



St. John's College, Oxford  
Middle Common Room

# Constitution and Standing Orders

# Constitution

## Preamble

The Middle Common Room (MCR) is a self-governing body of graduate members of St. John's College, Oxford. It acts to promote the interests and welfare of, and social activities among, its members, and to represent the interests of its members to the Governing Body of College and to institutions within the University of Oxford. It shall be operated in a fair and democratic manner. The MCR does not pursue political aims and it does not discriminate against its members on the basis of gender, ethnicity, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, national origin or any other protected characteristic. We value equality, respect, diversity and inclusivity.

## Part I – Membership

- 1) There shall be two categories of membership.
  - a) Full membership
  - b) Associate membership
- 2) Full Membership
  - a) The following persons shall be entitled to full membership.
    - i) All members of St. John's College enrolled for postgraduate studies within the University of Oxford.
    - ii) All members of St. John's College enrolled for undergraduate degrees who already have a first degree.
    - iii) Graduate students recognised as affiliated to the College.
    - iv) Those whom, from time to time, St. John's College requests to be full members.
  - b) Full members shall have the following rights.
    - i) The right to use any MCR property or facilities.
    - ii) The right to attend and speak at meetings.
    - iii) The right to vote at meetings and referenda, elections of the Committee, and in secret ballots.
    - iv) The right to stand for election or appointment for a Committee position.
    - v) The right to enter the MCR room ballot.
  - c) Any member of St. John's College entitled to full membership has the right not to take up this membership, with no student exercising this right being unfairly disadvantaged with regard to the provision of services or otherwise by reason of their having done so.
- 3) Associate Membership
  - a) A person who is not automatically a full member may be nominated for associate membership, by a motion to a General Meeting. No full member shall be permitted to nominate more than six persons for associate membership in any one academic year.
  - b) Associate membership may be granted through a motion put to the General Meeting in accordance with the Rules of the MCR. Persons nominated for associate membership, and the two full members who nominated them, must attend the meeting at which the nomination is being considered, unless given special exemption by the President. Unexcused non-attendance shall result in the motion becoming void.
  - c) The Committee, by majority vote, shall have the power to reject nominations for associate membership without submitting them to General Meetings if it deems that facilities have or may become overstretched.
  - d) Associate membership may be granted to a person for a term limited by time or other conditions. In the event that no conditions are set, the membership shall expire after a period of two years. If associate membership expires, the former associate member may apply again to become an associate member.
  - e) In addition, the President of the St John's College Junior Common Room shall automatically enjoy associate membership for the duration of their term in office, and any visiting postgraduate student at St John's College shall enjoy associate membership for the duration of their visit to the College.
  - f) Associate members shall have the following rights.
    - i) The right to use any MCR property or facilities if they are members of St John's College. In the case of associate members who are not members of St John's College, any access to MCR facilities is at the discretion of College authorities.
    - ii) The right to attend and speak at meetings.
  - g) Associate members have no voting rights, cannot stand for any position on the Committee, and are not entitled to enter the MCR room ballot.
  - h) Associate membership may be revoked through a motion put to the General Meeting in accordance with the Rules of the MCR.
- 4) The sum of all full and associate members shall be titled the membership body.

- 5) Responsibilities and Suspension of Members
  - a) Members are required to look after the common room and all MCR property and treat their fellow members with respect. Each member may share the facilities with up to three persons who are not members of the MCR. For additional guests, permission must be sought from one of the Executive Board Members. Members are responsible for their guests and can be held accountable for any damage or disturbance they cause.
  - b) In the light of misconduct and/or violation of MCR rules, the Committee may, by a simple majority vote, suspend a member's rights and access to facilities. If this suspension is still in effect at the time of the next General Meeting, it is subject to ratification by a motion put to that General Meeting. A member whose possible suspension is under consideration by the Committee shall be notified, by letter or email from the Vice President, of the Committee's consideration of possible suspension at least a week before the Committee votes on the issue, and the member shall be given the opportunity to make submissions to the Committee before the voting takes place.

## Part II - The Committee

- 6) The Committee shall comprise the following groups.
  - a) Executive Board Members
  - b) Non-Executive Committee Members
- 7) Executive Board Members
  - a) The Executive Board Members shall comprise the following positions.
    - i) President
    - ii) Vice President
    - iii) Treasurer
    - iv) Secretary
  - b) Each Executive Board position is held by one full member who is in residence during the term of office, with "in residence" defined as: living within the University-stipulated distance from Carfax Tower, paying (or having paid) University or College fees if these are applicable, and not having suspended their studies.
  - c) A person may not stand for election as an Executive Board Member if they are not in residence at the time of the election, or will not be in residence for part of their term of office.
  - d) If an Executive Board Member is no longer in residence, their Executive Board position falls vacant.
  - e) No Executive Board Member may be out of Oxford for longer than three consecutive weeks during term.
- 8) Non-Executive Committee Members
  - a) The Non-Executive Committee Members shall comprise the following positions, which may ordinarily be held by up to the number of people listed in brackets afterwards at one time:
    - i) Social Secretaries (3)
    - ii) Victuallers (3)
    - iii) Welfare Officers (3)
    - iv) Culture Officers (2)
    - v) Women's Officer(s) (2)
    - vi) LGBTQ Officer(s) (2)
    - vii) Black and Minority Ethnic Students' Officer(s) (2)
    - viii) Disabled Students' Officer(s) (2)
    - ix) International Students' Officer(s) (2)
    - x) Student Parent and Carers' Officer (1)
    - xi) Interfaith Officer (1)
    - xii) Environment and Ethics Officer(s) (2)
    - xiii) Sports Officer (1)
    - xiv) Returning Officer (1)
    - xv) Any other such position as the Executive Board may, by majority vote, from time to time create (2) although the Executive Board may allow more people to hold any of the positions in (iv)-(viii) above, to a maximum of three, where they consider exceptional circumstances require this.
- 9) The Executive Board
  - a) The Executive Board shall comprise the Executive Board Members, and shall have a quorum of two.
  - b) When the Executive Board is required to make a decision, this shall be decided by a simple majority vote. In the event of a tied vote, the President shall have the casting vote.
- 10) Operation of the Committee

