



TRINITY HALL M.C.R.

Second Official Committee Meeting, Lent 2024

12 noon, 8th February 2024 Bridgetower

Room

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Present: Chair: Jake Bransgrove (President); Emily Shaw (Vice-President), Soham Kar (Treasurer), Benjamin Iago Gibson (Secretary), Angus Fotherby (Alumni Officer), Jannis Jakobs (Welfare and Disabilities Officer), Niamh Divers (Academic Officer), Thomas Frick (Academic Officer), Tiana Maria Irwin (Gender Officer), Zoya Yousef (Green and Ethical Affairs Officer), Lindsey Barnes (Green and Ethical Affairs Officer).

Apologies received from: Michael Baker (Welfare and Disabilities Officer), Constantin Schmidt (International Officer), Shaashwat Saraff (International Officer), Noah Cadwaladr Evans (Steward), Louisa Yapp (Internal Entertainments Officer), Rob Wiseman (PDRA Rep)

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Matters Arising:

- 1) Declaration of conflicts of interest
- 2) Approval of minutes of the previous meeting
- 3) Updates from committee officers
 - i. Alumni Officer's update
 - ii. Academic Officer's update
 - iii. Welfare Officer's update
 - iv. Green and Ethical Affairs Officers' update
 - a. Bike theft at Wychfield
 - b. Tripping scourge
 - c. Gym equipment
 - d. Green Impact award
 - v. Gender Officers' Update
 - vi. Secretary's update
 - vii. President and Vice-Presidents' update

- a. Provisional MCR official opening date announced
 - b. Noticeboards in MCR
 - c. Proposed changes to Wychfield accommodation
- viii. Treasurer's update
- 4) **Discussion of new MCR needs, problems, and envisaged changes.**
 - i. Decorations and furnishings
 - ii. Mugs (again)
 - 5) **Committees, advisory groups, and working groups**
 - i. Legacies of Enslavement Working Group student representation.
 - 6) **Harassment and bystander training for MCR members**
 - 7) **McLuhan Symposium**
 - 8) **Website updates**
 - 9) **Other business**
 - 10) **Date of next meeting**
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1) Declaration of conflicts of interest

None.

2) Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3) Updates from MCR officers

The first update was that of the Vice-President, who apologised for her coughing fits, and promised that she wasn't infectious.

- i. Fresh from a meeting with the Alumni and Development Office, Fotherby began the round of updates. He reported the main takeaway from the meeting as being alumni's willingness to fund pleasant things for the MCR; that if both the MCR and the A&D Office are looking to foster tighter relations with graduate alumni, giving is a good way to instigate that tightening. He highlighted the setting-up for this academic year of the Chris Padfield fund, designed to support MCR members in more or less anything within reason—hardship, tenth-term PhD support, research. Important that not only are alumni in a position to support, but that current MCR members should know what funding is available to them, and where it comes from.

Also discussed was the idea of an MCR/alumni mixer, to be held at some point in the future—a pin was put in this.

- ii. Frick reported as Academic Officer on the recent proceedings of the Library and Archives meeting. As an MCR representative to the committee, he'd informed them of graduate members' concerns that some members of College were bringing in friends from the wider University to work in the Jerwood, limiting the seats available for study. Also that some MCR members had reported to him that the Mezzanine and the first floor of the Jerwood had been uncommonly cold recently—the Libraries and Archives Committee had actioned a liaison with Maintenance to check on this.
- iii. Jakobs delivered the Welfare Officer's report—firstly that the coffee and cake sessions held recently had gone very well. The President and Vice-President here mooted the idea of ordering in a lot of sustainable card cups and plates, which could be kept in the MCR and used for events like these in future. Jakobs, expressing worries that this might come out of the Welfare budget, was assured that it would not, as the cups and plates would be for the use of all Members and therefore within the general MCR budget. Jakobs suggested that, in that case, a couple of knives and a long spoon might also be nice.

Also to report was an informal meeting he had held with Lisa Déry, College's Head of Wellbeing, and that the recently-inaugurated MCR Connect scheme had so far reached twenty- two signups, which was encouraging—but only two MCR Committee members (!). There was still time to sign up, Jakobs encouraged, a call which the President echoed.

