

## JCR Open Meeting 22/02/2016

Present: James Antell (JA), Angus Satow (AS), Chris Bennett (CB), Natalya Kahn (NK), Amy Wilkinson (AW), Dominic Palmer (DP), Loic Desplanques (LD), Plum King (PK), Namha Adukia (NA), Krishan Shah (KS), George Barbantan (GB), Aidan Hilton (AH), Alicia Pasiecznik (AP), Ellen Garry (EG), Will Reis (WR), Heather Rigby (HR), Matthew Myers (MM), Nick Reis (NR), Max Nussbaumer (MN), Patrick Elwood (PE), George Wallace (GW), Jonny Bodey (JB), Tess Hegarty (TH), Conor Fowler (CF), Ethan Bresnett (EB), James Richardson (JR), Joe Rachman (JoeR), Simone Fernandes (SF), Phoebe Coleman (PC), Michael Daley (MD), Arthur Bickersteth (AB), Chloe Jones (CJ)

### 1) Discussion of AMAL and potential changes to how money is distributed among college groups

**Representatives from the Boat Club and the AMAL Committee responded to Ed Thicknesse's complaints about the AMAL process. There were many points made, both criticising and defending AMAL's system. It was broadly agreed upon that improvement to the AMAL constitution is necessary. The AMAL committee will be looking into its procedure, with the help of the whole student body, in an effort to listen to these concerns.**

JA: The JCR has no official position on this matter, but is happy to facilitate a discussion of AMAL and can propose an amendment to it, if need be. This has come up in response to a complaint by Ed Thicknesse.

JA reads out Ed's statement

(Ed's statement was emailed out by AS to the JCR beforehand)

MD: We, as senior members of the Boat Club, want to be transparent so we have come to discuss this issue with the JCR. It is a bit disappointing that Ed isn't here to talk about this in person as we were keen to address his concerns directly.

AS: Unfortunately, Ed isn't in Cambridge at the moment, but he did send a statement ahead that we've read out and we can still talk about the issue.

KS: I'm here to speak on behalf of the AMAL Committee, and want to clarify some points and address his complaints. Firstly, he said that the field sports representative was chosen, but, this wasn't the case. We opened it up for applications on numerous occasions and no one volunteered, so, very kindly Alice Boyd stepped in at the last minute to do the duty.

Just in terms of what happens, we thought we'd be a bit more clear. So, we have 1 week to look over bids, reviewing costings and raising questions with those who bid when relevant. Each person on the committee then presents their subset of bids that they've looked over and a decision is made by the committee. Those present are: the Senior Treasurer of AMAL, who is a fellow, presidents of the JCR and MCR, the Captain of Boats, a representative of college fields sports, a representative for the college arts and the voting members. I'll also read out a statement from Morgan Rogers, who was a JCR representative on the AMAL committee.

“As stated in the guidelines, each bid received by the Amal committee is considered on its own merit alone, alongside the existing assets of the club it comes from. The committee exists to determine which bids should be funded by the college based on the guidelines provided to all students and their own discretion, guided by the experience of the Senior Treasurer.

While committees may vary in opinion from year to year, this year’s committee determined that it would primarily grant funding to cover costs essential to the running of a club which *could not be covered by the club’s current budget or assets alone*, with preference given to clubs who had obtained partial funding from elsewhere and who had made clear how it was to be spent. Additional consideration was made as to which clubs needed to maintain independent financial assets, for example as insurance against potential damage. In the specific cases in question:

The rugby club bid ignored several of the guidelines. Listed in the expenses were medical kits, which are explicitly listed as equipment that will not be funded, and food and drink for the exclusive consumption of club members, also against the guidelines. Further, they asked for funding for water bottles, which all other sporting clubs expect their members to provide and are certainly not essential to the club’s function. Further, kit is listed under the club’s expenses for the year (without any reference to sources of pricing), which the committee agreed should not be paid for by the club’s funds. After all such non-essential costs had been dismissed, even with the dubious cost of the coach to Oxford accounted for (with no mention of direct member subsidisation for this transport), the club’s assets more than covered the essential costs of the club. The MBC bid conformed to the guidelines and they have even offered to send their bid to anyone who requests it since they have been able to account for every expense and have gone to considerable effort to obtain funding from their members and outside the club.

The costs of running these two clubs are frankly not comparable, and they were considered independently of one another during the meeting. The decisions made in the meeting were democratic, and I [Morgan] personally believe that funds have been fairly allocated based on the bids submitted.”