- a) The Committee members' responsibilities shall be as laid down in Standing Orders.
  - b) The Committee shall be bound by the decisions of the General Meeting, but has the power to act on its own initiative, in the best interests of the MCR, where the General Meeting has expressed no opinion.
  - c) Before making a major commitment that cannot readily be rescinded, the Committee must make all reasonable efforts to inform, and receive responses from, the membership body.
  - d) The Committee has a general duty to keep the membership body informed of its actions.
  - e) Any full member shall not hold normally more than one Committee position. In the case where any of the following positions are unfilled, a member of the existing committee may be appointed by majority vote of the committee to fulfil the representation duties and aspects of one of these roles until someone else is appointed. These positions are: Women's Officer, LGBTQ Officer, Black and Minority Ethnic Students' Officer, Disabled Students' Officer, International Students' Officer, Student Parents and Carers' Officer, Interfaith Officer, Environment and Ethics Officer, Sports Officer and Returning Officer. This member of the committee is known as an acting officer for that position, e.g. "Acting Women's Officer".
  - f) When the Committee is required to make a decision, the decision shall be decided by a simple majority vote. In the event of a tied vote among the Committee, the President shall have the casting vote.
  - g) When the Committee is required to vote, each Executive Board position shall have one vote each, and each Non-Executive Committee position shall have one vote each. If more than one person holds a Non-Executive Committee position, everyone in that position must agree in their decision or else the vote shall be recorded as an abstention.
- 11) Vacant Positions
- a) If an Executive Board position is vacant, by resignation or otherwise, a by-election shall be held for that position in accordance with the Rules of the MCR.
  - b) If a Non-Executive Committee position is vacant, the Committee should appoint, by majority vote, a full member in that position.
  - c) If a Committee position is not held by the maximum number of people in section 8, the Committee may appoint, by majority vote, a full member in that position.
  - d) The duration of any appointment under subsections b) or c) above shall not exceed the term of office of the Committee that made it, and any appointment is subject to ratification by a motion at the next General Meeting after the appointment. Until that meeting the member in question shall act in that position.

### **Part III - General Meetings**

- 12) Authority of the General Meeting
- a) The General Meeting shall be the final authority on all matters relating to the MCR, subject to referenda.
  - b) The General Meeting may debate and determine any question, subject to the Rules of the MCR.
  - c) The decisions of the General Meeting shall be binding on all persons acting in the name of the MCR.
  - d) The procedure of General Meetings shall be in accordance with Part I of the Standing Orders.
- 13) Holding of General Meetings
- a) There are three kinds of General Meetings.
    - i) Ordinary General Meetings
    - ii) Extraordinary General Meetings
    - iii) The Annual General Meeting
  - b) The quorum of any General Meeting shall be fifteen full members.
  - c) A minimum of two General Meetings shall be held each term. The Secretary shall determine the dates for Ordinary and Annual General Meetings, having consulted with the President.
  - d) Notice of a General Meeting shall be distributed by the Secretary using the MCR emailing list not less than seven days before the meeting is scheduled to take place. Such an email must be devoted exclusively to the notice of the General Meeting.
  - e) Motions must be submitted by two full members to the Secretary not less than seventy-two hours before the meeting is scheduled to take place.
  - f) The agenda for a General Meeting shall be distributed by the Secretary using the MCR emailing list not less than forty-eight hours before the meeting is scheduled to take place. Such an email must be devoted exclusively to the agenda for the General Meeting.
- 14) Extraordinary General Meetings
- a) An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called at the request of thirty full members or by a majority vote of the Committee.
  - b) The request to hold an Extraordinary General Meeting must be delivered to the Secretary in writing, must include evidence that it is supported either by thirty full members or by the majority of the Committee, and

- must specify the reasons for which the Extraordinary General Meeting is being called.
  - c) Upon receipt of the request, the Secretary must call an Extraordinary General Meeting to take place within seventy-two hours. Notice of, and motions for, such an Extraordinary General Meeting must be distributed by the Secretary using the MCR emailing list not less than forty-eight hours before a meeting is scheduled to take place. Such an email must be devoted exclusively to the notice of the Extraordinary General Meeting.
  - d) Discussion at an Extraordinary General Meeting shall be restricted to the motions for which it has been called, and to related procedural motions.
- 15) The Annual General Meeting shall be held before Fifth Week of Trinity Term.

## **Part IV - Financial Arrangements**

- 16) The Treasurer shall be responsible to authorise all expenditure subject to the concurrence of either the President or the Vice President.
- 17) The Budget
- a) The leaving Treasurer shall submit a preliminary budget report at the final General Meeting of Hilary Term.
  - b) Appropriate arrangements shall be made by the new Treasurer for the approval of the Budget by at the Annual General Meeting.
  - c) The Budget shall contain all of the following items.
    - i) A statement of the MCR's financial position.
    - ii) Audited accounts for the year ending 31 March
    - iii) A budget of income and expenditure for the year commencing 1 April.
    - iv) A detailed list of external organizations to which the MCR has made donations.
  - d) Accounts shall be audited by at least two full members, chosen by the new Treasurer, who are not also members of either the leaving or new Committee.
  - e) Should the Budget not be approved at the Annual General Meeting, it must be submitted, in amended form if necessary, to another General Meeting so as to obtain approval of it before the end of Trinity Term.
- 18) The MCR rules out College-internal third-party funding, such as funding for clubs or societies.

