

St Hugh's JCR Meeting Minutes

Sunday 26th November, 8th week MT17, The JCR

1. Reports from members of the JCR Committee 2 Swearing in of the new JCR Committee 3. Statement by the JCR Treasurer of the balance of the term's motion budget and the balance of any other budget relevant to that meeting 4. Action motions for debate asking for funding 5. Action motions for debate not asking for funding. 6. Statement motions for debate 7. Items for discussion 8. Elections to be held in the JCR Meeting (JCR Careers Officer, JCR Independent Chair, & JCR Returning Officer) 9. Any other business

N.b. This JCR Meeting was immediately followed by the Travel Grants Meeting, which was chaired by the incumbent Independent Chair.

1. Reports from members of the JCR Committee.

President – Ana Pavlova:

- Helped organise Committee Hustings;
- Attended Presidents Committee, Student Support Committee, Infrastructure Committee, Finance Committee;
- Met with the Bursar and Dean to wrap up a few things we've been pushing for;
- Handover week with Alex, with lots of meetings we'll both be attending.

Vice-President – Ed Piggott:

- Did handover.

Secretary (&RO) – Curtis Crowley:

- Busy with hustings and all the umpteen elections this term;
- Dealing with Travel Grants Applications;
- Usual minutes and agendas.

Treasurer – James Brown:

- Worked on the College accounts;
- Went to Finance Committee;
- Will be paying the Travel Grants;
- Working on my handover.

AccAff – Sophie Roche:

- Ran a tour two weeks ago;
- Attended Academic Committee, with discussion around increased suspension rates.

Welfare and Equal Opportunities – Rosie Tabor and Cameron East:

- We had Welfare Committee on Tuesday (where we meet with the Principle, Dean all other bigwigs in College) during which we presented a document in which we argued strongly for increased welfare training for Junior Deans. It was one of the most frustrating meetings in history but we discussed the issue for a solid hour – the main outcome was that next term they're going to set up a full meeting specifically to debate the issue of welfare training for Junior Deans. We'll make sure Ryan and Ella are fully up to speed when we hand over.

- SANE workshops – had our first workshop (on anxiety) on Monday, and we’ve got the one on depression tomorrow, 7pm Mordan Hall. They’re a great way to learn more about mental health in general, the stigmas attached to the condition, potential causes and ways of thinking about the condition. It wasn’t as focussed on tips for management etc as we’d hoped, but it will give a good overview of it, particularly the differences between having low days and being depressed etc.
- Last Welfare Tea ever for us as Welfare Reps, thanks for coming, and for helping.

International Students’ Rep – Tatjana Marks:

- Handover meeting with Afrah;
- Languages café in 6th week;
- My last event will be an International Film Night in 8th week.

LGBTQ Rep – Elise Page:

- Did my handover;
- Helped with the Welfare Tea.
- Some of my leftover LGBTQ budget went on the Welfare Tea;
- If you’re transgender and need any financial support (i.e. to pay for costs of transition) do get in touch with me - I’ve got some dosh;
- Organised an Class Act LGBTQ social, hopefully next time people will come.

Entz Reps – James Atkey and Nathan Peters:

- Held a party to decorate the JCR Christmas tree and the JCR;
- Had our last bop;
- Organised a JCR-wide Secret Santa.

Charities & Communities Rep – Hannah Taylor:

- Held the RAG Ball, it was really good, and we raised £2630, which is almost as much as the university RAG Ball;
- Tying up a few loose ends;
- Had a handover meeting with Naomi.
- Waiting to do the Charities Elections payments.

Environment & Ethics Rep – Ben Jones:

- We came 3rd in the #veggiepledge2017, with 105 pledges;
- Picked up some Student Switch Off posters, which I will place up around college.

Sports and Societies Rep – Harry Thomas:

- Nothing to report.

Careers Officer – Olayemi Eso:

- Had a meeting with the Bursar and the Development Office and we spoke about the next steps for the Pathways database.
- The database can stay up but people can’t request contact from it.
- Will relaunch a Pathways 2.0 alongside the original which will have the list of people who are still willing to be contacted.