There isn't a limit to the amount of money that we can distribute, so all money is given out based purely upon merit of the bid. We do acknowledge and agree with Ed’s problems regarding the constitution/bid guidelines of AMAL and are looking to make changes. For example, for large bids, we should have someone representing the club that makes that large bid. Also, sports captains/presidents might not be allowed to sit on the amal committee. We're going to look at reviewing things at some point soon. This will start with an informal meeting with any college members who want to attend to consider what changes would help.

PK: Why was the medical kit part of the bid that the rugby club made rejected? This seems like something they'd need.

JA: For any sport event, you can sign medical kits out from the Plodge beforehand, so it's in the constitution that this can't be bid for.

AU: Is there not an issue with the fact that no club captain can be a representative on the AMAL Committee?

KS: This is simply to avoid bias in the process towards specific sports.

AS: From my view, it seems strange that we are all members of the JCR, but not all members of the Boat Club, but the Boat Club gets well over double what the JCR tends to receive, especially when this is half of the total funds given out by the JCR. I also worry about the possible precedent that bidders can't receive more than they usually bid for, so the JCR's bid will always remain lower than the Boat Club's, in spite of possible need.

KS: We don't want this conception of AMAL to exist, clubs should be able to bid for as much as they think they deserve. With respect to whether the funding is too much, our policy is to give out what is essential to the running of any club that bids for it, regardless of the sum.

MD: At this point, I'd like to address some complaints and some of what has been said on behalf of the Boat Club. I think that it's ridiculous to suggest that any club shouldn't bid for as much as it is able to justify bidding for. We have massive expenses, we already have to be frugal. Our current account was briefly down to £4 a week or so ago, so we are far from flooded with money as a club. It's for the Amal Committee to decide what is acceptable to fund according to a club's need, not any other metric.

Furthermore, Magdalene Boat Club is integral to College life, about a quarter of college will have rowed, and paid MBC subs, for at least one term this year. In the last 12 months over 100 Magdalene members have trained for at least a whole term and raced with MBC. We bring a great benefit for everyone and members get an unparalleled number of hours from the Club. It was founded in 1828 and is a big part of College in terms of alumni relations and tradition, so it's massively in the College's interest to ensure the Club remains viable. MBC is also by far the greatest source of integration between JCR and MCR members.

AS: I think that the JCR and the MCR also hold a special position within the College though. In some colleges, the JCR distributes the College's money to clubs, not AMAL, so, it is possible to have a different dynamic. Perhaps our thinking needs to change on AMAL in general? How do Boat Clubs fit in at other colleges in terms of funding?

GW: Sidney Sussex, a smaller college, gave £29,000 this year to their Boat Club.

WR: At our AGM senior members of the Boat Club discuss the budget with Stewards (alumni responsible for checking that money is spent wisely) and how money will be raised and spent for the year ahead. We look at whether members should pay subsidies, which are currently £39 per person per term. We are keen to be transparent, as we understand that it's a large sum of money being discussed, but we feel justified in asking for it.

AU: Are subs+AMAL funds your only sources of income?

WR: Those are the main two, yes. They are fairly well balanced in terms of % of total income. We do also get some alumni donations and are on the lookout for sponsorship.

I do thoroughly back Ed's suggestion about bidders representing themselves at the AMAL meeting.

KS: As mentioned, we will be looking into this.

MD: Just to clarify, AMAL makes up approximately 45% of MBC's budgeted funding. We have a budgeted turnover of over £28,000 for the coming year. We are very actively looking for sponsorship opportunities and are strengthening ties with the Alumni and Development Office to maximise income through these streams. The Boat Club wants to be completely transparent about our income and expenditure. Everything was comprehensively accounted for in our bid. I suggested, at the AMAL Meeting, that all bids should be published. This suggestion was unfortunately opposed by the MCR representative.

AS: It seems the process in general was poorly organised this year, due to extremely late appointment of AMAL officers, and Ed's complaint about a lack of clarity in the documentation and how to submit a bid.

JA: AMAL Club is an independent body, it falls to the previous year's Secretary to organise the appointment of the following year's secretary. Unfortunately, this year the secretary graduated without appointing their replacement, so when I was informed of this rather bad situation over Christmas I had to try to get a new secretary. This was the reason for the major delay, usually the entire bidding process and meeting would happen in Michaelmas.

MD: The template is pretty comprehensive, I don't think that this needs to be changed. Any concerns and clarifications could be overcome through good dialogue with the AMAL committee.

CB: I agree, I put in a relatively small bid for a club and I thought the whole process was very clear, including having a question about my bid emailed to me by a member of the Committee, as well as clear documentation.