## **Part V - Complaints and Censure/Recall Motions**

- 19) Complaints procedure for members
- a) A full member, or any person who has opted out of membership in accordance with their rights given in Part I, may make a complaint about their dealings with the MCR in accordance with this section.
  - b) Where the complaint concerns the Returning Officer, or where there is no Returning Officer, it will be considered by the President, unless it concerns the President, where it is considered by the Vice President.
  - c) Where the complaint is about any other matter, it should be considered by the Returning Officer.
  - d) Complaints should be made in writing to the college address of the relevant person listed above.
  - e) The person considering the complaint shall handle the complaint fairly and promptly.
  - f) The person considering the complaint shall, if upholding the complaint, try to provide a complainant with an effective remedy, which may include bringing a motion of censure or recall.
  - g) Where a complainant is unhappy with the handling of the complaint, they retain the legal right to contact the College's Governing Body, who may appoint an independent person to review the complaint.
- 20) The complaints procedure for non-members shall be in accordance with the Code of Practice of St. John's College as prescribed under the Education Act 1994 (UK) s.22(3), which is available from College.
- 21) Motions of Censure
- a) Any member may be censured through a motion put to the General Meeting in accordance with the Rules of the MCR. Such a motion must state the reasons why censure is brought against the named member.
  - b) While a motion of censure of a member of the Committee is under consideration in a General Meeting, the Returning Officer shall occupy the Chair, unless the motion is directed against the Returning Officer, in which case the President shall occupy the Chair.
  - c) A simple majority is required to pass a motion of censure.
- 22) Motions of Recall
- a) A motion of recall is a motion to a General Meeting that, if passed, requires the resignation of the member of the Committee to whom it is directed. In addition to the requirement that a motion be submitted by two full members, a motion of recall must also deliver to the Vice President evidence that it is supported by thirty full members or the majority of the Committee, and the reasons for which recall is sought.
  - b) While a motion of recall is under consideration in a General Meeting, the Returning Officer shall occupy the Chair, unless the motion is directed against the Returning Officer, in which case the President shall

occupy the Chair. A simple majority is required to pass a motion of recall.

## **Part VI - Affiliation to External Organisations**

23) The MCR is affiliated to any organisation listed in Standing Orders.

24) Affiliation to External Organisations

- a) The MCR may affiliate to an external organisation by adding the organisation to Part III of the Standing Orders, by motion in a General Meeting or referendum. Any details of affiliation should also appear in Standing Orders. Where this happens, the President shall ensure that notice of the affiliation and of any fee or donation made is distributed using the MCR emailing list and to the Governing Body of College.
- b) The Executive Board shall ensure a review of details regarding payments made to any external organisation, as well as the renewal of any affiliation to an external organisation is put before the Annual General Meeting, and given to the Governing Body of College.

25) Continuing Affiliation to External Organisations

- a) The continuing affiliation to any external organisation must be approved at the Annual General Meeting. Where the Annual General Meeting does not approve continuing affiliation, the Standing Orders shall automatically be amended to delete the name of the external organisation, and the Vice President shall ensure this deletion takes place in the copy available on the MCR website.
- b) A requisition may be made by five per cent of the full members that the question of continuing affiliation to any particular organisation be decided upon a secret ballot in which all full members are entitled to vote. Such a request must be delivered to the Vice President, with evidence that it has the support required.
- c) Upon the receipt of the request specified in subsection (b) above, a referendum shall be organised by the Returning Officer in accordance with the Rules of the MCR, except the Executive Board shall have no power to veto the question.

## **Part VII – Elections**

26) Timing of Elections

- a) An annual election shall be held for all Committee positions during Hilary Term. The new Committee shall hold office from the midnight that marks the end of the Saturday of Eighth Week of Hilary Term.
- b) A by-election shall be held not more than three weeks after the vacancy requiring the by-election occurs or, if the date of three weeks does not fall within a full term, then the by-election must take place before the end of Second Week of the following term.

27) Candidates may only stand for one position in an election. Eligibility for a position is determined by a member's rights under Part I and the special rules for Executive Board positions in Part II.

28) Nominations

- a) A candidate must be nominated by at least two full members.
- b) Each nomination shall consist of the following items.
  - i) A manifesto, summarising the candidate's principles and intentions for their potential tenure in the nominated position.
  - ii) A statement signed by both the nominating members and by the candidate indicating the candidate's willingness to stand for the position.

29) Process of Elections

- a) The Returning Officer shall distribute information about the details of an election and the closing date for nominations using the MCR emailing list. Such emails must be devoted exclusively to electoral matters.
- b) A period of at least seven days must elapse between the distribution of information under subsection a) and the closing of nominations.
- c) Once nominations have closed, details of all nominations and manifestos shall be distributed using the MCR emailing list and the MCR notice board. Other than emails sent by the Returning Officer, the MCR emailing list shall not be used to campaign for or against any candidate.
- d) Once nominations have closed and before any voting begins, hustings must be held in which the members may interrogate the candidates in attendance about their candidacy.
- e) The period between the opening of nominations and the closing of all voting must not exceed 21 days.

30) Process of Voting

- a) Voting must take place using an online voting system chosen by the Returning Officer. Voting shall be available for a period of at least three days.
- b) The Returning Officer may allow voting by email or by means of a physical ballot paper, in the event that an online voting system is (or becomes) unavailable.

- c) The Returning Officer shall keep secret all ballots in any election.
  - d) The MCR uses the Single Transferable Vote system, in accordance with rules published by the Electoral Reform Society. Candidates shall appear on the ballot as individuals, but are permitted to openly campaign with other candidates for the same position.
  - e) A ballot will be considered spoiled if and only if it is illegible or incomprehensible.
  - f) Re-Open Nominations (RON) shall be a ballot option for every position, and in the event of RON being 'elected' above all other candidates, the position shall be considered vacant and a by-election held.
  - g) For each Committee position, the Returning Officer shall deem elected all candidates elected above RON, up to the maximum numbers listed in Part II.
- 31) The Returning Officer shall publish the election results within twenty-four hours of closing of all voting.
- 32) Electoral Disputes
- a) The Returning Officer shall be the arbiter in all electoral disputes and may order a new election if they believe that substantial irregularities have taken place.
  - b) The General Meeting may, by a two-thirds majority, order a new election within two weeks of the closing of voting if it disagrees with the Returning Officer's verdict on an election.