The Vice-President coughed.

- iv. The Green and Ethical Affairs Officers took the floor, with Lindsey Barnes introducing herself as the new officer in the role's double-act.
 - a. They began with feedback from the Buildings Committee, the headline of which was that bike theft at Wychfield was becoming a problem. The Committee had urged MCR members to make sure their bikes were double-locked; that even with the security in place at Wychfield, thieves had been known to jump over gates and walls. All incidents or near-misses the Committee had urged be reported to the porters.
 - b. Another class of incident which the Buildings Committee had asked be reported to Authority was that of tripping around College. All cases of tripping around the College's sites, or of tripping near-misses, they encouraged be made known, as they were trying to identify especially hazardous areas. The MCR Committee then spent some time having a bit of fun with this, and with the idea of a near-miss tripping incident.

- c. The Green Officers also reported back from the Buildings Committee that some money had been put aside to improve the gym at Wychfield. Fotherby leapt up here, explaining that he had been on this hobby-horse for years. That what the gym really needed was some barbells, which necessitated a cage [citation needed]. Following this there was a very long discussion on the subject of gyms and gym equipment, the only real headline from which was an anecdote from the Vice-President about that time that someone had managed to steal a whole erg from the gym and get it back to their room.
 - d. Order restored, the Green Officers concluded by informing the Committee that they were pushing for a Green Impact award for College, with hopes at present for a bronze award. Also by reporting an informal meeting with their counterparts in the JCR, and with an alumnus Green Officer, with whom they'd had a nice catchup.
- v. The Gender Officers reported that their termcard was now out, with a full list of scheduled events.
- vi. The Secretary informed the Committee that he was in the preliminary stages of putting together a regular newsletter for the MCR, which could act as a central circular which all Officers could use to advertise events and news—he encouraged everyone present to send to him word of anything which they'd like sharing in this way.
- He also reported on a meeting that he and the President had held with the College Archivist, where they'd both stressed their desire to co-operate with the Archivist on preserving MCR materials, and to make a parcel of records, photos, and other ephemera to be deposited in the Archive at the end of the academic year. All committee members present were urged again to send any records produced during their time in office which they wanted preserving to the Secretary, who could act as node for this archival process.
- vii. The Vice-President, coughing, opined that the most important matter arising so far is that of money: making sure that MCR members know what funds are available to them and where the money is coming from, especially in the case of donations from alumni.
- a. She and the President announced a provisional date for the opening of the MCR as Friday 8th March, with a drinks-and-nibbles student and staff mixer, featuring some speeches and ribbon-cutting, to be followed by general revelry till early hours.
 - b. Hope was also expressed by the pair that the planned noticeboards in the MCR would be in place by then—there had, unfortunately, been supply chain issues dogging the installation attempts so far.
 - c. Both had also arranged a meeting with the executive of the JCR, the main item of which was to be proposed changes in the College's Masterplan to accommodation at

Wychfield, which might involve moving postgraduates out of New Build and to install undergraduates in Walter Christie.

There had also been a decision made last year, of which the MCR executive was not aware until a few days before this Committee Meeting, to switch the system of postgraduate College accommodation from one in which first-year accommodation was guaranteed, to a room ballot incorporating all years, including incoming postgraduates. The MCR, the President reported, had been supposed to have representation in this decision, but no members had been made aware—any concerns or strong thoughts on the topic he encouraged Members to communicate to him or the Vice-President, who would be able to make them known to College Officers.

- viii. The Treasurer announced that all budgets for MCR Officers had now been sent out. The preferred system for expenditure, he clarified, was to send him copies of receipts for reimbursement. If, however, an expense were to come up which an Officer might not be able to cover personally, or which they would be uncomfortable putting on their personal card, if they were to email the Treasurer, he could put the cost directly on the MCR card.

Jakobs asked for clarification on how copies of receipts were to be sent to the Treasurer, to which the Treasurer explained that a message with a photo of a receipt, a scan, or the physical receipt itself would all be acceptable.