MM: I looked at lots of bids, as I was the MCR representative on the AMAL Committee. I thought things were clear, we don't want to be massively prescriptive with our documentation as this might stifle creativity of bids to be relevant to each club.

AU: Perhaps the problem was more due to timing rather than a failure in the documentation.

KS: There were over two weeks given for bidders to sort themselves out, we were able to research into costings fairly quickly.

AS: The deadline was extended by a week though, after I got in touch concerned that it was too short. Some clubs will have fewer people and less time to make a bid than others.

MD: Will and I, between us put over 30 hours into preparing MBC'S bid. If funding is necessary for your society to function, and items being claimed for can be justified, you can find the time to prepare a suitable bid. There was almost three weeks to prepare bids, collate information from the people who previously organised your society, and engage in dialogue with the AMAL committee. Quite frankly, if in this time you could not submit a suitable bid - or explain any challenges that you were facing in preparing your bid to the AMAL committee (we are a student community after all - we want to help each other out!) - then clearly you either don't care enough about what you are bidding for or you do not think that what is being bid for can be justified.

MM: From my experience, it wasn't really a shorter bidding time than previous years. Whilst some clubs weren't totally ready, we understood and allowed them a little time after the meeting to give us bank details etc. and considered the bids nonetheless.

AS: I think this was a worthwhile discussion, and it'll be good for us to continue to talk about how we can improve the AMAL constitution in future - in particular by consulting the whole student body.

## 2) Discussion of changing the constitution regarding an alternative voting system being put in place for equal opportunities subcommittee elections, revolving around the question of who should be allowed to vote in such elections

**AS proposed that mailing lists be divorced from electoral rolls, so that the entire college would be eligible to vote for all equal opportunities roles. Inkeeping with the constitution, only people who are either members of or interested in a specific group, e.g. LGBT, can vote in those elections. After some discussion of benefits and purposes of this change, as well as alternatives, a motion was passed to implement the new system.**

JA: Currently, the system is that there are mailing lists for each subcommittee within Equal Ops, which self-identifying members of those groups can join, as well as those who might have an interest in such campaigns. The electoral rolls are then drawn from the mailing list, so only those on the mailing list can vote in these equal ops elections.

AS: I was going to propose a constitutional change so that our voting practices would be in line with CUSU's. But this would require a referendum in which a third of the College would have to vote in favour, so it would be nice to avoid that. The current system has problems, because some people who want to vote on the day aren't on the electoral roll (I received emails from multiple people in this situation and couldn't do anything to help them).

LD: I'd like to add that the JCR decided last year when forming the Equal Ops role that people who have an interest in certain groups should get a vote, but it might be an option only to allow members of those groups to vote.

JA: We can interpret the constitution in such a way that we can change the rules so that everyone on the JCR electoral roll at large can vote, as long as we specify that only those who are members of the group, or who are interested in the issues and campaigns of that group, should vote.

SF: I find difficulty with defining my role and who I can invite to my events already, because the mailing lists have to be so restrictive in order for them to be useful electoral rolls. I would like to have more people on the mailing lists so that we can be more inclusive generally.

JR: I think it's sad that men aren't really invited to join the mailing list and join in with the general Women's Equal Ops because it's exclusive and seems to stop us from contributing.

PC: If people aren't sure about their sexuality, then being on the LGBT mailing list as 'interested' in the movement might be a helpful step, so we don't want to get rid of that.

AS: Actually, for women's officer, the constitution states that only women can run for to run for election, men are allowed to vote.

My proposition is: we divorce mailing lists form electoral rolls completely, put everyone on the JCR on the electoral rolls for equal ops positions, but specifically request that only self-defining members of or those interested in a community vote for the officer for it.

AU: Would this at some point go towards a referendum on changing who can vote to being only members of communities?

AS: Not necessarily

MD: What other options are there?

AS: We could leave the situation as it is of course, or we could go to a referendum either to fix electoral rolls to the mailing list only for self-identifying members, or to widen the electoral rolls to everyone broadly but only ask self-identifying members to vote.

MD: What's the aim of these changes?

AS: Mainly to increase engagement with elections, and thus the sub-committees themselves.

MD: But do the changes actually solve the root cause of this problem?

AS: It's probably the best we can do on electoral rolls, but we will always keep looking for more ways to engage people.

AH: I think we address the problem of some people not being able to vote by moving electoral rolls away from mailing lists,so it's worthwhile to change it just on that basis. I'm against any policing of who can vote.

AB: I worry about possible electoral fraud, people voting by rights shouldn't be.