## **Part VIII - Referenda**

- 33) A referendum may be called at the request of forty full members or by a majority vote of the Committee. A referendum may be on any question relating to the MCR, subject to the following conditions.
- a) It may not name any person (or persons) in the MCR, nor may it refer to any such person (or persons) by the position (or positions) that they hold on the Committee.
  - b) It may not propose the censure or recall of any member of the Committee.
  - c) It must call for a 'Yes' or 'No' answer, although the Returning Officer may permit abstentions.
- 34) The request to hold a referendum must be delivered to the Vice President in writing, must include evidence that the holding of the referendum is supported either by forty full members or by the majority of the Committee, and must specify the question which is to be put to referendum.
- 35) Upon receipt by the Vice President of a request to hold a referendum, the Executive Board may, by majority vote, determine that the question discriminates against members on the basis of gender, ethnicity, religion, race, disability, sexual orientation or national origin and may disallow the question. The Executive Board shall communicate this decision and the reasons for it to the supporters of the referendum.
- 36) If the Executive Board have not disallowed the question, the Returning Officer must call a referendum to take place within twelve days of the receipt of a valid referendum request. Notice of a referendum must be distributed by the Returning Officer using the MCR emailing list not less than forty-eight hours before the polls are scheduled to open. Such an email must be devoted exclusively to the notice of the referendum.
- 37) The MCR emailing list shall not be used to campaign for or against a referendum question.
- 38) Process of Voting
- a) Voting must take place using an online voting system chosen by the Returning Officer. Voting shall be available for a period of at least two days.
  - b) The Returning Officer may allow voting by email or by means of a physical ballot paper, in the event that an online voting system is (or becomes) unavailable.
- 39) A referendum question is carried if it is supported by a simple majority of those voting in the referendum, ignoring any abstentions. A successful referendum question shall be deemed to have the same effect as if it had been a motion successfully carried at a General Meeting, even if that motion would have required a two-thirds majority in the General Meeting.
- 40) The Returning Officer shall publish the referendum results within twenty-four hours of closing of all voting.

## **Part IX – Amendment, Interpretation and Miscellaneous**

- 41) The Rules of the MCR shall consist of this Constitution and the Standing Orders. Documents annexed to the Constitution do not form part of the Rules and are altered in the same manner as if they were not so annexed.
- 42) The Constitution may be altered through the approval of a constitutional motion by a two-thirds majority in each of two successive General Meetings, at least one week having intervened between the two meetings. In all other respects, the procedure for such a constitutional motion is the same as for ordinary motions.
- 43) Parts I and II of the Standing Orders may be altered through the approval of a motion by a two-thirds majority at any General Meeting, while Part III may be altered in the same manner but by a simple majority. In all other respects, the procedure for such a motion is the same as for ordinary motions.
- 44) Part I of the Standing Orders may be suspended by a three-quarter majority for a single General Meeting.

- 45) According to the Education Act 1994 (UK) s. 22, Governing Body has certain rights with regard to the statutory rights of the MCR. Details are provided by the College Code of Practice, as well as in related information material, which are available from College.
- 46) An updated copy of the Rules of the MCR, including all interpretations, shall be available on the MCR website.
- 47) Questions of interpretation of the Constitution shall be settled by a simple majority vote of the Executive Board, after consulting the Committee. The results of such a vote shall be announced at the next General Meeting, and a copy of the question and the resulting interpretation, with a record of the vote, shall be filed with the copy of the Constitution and Standing Orders available on the MCR website.

## Standing Orders

### Part I: General Meetings

- 1) Members are at all times expected to respect the right of other members to listen and to take part in discussions at meetings. At the discretion of the Chair, a procedural motion may be put to eject from a meeting of the MCR any member disruptive to the proceedings of that meeting. The motion must be passed by a two-thirds majority of the members attending the meeting.
- 2) Chairing of the General Meeting
  - a) The President shall ordinarily take the Chair at General Meetings, subject to the Constitution.
  - b) The voting rights of the Chair are not prejudiced, and the Chair has a casting vote in case of a tied motion.
  - c) All remarks shall be made through the Chair.
- 3) Order of Business
  - a) The business of the meeting shall be arranged as follows
    - i) Minutes of the previous Ordinary (or Annual) General Meeting
    - ii) Matters arising from the Minutes
    - iii) Reports from the Committee
    - iv) Questions to the Committee
    - v) Motions submitted
    - vi) Matters for Discussion submitted
    - vii) Any other business
- 4) Minutes
  - a) The Minutes of the last meeting shall be approved by the General Meeting and signed by the President.
  - b) If Minutes encompass decisions made and votes taken that turn out to be in violation of these Standing Orders, approving the relevant Minutes shall retrospectively validate such decisions and votes.
- 5) Substantive Motions
  - a) Substantive motions may not be introduced once the meeting has been declared open.
- 6) Procedural Motions
  - a) The following procedural motions may be put if proposed by two full members of the MCR
    - i) that the motion now be put
    - ii) that the motion be taken in parts
    - iii) that the motion be decided by secret ballot
    - iv) that the order of business be amended from that printed on the agenda
    - v) that the meeting proceed to the next business
    - vi) that the meeting do now adjourn
  - b) For procedural motions, one speech for and one against the motion shall be allowed.
- 7) Points of Order
  - a) Points of Order to draw the attention of the Chair to a violation of the Rules of the MCR may be made at any time.
- 8) Once declared quorate, a meeting shall remain so until a member requests a quorum count.
- 9) Amendments
  - a) Amendments may be put to any substantive motion, even if already amended.
  - b) If the initial proposer of a substantive motion accepts the amendment, it is automatically incorporated.
  - c) Amendments which are not accepted by the initial proposer of the substantive motion shall be discussed and voted on immediately. Where the amendment is accepted, and the original proposer no longer wishes to propose the motion, the proposer of the amendment becomes the proposer of the amended motion.
- 10) Summation
  - a) The proposer of any substantial motion has the right to sum up before a motion is put to a vote.