The Green Officers announced that they were starting the process of enquiring into the MCR's switching to a more sustainable bank—the Vice-President suggested that this might be a topic for discussion with the College's Junior Bursar; that banks as a rule really do not like MCR-style accounts.

4) Discussion of new MCR needs, problems, and envisaged changes.

The President is in the process of talking to the College Picture Steward about decorating the new MCR space with some of College's art collection, with some especial effort going in to making the Blue and Red Rooms distinct. Also incoming was a chandelier, picked out from a sample of many by the President's own hand, for the Red Room. And there's more: a new table and mirror and curtains. Gryffindor-common-room curtains. The Vice-President affirmed intentions to get hold of some high-quality stuff, so that it will last.

The Vice-President coughed.

- i. The subject of getting mugs for the MCR was raised again—various schemes were discussed in order to prevent their being stolen wholesale by MCR members. The Vice-President suggested having a paint-a-mug session in order to foster emotional bonds between members and mugs. In

a similar vein, the Secretary suggested a sponsor-a-mug programme, in which members could get their face printed on a mug. Discussion followed about where exactly the face should go.

5) Committees, advisory groups, and working groups

The President offered Members the opportunity to ask questions about the College's Advisory Groups and their activities. The Vice-President thanked all those who had been attending Advisory Group meetings so far, and highlighted their importance for MCR members being seen to engage in the workings of College.

The President encouraged anyone who did not currently sit on a particular Advisory Group *ex officio* to get in touch with the College Officer responsible if they felt that they still ought to attend or might have something to contribute; College is very keen to encourage engagement in these affairs, and 9/10 times would be happy to allow participation.

- i. The President introduced the matter of the Legacies of Enslavement Working Group, for which there should be student representation. He reported that he had liaised with College on this, and that they were still at the stage of finding a postdoc who could conduct the necessary research, and that student representation on the subject would come down the line—a space to be watched.

6) McLuhan Symposium

The Academic Officers shared with the Committee the state of their plans for the McLuhan Symposium, to be held in Easter term, with a date to be set for the end of April/start of May, and taking place over the course of a long afternoon. The working theme for the symposium is 'Breaking Boundaries', though this is not yet finalised and still open to suggestions.

The Academic Officers asked what the budget for the Symposium might be, to which the President confessed that nobody had any idea; the records of previous Committees had obfuscated how the event was paid for last year. Unknown, too, was how much of the cost was covered by College. As far as sorting a venue for the event, though, that could be arranged through Events; an ideal space would be either the Leslie Stephen or Graham Storey Rooms.

The Vice-President coughed.

The Academic Officers asked the room for any suggestions regarding speakers for the event: currently they were considering the option of contacting Sir Terry Waite, Fellow of the College, humanitarian, ex-special-envoy of the Archbishop of Canterbury, hostage negotiator, and one-time captive of the Islamic Jihad Organisation in Lebanon. Nobody could quite come up with a suggestion cooler than this.

The Vice-President coughed.

7) Website (and Constitution) updates

The Vice-President updated Members on the ongoing project to resuscitate and revamp the MCR's website; that she was going to talk to the College's IT department and see if it could be torn down and begun again.

The President added that this had been partly a problem caused by a lack of proper handover between Committees, that so much had had to be started over again. Some of the names registered as owners of the MCR website were now about four years out of date. He stressed again the need for the Committee to prepare solid handover notes for next year.

The Vice-President added that she was looking into splitting the role of Computing Officer into two different roles, one with responsibility for computing, and one for communications. Following this, she made known the Executive's desire to update the MCR's constitution, which has not so far been updated since 2019 and much of which doesn't reflect the way the MCR currently functions. She highlighted several points of diversion from current practice, from the use throughout of the generic pronoun 'he/she', to its mandating of a physical ballot for elections. Given that the MCR has, of necessity, not been following many of these stipulations, it leaves the integrity of the Committee vulnerable if anyone were to begin pointing out inconsistencies.

8) Other business

- i. Irwin raised the possibility of finding bike training for Members, a suggestion which was met with some approval.

9) Next meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for Friday 8th March, in the Stephen Hawking Room.

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Meeting concluded 1.50pm.