DODO – Hannah Choi:

- Uploaded a few documents to the website;
- Did my handover.

Freshers' Rep – Theo Davies-Lewis:

- Nothing to report.

2. Swearing in of the new JCR Committee

Members of the new JCR Committee, in accordance with a bogus clause inserted into Appendix A of the JCR Constitution, declare the following oath in unison and dressed in full sub fusc in front of the JCR as assembled in the last JCR Meeting:

“I pledge my allegiance to the Junior Common Room of St Hugh’s College, Oxford, and hereby swear to uphold its Constitution and Appendices, so help me St Hugh”.

This greatly amused the outgoing JCR Committee, and should hopefully be a nice memory for the new JCR Committee to look back on.

3. Statement by the JCR Treasurer of the balance of the term’s motion budget and the balance of any other budget relevant to this meeting.

£58

4. Action motions for debate asking for funding.

5. Action motions for debate not asking for funding.

Motion a) Change to the International Rep’s constitutional role (1st reading)

The JCR Notes that:

1. Freshers Helpers are traditionally around starting from Monday of 0th Week to welcome arriving Freshers
2. Many International Students arrive before Monday of 0th week
3. This year, the incumbent International Rep arrived in -1st Week to welcome International Freshers arriving early
4. College has a JCR Vac Res fund which can be used to fund the early arrival of relevant Committee Members

The JCR Believes that:

1. Every Fresher should have a friendly face welcome them when they arrive in College

The JCR Resolves:

1. To include the clause [The International Rep shall] “Return two days before Sunday of 0th Week to welcome any International Freshers arriving early” in Appendix A of the JCR Constitution

Proposed by: Tatjana Marks

Seconded by: Afrah Shibu

No short factual points or points of debate.

Move to vote.

Motion passes with 69 votes in favour, 1 against, and 1 abstention.

Motion b) Prescriptions funding

The JCR Notes:

1. Some members of the JCR have conditions which mean they are spending huge amounts of money on prescriptions.
2. This can be a big burden on their finances.
3. College, when spoken to, were unwilling to cover these costs (except via the Hardship Fund which is already in place and is not adequate).
4. Other colleges have systems in place to cover these costs (either in the JCR budget or in the form of a levy). These include Balliol, Wadham, Worcester and Pembroke.
5. It is possible to make a fund available in the JCR termly budget.

The JCR believes:

1. Students should not have to face this burden without support.
2. The JCR should have a fund available to reimburse those who have a condition that means they have overwhelming prescription costs.
3. Adding in a fund for this would not be detrimental to the overall budget of the JCR.

JCR resolves:

1. To obligate the incoming Treasurer to put aside a fund of £1000¹ in the Hilary 2018 budget for this purpose.
2. To ask the next Welfare Reps and Treasurer, along with the Disabilities Rep (who sits on the WEQ Committee) to further discuss this or adapt it if the system does not work.
3. To use this fund to reimburse those who have a prepaid prescription card² meaning that only those who had significant costs would be reimbursed.
4. For the Welfare Reps to be responsible for the running of this system.
5. This will be a fund that expressly states that those on Suspended Status can access the fund.

Proposer: Tirzah Barwick Ward

Seconder: Roxy Orloff

Short factual points:

Marcel: Could you explain how the hardship fund is not adequate?

Tirzah: You have to provide a lot of reasons to prove you have overwhelming subscription costs which is difficult, and there's a deadline too.

Elise: Applying to the university-wide hardship fund is really complicated, you have to give lots of reasons, and there may be some really complex financial situations which means you may still be in need, but not be eligible, and it's also generally quite a stressful and humiliating process, and the complexity of it is really bad.

James Brown: Can you get prescriptions free from the NHS if your family is low income.

Tirzah: Not everyone fits this criterion, but you could still have overwhelming prescription costs, especially given we're students.

¹ This is the amount set aside by Pembroke College JCR.

² <http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/1127.aspx>

Aditya: £1000 is a seventh of our termly budget. How big is Pembroke's budget? Would this mean taking money from other areas of our budget?

Tirzah: I spoke to Fabio (the previous Treasurer) about this, and he thought there was enough money for it.