- b) Members may question the proposer of any motion on the purpose and scope of the motion. The answers to these questions shall be minuted to aid the understanding of the motion if passed.
- 11) Voting
- a) A vote shall be taken by a show of hands, except during a secret ballot. The Chair shall declare the motion carried or defeated and give details of the votes cast in favour, against or in abstention.
  - b) A simple majority is needed for all votes, unless specified otherwise in the Constitution.
  - c) Any member may ask for a recount, except where a procedural motion has passed for a secret ballot.
- 12) Policy Motions
- a) Once a motion is carried at a General Meeting, the President, in consultation with the Vice President, shall decide whether that motion establishes ongoing policy intended to have continuing effect in the future.
  - b) Any policy shall be annexed to the MCR Rules in order that it should not be subject to gradual oblivion.
- 13) Charities Motions
- a) All donations by the MCR to charitable organisations shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures described in this Section. Where there is a vacancy for Environment & Ethics Officer, the Vice President or their nominee on the Committee shall be responsible for ensuring this Section's procedures take place.
  - b) There shall be a division of the MCR Budget containing money for charitable donation (hereafter referred to as the 'MCR Charity Fund').
  - c) Donations from the MCR Charity Fund shall be made once each term, at the final General Meeting of the term, although the Environment & Ethics (E&E) Officer may hold this at another General Meeting at their discretion. The E&E Officer shall publicise the approach of this meeting and the availability of donations from the MCR Charity Fund using the MCR e-mailing list.
  - d) The E&E Officer shall distribute a nomination form for charities, which shall solicit information including: the relationship of the charity to the MCR or to MCR members, the financial need of the charity, the degree to which the applicant is directly involved in the charity, the long-term benefit which the donation may provide, and the registered charity status (in the UK or elsewhere) of the charity.
  - e) Applications for donations from the MCR Charity Fund must be received by the E&E Officer not less than forty-eight hours before the relevant meeting is scheduled to take place.
  - f) No single charity may receive more than one donation from the MCR Charity Fund in any academic year.
  - g) The procedure for conducting a charities motion at a General Meeting shall be as follows
    - i) The applicants for charitable donations shall each present their proposed charity, making reference to the criteria listed in subsection (d) above.
    - ii) The sum of money from the MCR Charity Fund available at that particular meeting shall be notionally divided into x equal parts (with x being a convenient number determined by the E&E Officer).
    - iii) The E&E Officer shall distribute secret ballot papers to full members, listing each proposed charity.
    - iv) Full members shall each have x points to allocate amongst the proposed charities (with each point notionally representing a certain sum of money). Members may allocate all their points to one charity alone or may divide them amongst some or all of the proposed charities. Members need not allocate all, or indeed any, of their points.
    - v) The E&E Officer shall collect the ballot papers and shall calculate the total number of points received by each charity, and the percentage which this number represents of the total number of points capable of allocation (i.e. x multiplied by the number of ballot papers collected).
    - vi) The E&E Officer shall communicate to the Vice President the percentage of total allocatable points received by each charity and the MCR shall be deemed to have voted to divide the sum of money available for donation accordingly. The percentages shall be recorded in the minutes.
    - vii) Money not donated in any term shall be carried forward in the MCR Charity Fund to the next term.

## Part II - Committee Positions

- 14) All Committee members shall be responsible for the general running and upkeep of the MCR.
- 15) MCR Committee members are expected to uphold actively the values of equality, respect, diversity and inclusivity, and to work with College, the MCR community and all other relevant organisations to ensure these values are upheld in all MCR dealings.
- 16) The President shall have the following main responsibilities:
  - a) Chair General Meetings, in accordance with the Rules of the MCR.
  - b) Make representations on behalf of the MCR to members of other bodies of the College, of the Oxford Student Union (OxSU), and of the University, including the Rents and Charges negotiations in Trinity Term.
  - c) Deal with the correspondence of the MCR.

- d) Oversee the activities of the Committee.
  - e) Deliver a Presidential Report at the Annual General Meeting following the end of the term of office, which shall be annexed to the Rules of the MCR.
- 17) The Vice President shall have the following main responsibilities:
- a) Maintain a current version of the Rules of the MCR.
  - b) Maintain a list of the membership body.
  - c) Organise the Couples Ballot in Hilary Term, and the Room Ballot in Trinity Term.
  - d) Attend all College Committees to which the MCR is invited, including the Rents and Charges negotiations in Trinity Term.
  - e) Act as substitute for the President when the President is absent.
  - f) Be a point of contact to MCR members regarding issues of discrimination or unjustified unequal treatment that does not fall within the responsibilities of the Women's Officer(s), LGBTQ Officer(s), Black and Minority Ethnic Students' Officer(s), Disabled Students' Officer(s), Parents and Carers' Officer or Interfaith Officer.
- 18) The Treasurer shall have the following main responsibilities:
- a) Make all duly authorised financial transactions on behalf of the MCR.
  - b) Act as substitute for the Vice President when the Vice President is absent.
  - c) Assist with the Rents and Charges negotiations in Trinity Term
  - d) Perform all further duties and obligations of the Treasurer as specified in Part IV of the Constitution.
- 19) The Secretary shall have the following main responsibilities:
- a) Collate the MCR newsletter once a week and distribute this via the MCR emailing list.
  - b) Review and process all MCR room booking requests.
  - c) Organise General Meetings and Committee meetings, in consultation with the President.
  - d) Take minutes, and maintain a record of minutes, of all General Meetings.
- 20) The Social Secretaries shall have the following main responsibilities:
- a) Organise social events, including (but not limited to): bops (usually two per term) and Exchange Dinners.
  - b) Organise the MCR Christmas Dinner at the end of Michaelmas Term.
- 21) The Victuallers shall have the following main responsibilities:
- a) Organise two Guest Dinners per term.
  - b) Organise two SCR/MCR Wine & Cheese events per term.
  - c) Organise any other similar events as the Victuallers see fit.
- 22) The Welfare Officers shall have the following main responsibilities:
- a) Organise welfare events, including (but not limited to) brunches following bops, Sunday cakes and other events.
  - b) Be a point of contact to MCR members regarding issues of health and wellbeing.
  - c) Be responsible for welfare initiatives within College.
  - d) Oversee the Peer Supporters.
  - e) Provide sexual health supplies to members of the MCR.
  - f) Ordinarily, attend College Decanal Committee.
- 23) The Culture Officers shall have the following main responsibilities:
- a) Manage MCR periodical and magazine subscriptions.
  - b) Organise events related to culture and the arts, including (but not limited to) film nights and cultural trips.
- 24) The Women's Officer(s) shall have the following main responsibilities:
- a) Represent the interests of women and non-binary genders within the MCR and to other bodies of College.
  - b) Be a point of contact for women and other minority genders regarding gender discrimination and harassment.
  - c) Work with the JCR Women's Officer to organise events including (but not limited to) women's lunches, women's dinner, and the annual garden party.
- 25) The LGBTQ Officer(s) shall have the following main responsibilities:
- a) Represent the interests of people who identify as LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and Questioning) within the MCR and to other bodies of College.
  - b) Be a point of contact for LGBTQ people regarding gender and sexuality discrimination, harassment, and other LGBTQ issues including welfare support.
  - c) Work with the JCR LGBTQ Reps to organise events including (but not limited to) LGBTQ drinks and film nights.
- 26) The Black and Minority Ethnic Students' Officer(s) shall have the following main responsibilities:
- a) Represent the interests of people who identify as BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) within the MCR and to other bodies of College.

