



## JCSU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING 2020

Minutes of a meeting of the JCSU Executive Committee held on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May on Zoom.

**Present:** the President (Aurelio Petrucci), the Vice-President (Octavia Rooks), the Treasurer (Will Davison), the Secretary (Sameer Aggarwal), the Ents Officer (Ollie Dennis), the Male Welfare Officer (Tom Cay), the Female Welfare Officer (Honor Abery), 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 International Students' Officer (Satya Amin), the Ents Officer (Matt Griffiths) and the Access Officer (Cormac Parks).

The meeting opened at 15:36.

### MINUTES

#### 1. Matters Arising

##### a) Donation of JCSU Budget to Charity [WD]

WD: We have a large underspend this year and I think it would be nice to give some/most of that money to coronavirus-related charities. Normally we'd have to go through College Council, an AGM etc., but College understand the extenuating circumstance. Question is to which charities and how do we decide which ones?

ZC: Can we donate at least some to a Women's Refuge?

WD: If we came up with a few suggestions for charities, and we put out a poll to see who would people like us to donate to?

OR: Can we include Cambridge-based charities?

SB: Also can we donate to multiple charities, split by how many votes each option gets?

JM: SolidariTee are also doing a drive.

WD: It will be easiest if it's a registered charity.

HJ: Also, would be good to support a cancer charity, especially as all their shops are currently closed.

WD: If I collate a list of pitches for charities, their name and why they're important? If you email them to me and put out a poll.

**b) Financial Support [WD]**

WD: Has anyone had any feedback about College's hardship provisions?

BM: From reading the communications, it seems quite difficult to get support, and there seems to be a lot of hurdles to jump and quite a long process. Feels quite off-putting.

ZC: Could we have a provision to financially support students if they have requirements that College aren't meeting?

SAG: How large is our underspend?

WD: Difficult to put an exact number on, because I don't know how much the Boat Club have spent, and quite a few clubs and societies are about to invest in equipment for next year. Probably about £15,000.

AP: I think laptops etc. are things College should provide. I worry if we start paying then it seems like it's our responsibility when it's theirs. Of course, if it is for something that is outside College's remit I'm happy for us to fund it. We would need to also have a conversation about how we decide eligibility, so it doesn't seem nepotistic.

WD: Yeah, it may be better to put in College's hardship fund.

HJ: Does the University have a fund?

LB: I think you apply through the College and get funnelled to the University.

AP: Yeah, in the first instance you apply through College.

*Procedural point about the muting of mics raised by AP.*

WD: Yeah, current provision seems inadequate. Some communication given by College has been inappropriate, e.g. "get a job". Need to have a plan of action to talking to College about how they can improve provision, both in terms of advice and amount of money.

AP: Have talked to College a bit about this. The Cambridge Bursary is being reformed next year, will taper off at a higher income, and will consider family size, parental support etc. College seem to think this will be a magic bullet, and I think College will be reluctant to do anything to they see the results of the reform. However, things like "get a job" is just bad advice - would be good if we can see the advice College are giving before it's sent out and tell them if things they are saying are inappropriate.

BM: Good that the University-wide bursary is becoming more mindful that family income alone is not necessarily the best way to judge eligibility. But the main issue is the way College responds to people who ask for support. I think telling students to "ask for cheaper rooms" is not as bad as being told to "get a job" or "budget better", but still inappropriate nonetheless.

*OR's dog arrives at 15:53.*

ZC: In the shorter term, can we put out an email/post asking people to get in touch if they have had problems getting support, and say we have money to support them as a last resort?

AP: Yeah, I'm not sure that College knows how many people have problems. We could ask College to have a feedback system with the financial support system, or we could even have an informal one.

WD: I think the form after use is a good idea, if it's anonymous we have no way of communicating with people who have issues. If we put out a form to see what people's experience of accessing support has been like and if they have any suggestions that would be a start.

AP: Even asking people to move rooms I'm uncomfortable with, as it isolates people from friends.