James: I think there's room for this fund, whilst maintaining the same level of funding for the other areas of the budget.

Alex Yeandle: Is it possible to means test this? People will not want to give up their personal financial information to JCR Committee Members.

Tirzah: We'll be taking it on faith that anyone who has to pay for one of these prescription cards (and therefore has costs of over £100 a year) would only apply if they found the costs overwhelming.

Aditya: But we'd have no way of knowing for certain?

Tirzah: You could put in a clause stating people should only apply for the fund if they really need it.

Arjun Sharma: Why £1000? Pembroke has one of the wealthiest JCRs in Oxford.

Tirzah: I looked at all the college JCRs with prescription funds, and thought £1000 was appropriate initially.

Arjun: What if the £1000 isn't used?

Tirzah: This would be an initial maximum, as it's about trialling a completely new system to see what works and what doesn't, and how much demand there is. Once the new Committee has learnt that, they can make it official.

Roxy: You could definitely add a section saying if you don't need it, it goes back to the JCR. Any system is open to some degree of abuse, so that's not an argument against.

Harrison: How big is Pembroke's JCR?

Tirzah: Smaller. This was discussed for a long time over the last year, and a lot of research went into it.

Harrison: Does it cover part of the cost or the full cost?

Tirzah: It would cover the full cost of the card.

Elise: This was greatly discussed in the WEQ Committee last year, and with the Welfare Reps, and making use of the Welfare survey.

Nathan: If it's like the Blues Funds, and is overapplied for, would everyone still get some money, but not the whole cost back?

Tirzah: Sure. It's up to the new Welfare Reps.

Alex: This is a lot of money, so do we need to pass this motion more than once?

The Chair: No, because it's not spending part of the Motions Budget, or changing the Constitution, it's mandating the Treasurer to put aside some of his budget.

Curtis: The mandate from this motion would only last for one term. A long-term mandate would need to be embedded in the Constitution's Appendices.

Tirzah: This is a temporary measure to try to find the best solution.

Points of debate:

The Chair begins by reading out a point submitted by a suspended student who couldn't be there:

"I don't usually write to ask for a point to be raised at a meeting, now that I am away from college for the year. But, having suspended in May on mental health reasons, I feel I can offer context for why this motion is important.

I have been considering heading towards the medication route for treatment of my depression since I suspended my study. One major consideration for me on this has been the cost of prescriptions for medication that I'd need every week. Using a pre-payment certificate (PPC), this medication would cost me £104 over twelve months. I am lucky in the respect that my condition has improved to the point where, being on extended leave, I can now work part-time to cover these costs. However, for the first few months of my suspension, costs of medication were something that really concerned me (having left college with spiralling debt). This concern played a huge part of why I rejected that route of treatment and went for Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. Had this system been in place at the time, the worries over money would not have been present at all. Having had this experience I would hope that no-one else in college would have to experience having to weigh up your health against financial considerations. It is for people who may find themselves in a similar position that I ask you to back this motion."

Marcel: Of course, if somebody cannot afford the medication they need, they should get financial help to do so. I'm concerned that this fund would seem to allow rich people in college to get their prescriptions for free, at the cost of the poorer students in the college who pay for the fund. We need some sort of checks on income. Why can't the hardship fund be used and promoted?

Harrison: The only way to test someone's wealth is to measure their parents' income, which would be too much work for the Treasurer, would involve lots of forms, would lead to issues of data protection, etc. and parents' income is a crude measure of a student's financial need and their personal budget or family circumstances.

Roxy: Household income is not indicative of a student's or family's financial circumstances. Also, often students don't want to tell their parents about mental health problems, and so couldn't ask them for more money to pay for prescriptions.

Paddy Byfield moves to vote by secret ballot, in accordance with Standing Order 1.15.5. The motion will therefore be voted for online.