- b) Be a point of contact for BME students regarding discrimination and harassment on the grounds of race or ethnicity, and other related issues including welfare support.
- c) Work with the JCR BME Reps to organise cross-common room events.
- 27) The Disabled Students' Officer(s) shall have the following main responsibilities:
  - a) Represent the interests of people who identify as disabled within the MCR and to other bodies of College.
  - b) Be a point of contact for disabled students regarding discrimination and harassment on the grounds of disability, accessibility, and other related issues including welfare support.
  - c) Work with the JCR Disabled Reps to organise cross-common room events.
- 28) The International Students' Officer shall have the following main responsibilities:
  - a) Represent the interests of people who identify as international within the MCR and to other bodies of College.
  - b) Be a point of contact for international students regarding discrimination and harassment on the grounds of nationality, and other issues including welfare support.
  - c) Work with the JCR International Reps to organise cross-common room events.
- 29) The Student Parent and Carers' Officer shall have the following main responsibilities:
  - a) Organised family-focused events for MCR members.
  - b) Mediate specific parent- and/or carer-related problems to College.
  - c) Provide advice on issues pertaining to student parent and/or carer problems.
- 30) The Interfaith Officer shall have the following main responsibilities:
  - a) Represent the interests of people of faith or belief within the MCR and to other bodies of College.
  - b) Be a point of contact for people regarding discrimination or harassment on the grounds of religion or atheism.
  - c) Organise and provide advice to other Committee members on organising MCR events that relate to religious occasions.
- 31) The Environment & Ethics Officer shall have the following main responsibilities:
  - a) Promote a positive environmental and ethical stance within the MCR.
  - b) Organise events relating to the environment or ethical issues in the MCR.
  - c) Be responsible for the MCR Charity Fund distribution, in accordance with these Standing Orders.
- 32) The Sports Officer shall have the following main responsibilities:
  - a) Organise sports-related events for MCR members.
  - b) Liaise with the JCR Sports Rep and College on sports-related issues
  - c) Maintain the MCR sports cupboard.
- 33) The Returning Officer shall have the following main responsibilities:
  - a) Organise any elections or referenda under the Rules of the MCR.
  - b) Have any further responsibilities listed under the Rules of the MCR, including the chairing of General Meetings in certain circumstances and the handling of certain complaints at first instance.
  - c) Ordinarily, to attend and have the MCR's second vote at OxSU Council.
- 34) Other positions created by the Executive Board shall have responsibilities designated by the Executive Board.

### **Part III – External Organisations**

- 35) The MCR is affiliated to the following organisations: Oxford University Student Union.
- 36) The MCR's three votes on OxSU Council shall be taken by the President, the Returning Officer and a full member appointed by the President. Where the President or Returning Officer are not able to attend, the President may appoint full members as replacements.

## Policy Motions

Policy Motions are motions passed by the MCR at a General Meeting which the MCR President, in consultation with the Vice President, has decided “establishes ongoing policy intended to have continuing effect in the future” (MCR Standing Order 12a). They are collected in this annex to the MCR Constitution in order that they should be easily remembered and referred to in subsequent years.

Policy Motions are passed in the same manner as any other non-constitutional motion, that is, by a simple majority at a single general meeting. They may be amended or repealed in this same manner. Once passed, they continue to apply according to their terms unless and until amended or repealed.

### **POLICY MOTION: MCR independence from JCR**

Proposed by: David J. Townsend, MCR President

Seconded by: Matthew McCormick, MCR Secretary

The MCR notes:

- 1) That the Constitution of the St John's College Junior Common Room states that "full membership of the JCR shall be automatic for all members of College in statu pupillari".
- 2) That full membership of the JCR entitles MCR members to vote in all JCR elections.
- 3) That 'in statu pupillari' is not defined in the JCR Constitution, nor is the term defined in the University Statutes.
- 4) That the interpretative practice in relation to the JCR Constitution is to acknowledge all MCR members as JCR members.
- 5) That the closest explicit definition of the phrase 'in statu pupillari' is found in the Cambridge University Statutes, wherein it is effectively defined as any student, not yet holding a doctorate or master's degree, who is within 3 1/2 years of admission to their first degree.
- 6) That if the definition of 'in statu pupillari' contained in the Cambridge University Statutes applied to the JCR Constitution, some MCR members would also be JCR members, but other MCR members would not be JCR members.
- 7) That the JCR receives a larger capitation from College than does the MCR on the grounds that the JCR provides certain services to all students, graduate and undergraduate, without distinction.

The MCR therefore resolves:

To renounce all claim to membership of the Junior Common Room of St John's College, on condition that services hitherto provided by the JCR to all JCR members (i.e. graduates and undergraduates) without distinction, should henceforth be provided to all JCR and MCR members without distinction.

Motion passed at Ordinary General Meeting on 10 March 2011

### **POLICY MOTION: Fair Trade policy**

Proposed by: David J. Townsend, MCR President

Seconded by: Matthew McCormick, MCR Secretary

The MCR notes:

- 1) That the Fairtrade certification mark is awarded to products from more than 70 developing countries which are produced and traded in compliance with the FLO International Fairtrade Standards.
- 2) That the FLO International Fairtrade Standards include democratic decision making and capacity-building reinvestment of profits in small farmers' collectives, the payment of a Fairtrade premium to hired labourers and the ability of those labourers to bargain collectively, adherence to health and safety regulations, and no use of slave or child labour.
- 3) That College has been pursuing Fairtrade certification for some years.
- 4) That certification depends on the College, and its associated entities such as the MCR, being able to show certain commitments to the use of Fair Trade products.
- 5) That a draft of the necessary commitments, including those incumbent on the MCR, is set out in the annexed document 'St John's College - Fairtrade Policy Draft'.
- 6) That a final Fairtrade policy will be determined in discussion with the JCR, MCR, SCR and staff, and will be

subject to approval by the Governing Body before becoming effective on the whole of College.

The MCR therefore resolves:

- 1) To support the College's pursuit of Fairtrade certification.
- 2) To provisionally subscribe the MCR to the relevant commitments contained in the annexed document while awaiting the development of a final binding policy.

