



JCSU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING 2020

Minutes of a meeting of the JCSU Executive Committee held on Monday 3rd February in the Coleridge Room.

Present: the President (Aurelio Petrucci), the Treasurer (Will Davison), the Secretary (Sameer Aggarwal), the Ents Officers (Ollie Dennis and Matt Griffiths), the Male Welfare Officer (Tom Cay), the Women's and Non-Binary Officer (Jess Molyneux), the LGBT+ Officer (Ben Gibson), the Environmental & Ethical Affairs Officer (Zak Coleman), the Freshers' Officer (Libby Bryant), the Ethnic & Religious Minorities Officer (Bobby Mugo), the Services Officer (Heather Jones), the Mental Health & Disabilities Officer (Sophie Baldwin) and the Communications Officer (Jacob Powell).

Apologies: the Vice-President (Octavia Rooks), the Access Officer (Cormac Parks), the Female Welfare Officer (Honor Abery), and the International Students' Officer (Satya Amin).

The meeting opened at 19:06.

MINUTES

1. Committee Reports of Actions Since Last Meeting

AP: Laid groundwork for organising Committee Dinner. Continued work on previous agenda items. Updated website theme.

OR: Attended CUSU Council.

WD: Cheques and reimbursement as normal. Had a meeting with the Boat Club to try to clear up their financial situation.

SAG: Updated Committee website page. Uploaded minutes, organised bookings of JCR.

OD/MG: Had the Ceilidh last week which was a big success - very popular and looking to hold more in future. Planning for open mic this week which is only a small event, and also the Week 5 bop next week.

CP: N/A

TC/HA: Booked the Brewery Room for our Week 5 Welfare Event - taking place at 15:00 on 16th February. Emailed the Master and the Chaplain about speaking, have so far received a positive response from the Chaplain. Asked catering for a crepe bar but still unsure as to whether this will be possible.

JM: Week of the Woman & Galentine's preparation. Had brief discussion with Senior Tutor regarding sexual misconduct policy.

BG: Set up the gender expression fund. Talking to Finance to sort the logistics of reimbursing without receipts – they've suggested this is fine. Flew the LGBT+, trying with AP to challenge the Monday-Friday rule. Organised LGBT+ Formal tickets for people from out of college.

ZC: Met with Roost Café to discuss its waste system and how to make it work better. Started organising an event on intersectionality in climate crisis activism for Green Week.

SAm: N/A

LB: Organised meeting with Senior Tutor and AP to discuss the setting of work during Freshers' Week.

BM: Planned event for Mental Health Awareness Week with SB. Planning a BME games night for next Saturday. Will have drop-in next Sunday. Drafting a letter to College regarding memorialisation of Rustat.

HJ: Publicised Requests Form and started receiving responses.

SB: Compiling data for potential medical prescription fund. Finalising Mental Health Awareness Week ents. Going to meet with Geoff Parks about a 2nd counsellor.

JP: Designed, compiled and sent out the JCSU communications bulletin.

2. Requests Form Report [HJ]

HJ: Had 35 reports. People want better lighting in Chapel Court, especially on the Second Court side. Accessibility noted as an issue through the Jesus Green gate. Someone mentioned getting portable ovens in the kitchens, to reduce stakes in 1st Year ballot.

AP: College want parity across accommodation - Domestic Bursar said he'd investigate it. They also want every kitchen to either become fridge-freezers or iceboxes.

HJ: Has anyone tried to bring down the Caff minimum top-up?

AP: You can top up any amount in the Roost.

HJ: Getting proper bike storage in place?

AP: Yeah, as a minimum all new bike racks should be sheltered.

HJ: Some people mentioned a food pickup scheme at Caff.

ZC: Talked to Alexis Moreau about a redistribution scheme for food to homeless people.

WD: Have talked to College before about it, and they said no due to health and safety.

HJ: People wanted vegan puddings. Also is there any way of bringing down the KFC?

AP: They're reviewing it, with a view to removing it.

TC's alarm goes off at 19:17.

AP: Some universities have a system where £600 or similar of credit is loaded onto your card, and then you pay out of that, with any money not spent lost.

HJ: I don't think many people could afford a £600 outlay at the start of the year.

