



HUGHES HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

MCR Committee
Wednesday, 12 June 2019, 7pm
Pfeiffer Room

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Present: A Entwistle-Thompson (President); C Kazamias (Vice President); PS Perillo (Secretary); A Kölle (Treasurer); I Yu (Academic Affairs Officer); PR Librizzi (Social Secretary); N van der Steen (Social Secretary); R Hosking (Female Welfare Officer); M Egle (Male Welfare Officer); J Deokiesingh (Equality Officer); A Gablier (Sports and Societies Officer); M Tang (IT and Infrastructure Officer); L Collas (Green and Ethical Affairs Officer)

Apologies for Absence: K Bartsch (Accommodation Officer)

I. Introduction

Declaration of Members' Interest

No declaration was received.

II. Standing Action

Photo Session (Sports and Societies)

Ms A Gablier is happy to lead the organisation of the photo session, which will be planned and undertaken in due course.

III. Standing Items

III.A. Fresher's Schedule and Planning

Ms A Entwistle-Thompson proposed that the MCR Committee start the planning and preparation of the Fresher's Week early to ensure a smooth and successful administration of the programmes and activities. The College's student registration dates were attached to the agenda and were made available to the MCR Committee. Ms Entwistle-Thompson

will prepare the Google Form listing the final student registration dates. The MCR Committee members are expected to volunteer on these dates and sign up for as many dates as possible. It was clarified that this form is separate from and in addition to the activities that the Social Secretaries are preparing for the incoming students, and for which a separate Google Form will be circulated to the MCR Committee members for volunteering and signing up. As regards the latter form and line-up of activities, Ms Entwistle-Thompson instructed the Social Secretaries to put up the Google Form for this purpose to start the ball rolling, and for other MCR Committee members to provide their inputs, if any. She advised going over last year's Google Form which could prove useful in this year's planning of activities.

As regards the welfare talk during matriculation, Ms Entwistle-Thompson that College and the MCR Committee are currently contemplating on a way of improving this part of the programme. A suggestion was made to include in the programme, discussions about impostor syndrome and mental health in general. A suggestion was also made to include in the programme, a discussion about Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students and their welfare. A further suggestion was made to organise one main welfare talk and another one specially for BAME students which Mr J Deokiesingh will lead. Ms PR Librizzi, former Female Welfare Officer, will share the information about last year's talk to the MCR Committee members to see if any of these materials would be useful for the preparation of this year's welfare talks.

As regards the MCR Committee members who will be managing the welfare talks, Dr P Johnston (Senior Tutor) suggested having the President, the Welfare Officers and/or Social Secretaries to lead the groups, bearing in mind, gender balance. Mr Deokiesingh also suggested providing a longer registration time as there was a long queue at registration last year. A previous MCR survey might also provide insight on the students' preference in terms of activities.

III.B. £2,000 Payment to the Graduate Union

It was brought to the MCR Committee's attention that the Committee, through Ms A Kölle, paid £2,000 to the Graduate Union upon receiving an invoice from the latter. It was clarified that the MCR Committee has made a conscious decision in recent years not to pay this fee. The MCR Committee discussed various options to retrieve the amount that was inadvertently paid. Ms L Collas discussed that a similar issue arose three (3) years ago at the Cambridge University Student Union (CUSU), and it was thought that the benefit for CUSU membership is unsubstantial compared to the payment being sought for such membership. She also clarified that based on the Graduate Union website, by agreement with colleges, the Graduate Union is no longer charging college membership fees. It was thus suggested and agreed that the MCR Committee must retrieve such amount. Ms Entwistle-Thompson will endeavour to recover the subject amount.

Action:

Ms Entwistle-Thompson will endeavour to recover the £2,000 that was inadvertently paid to the Graduate Union.

III.C. Upcoming Meeting Dates

Ms Entwistle-Thompson informed the MCR Committee that for the summer period (June to August), there would be no fixed schedule for the Committee to meet. And in the event that a meeting will be called, she advised that members who are not in Cambridge could participate through a Skype call.

III.D. Socials

III.D.1. Garden Party

The Garden Party is currently scheduled on 19 June 2019. Rain forecast will be monitored. The Social Secretaries will require help on (a) decoration preparations on 17 June 2019; (b) setting up on 19 June 2019, between 09:30 and 10:00; and (c) tidying up after the event.

III.D.2. Potluck

Mr N van der Steen requested to move the potluck event. He proposed 27 June 2019.

III.D.3. Formal Swap

Ms Librizzi advised that a formal swap is being organised with Clare College. Further information will be circulated to the MCR Committee in due course.

III.D.4. Pub Quiz

The Pub Quiz is scheduled on 13 June 2019, at 20:30. The format of the Pub Quiz was changed per the request of the quizmaster. A sum of £10 will be spent towards snacks. Participants will be asked to donate £1, which would go towards the prize money.

III.D.5. Drum Kit

Ms Entwistle-Thompson informed the MCR Committee of an offer to acquire a drum kit for £325. The MCR Committee found the cost to be high, and expressed concern about upkeep, monitoring and storage. No agreement was reached to acquire a drum kit.

III.E. Welfare

III.E.1. Sunday Tea and Cakes

Mr M Egle informed the MCR Committee that the Sunday tea and cake events have been going well. He advised the members to be more careful about segregating the trash and to

remind students to segregate, as students have been observed to be throwing compost waste into the recycling bin. Ms Collas offered to help out in monitoring waste disposal and reminding the students about the same. Mr PS Perillo suggested putting compost and general waste bins at the Pfeiffer Room as currently, only a recycling bin is available at the Pfeiffer Room. The latter appears to be the root cause of the problem. Ms Collas agreed to take this matter up with Mrs K Smart (Head of Domestic Operations).

