



Trinity Hall MCR
Committee Meeting
6.00pm, 30th November 2015
MCR Blue Room

1 Attendance

1.1 Present

Charlotte Attwood (CA, chair), Charles Board (CB), Philip Brown (PB), Madeline Grimm (MG), Xanthe Gilmore (XG), Will Miller (WM), Peppar Cyr (PC), Gareth Matthey (GM), Daniel Zimmerman (DZ), Mich Liebst (ML), Matt Samson (MS), Isabel Estevez (IE), Dan Bowen (DB), Rob Gard (RG), Victor Chu & Verity Smith (VC & VS, or Team V), Chris Wilson (CW), Johan Hendrikson (JH), Spencer Brennan (SB).

1.2 Apologies

Alina Kozlovski (AlKo), Allison Kindig (AlKi), Nard Choi (NC), Jordan Hatter (JH)

2 Quorum

Quorum is 50 % + 1 of the number of members of the MCR Committee. This correspond to 13 people; 20 were present, so quorum was reached.

3 Minutes of last meeting

No minutes needed to be approved. The minutes of this term's Open Meeting will be approved at next term's Open Meeting.

4 Matters arising

4.1 Committee position reports

Each Committee role described what they'd done so far this term. GM and DZ have worked on events for next term, and been available for any welfare discussions. WM and XG have run a successful film night with mulled wine. The MCR has been spectacularly decorated for Christmas with the assistance of others. Work is ongoing for the debate next term, but a room has been booked and discussions with the SCR are continuing. Internal Ents have a few exciting ideas for super hall themes, but these are still highly classified. They are attempting to track down Scottish speakers for the Burns Night dinner. Working with Pauline Kiesow (PK), the Charity Raffle at the Christmas Dinner has been organised.

SB has been focused on handing over last year's vice president role; work as Alumni Officer is just starting. The Stewards have been working to organise the Christmas Dinner. Team V have organised swaps with Robinson and Johns which were successful and well-attended; a Churchill swap is coming up, as is an ice skating trip. So far progress on the planned MCR jacuzzi has stalled but they are hopeful these issues can be resolved soon.

CB now frighteningly has supreme authority over MCR accounts. Committee members wanting to be reimbursed should download the claim form from the website, submit it on paper to CB's pigeonhole, and wait for bank transfer or a cheque. Work on this year's Budget is continuing with Tobias Wenzel. DB has been working on the Google Doc of Responsibility, which will ensure good ideas turn into good events. DB is also attending CUSU council.

JH is working with the JCR on Fair Trade initiatives. There is also a plan for an energy promises scheme for the New Year; details to follow. JK has updated the Committee page on the website to show our grinning faces, and made a PowerPoint

for the Porter's Lodge showcasing the gorgeous new MCR Committee. Behind the scenes there's been lots of work getting access to the various IT systems.

PC has been involved in providing plenty of welfare advice to MCR members. PB has been forcing all the Committee members to read the Constitution, a challenging task which has finally been completed.

CW and AlKo have been working on the MCR study groups. So far these have been held on Saturdays but attendance has been extremely low. They will look at changing these events to a different day. First preparations for the McLuhan Symposium have begun. In addition, talks with post-doctoral research associates (PDRAs) have been held. We are trying to encourage the PDRAs to become more involved in MCR life; they're full members and welcome at all events, but this may not have been made clear enough to them at the start of the year. In addition, work is ongoing to set up a mentoring scheme where PDRAs would mentor other members of the MCR, providing advice on life in the ivory towers of academia, etc.

CA has been involved in many discussions with College on a myriad of issues. Some members of the MCR were unhappy that they were unable to book a seat at MCR Christmas Dinner this year because seats sold out very fast. There is a fundamental problem that the hall can't fit all the members of the MCR. A good solution for next year would be to ensure booking for MCR Christmas Dinner closes before booking for the joint JCR-MCR Christmas Dinner (which is often quite poorly attended). Then any MCR members who can't get tickets for the MCR Christmas Dinner would still be able to attend a Christmas Hall. There was general consensus this was a good resolution to the issue.