Motion passed at Ordinary General Meeting on 10 March 2011

### **POLICY MOTION: Length of MCR Presidential Reports**

Proposed by: David J. Townsend, MCR President

Seconded by: Matthew McCormick, MCR Secretary

The MCR notes:

- 1) That the MCR President is required by the MCR Constitution to deliver a Presidential Report at the Annual General Meeting following the end of his or her term of office, which Report is annexed to the MCR Constitution.
- 2) That if there is no specified maximum length of such Presidential Reports.
- 3) That a series of overly long Presidential Reports would soon result in excessive annexes to the Constitution and such Reports no longer fulfilling their function as brief summaries of each year in the life of the MCR.

The MCR therefore resolves:

That each future MCR Presidential Report should not exceed two A4 pages (i.e. 2 sides) in length.

Motion passed at Ordinary General Meeting on 10 March 2011

### **POLICY MOTION: MCR Room Booking**

Proposed by: Ant Hibbs, MCR President

Seconded by: Ross Haines, MCR Vice President

The MCR notes:

- 1) That at a previous OGM, the MCR resolved to adopt a policy of not letting societies (or other large groups consisting largely of non-members) book out the MCR building.
- 2) That this was primarily to avert three main concerns: that the use of the MCR by its members was limited by such bookings; that flexibility to organise MCR events was compromised by bookings made far in advance; and that the large number of non-members using the facilities might have contributed to the number of MCR items which were being stolen or broken.
- 3) That the resulting room booking policy allows that the only people who can book rooms in the MCR are MCR members, for groups with a ratio of one member per 3 guests.
- 4) That, despite the increase in availability of the MCR this year following the change in policy, the usage of the MCR has not significantly increased.
- 5) That concerns of theft and breakage can be alleviated by requiring a deposit for large bookings in cheque form, which is returned after the event if the MCR Committee is satisfied that the building has been left in its original, undamaged and tidy form. If the Committee is not satisfied with this, they would be able to use the money to repair or clean the MCR.
- 6) That concerns of bookings filling the calendar and reducing flexibility to run events can be alleviated by refusing bookings made more than three weeks in advance, and limiting large bookings to two in total in a given week.
- 7) That maintaining links with University societies is beneficial to this MCR.

The MCR therefore resolves:

- 1) To allow large groups of more than twelve people, which do not satisfy the required 1:3 member to guest ratio, to book rooms in the MCR subject to the following conditions:
  - a) A full MCR member is to book the event through the MCR President. This member will be wholly

responsible for the event and required to attend it.

- b) A cheque for £100, made out to 'St John's College MCR', will be delivered to the MCR Treasurer no later than three days prior to the event, otherwise the booking will be cancelled, and this will be returned if the MCR is returned to an acceptable state.
  - c) The usual decanal permission must be obtained.
  - d) Events can be booked no earlier than three weeks in advance.
  - e) A maximum of two such bookings will be allowed in any given week.
  - f) MCR members will be allowed full access to events held in the MCR building and, for society events, MCR members shall receive the same rights as society members.
  - g) The MCR Committee reserves the right to reject and cancel bookings at its discretion.
  - h) This policy applies to the main room in the MCR.
- 2) To allow groups of twelve people or fewer, which do not satisfy the required 1:3 member to guest ratio, to book the main room, meeting room, games room and TV room in the MCR subject to the conditions a) and g) above.

Motion passed at Annual General Meeting on 5 May 2013

### **POLICY MOTION: Compulsory Consent Workshops during Freshers Week**

Proposed by: Eden Tanner

Seconded by: Emma Claussen, MCR Women's Officer

The MCR notes:

- 1) A sexual consent workshop is an activity in which a small group of people (ca. 10 – 15) participates in an hour long facilitated discussion around the notion of sexual consent. It begins with a setting of ground rules, followed by a framing of the discussion by examining statistics of sexual violence within the UK, and specifically within UK universities. It then proceeds through three scenarios sequentially.
- 2) OUSU co-ordinates the training and provides resources for MCRs and JCRs to run sexual consent workshops in their communities.
- 3) Feedback on the workshops is overwhelmingly positive.
- 4) That several common rooms have made these workshops compulsory for incoming students.
- 5) That sexual consent is necessary, not optional for sexual interactions.
- 6) That the Freshers' Week committee is responsible for the timetabling of Freshers' Week events.

The MCR believes:

- 1) That consent workshops are an appropriate and desirable way of highlighting the issues surrounding sexual consent and creating a dialogue for incoming students.
- 2) That St John's MCR should be a community in which sexual consent is respected, and sexual violence is not tolerated.

The MCR therefore resolves:

- 1) To mandate the head of the Freshers' Week committee to set aside a one hour slot during the earliest days of Freshers' week, in which will be held consent workshops for incoming students.
- 2) This slot is to be highlighted as a compulsory event in the timetable, but there will be no repercussions for those who do not come, or for those who choose not to stay after the establishment of the ground rules.
- 3) To mandate the women's officer and welfare officer(s) to attend training to facilitate the workshops.
- 4) To invite all interested parties to attend trainings to help the MCR officers facilitate the workshops.

Motion passed at Ordinary General Meeting on 22 January 2014

### **POLICY MOTION: Room Ballot Privileges**

Proposed by: Marina Lambrakis, MCR President

Seconded by: Nick Cooper, Returning Officer

The MCR notes:

- 1) That currently, several members of the MCR committee receive privileges on the room ballot. These are as

follows: the President and Vice President are given first and second place respectively on Ballot 1, the Treasurer is placed on Ballot 1 below all finalists but ahead of non-finalists, and the Social Secretaries are placed immediately below the Treasurer (ranked according to the average of their room scores, from lowest to highest). These entries do not count as ballot entries by these students in future ballots (that is, it does not detract from their ability to use Ballot 1 in the future, assuming they have not already used it), though the score from these rooms does count to their room score average.

- 2) That a survey was circulated to gauge current opinion within the MCR community on the system as it stands, which had a response rate of 28.7% (78 respondents).
- 3) That, of the 63 respondents to the question of who should get room ballot privileges, 77.8% were in favour of the President, and 44.4% were in favour of the Vice-President receiving room privileges. That 20.6% were in favour of the Treasurer receiving this, and 27.0% were in favour of the Social Secretaries receiving this.

