

Liaison Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 30th April 2014, Deighton Room

Attendance:

Prof Grae Worster – *Senior Tutor (Chairman)*

Prof Kevin Gray – *Dean of College*

Dr Rod Pullen – *Junior Bursar*

Dr Stuart Haigh – *TCSU Senior Treasurer*

Dr Peter Sarris – *Steward*

Dr George Corbett - *Fellow*

Dr Tim Gibbs - *Fellow*

Revd Paul Dominiak - *Chaplain*

Janina Voigt – *BA Society President*

Matthew Griffiths – *BA First Year Rep*

Jeremy Bernstein – *TCSU President*

Thomas Hughes-McLure – *TCSU Vice-President*

Leo Sands – *TCSU Secretary*

Apologies:

Mr Rory Landman – *Senior Bursar*

Prof Rebecca Fitzgerald – *Advisor to Women Students*

Sun Lee – *BA Society Liaison Officer*

1. Matters arising from last meeting's minutes

- a. Last meeting's minutes were accepted.
- b. The Junior Bursar reported that the Brewhouse will now be available for overseas storage over the Long Vacation, meaning that the WPR will no longer be required as had been previously discussed, providing that there is no more demand for storage than usual.

2. Matters arising from the Junior Bursar

- a. Matters concerning the British Heart Foundation clothing collection.
 - i. Two skips already sited in College will be accepting donations for the cause; the first by Nevile's Gate, and the second by the Porters' Lodge in Burrell's Field. Additional 'wheelie bins' in other locations will not be used this year.
- b. Matters concerning Bidwells Management.
 - i. Following the assumption of the responsibility for the Trinity portfolio by Teresa Peters, a thorough audit of the properties under Bidwells management is under way.
 - ii. At this stage, only two volunteers have responded to her request for Housing Reps. As such, the Junior Bursar has suggested to Ms Peters that any existing reps may wish to come forward, but that any collective meeting with House Reps be delayed until Michaelmas Term, when new Reps may be elected.
- c. Matters concerning the Living Wage.
 - i. The Junior Bursar emphasized that his offer to hold an Open Meeting with any interested members still stands.
- d. Matters concerning the TCSU and BA Society Attitude Surveys.

- i. The Junior Bursar has met with the two Presidents, and issues are currently being worked through.
 - ii. Upon the Senior Tutor's suggestion, the Committee agreed that a PDF version of the survey results will be submitted to the College Council.
- e. Matters concerning environmental issues, including recycling
 - i. It was established that the President and Vice-President of TCSU have already been consulted on this subject, and has been agreed that one element of the issue is a 'knowledge gap'. Information from the college on existing arrangements would enable a better dialogue on the subject.
 - ii. The Junior Bursar offered to hold an Open Meeting to those members interested in expressing views, or learning more, on the matter.
- f. Matters concerning rents for the coming year.
 - i. At this stage, information is still being sourced by Bidwells Management on open market rent projections in Cambridge for the coming year. Government figures have been published on RPI, which rose by 2.5% in the year to April 2014. The Junior Bursar would bring his specific proposals to the next meeting.
- g. Matters concerning works in New Court:
 - i. It would be advantageous to contractors to be able to shut down the heating in New Court, affecting the Court's West Range (staircases A – E), from mid-May. Although a decision on the matter has yet to be made, the Junior Bursar suggested that it was likely that permission may be granted to the contractors. It was noted, that in the case of the heating being switched off, there was no prospect of switching it back on, but that from mid-May it was unlikely to be required.
- h. Matters concerning TCSU May week events.
 - i. The TCSU President would like to proceed with the proposed night punting arrangements, but not for a sports event on the South Paddock. The Junior Bursar will raise these proposals at the College Council's meeting on Friday 2nd May.

3. Matters arising from the Dean

- a. The Dean reiterated a request for restraint and consideration regarding noise throughout the coming exam period.

4. Matters arising from the Senior Tutor

- a. Matters concerning Caesarean Sunday.
 - i. The Senior Tutor said he felt that there was no pressing need to send out a specific message to college members regarding the event, as college members had not attracted any police attention in the past through participation in the event. Nevertheless, any informal reiteration of the college's expectations of its undergraduate members would be well received.
- b. Matters concerning a Formal Hall toast to the University Challenge team.