BM: Yeah, I know a 1<sup>st</sup> year who was asked to move to Second Court, which is very unfair.

JM: Might also be worth giving people a heads up about cost concerns ahead of balloting. Would also be good to standardise prices in 1<sup>st</sup> year.

BM: People have been forced to leave ballot groups because of where they were ranked, meaning they couldn't afford the rooms.

AP: There is reform in the pipeline. We have currently one of the most complex rent systems in Cambridge. College are discussing things like putting rents into 4 or 5 bands or making it a flat rate for all rooms. Makes it hard to get college to act on this in the meanwhile. But in the meantime, I think we should at least say it is highly unfair to make students move rooms.

### **c) Freshers' Week [LB]**

LB: Need to have a discussion with AP and put together timetable. Obviously clubbing etc. will likely not be happening. With regards to a virtual Freshers' Week, we keep working on it, but clearly won't be as good.

ZC: There was a story about arts students maybe returning after sciences students?

LB: Yes, I saw that. I know it had medical students as a priority. I don't know how much is true and is speculation.

AP: I asked about this in Council, and nobody knows. But they're expecting things not to be business as usual. If we only have a small number of freshers then we can run the core events virtually and some more social events with those who are here.

LB: Also we can see what stance College takes on matriculation etc. to see what plans may be.

AP: Geoff Parks said they'd be able to have a socially distanced matriculation quite easily. But other things are more complicated, e.g. they had to take legal advice about whether College Council could be held meetings virtually, and there is ambiguity about if you can study at Cambridge if you haven't matriculated or you're not in residence. Also seemed resigned to Matriculation Dinner not happening.

LB: Yeah, problem is no one knows, and you can ask for what plans are but can't tell until decisions are made

### **d) Period Provision [JM]**

JM: Me and ZC sent out the form to see if people wanted period products. It's had a good response, but not as large a response as expected. Under 20 people wanted Organicups, but there has been quite a lot of interest in the washable period pants. WD, would it be easier if I ordered and sent them out, or if we let people buy their own and reimburse them?

ZC: Also I think you need 3 pairs to use them properly

JM: They are quite expensive - about £25 a pair. So I don't think we'd be able to buy people a full set. But I think the idea is we get people started on them. Unless we use a lot of the under spend money, but I'd rather give it to charity I think?

ZC: How much interest has there been in the period pants?

JM: About 15. It seems like a lot of money for a nice to have

AP: Are we giving it to people who can afford it, or people who need the money?

JM: I suspect it's a mix. With some people I think we'd be paying for the sustainability.

ZC: I think we should limit it to 1 per person, and then do a second wave for people who had success trying them and would struggle to pay for them.

SB: A cheaper alternative may be washable sanitary pads?

JM: I'll investigate that, and then I'll email people who asked for pants.

WD: Yep that all sounds good. It's a hard one but the money has been allocated to the JCSU to help students so where possible we should prioritise that. With reimbursements, that should work – they can fill out the form and I'll bank transfer them, although I've had some difficulty confirming that I can do so form College.

*ZC enthuses about period pant websites.*

*JM has suspicions Facebook is spying on her.*

JM: Should I wait until you get confirmation from College until I tell people to order?

WD: No, you can tell them to buy now – I can make small reimbursements form the Enterprise Fund.

## 2. Any Other Business

AP: Been contacted by Trinity College, Oxford's JCR President about the "Soap Challenge". Been asked if we'd like to participate. Money is going to Médecins Sans Frontières. It is a competition between colleges.

AP: If you're interested then Ireland has released it's exit plan from lockdown, with its plan being a university return on 10<sup>th</sup> August. We'll also be able to learn from universities that have returned in the weeks before us probably.

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

The meeting closed at 16:19.

### Action Points

WD to collate list of potential charities and put out a College-wide poll to choose which we donate to.

AP/WD to put out a form to gauge people's experience of trying to get financial support from College.

JM to investigate washable sanitary pads and work on provision of period pants.

WD to create group with AP, CP, BM, and anyone else interested to discuss issues of financial access in College.