Action:

Ms Collas will bring the Pfeiffer Room waste disposal issue to Mrs Smart, and propose the provision of compost and general waste bins in the same room.

III.E.2. Proposal for the Creation of a Mental Health Subcommittee

Ms R Hosking proposed the creation of a Mental Health Subcommittee. She informed the MCR Committee that the purpose of the proposed subcommittee is to “increase the number of mental health focused welfare events in 2019/2020”. The MCR Committee considered this proposal and voted in favour of the creation of the Mental Health Subcommittee with thirteen (13) affirmative votes.

The Mental Health Subcommittee will have a meeting with the College Nurse and the Senior Welfare Officer to understand major welfare issues involving students’ health, especially mental health.

III.E.3. BAME Officer

Mr Deokiesingh proposed the creation of a separate BAME Officer who will represent BAME students in the MCR Committee. The MCR Committee members clarified that according to the MCR Constitution, BAME students are represented by him as the Equality Officer, and that having the Equality Officer represent BAME students does not water down their representation in the Committee. Mr Deokiesingh explained that his proposition is for BAME students to have a representation separate from the other students being represented by the Equality Officer. He noted, however, that he is also happy to rename the Equality Officer position to specifically add BAME in the title of the position, i.e. ‘Equality and BAME Officer’. It was clarified that Mr Deokiesingh is at liberty to propose the renaming of the Equality Officer position to ‘Equality and BAME Officer’ for the approval of the MCR in its Annual General Meeting.

III.E.4. Library Lights

Mr Egle informed the MCR Committee that students have complained about lights at the College Library automatically turning off. Some students found this to be rather inconvenient. It was explained that the motion sensor ceiling lights are being used because the College Library has 24-hour access, and such lighting technology is environmentally friendly and prevents energy wastage. It was suggested that Mr Egle

approach the College Librarian or the Maintenance Manager to inquire if it is possible to increase the time when the motion sensor ceiling lights would turn off.

Action:

Mr Egle will inquire from the College Librarian or the Maintenance Manager if it is possible to increase the time before the motion sensor ceiling lights would turn off.

III.E.5. Student Concern regarding Tutorial and Welfare Support

Mr Egle brought to the attention of the MCR Committee a circumstance where a student was not supported by their tutor in requesting for an increase in their government funding. Ms Entwistle-Thompson suggested bringing this directly to the attention of Dr Johnston.

Ms Entwistle-Thompson also shared Dr Johnston's feedback that students seem to not take advantage of getting assistance from their tutors, or at least dropping by to see their tutors. One of the MCR Committee members shared their experience about a former tutor who was unhelpful when reached out to, and did not have time to meet with the student. The said tutor is no longer connected with the College, but it would be advisable to bring this to the attention of the Senior Tutor so that tutors could also be reminded about what their role entails.

Mr Egle also brought another issue regarding a tutor who discouraged a student from taking too many counselling sessions because the College will have to pay for it. Ms Collas noted that this might have been a case of miscommunication. Mr Deokiesingh clarified that the University offers four (4) counselling sessions to each student, with additional two (2) sessions when needed. Thereafter, students are advised to arrange additional sessions themselves. Ms Collas added that College offers financial assistance to students for counselling sessions. This matter could also be taken up directly with Dr Johnston.

Mr Perillo noted that per his conversation with Mrs V Espley (Bursar), students residing at Swirles Court could still ask College to provide them with a taxi service on their way back to their Swirles Court accommodation from 23:00 onwards when they come to College. Ms Entwistle-Thompson will discuss this further with Mrs Smart and noted that better communication of information would be needed especially to new students.

III.F. Sports and Societies

Ms Gablier informed the MCR Committee that based on last year's feedback, the previous Sports and Societies Officer was more passive. She will endeavour to be more active this year, and in this regard, would like to provide the MCR Committee with a rundown of activities she plans to organise.

1. Sports and Societies Fair (during matriculation)
2. Sport and Societies Dinner

3. Boat Race in London
4. Support to New Societies
5. Recreational Society, a weekly taster session which features different sports and activities organised throughout the year
6. Website Update, which includes a list of active sports clubs and societies at College, and other information such as a brief introduction to the League and Cuppers system
7. Sports and Societies Updates through Hughesletter
8. Stash session more oriented towards sportswear (separate from regular stash)
9. Sports and Societies Photo Session
10. Social Media Presence
11. Secure feedback from (a) student body; and (b) heads of sports clubs and societies
12. Student volunteers for College events, including members of the College who are Blues and Half-Blues members
13. Expansion of Sports Facilities available to Hughes Students, including undertaking an inventory of what is already available (for instance, table tennis, tennis, croquet and squash facilities are currently available). It was suggested that the Sports and Societies Officer approach College to look into the possibility of a corporate or similar membership in certain sports facilities such as a swimming pool, similar to what other colleges do. It was also noted that the Garden Lecture Room (GLR) must either be (a) properly advertised, i.e. as a room with rowing machines and as a gym; or (b) improved to include other equipment and make it into a proper gym.
14. Offer of a Ski Trip from Hughes Hall Alumnus. It was noted that the MCR Committee would need further information on this offer.