

# Magdalene College JCR: Open Meeting report

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2018

Report from the Open Meeting on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2018 at 20:00 in the Buckingham Room.

Prepared by Edwin Bahrami Balani (IT Officer) from notes made by Alex Russell (Vice-President).

## Members present

### JCR Committee

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Sam Ashbridge	President
Alex Russell	Vice-President [ <i>taking notes</i> ]
Kit Baker	Green & Charities Officer
Harry King	Services, Bar & Buttery Officer
Hannah Bryant	Domestic & Academic Officer
Giri Nandakumar	Ents Officer

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### Non-committee JCR members

For the entirety of the Open Meeting a sufficient number of JCR members were present for a quorum to exist under subclause 12(f) of the Constitution.

Members present and mentioned in this report include:

- Angus Satow
- Madeleine Kelly
- Krishan Shah

## 1 Objections to the order of items on the agenda

Headings in this report are numbered according to the original order of the agenda before objections or modifications at the time of the Open Meeting.

In the Open Meeting, item 6 as listed in this report was discussed first.

## 2 Hustings for the roles of Disabilities and Communications Officers

The only nomination received for these roles was one for Daniel Lawson as Communications Officer. Mr Lawson was unable to attend, so the Vice-President read out a speech previously prepared by Mr Lawson.

### 3 The Charities votes

St Luke's Hospice was withdrawn as an option for the National charity due to uncertainties over how donations could be made.

The following charities were nominated:

- Local charity:
  - Pippa Goodman (Magdalene alumna)
  - Cambridge Hub
- National charity:
  - Leonard Cheshire Disability
- International charity:
  - Borneo Nature Foundation
  - The Against Malaria Foundation
  - The Schistosomiasis Control Initiative

### 4 Motion to support the boycotting of the National Student Survey

See the Appendix for the text of the motion with amendments as follows.

The following friendly amendments were accepted at the Open Meeting:

- Amend 'Believes' clause E to read "Magdalene JCR members" instead of "Cambridge"
- Amend 'Notes' clause D to read "may or may not" instead of "may"

The following friendly amendment was proposed but failed at a vote:

- In 'Resolves' clause D, remove "or that the link between TEF and fees will be removed"

A vote was held on the motion as amended, which was carried with 11 votes in favour, two against and one abstention.

### 5 The 'Cut the Rent' campaign & College accommodation

The Vice-President announced that the JCR Committee had passed the following motion the previous day at a Committee meeting:

The JCR Committee resolves that the motion passed endorsing the campaign 'Magdalene Cut the Rent' which took place at the Open Meeting on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017, was conducted in a way that was unconstitutional. The JCR Committee shall encourage the campaign to re-submit a motion for discussion and voting at an Open Meeting.

Angus Satow of the 'Cut the Rent' campaign commented that it was unusual for the Constitution to be adhered to in this manner.

Following suggestions that social pressure may have influenced votes cast on 22<sup>nd</sup> November (where the motion was voted upon by show of hands), Madeleine Kelly proposed that any future vote on an affiliation of the JCR to the 'Cut the Rent' campaign should be held by secret ballot. This proposal was put to a vote, which passed.

Mr Satow reported that the campaign had submitted a petition with 171 signatures to the College's Bursar and Assistant Bursar, and that the Bursar responded offering to meet two representatives of the campaign and the JCR President and Vice-President for discussion.

General discussion was held on what changes should be seen in College accommodation.

## **6 The College gyms**

Krishan Shah noted that the main problem with the College gyms was a ‘tragedy of the commons’ where the gyms are left in a messy state by those using them, but stressed that having the gyms (monetarily) free for all to use is important. Mr Shah proposed that a way of logging use of the gyms be devised.

The President reported that the College Marshal had suggested that card access be revoked from all, forcing people to re-apply for this, and also that a membership fee be introduced to deter irresponsible behaviour. However, the sentiment at the Open Meeting was that a fee should not be introduced for fear of discouraging exercise.

It was suggested that the gym be checked each evening to allow identification of those misusing it.

The President noted an email from Katherine Phillips [*JCR member, not present*] requesting that lighter weights be available in the Benson weights gym for those who wish to use them.

It was proposed that gym cleaners are appointed — it was noted that the College cleaning staff are not allowed to lift the weights. A member asked how this would be paid for. While the College currently does make a contribution towards gym upkeep, it was agreed by those present that the College Marshal is unlikely to approve the use of this money for employment of cleaners, since a large float of money must be kept in case of equipment breakage.

It was noted that a Gym Committee would soon be formed, to be chaired by the College Marshal and comprising members of the JCR and members of the MCR.

## **7 Updates & announcements from Committee members**

None.

## **8 Update from the Constitutional Working Group**

The intentions of the Constitutional Working Group were relayed:

1. An amendment will be drafted to let the JCR decide if Equal Opportunities Subcommittee members should be allowed to become ‘full members’ of the JCR Committee.
2. An amendment will be drafted to allow some use of social media for campaigning in JCR Committee elections.

## **9 Questions to the Committee**

None.

## **10 General announcements from the JCR community**

None.

## **11 Any other business**

There was a query regarding how to stand for the vacant Disabilities Officer position.

## Appendix

See agenda point above.

### **Motion to Support the Boycotting of the National Student Survey (NSS)**

Proposed by Alex Russell, JCR Vice-President

Seconded by Hannah Bryant, JCR Domestic & Academic Officer

This JCR notes that:

- a. CUSU has existing policy in support of boycotting the NSS;
- b. Both the UCU (University and College Union) and the NUS (National Union of Students), oppose the NSS in its current form;
- c. The NSS is part of the government's Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), which aims to marketise higher education;
- d. TEF scores may or may not be used to justify future tuition fee increases;
- e. Last year, CUSU joined 25 other students' unions nationwide in voting to boycott the NSS, resulting in NSS data being invalidated at at least 12 institutions, and the government subsequently announcing that they would not increase fees over £9,250;
- f. Not all institutions that oppose TEF and the NSS are in a position where they are able to boycott the NSS.

This JCR believes that:

- a. 'Satisfaction' is the wrong aspect to measure in a university; what matters is whether the student has been intellectually challenged in a supportive environment;
- b. The distribution, collection and analysis of NSS scores is a waste of time and money that could be better spent on education;
- c. The NSS treats students like customers rather than learners;
- d. There is no guarantee that the current fee freeze will be continued, or that the link between TEF and fees will be removed;
- e. Boycotting the NSS sends an important message that Magdalene JCR members oppose the government's current efforts to marketise the higher education sector.

This JCR resolves to:

- a. Support CUSU in the NSS boycott;
- b. Mandate the JCR Committee to share information about the boycott, including methods to unsubscribe from the survey mailing list.