4.2 MCR-JCR mentor scheme.

IE has been working with PB on a mentorship scheme where MCR members would mentor JCR members in their later years to provide advice about applying for MPhils/PhDs, details about the realities of postgraduate study, etc. Details of the scheme are basically ironed out. We would ask for volunteers among the MCR for mentors who would be willing to answer their mentees' questions, and also take them to Grad Hall once a term or so to have a chat about postgraduate life. These mentors would list their areas of experience (e.g. "Gates Scholar" or "Did a Masters in the US"). The JCR would do the hard work of matching up mentors and mentees; the scheme would likely be restricted to initially 3rd year JCR members, extended to 2nd year if there is sufficient interest on both sides. IE suggested that one possibility was to add the mentorship information to the already existing list of Academic Interests set up by AlKo and CW. However it was felt that this would probably work better as a separate scheme, to ensure that we only get MCR members who are actually keen to do some mentoring. PB suggested we'd rather get a small number of interested mentors who will actually help their mentees than a large number of more apathetic mentors. In addition, we should strongly encourage mentors to bring their members to Grad Hall once a term, as this will provide an extended period for mentees to have a detailed discussion with their mentors, which cannot be done by email.

CA said that essentially the scheme sounded good. The only remaining issue was regarding events containing the MCR, JCR and alcohol, which have often raised concerns with College. However, the Domus Tutor had been asked, and said that as long as only older years of the JCR (in particular, members certainly older than 18) were involved, and the scheme had an academic focus, then there should be no problems, but this should be cleared with the Senior Tutor.

Action: CA to raise with Senior Tutor. Once permission granted, IE and PB to ask for MCR volunteers and pass list to JCR.

4.3 Accommodation representatives

CA raised the issue of accommodation representatives for each graduate housing block. In previous years, there has been one representative per building, whose role is to co-ordinate issues regarding accommodation from residents. In general this role tends to require little work - for everyday issues, the usual Maintenance Request form can be used. The role is more intended to represent the interests of residents to the MCR Committee when more serious issues arise; for example, last year when Bateman Street houses had many problems, the Bateman representative collated issues and pressured College to take action.

Volunteers were sought from the MCR Committee. The following members were coerced into taking on the role.

Walter Christie Charles Board

Launcelot Fleming Philip Brown

Herrick House No members present. CA will ask AlKo if she'd be willing to do this role.

Bateman Street Verity Smith

New Build Daniel Zimmerman

Action: *list of these representatives to be circulated to the wider MCR by PB. Accommodation representatives to deal with any issues presented to them. CA to ask ALKo about representing Herrick House.*

4.4 Holiday arrangements for MCR members

CA mentioned that in the past there had typically been a few MCR members around over Christmas (in particular international students), and we should put in place activities to ensure social events continue over this period. These arrangements are typically informal but allow any remaining MCR members to e.g. have Christmas dinner together if they want to. This will likely just take the form of a Facebook group to co-ordinate events. The numbers involved are typically small. JH said he should be around over this time to organise events.

Action: *JH to take the lead in setting up a group for MCR members who'll be present at Christmas.*

4.5 Discussions with Domus Tutor

CA has been in contact with the Domus Tutor (AA), Andrew Arthur, regarding how permission is granted for MCR events. In particular, this arises from issues with Halloween Hall this year, where MCR members were forbidden from wearing fancy dress to a Wednesday Grad Hall because fellows may be present.

These discussions have been productive, and AA had been extremely helpful in providing clear and accurate information. AA is putting together a document which will list the details of various College events (for example, "Wednesday Grad Halls cannot be fancy dress and capacity must be limited to this; for a Friday superhall these options are possible...") which could be very useful in allowing the MCR to plan dinners.

In addition, CA also raised the price of superhalls with AA. Many MCR members believe superhalls are quite expensive; this issue has also been raised with College. Discussions have found that the price of superhalls can't be made significantly cheaper - coffee after the meal could be removed, but this will provide a saving of less than £1. Currently the MCR does not subsidise superhalls and this is part of the reason for the expense. However College would have no problem with superhalls being subsidised; this money will need to be found from the MCR budget.

Action: *CA to obtain document from AA setting out College regulations on events. Committee to continue looking at the possibility of subsidising superhalls.*

4.6 Update on ongoing rent negotiations

CA and MS presented an update on an issue that is hopefully only the middle chapter in this ongoing epic saga. For those members not present last year, a brief summary was provided. The MCR is engaged in a discussion with College over the level of rent rises for some Wychfield accommodation next year, which are as high as 10 % on some properties. Full details are set out in a document available from MS setting out the MCR's opposition to the rises and explaining our arguments.

This document has previously been circulated to a select group of fellows; however at the end of his reign last year MS felt it had become necessary to raise the issue with the entire Fellowship. The document has therefore been put on the agenda for the Governing Body meeting on 1st December 2015.