- i. Such an event is under consideration. If this is to go ahead, tickets would be available to members of college before they are released to guests.

5. Matters arising from the Steward

- a. Matters concerning price inflation.
 - i. It was proposed that the mechanism used last year to raise food costs be repeated. This would entail the price of food increasing in line with food inflation, whilst the Kitchen Fixed Charge be raised in line with the general figure. The Steward expressed his intention to make college members aware of the increases as soon as the figures are made available.
- b. Matters concerning bar renovations.
 - i. Any proposals for changes to be made to the bar ought to be brought to the catering manager, who will then pass them on to the bar manager.
- c. Matters concerning BA guest night.
 - i. BA Society President expressed her intention to re-host a guest night in the college bar, the Steward suggested no reason why this wouldn't be possible.

6. Matters arising from TCSU

- a. Matters concerning the TCSU blackboard.
 - i. Originally, the Catering Manager was only willing to give permission to a blackboard if a glass screen was installed as a protection measure. However, the Committee would prefer a board without a screen. The Junior Bursar offered to speak to the Catering Manager about establishing who will be in charge of maintaining the blackboard, and ensuring that nothing offensive is written on it.
- b. Matters concerning furniture in the JCR
 - i. It was established that the TCSU has already purchased furniture for the JCR. The Junior Bursar confirmed that he had agreed a College contribution to this.
 - ii. It was established that a PlayStation 4 is being purchased to accompany a potential new television for the JCR.
 - iii. The TCSU raised the question of increasing the internet bandwidth for the JCR to allow heavier use of the PlayStation 4. It was established that permission must be secured from the Computing Office, as such, the TCSU Computing Officer will raise this to the Computing Committee, and the Junior Bursar offered to alert also the Chairman of the Computing Committee (Dr Petrie).
- c. Matters concerning bar renovations.
 - i. The TCSU expressed a desire to do this in liaison with the BA Society, with the ultimate goal of reducing the bar's financial loss.
 - ii. The TCSU raised the possibility of long-term changes; possibly moving the bar to the Whewell's Court wine cellar or the Brewhouse site. The TCSU President has spoken to Professor

McKitterick, who suggested that he would be happy to distribute any preliminary proposal amongst the Fellows. The Junior Bursar also offered to suggest a time and date for a trip to the Whewell's Court wine cellar, which would preferably be carried out as soon as possible.

- iii. The BA Society President raised a question over how changes to furniture ought to be made. The Junior Bursar suggested that this should be done through the Catering Manager.
 - iv. Dr Corbett raised the possibility of a broader development of the existing sight and facility of the bar, if major new proposals were taken forward for relocating the bar altogether (i.e. Brewhouse site or Whewell's Court wine cellar). He noted from the TCSU survey (p.11) that the JCR rooms are 'largely underused by students, with 51% of students making at most one visit a term'. He suggested, therefore, that it might be worth considering a re-organisation of the current space on that general site (for example, linking or amalgamating the current bar with the JCR rooms and other rooms, perhaps even the BA room).
 - v. The Junior Bursar reminded the Committee that the possibility of using the 'brewhouse' refers to a new facility developed on that sight, not to use of the existing building.
- d. Matters concerning an 'alternative prospectus'.
- i. It was established that the TCSU Access Officer had made an alternative prospectus. It was agreed that a digital PDF copy of this ought to be circulated around the entire Liaison Committee.
- e. Matters concerning the welfare budget.
- i. Following his receiving a budget proposal from the Welfare Subcommittee, the Senior Tutor raised concern about the total sought and the fact that parallel provisions are made to related societies. The Senior Tutor emphasized how he would prefer not to receive specific requests to present to College Council but instead would rather receive a lump sum budget proposal.
 - ii. The Committee was reminded that two autonomous societies *Women of Trinity* and *Men of Trinity* had been subsumed as roles in the TCSU's Welfare Subcommittee. As such, the concern that these causes were missing out on benefits from the Amalgamated Clubs, was raised.
 - iii. The Senior Tutor noted that the Welfare Committee had its own Senior Treasurer, which may be a relic of when WoT and MoT were societies. He reported that he had offered to host a meeting to discuss welfare provisions in College.
- f. Matters concerning Freshers' Week.
- i. Because of TCSU President's acceptance onto the MIT-Cambridge exchange, it was established that the Vice-President will assume presidency for the first two weeks of Michaelmas, after which a by-election will take place.
 - ii. The Junior Bursar remarked that one-third of the electorate will have been in college for only two weeks at the time of the

election, and have little knowledge of the College, TCSU, or the candidates.

