

## JCR Open Meeting 30/04/2016

Present: James Antell (JA), Angus Satow (AS), Chris Bennett (CB), Margot Speed (MS), Chloe Jones (CJ), Loic Desplanques (LD), Simone Fernandes (SF), Aidan Hilton (AH), Alicia Pasiiecznik (AP), Anna Fitzpatrick (AF), Eve Mair (EM), Ellen Garry (EG), Natalya Kahn (NK), Arthur Bickersteth (AB), Annie Cave (AC), Plum King (PK), Adam Uddin (AU), Kate Dunbar (KD), Alice Boyd (ABo), Will Reis (WR)

JA: Thanks for coming all, this is likely to be the last Open Meeting of term.

### **1) Hustings for positions of Vice-President and Women's Officer (Michaelmas Term only)**

*Hustings took place for the two roles available for a by-election: Vice-President and Women's Officer*

Speeches were given by AP and AF to apply for the roles of Vice-President and Women's Officer respectively.

### **2) NUS and CUSU Council**

*A discussion was had about how the JCR's representatives should vote on a motion in Cambridge University Student Union Council that would trigger a referendum on CUSU's affiliation with the National Union of Students.*

JA: This matter has been in the news a lot, following the election of Malia Bouattia as the NUS' new President, who has allegedly made anti-semitic comments in the past. A campaign called Let Cambridge Decide put forward a motion, which will be presented to the CUSU Council on Monday 2nd of May. This motion proposes that there be a referendum on CUSU's affiliation to the NUS. All the members of the CUSU Council, which includes College Presidents and Vice-Presidents, will vote on this motion and if it receives two thirds of the vote then the motion will pass and a referendum will be held. We wanted to discuss this with you before Council to gauge College opinion so we know which way to vote. (The motion and minutes of council meeting will be available to read here: <http://www.cusu.co.uk/representation/cusu-council>)

MS: Is there more detail from the Let Cambridge Decide campaign as to why they think this is necessary?

JA: Yes, they sent a letter to us. Extract from letter read:

“On 2 May, CUSU Council will vote on a motion calling for a referendum on CUSU's affiliation to the National Union of Students. The campaign of which I am a part is supported by students from across Cambridge, and from a number of different colleges.

Cambridge students should be able to vote on our affiliation to the NUS following the recent election of Malia Bouattia as NUS President. I, as well as many others, hold grave concerns about her alleged anti-Semitism. Prior to her election, around 50 Jewish Society presidents from universities across the country – including Cambridge – sent her an open letter raising concerns.

In 2011, she described Birmingham as a “Zionist outpost in British higher education”, adding that “it also has the largest JSoc in the country, whose leadership is dominated by Zionist activists”. She has also criticised “Zionist-led media outlets”. Disturbing comments made at the NUS Conference opposing commemoration of the Holocaust suggest that anti-Semitism in the NUS goes deeper than just their choice of President.

The President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews said that she had failed to “to satisfactorily clarify past remarks and associations”.

These developments send a horrifying message to Jewish students at this university.

Whether or not you think CUSU has a long-term future in the NUS, Cambridge students, and students at Magdalene College, should decide for themselves whether this organisation really represents all students. Of course, it will be entirely possible for Cambridge to re-affiliate at a later point, should the NUS reform itself.”

SF: How are we going to decide today how JA and AS vote?

JA: We didn't think that the Open Meeting would be representative enough of the whole student body, and there's a high likelihood that the motion will be amended, so the plan is just for us to gauge the general feeling and act accordingly.

AS: I will propose several amendments to the motion, removing the parts that say that Malia hasn't addressed concerns and scrapping the part of it that say that Sabbatical Officers must remain neutral.

MS: How much difference can the President make to the whole NUS in one year really?

JA: I'm unsure, but if there are people who are disillusioned with the NUS then a referendum allows them to have their say.

AB: Did you consider the possibility of a College referendum on whether or not there should be a referendum on CUSU's NUS affiliation?

JA: We did, but we thought that it would be too short notice and potentially ineffective, given the probability of amendments. We are happy to have one though.

CB: I don't understand why we wouldn't have a referendum, it allows the whole student body to express their opinion on the issue.

AB: There is a possibility that if there is a referendum now, the campaign for leaving the NUS would be at its strongest so there wouldn't be an even-handed debate.

AS: I think that even having a referendum frames the conversation in a certain way that may push people towards voting to leave the NUS. Moreover, the campaign that wants to push for a referendum does have a stake in pushing for CUSU to disaffiliate, so they're not asking for a referendum from a neutral position and this might over privilege this side's argument in the event of a referendum.

CB: But equally, those who don't want a referendum are by default on the side of remaining affiliated, which doesn't give a lot of people a say.

NK: Most people in the University don't care what the NUS does at the moment, a referendum could be good as it will show people the benefits of what the Union does.

LD: Is it possible for CUSU to force a vote of no confidence in Malia?

AS: I support something to similar to this from CUSU Council, an open letter from us that explains our grievances with the NUS.