AS: We hope it won't happen, this is how CUSU elections work, and it's just based on trust.

AB: Surely it would be considered bad if people who weren't interested or involved in a group voted for that group's position under the proposed system?

CB: But this is possible already, as people can sign up for the mailing lists and are not policed in doing so.

AS: I think, with enough disclaimers about who should be voting, I trust the student body enough to do the right thing.

**A vote was taken on the motion: For Equal Opportunities subcommittee positions, the JCR moves to divorce mailing lists from electoral rolls completely, put everyone on the JCR on the electoral rolls for these positions, but specifically request that only self-defining members of or those interested in a community vote for the officer for it.**

**25 voted for, 2 abstained and no one voted against. So the motion carried.**

### 3) Presentation from the JCR President on the possibility of a Magdalene JCR App

**JA told us that there may be a Magdalene JCR app in the pipeline. This was generally thought to be a good thing to look into.**

JA: We have been approached by a company who have offered us the opportunity to have a Magdalene JCR App, which would have up-to-the-minute College news, an events system, all JCR communications, push notifications, staff and Committee directories and menus for Formals and Ramsay.

AU: The website is currently something of a shambles, this should be priority, I worry that the app might go the same way and never be updated.

JA: This is fair, but we are working on improving the website, so hopefully we could do both.

MD: Would the cost be one time or subscription?

JA: It seems to be a one time cost, although there might be further charges to stay updated.

*General agreement that this is a good idea, with the caveat that the App would have to be well updated. So JA will continue to look into the matter.*

### 4) Discussion of JCR Communication policy, following a complaint from SF

**SF raised her complaint, but the consensus was that we should try not to send too many emails. The possibility of creating mailing lists for those who want more emails about events and opportunities will be looked into.**

SF reads out her statement on the matter.

(This is available online, it was emailed out by AS before the Meeting)

AS: The Zero Carbon event wasn't an event for Magdalene specifically, unlike the Chill Night, so this was why it didn't merit an email to the whole JCR. We approve 1-2 emails a day, which we see as enough, and already receive complaints that we send out too many.

CB: A possible solution might be to present incoming freshers with a list of numerous mailing lists, including Equal Ops as well as some Magdalene events ones. They could then tick whichever they wanted to subscribe to and we could allow those to have far more emails, because JA, AS and I receive many each day that various external organisations want us to spread to the JCR.

*General Agreement, CB to look into this.*

## 5) The possibility of the E-Luminate Festival coming to Magdalene

**JA is looking into the possibility of the E-Luminate Festival coming to Magdalene; this was generally thought to be a good idea.**

JA: I've been in contact with the organisers of this event, which lit up lots of central Cambridge over the past week. I suggested that they could light up the part of College which is visible from the Quayside, i.e. the external walls of First Court.

MD: Who would pay for this?

JA: E-Luminate themselves put up all the money for lighting.

AB: Will the light not disturb people who have rooms in First Court with windows looking out that way? Surely they'll have light beamed directly onto them?

WR: I believe they have a radar based lighting system so it simply won't go through windows into rooms.

## 6) A Discussion of accommodation for 4th year Natural Sciences and Engineering students

**WR brought up an inconsistency between the ways Natural Sciences and Engineering students are treated in terms of 4th year accommodation. NK suggested that this problem can be resolved if the college has more information about how these courses work.**

WR: At the moment, Engineering students who have said that they wanted to do a fourth year go into the ballot after second years. Most natscis thought they would be in the same situation, but it's different because their 4th year is optional, even though many know they want to do it all along. All potential 4th years get to express a preference for a vague area of college and rent band, before the freshers ballot. They then reserve rooms accordingly across College and once your place for 4th year is confirmed, you are allocated a room. My issue is that this isn't clear, and also Engineers must achieve a certain grades in their exams too to get

the 4th year, so I don't really know why natscis are treated separately. I think the solution should be that those who are sure about doing a fourth year should be in a similar situation to the Engineers going for a fourth year.

NK: The problem on this is mainly that the accommodation side of College simply doesn't know how your degrees work, so if you could email us with an explanation, then we can look into helping.

JA: College's issue might be that they don't want to end up with empty rooms dotted across College which are then given to freshers, who would be surrounded by people from other years and no other freshers.

I suggest that NK+I discuss this with college to sort out a solution.

*General Agreement*

## 7) Any Other Business

LD: We're looking at the College's current harassment policy. If anyone wants to suggest anything, message me or AU.

AS: Pizza will be a regular thing at Open meetings in future, so please keep turning up.

JA: Thanks everyone for coming.

**End of Meeting**