

Liaison Committee Minutes

Wednesday 4th May, 2pm, Old College Office

Attendance:

Professor Worster, Senior Tutor
Dr Pullen, Junior Bursar
Professor Hilton, Steward
Dr Lyndsay Coo, Fellow
Dr Dmitri Levitin, Fellow
Dr Haigh, Senior Treasurer of TCSU
Doug Brumley, BA Society Treasurer
Vicky Spence, TCSU President
Laura Keys, TCSU Secretary

Apologies:

Mr Landman
Professor Gray
Dr Fitzgerald
Alice Goodman
George Gordon, BA Society President
Marijke Fagan, BA Society Secretary
Josh Mills, TCSU Vice-President

1. Matters arising from last meeting's minutes

Minutes of last meeting accepted.

2. Matters arising from College Council

2.1 The Senior Tutor would like to remind members of College to observe the quiet period for exams, which starts on the 25th May and continues until 26th June.

3. Matters arising from the Junior Bursar

3.1. Proposed annual student satisfaction questionnaires

ANUK registration requires the college to annually gauge student satisfaction about accommodation. This is done continually through the Liaison Committee, but a questionnaire may prove more useful. It was proposed that they be sent out electronically, and returned in a paper form after students have filled them in. But it is likely that students will not remember to print them out, so the forms should be electronically returned. The Senior Tutor suggested that perhaps the electronic forms could use drop down menus for answers to ensure regularity.

The Junior Bursar asked for reactions from the BA Society and from TCSU to draft the forms that he handed round. He would like these opinions returned within the next week so that the forms can be sent out within two weeks.

The Catering Department will conduct a similar survey during the next Lent term.

3.2 Feedback on further consideration of New Court proposals

Buildings Committee has considered the feedback and in accordance with this, Fifth Studio are working on a revised and more detailed proposal. However, the decision to go ahead with the works still needs to be approved by the whole Fellowship, and has not yet been finalised. The works are therefore still in the planning stage.

General feedback has been that there should be a mixture of the two options. The Fellows also suggested that smaller rooms could perhaps be situated overlooking the backs so they at least have a nicer view. The TCSU view that there should be no smaller rooms on the top floor had also been noted.

3.3 Safety and Security in College

With the warmer weather windows have been left open which can allow intruders to access rooms. Everyone needs to remember that the College cannot control access throughout the site.

3.4 New Recycling arrangements

The Junior Bursar wanted to clarify that members of College are aware that green bins located in students' rooms can now be used for most recyclables, rather than just paper. TCSU raised concerns about Housekeepers not observing this and emptying both recycling and general waste bins into the same black rubbish sacks. The Junior Bursar noted this.

3.5 Rent Increases for 2011-12

Rates increased by 6% this year, which has been compared to rates of increase at other colleges and found to be average. Some colleges increased by up to 11%, with others as low as 4%. Trinity does still have lower than average prices, for better than average accommodation. Due to the current inflation rate of 4-5%, rates will probably increase by at least 6% next year. A definite proposal will be presented at the next meeting.

3.6 Work to Great Gate and Porters' Lodge during the coming Long Vacation

There will be major remodelling of the Porters Lodge and restoration of the gates during the Long Vacation. Cabins will be installed on the cobbles to provide a temporary Porters' Lodge, meaning cycles will have to be removed. The gates will have to be removed, meaning that there will be some disruption in the access to the college at various times through this entrance. After these works the Porters Lodge will be more efficient, attractive and nicer to use for staff and visitors to the Lodge (from the College or outside).

4. Steward's Business

4.1 Food price rises

A proposal will be presented at the next meeting for price rises after considering inflation etc.

4.2 Drinks at TCSU events

The Catering Department has had a complaint about the lack of free drinks for committee members of TCSU at TCSU organised events. This could have been stopped because of licensing. The Steward would not like to restore this system, and a new discount system is already in place. Vicky will attempt to discover who made the complaint and try to resolve the situation.

5. Matters arising from TCSU

5.1. Laundry Renovation

A renovation of College laundrettes was discussed at a previous meeting, and TCSU enquired about whether any action has been taken on this front. The Junior Bursar stated that the idea of complete outsourcing was dead, as no commercial operator was interested in our set-up of several, small laundrettes. There will therefore be a renovation by the college, with the laundrette in Angel Court being tackled first during the coming Long Vacation. The

Junior Bursar suggested that perhaps in future, instead of using the current card system, students would pay a fixed fee in order to use the services. This would be easier, but perhaps slightly less fair for students and security would be an issue, although the SALTO locks on the door would prevent unauthorised users entering the laundrettes, unless assisted by members of Trinity.

