familiar. She said that the MCR had made the year incredible, and that she wanted to help bring the same sense of community to the next cohort. Jas added that she wanted to do this alongside Lucas, whom she described as a close friend.</p> <p>Lucas agreed, adding that Catz had been the highlight of his Oxford experience. He said he had not seen another college with a stronger graduate community, and wanted to ensure that this continued to be emphasised, particularly with the reopening of the Dining Hall. Lucas noted his close relationship with the current Presidents, which would enable a smooth transition. He said there was no one else other than Jas that he would want to run with.</p> <p>When asked about relevant experience, Jas noted that she was currently the DPhil Rep, had organised events and attended meetings, had previously served as Social Secretary for the Italian Society during undergraduate study, and was currently a graduate representative in her department. She had also been involved with the LGBT committee and a young professionals committee. Lucas noted experience as Catz House Rep, involvement with a national think tank, and previous experience running a debating society.</p>		

In response to a question about potential events making use of the Dining Hall or the Library, Lucas noted that other colleges hosted events in their halls and suggested that Catz should do more to incorporate similar events and “put Catz on the map”. Jas said she hoped to hold a strong BOP, noting that the community had needed to be defended over the past year, and expressed the hope that this would no longer be necessary now that the Hall had reopened.

A member expressed support for the candidates’ enthusiasm but noted that College had been strongly opposed to events in the Hall. They asked what “relaunching Catz” would mean if the Hall could not be used. Lucas responded that the JCR could also be used, and that even if tables could not be moved in the Hall, themed formals could be arranged. He also suggested making better use of the JCR and Library, noting that things had been more subdued in recent years and that there might now be more flexibility. Jas added that she hoped to host a garden party later this year or early next year. She said that the Hall was a strength, but that if a BOP in Hall was not possible, the MCR could still try themed formals to keep tables in place. She noted that she hoped to collaborate with other college MCRs.

Lou noted that there had been ongoing efforts to have Friday Guest Dinners taken out of the Social Secretary’s remit, and encouraged the candidates to continue pursuing this. Lucas said he would work with Lou to continue to push for this. Jas thanked Lou for the work already done and indicated that they would continue it.

When asked what the current committee could have done better, Jas invited suggestions from members on how things could be improved. Lucas noted that taking over early would allow the committee to prepare the Michaelmas term card earlier.

Nominations passed (28 votes in favour, 2 votes against)

3.2 Secretary <i>Andrew Wood</i>	Co-Presidents	Page 8
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Andrew introduced himself as a DPhil student in Mathematics. He said that he valued the community at Catz and would like to support it by serving on the committee. He described himself as reliable and organised.

When asked about previous experience, Andrew noted that he had taken notes for all of his courses and shared these with professors. When asked whether he enjoyed writing Bulletins, he responded that he did.

Nomination passed (26 votes in favour, 4 abstain)

3.3 Treasurer <i>Patrick Jones-O’Brien</i>	Co-Presidents	Page 9
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Patrick introduced himself as a first-year MPhil student in Development. He echoed previous comments about the strength of the MCR community and said he was keen to keep contributing to it.

He noted that he had previously served as Treasurer on committees and had already been working with Wen Hao in the Catz MCR Bar. He reported that the MCR bar was profitable, and noted that there was a wealth of institutional knowledge that could be built upon.

When asked where he thought the MCR should spend more money, Patrick suggested that there was some desire to increase the scale of social events, and that funding could be directed towards this. He also suggested that more money could be spent on reimbursements.

In response to a question about international travel, Patrick clarified that he would only be travelling over the summer and would be in Oxford for all three terms.

Nomination passed (29 votes in favour, 1 abstain)

4. Any Other Business

Item	Led By	Related Documents
4.1 Thanks to the 2025/2026 Committee	Co-Presidents	
Thank you to everyone on the Committee!		

Meeting opened: 7:15pm

Meeting closed: 7:51pm