AP: We need to come up with a replacement, we can't just say scrap it. We could also arrange termly payment – people already have a £200 a term outlay for the KFC.

TC: Could have a system where people who've paid the KFC pay a subsidised price, and those who haven't don't – can be done automatically.

HJ leaves at 19:19.

3. Matters Arising

a) Tobias Rustat Memorialisation [AP]

AP: In preparation of the Benin Bronze 'handover', they want to amend the website to reflect the College's changed view on Tobias Rustat. The last announcement was on Benin Bronze, and the next one will be on the Benin Bronze and the legacy of Tobias Rustat.

TC: The article is presented as just fact.

BG: The article has a lot of humanisation and positivity – would come across inauthentic to just add a section saying he was a bad person.

JM: Nothing on the page reflects the complexity of his legacy.

SB: The article feels like they're trying to hide his actions.

ZC: It will feel hollow if they just amend the article but take no subsequent action due to his legacy.

BM: There's a line that say "they fully rewarded exploitation" – clearly a bad statement. Agree with ZC, unless there is some substantial action, it just seems performative as nothing changes. The celebration of him is upsetting, and action taken should be a lot more urgent.

AP: College seem to be looking at The Legacy of Slavery Working Party to act, and vice versa.

BM: If we care about the issue, we could present it to the students and then take a mandate to the College.

WD: BM could write an article for Varsity.

JM: When are the working party next meeting – this should be an urgent issue for them.

AP: I would suggest to BM to draft a letter from the JCSU to College telling them how much students care about the issue with a view to avoiding unwanted escalation.

ZC: What would be our preference in how the College could put some resources towards the situation.

BM: I think a scholarship might be good. Would depend on the exact criteria upon which it is awarded.

AP: Looking at Chapel, the wall around his memorialisation is very blank – we could commission a mural by an artist from the diaspora.

WD: Would also show how committed College are to the secularity of Chapel.

ZC: Would be good to add contextualisation notes everywhere he is memorialised as well.

MG: Very weird focus on money throughout the article.

SAG: Would be good if after the article is amended, a note is added that this new view wasn't always the view of the College.

JP: It should be in the College's interests as well – the Communications department produced a list of the mentions of the College in the media, and many were because of the Benin Bronze.

AP: Can BM draft a letter to College outlining our objections to the current article?

AP: People won't necessarily take against the College for taking money in the first place; the objections will be for College not recognising the fact that the money has come from the proceeds of slavery.

WD: And that they're still sitting on this pot of money.

b) Discussion of Food

SAG: There seem to have been quite a few concerns and issues raised recently.

JM: I raised before that we want better vegan options at brunch.

LB: I've had a friend told the vegetarian sausages are vegan.

JM: They're not – I think egg is used in binding them.

WD: Know of a student who was twice given a beef burger having been told it was lamb.

AP: Might be good to have a survey of more vegetarian/vegan options?

SAG: Is there not already Caff Forum?

AP: But still in addition to that.

LB: I know people who are opposed to vegetarian days, less meat options etc.

AP: Are we sure it's not just meat-eaters shouting loudest?

ZC: I think people are instinctively in favour of having more choice.

BG: I think if you advertise as little as possible, they just wouldn't notice.

AP: Also, the brunch coffee is bad.

TC: In favour of phasing out ruminant meat but would be cautious about being quiet about it – people will notice it.

JM: Do we have to completely remove? We can still have a big effect by reducing the amount.

AP: I think they have already reduced it a lot.

OD: There is also not a lot of fish in Caff – we could ask about more sustainable fish.

JM: Also people are more likely to notice at Formal than Caff, and people eat at Caff more – perhaps we shouldn't touch Formal as much?

MG fumes about steak being swapped out for chicken once at a formal without notice.

SB: Also would like the sides at Formal to be vegan.

LB: And publish the vegan options beforehand.

AP: I have personally had my mind changed by seeing in numbers the carbon impact of ruminant meat.

JM: I think it is about getting people to have these conversations.

MG: Could have more positive advertising for the vegan/vegetarian options at Caff.

SB: I think people are also resistant because if you eat meat it is cheaper to go to Caff than to cook.

BG: Also a cultural thing to have meat in a meal.

LB: People I've spoken to think they ought to have a choice, and it is the JCSU trying to be too correct.