7. Matters arising from the BA society

- a. Matters concerning the BA Society election.
 - i. It was confirmed that this is to happen on the 16th May 2014, with handover on 23rd May.
 - ii. It was established that the election will be held in conjunction with a referendum on introducing an LGBT+ Officer, and a realignment of the Society's financial year. It was confirmed that both proposed changes need to be approved by College Council.
- b. This Saturday, pre-drinks will be held in the OCR and the bar, subject to agreement by the College Council on Friday.
- c. Matters concerning the division between 'associate members', 'full members' and 'affiliate members'.
 - i. At this point, 'associate members' and 'affiliate members' are constitutionally barred from voting in elections or standing for elected positions.
 - ii. Affiliate members are those students doing a two-year law-conversion course; students who had already held BA degrees.
 - iii. The Committee agreed with the BA President that it seemed unfair to bar these students on law-conversion courses from fully participating in the BA Society.
 - iv. It was noted that, a suggestion has been put forward to change the definition of 'full member' in the BA Society's constitution.
- d. Matters concerning BA guest night.
 - i. The BA President will reapply for permission from College Council for another guest night.
- e. Matters concerning BA Society Handover Feast,
 - i. The BA President would like to have a microphone in hall on this occasion.

8. AOB

- a. Matters concerning the BA Society survey.
 - i. Dr Corbett praised the BA survey and welcomed its recommendation to use a template to allow an annual survey. He questioned, however, whether the 'survey provides a fair representation of the views of the BA society as a whole' given that those who responded to the survey (27%) are more likely to be those who are most engaged with the college. Some of its findings, such as that 'Figure 24 shows that most BAs attend informal hall regularly, with 60% eating in informal hall several times per week', are misleading (the figure could be much lower), and more careful phrasing might be advisable in future.
 - ii. The BA President acknowledged that an issue existed, particularly with the involvement of certain members who live out of college.

- iii. The Dean reminded the Committee that in Trinity Hall, there was a custom of graduate students being occasionally entertained at High Table.
 - iv. It was agreed that there was a general need to increase communication between Fellows and graduate students.
 - v. Dr Corbett suggested that Fellows may be asked to attend BA Formals from time to time, seated next to graduate students of their relevant subject. Dr Corbett also suggested that a graduate lunch may be held in a room close to hall, to which Fellows could be invited. The committee noted that some negative comments about the college contact system had been made - 'many respondents saying that they received a college contact who proceeded to never meet or even contact them' (BA Survey, p. 32). It was agreed that this should be looked into. It was also agreed that there was a general need to increase communication between Fellows and graduate students.
 - vi. The Junior Bursar informed the Committee that there was a High Table Committee meeting soon, and that suggestions could be raised there. He also reminded the Committee that the possibility of a graduate lunch falls under the prerogative of the Steward, and he would need to be consulted for this to take place.
- b. Dr Corbett raised a question over a complaint about library loans that appeared in the TCSU Annual Survey.
- i. The TCSU President confirmed that he has spoken to the librarians about this, and they are looking to implement a system that gives automatic warning in advance for due books.
- c. Dr Corbett raised a concern about the pricing of BA accommodation.
- i. It was confirmed to the Committee that rises in these costs are tied to the college's costs, not to general inflation or the RPI, and that all rents for students in College-owned properties are subsidised by the College compared to the Open Market Rent.
 - ii. The Junior Bursar added that the subsidy is adjusted year by year so that the increase in Bidwells managed properties is the same as the increase in rents for College itself.
 - iii. The Junior Bursar reminded the Committee that Trinity is in the lower third of Cambridge colleges in terms of accommodation costs, and the Cambridge student rents are generally low compared with national levels.
- d. A vote of thanks was recorded to the outgoing BA Society Committee.