Elise: Applying to the college's hardship fund, university hardship fund, or access fund, all of which have limited resources anyway, is so much work, and stress, which is not what you need when already depressed. You have to go through and justify all your spending, which is very embarrassing. If you have very little money, and are unwell and need to study over the vacations, then work isn't an option available to help you fund medical costs. This is just an easy, kind way for people who might be feeling afraid or worried or trapped to get some help, rather than the complex applications for hardship funds which are really not very disabled-friendly. As Tirzah said, what we're doing is setting up a temporary, trial system to see what the best way to fund prescriptions would be. I don't think making preventing rich students from using the fund justifies making it harder for those who really need it to get access. I think this a great motion.

Arjun: If this is a test trial, why are we starting with such a high budget?

Tirzah: The figure is based on other colleges' JCRs' budgets. The £1000 is a limit, we don't have to spend it all.

Jem: The costs of prescriptions are large. A smaller budget of £500 would only help 5 people.

Curtis: I think this is a wonderful motion that would do a lot of good. I would just like to add that the new Committee should still communicate with College to see if College will as a result increase our JCR budget, or consider setting up a system where on presentation of one of these prepaid prescription cards, the College instantly refunds the student. These options should still be looked into. As the Committee trials this and works out what works, they should probably look at creating a proper Appendix in its own right on this, so that the system is clear, and official, and will make sure the mandate lasts.

Cam and Rosie: We fully support this motion.

The Chair: The particulars of the system can be decided by the new Committee, they do not all have to be settled now.

Aditya: Can we delay to vote on it?

Curtis: No, not now we've discussed it and moved to vote by secret ballot.

Elise: If you want to change elements of it, or even overrule it, you can put forward your own motion next term.

Nathan: This is the ideal time for you, as you have the whole vacation as a Committee to work on it and sort out the details.

Jem: Could the new Committee make sure there's an open discussion about the new system with lots of JCR involvement.

The motion was voted on online. It passed with 62 votes in favour, 24 against, and 19 abstentions.

6. Statement motions for debate.

7. Items for discussion.

Blues Funds

In particular, interpretation of paragraph 1 of Appendix G: 'Monies for these grants are to come from a separate JCR fund, within the main JCR account, devoted to supporting members of the JCR who are involved in any form of University Blue or Half-Blue sport.'

Kazi Elias makes a speech arguing that the JCR Committee's decision to offer Blues Funds to any JCR member who plays sports competitively at a university-wide level is unacceptable, and cannot be sustained by a reasonable interpretation of the above clause.

The Independent Chair, Daniel de Wijze, issues a ruling of interpretation, as per section 7 of the JCR Constitution, and stipulates that 'any form of University Blue or Half-Blue sport' means exclusively those sports listed on the Oxford University Blues website: <http://oxforduniversityblues.co.uk>

The Treasurer, James Brown, will operate on the basis of the Independent Chair's ruling when he allocates this term's Blues Funds.

8. Elections to be held in the JCR Meeting

These shall be overseen and run by the incumbent JCR Returning Officer, the JCR Secretary Curtis Crowley. For each position, each of the candidates will take part in a short hust, beginning with a speech of up to 3 minutes expressing why they would like to take on the role, and then followed by up to 8 questions, which must be addressed to all candidates. The first 3 questions shall be reserved for incumbent members of the JCR Committee, the incumbent Independent Chair, and the incumbent Returning Officer. An online vote shall be held during 8th week, by the AV system.

JCR Careers Officer

The one candidate, Quentin Dercon, gives a short speech followed by questions.

The vote was conducted online by AV, with RON as an option. Quentin Dercon was elected.

JCR Independent Chair

Three candidates present themselves: Patrick Byfield, Kavana Crossley, and Matthew Grant. They each give a short speech, followed by questions.

The vote was conducted online by AV, with RON as an option. Kavana Crossley was elected.

JCR Returning Officer

One candidate comes to the rescue of the JCR and presents himself: Arjun Sharma. He gives a short speech, followed by questions.

The JCR votes to elect him as Returning Officer for HT 2018, with 67 votes in favour, and 5 against.

9. Any other business.

N.b. This JCR Meeting was immediately followed by the Travel Grants Meeting, which was also chaired by the incumbent Independent Chair. Only one application was vetoed by a majority vote, the application for the project entitled 'Scuba Diving Down Under'. The remaining 5 applications will go to an online vote.