SF: I think it's important to have a college referendum, as some people might have a strong opinion on this matter that they can't express.

AS: I think anyone who has a strong opinion will likely have come to this meeting, or sent something in to be read out.

AU: How are other colleges likely to vote?

AS: It's hard to say at the moment, no clear indications.

PK: Could we have a vote on this now? The results of the vote could then tell AS and JA how to vote on Monday.

AS: Difficulties of representation, bearing in mind the attendees at the open meeting might not reflect the will of the college more broadly; also I might argue I have a mandate from my election as VP .

AC: I think you should vote with what the JCR wants.

*General Agreement*

JA: It may be possible for us to pass a motion to have a referendum over the next day, which would then dictate how Angus and I voted at Council.

MS: What would the wording of this referendum be?

EM: I think a referendum isn't ideal, but how else can we fairly decide how our representatives should vote?

AS: Unfortunately, due to article 12C of the constitution, we cannot officially pass a motion at this meeting without publishing it 72 hours beforehand. In addition, open meeting resolutions can only take effect one week from being voted on. So no referendum can happen.

JA: Okay, so it seems likely that I am going to vote in favour of the motion on Monday, and Angus against. Thank you for your input.

### **3) EU Referendum**

*A proposal for the JCR to encourage its members to register to vote prior to the EU Referendum was accepted.*

AS: I propose that the JCR encourages a registration drive to try to get as many students as possible to register to vote in the EU referendum. This would be a non-partisan registration drive.

### *General Agreement*

### **4) Bop and Alcohol**

*A complaint about the content of Bop Juices was heard. In response, the JCR Committee proposed a new system for displaying what's in Bop Juice, which was accepted.*

ABo: On the night of the Bop which took place at the end of last term, I heard that there wasn't alcohol in the bop juice and that JCR Committee members were joking about this. I don't think it's fair not to tell people what's going on with drinks at Bops.

JA: We understand that this became a fairly widespread concern, and want to address the issue. We are serving under license, so we are legally obliged not to serve to excessively drunk people. We normally have two alcoholic drinks and one non-alcoholic, and we have much more of the alcoholic, because it's obviously more popular. Ideally, the committee would tell people who were too drunk that they were going to be served the non-alcoholic drinks, but this is tricky at a loud bop, so a small number of very drunk people may have been served non-alcoholic bop juice rather than alcoholic without their knowledge, which is clearly not great either.

To improve the situation in future, we propose a clear drinks menu should be available both on the night and publicised beforehand, with brightly coloured jugs in the Bop so it is clear what is

being poured out. In the case of someone being too drunk, the server will attempt to communicate to the, that they will only be given non-alcoholic drinks, due to the licensing rules. We want to ensure that everyone is safe, but we also don't want people to feel deceived in any way so we think this may be a good system.

LD: It might be worth putting a statement out beforehand informing people of this situation and telling them not to get angry when they aren't served alcohol, as this makes the servers' lives easier.

WR: Was the objection mainly that people were being lied to about what they were drinking?

ABo: Partly, the main concerns are that committee members were laughing about giving the wrong drinks, and people, even if they weren't drunk, weren't being given alcoholic drinks.

MS: There isn't any feeling on the Committee of trying to spoil people's fun, we are just there to help everyone have a good time as well, but we have certain responsibilities too.

JA: So is everyone happy with the new system of clarity viz. drinks at Bop?

#### *General Agreement*

#### **5) Natural Science Students' 4th Year Rooms**

*The Services and Domestic Officer provided an update on the developing issue of fourth-year rooms for Natural Science students. The College will hopefully be able to improve the situation for next year's cohort.*

NK: This was raised at the last Open Meeting, and there has been little development on this since then unfortunately. The lady who is responsible for allocating these rooms is going to send something out soon to give these students information, and the College will try to gather information about how these degrees work so that they can better work out the accommodation situation in the future, although it's probably too late for it to change this year.

#### **6) Discussion about Internet Allowance**

*The President presented a new system for College Internet Allowances, proposed by the MCR. This was rejected as it was seen as unfairly raising weekly charges on the majority of students.*

JA: We've spoken to College, and College has given us a relatively free rein over how we choose to charge people for internet, as long as they still receive the same income from it to upkeep their infrastructure and staff. To this end, the MCR have proposed increasing the daily allowance, which would mean that far fewer people get charged for exceeding this allowance, but the weekly rate everyone pays would increase. Last term, 76 people from the MCR and JCR combined exceeded their data allowance. I have decided to discuss this now because I need to

let College know any changes that we might want to make before the Budget is submitted on Wednesday.

*General disagreement with the proposed MCR change, as it raises rates for most students while drastically lowering charges for fewer students.*

JA: I'll let College know that we're opting to keep the current system for now then, thanks.

### **7) Any Other Business**

*The possibility of a college cat was brought up, and may be looked into further.*

CB: Is there a possibility for the JCR to get a college cat? I think it would be a very popular move, everyone likes cats.

JA: Maybe, I could ask about it. I'd imagine the Gardening Team would most likely to be able to look after it.

**End of Meeting**