CA explained that she was hoping to push for more transparent discussions on rent, in particular a formal procedure that goes through College's Finance Committee. The ideal would be a procedure where the Bursary would present its proposals to the MCR a month in advance, giving the MCR a chance to prepare a counter-proposal. In the past the MCR feels it has been disadvantaged in rent discussions through the lack of a transparent procedure, and the implementation of this would be significant progress.

MS and PB are to present the proposal to the Governing Body meeting, and field any questions. The planned approach is to be brief and allow the document to speak for itself, as well as accepting that resolution is likely to come only at the Finance Committee.

PB added that realistically it may be hard to avert the 10 % rise, though we will try. This is likely something that is best done in next term's Finance Committee meeting anyway. A successful outcome would be the implementation of a more transparent rent discussion procedure, which should stop this issue arising in future years.

Action: *MS and PB to present the position statement on rent to Governing Body on 1st December. MCR Exec to continue discussions with College requesting a more open rent discussion procedure for future years. The issue of the 10 % rise (and clearer discussion procedures) to be brought up in Finance Committee meetings next term.*

4.7 Uploading of minutes to web page

PB raised the issue of uploading MCR meeting minutes to the MCR web page. In addition to uploading them as a .pdf, he advocates also uploading them as a separate web page. This means the text would be searchable, making it very much

easier for future MCR Committees to find information about the actions of their predecessors. This would be relatively little work for the Secretary, and hopefully greatly increase institutional memory in the MCR. However, for the page to be searchable it could not be uploaded behind a Raven login, so the information would be public. PB accepted there could be concerns with MCR members having their names and views on issues posted on a public webpage, particularly regarding issues that are contentious with College. He stated that of course the meeting minutes would be phrased diplomatically where necessary to avoid any problems. The idea of uploading to a separate webpage was inspired by the JCR, who already do this and whose minutes were an extremely useful source of information on rental negotiations.

Members of the Committee stated that the minutes should only be uploaded after they've been approved at the next Committee meeting. This will provide ample time for anyone uncomfortable with how their viewpoints are portrayed in the minutes to raise it the Secretary. PB agreed that certainly this would be the case. The motion was put to a vote.

Vote: For: 15. Abstained: 2. Against: 3. Motion passed.

Action: PB to upload minutes to the MCR website as a webpage as well as a .pdf, after they've been approved by the next meeting.

5 Any other business

5.1 Electrical heaters in accommodation

JH raised the presence of electrical heaters in student rooms as an environmental issue. These heaters are a very inefficient way of heating accommodation. CB said that in Walter Christie there are both wall radiators and electrical heaters; this is the case for most student rooms.

Questions were raised about the cost of using these heaters. Unlike the water radiators, the cost of electricity for these heaters is not included in room rent. VC answered this decisively: leaving a radiator on continuously for a term costs ~£30. He knows because he does this. Much outrage ensued on environmental grounds.

CB said that it's unclear what can be done about this. College will almost certainly refuse any requests for electrical radiators to be removed.

5.2 Christmas Charity Raffle

Xanthe raised the plans for the Charity Raffle at MCR Christmas Dinner this year. This is being organised by PK, XG and WM. A number of prizes have been donated by members of the MCR and College. These include a baked good of your choice from CA, a toy dog wearing Trinity Hall attire from the Alumni Office, and a full post-doctoral fellowship provided by Dr. Bartels. MCR Committee members are advised to bring money to buy raffle tickets, which will be £1 each.

Action: Christmas Raffle to go ahead. CA to make requested baked goods.

5.3 Milk delivery for the MCR

VC asked whether it was possible for regular milk deliveries to the MCR. A surprisingly extended discussion about the milk delivery ensued.

VC asked for there to be 1 pint a day delivered, as had happened in the past. JH said that from the Green Officer point of view there were no problems. WM asked what type of milk should be delivered. Extensive discussion decided on semi skimmed, **not orange top**.

CB raised objects on the grounds of price. The milk delivery can be obtained from College so isn't hugely difficult, but we should check how much this would cost - potentially a bottle a day could be a few hundred pounds a year, which is a not insignificant part of the MCR budget.

RG asked about the details. Will this be done at the weekends, only during term time, etc.? CB said that we should begin with a trial period; if we end up with the MCR fridge becoming overwhelmed with milk we can review the situation. RG laconically agreed. The motion to reinstate the milk order, to be run by the Stewards, for a trial period of an unspecified duration, was put to a vote.

Vote: For: 19. Against: 0. Abstained: 1. Motion passed.

Action: RG to lead, contacting College and keeping an eye on the milk situation. This issue to be reviewed later.

6 Date of next meeting

There will be a meeting near the start of Lent term; this is to be decided closer to the time.