5.2 Outdoor tables

There have been several requests from students for picnic-style tables in outside areas of College, such as around the bar and in areas of Burrell's Field. TCSU should talk to the Gardens Committee about this, but there shouldn't be a problem in principle in Burrell's Field. The Junior Bursar likes the idea, but would not want to have tables on the paddocks, as this would encourage tourists to use them for picnics. The Senior Tutor suggested that they could also be introduced to areas of the Fellows Garden. The Junior Bursar will pursue this matter further with the Gardens Committee.

5.3 Group Room Balloting

Students have been asking about whether it would be possible to ballot in small groups on an optional basis. Systems at other colleges work in the following way: students inform the Accommodation Office a few weeks prior to the ballot that they wished to be balloted together in a group of between 2 and 6. When the random ballot is drawn up, they are all be grouped under one name, and given one number. The order that they pick in within this group is also randomly determined. For the next year, the ballot is flipped and this order is reversed. There is no re-assignment of ballot groups. They are under no obligation to chose rooms near to each other, but students do then have the option of living near their friends in the second and third years. TCSU would like to employ a similar system at Trinity and are keen to see this plan to its completion, especially since the New Court double sets are likely to be removed under the current renovation plans. Vicky asked the committee if they had any concerns or comments on this scheme before it is presented to the Accommodation Office. The Junior Bursar raised several practical objections to this plan, and he was also opposed on principle because it would undermine the community spirit of the college, and would be unfair because an element has been introduced to the ballot whereby a whole block of rooms could disappear at once that ungrouped students could want to take. He also expressed worries that people would want to move, once rooms have been allocated and that ungrouped students would feel isolated.

Dr Coe and Dr Levitin favoured the idea, which was used successfully at previous colleges of which they have been members. Dr Coe suggested that a group of six may perhaps be too large, however. Dr Levitin stated that in his time at another college using this system, almost everyone did ballot in a group so very few students were left out.

The Steward and the Senior Tutor liked the idea, but had concerns about its practicality.

Laura felt that the current system also excludes people, with some having no choice but to move to Burrell's Field,

Doug thought the idea was good, but that there could be difficulties with the third year ballot that would have to be corrected.

Vicky will take these concerns and ideas into consideration before drawing up the final proposal.

The Junior Bursar will discuss this further with the Senior Tutor.

5.4 Library hours

Extended library hours had been discussed at a previous meeting, and Vicky wondered whether any progress has been made on this front. During Easter Term the library is open

from 8am until 2am, and Vicky wondered whether this could be extended, especially the early opening time, so that students can return books before lectures. Later opening times at the end of the day have previously been discussed and dismissed because of staffing issues, but an earlier opening for book returns wouldn't need to be fully staffed and could be feasible. Further discussion will occur on this.

5.5 Student Liaison officer

The TCSU Access Officer has noticed that other colleges have a part-time member of non-academic staff who acts as a liaison officer with schools. The Senior Tutor would discuss this more, and more information needs to be gathered about the procedure at other colleges. The Access Officer should send the Senior Tutor an email detailing her plans, perhaps before next Tuesday, when there is a meeting of the College Staff Committee.

5.6 Interview Guide

The TCSU Access Officer wondered whether it would be possible for basic interview advice from TCSU to be included with the letter that invites students to come up for interview. The Senior Tutor did not see a problem with this in principle, but would have to work very closely with the Admissions Tutor to ensure that advice is correct, especially in light of past complaints about interview advice. He suggested that students could perhaps be directed to a centralised University based advice forum.

6. Matters arising from the BA society

6.1. Lockers

The BA Society wondered whether it would be possible for lockers to be installed in College so that Graduates who do not live on the main site could have a place to leave their bags when they come for hall or other short visits. The Junior Bursar suggested that there is no space for them, and the Senior Tutor thought that they would be filled quickly with longer term storage, and lost keys would be an issue. It was suggested that an electronic locker system could be employed, similar to that which is currently being used in the University Library. The lockers would be situated on the lower floor of the BA room, or in the old TCSU Office which is currently unused.

6.2 Water in hall

The BA Society wondered when a water machine will be returned to hall. Vicky said that she has spoken to the Catering Manager, who says that he has the machine but the Maintenance Department have not fitted it yet, but this will be done soon.

6.3 Water Cooler outside the library

The BA Society enquired as to whether it would be possible to have a water cooler installed outside the library. Members of the Committee suggested that there could already be a water cooler outside the library, situated on the left of the entrance, and the BA Society should check this. The Junior Bursar will also look into this matter but doesn't think that a permanently plumbed cooler could be fitted because of planning regulations concerning Listed Buildings.

7. AOB

No business.

Laura Keys, 11th May 2011