TC: We could put forward a motion at an OGM?

JM: I think it makes it an issue where there isn't one. Could get people to put their own OGM motion forwards against the phasing out of ruminant meat.

OD: Could we not put carbon footprints on the menu?

JM: Would also like better bread rolls.

ZC *professes his deep love for brioche.*

c) Discussion of OGM Motion Regarding Drinking Societies

ZC: Have drafted an initial motion. Quite rough, and the phrasing can be tweaked.

Motion for the JCSU to adopt an official stance against drinking societies

The JCSU notes: The JCSU has never taken an official stance on college drinking societies (including - Jesus-specific - Caesareans, Black Widows, Natives), despite the controversy surrounding them.

The JCSU believes: College should be an inclusive and welcoming environment. Drinking societies are exclusive groups which recruit members based on ambiguous criteria. This selection process is inherently unaccountable and exclusive and therefore has the potential to exclude those who do not meet these murky standards for admission. This frequently ends up reproducing hierarchies of race, class and gender conformity. Essentially, we believe that drinking societies form part of an outdated culture which sustains the image of Cambridge as an exclusive, elitist institution. This is something consistently cited by students from disadvantaged background as a reason for reluctance around applying to study at Oxbridge. It also creates a hostile environment for current students, particularly those from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. This is especially pertinent for freshers trying to settle into university life. These societies are also gender-based, and so exclude non-binary students. For these reasons, the JCSU opposes drinking societies on the basis that they constitute a barrier to access and reproduce an exclusive elitist culture which is at odds with the JCSU's core aims.

The JCSU resolves: To adopt an official stance against the existence of drinking societies for the reasons listed above. This would entail including information in freshers' workshops detailing the JCSU's rationale behind this position and discouraging participation.

BG: I would add more about the gendered nature - I can draft.

AP: A few more words about how we would discourage participation? Will we explicitly discourage participation or we will just present the facts in a way which is likely to discourage participation?

ZC: The rationale would be why you shouldn't join, and the discouragement would for these reasons please don't join.

JM: Think we need more emphasis on the behaviours that are problematic – the societies can be more diverse than the student body of the College as a whole.

BM: Agree with JM – not just bad that the societies are exclusionary, but that they breed toxic behaviour as well.

BG: But they can easily say that they're just a group of friends and their behaviour is fine – their exclusionary nature is the issue.

AP: Bringing them up in Freshers' Week may make them infamous.

LB: But freshers find out anyway.

SB: People also hear a lot about them before they arrive anyway.

JM leaves at 20:11.

ZC: I think part of why we're doing it is to discourage it, but also to legitimise the viewpoint of opposing drinking societies.

AP: I think it can be quite powerful for freshers to be introduced to reasons against joining these societies.

WD: Was invited to Caesareans in Freshers' Week – was unsure, and after talking to others who were invited found out they were also uneasy, which solidified my position of not going.

ZC: Motion is now on a Google Doc, so people can amend and make suggestions.

d) Fellow/Student Events

RIP.

4. Any Other Business

TC: Have Brewery Room booked for Week 5 Welfare Event, have Chaplain on board. Would be good to have as many liberation officers there as possible to speak. Waiting to hear from the Master before starting publicity.

SB: Wellness Week leading up to it, and on the day there are smoothies in JBar, could tie that in as well.

TC: Have asked Catering to get a crepe bar.

WD: Got asked by someone who is a member of a university society if they can be funded by the JCSU? Can't find anything strictly against it.

OD: Does anyone know who is in charge JCMS – want to borrow some equipment?

BG: Becky Kershaw. They have been lending it for May Ball auditions recently.

OD: Also please advertise the upcoming Open Mic Night.

AP: Also have had an issue with the Halfway Hall dress code – complaint that it was exclusive for trans and non-binary people and classist.

BG: Could change the emphasis from "dress code" to "dress guideline".

ZC: Could say "formal wear e.g. black tie etc."?

AP thanked the members of the committee for a helpful and productive meeting.

The meeting closed at 20:35.

Action Points

BM to draft a letter and show to committee regarding Rustat memorialisation.

AP and HJ to get in contact with Catering/Domestic Bursar about current ruminant meat provision, and potential reduction.