The MCR Resolves:

- 1) To retain the first and second place on the room ballot for the President and Vice-President.
- 2) To scrap room ballot privileges for the Treasurer and Social Secretaries.

Motion passed at Ordinary General Meeting on 3 December 2014

### **POLICY MOTION: Harassment Policy for MCR Events – Proposed Amendments**

Proposed by: David Heaton, Social Secretary

Seconded by: Kieran Fitzpatrick, Social Secretary

The MCR notes:

- 1) the value of its Harassment Policy for MCR Events (‘the Policy’) and the importance of its being properly and effectively enforced at all MCR events
- 2) that, in view of the experience in the first two terms operation of the Policy, it is useful to make express in the Policy several elements of how it has been applied in practice
- 3) that, in view of the workload of the Social Secretaries (which appears to have deterred candidates in the most recent MCR elections) and the possibility that the MCR Committee may at times need to operate without Social Secretaries, changes to the Policy to clarify that the Welfare Secretaries are primarily responsible for executing and maintaining it are desirable

The MCR Resolves:

This policy supplements the St John’s College Harassment Policy and Procedure. It establishes role and procedures for applying that policy at MCR events. The MCR maintains that there should be no tolerance for harassment.

- When a complaint of harassment arises at an MCR event, the event organiser or person agreed between the event organiser and the Welfare Officers are the first point of contact for the witness to or victim of the harassment.
  - An MCR event is defined as any event hosted by an MCR committee member in an official capacity.
  - The event organiser is the individual who booked the MCR space.
  - Where a person is agreed between the event organisers and the Welfare Officers to be the first point of contact in relation to a particular event, that person is the first point of contact, and is required to be present for the duration of the event.
  - In the case of bops, the Social Secretaries and Welfare Officers will agree beforehand on at least three first points of contact for the duration of a bop (which may be more than three people working in shifts), none of whom is a Social Secretary. The Welfare Officers are responsible for identifying and arranging the attendance of such persons. They are also responsible for ensuring that the Harassment Policy is properly advertised at bops.
  - The Welfare Officers are responsible for organising such training sessions as are required to qualify sufficient members of the MCR to act as points of contact for events.
  - If agreement cannot be reached for any reason or the Welfare Officers cannot arrange at least three people to act as points of contact for the duration of a bop, the Welfare Officers (or as many as are required to ensure there are sufficient points of contact at all times) will attend bops themselves and act as points of contact, unless this is inappropriate.
  - The witness or victim is either the direct victim of the behaviour or another attendee at the event who saw or heard the behaviour.
- When the event organiser or designated person is told about an instance of harassment, they must contact the

Junior Dean on duty unless explicitly asked not to by the victim or witness.

- Subsequent decisions about expulsion, followup, and application of the College Harassment Policy are to be made by the Junior Dean.
- The event organiser or dedicated person may also contact the Porters, either because the Junior Dean is not immediately available or because of an imminent threat of physical violence.
- The event organiser or designated person is not responsible for judging whether harassment has or has not taken place, nor are they responsible for removing the alleged harasser.
- The event organiser or designated person and all members of the MCR Committee must maintain confidentiality around the identities of the victim/s, witness/es, and alleged harasser, except in conversations with the Junior Deans, Porters and members of the MCR Committee.
- In the exceptional case when a Junior Dean is not available, the event organiser or designated person must contact the Porters, and the alleged harasser will be asked to leave.
- If the event is held off-site, so that the Junior Deans or Porters are unable to respond, the event organiser or designated person is expected to follow up with them as soon as practically possible.

Motion passed at Ordinary General Meeting on 5 March 2015

### **POLICY MOTION: Couples' Accommodation Ballot Rules**

Proposed by: Eden Tanner, MCR President

Seconded by: Anthony Payne, MCR Vice President

The MCR notes:

- 1) This motion is not to make any procedural changes to the ballot, but only to update the wording to reflect current practice

The MCR Resolves:

That the allocation of couples' accommodation will be decided based on the following rules:

- 1) The Domestic Office will allocate rooms to the following students, assuming the students request accommodation from the College:
  - Couples with children with at least one of the persons at St John's College
  - New students arriving at St John's College with partners
- 2) Any couples' accommodation remaining thereafter will be allocated by the MCR according to the following rules:
  - St John's College couples' accommodation will be allocated on an annual basis, and the normal tenancy period will be one year with the start and end dates of the normal tenancy period set by the Domestic Office.
  - Couples, at least one party to which is a student at St John's College, who wish to obtain couples' accommodation for the following year may enter a ballot for available couples' accommodation (the MCR Couples' Accommodation Ballot) by communicating their wish to the MCR Vice President by the date announced by email by the Vice President in Hilary Term.
  - After the closure of the ballot, couples entered in the MCR Couples' Accommodation Ballot will be ranked randomly and available couples' accommodation will be allocated in order of rank at the time announced by email by the Vice President.
  - In the event that further couples' accommodation is released by the Domestic Office subsequent to the conduct of the ballot, such accommodation will be allocated in order of ballot ranking.
  - In the event that more couples' accommodation becomes available part way through the normal tenancy period, it will be allocated according to ballot rank, however the tenancy will only run to the end of the normal tenancy period.
  - In the event that all couples on the ballot have been allocated couples' accommodation or have been offered couples' accommodation and have declined the offer, any couples' accommodation remaining or subsequently becoming available will be allocated by the MCR Vice President after informing all MCR members of the availability of the accommodation and ranking respondents randomly.

Motion passed at Ordinary General Meeting on 18 June 2015



## **POLICY MOTION: Introduction of single termly priority pass for events for committee members**

Proposed by: Edward Love, MCR President

Seconded by: Laura Grima, MCR Vice President

The MCR notes:

- 1) Many MCR Committee members commit multiple hours per week to their duties.
- 2) Up until the OGM on 3rd December 2014, committee members other than the MCR President and Vice President received ballot privileges, namely the Treasurer and Social Secretaries
- 3) On 3rd December 2014 a Policy Motion was passed to scrap room ballot privileges for the latter two of these roles following a survey of 78 (28.7%) MCR members
- 4) With low interest over the last years in serving on the MCR Committee, introducing a perk to each role is not only a way of incentivising MCR members in future to dedicate their time to serving on the MCR Committee, but also a modest (non-monetary) way of acknowledging the time dedicated by incumbent Committee members

This MCR now resolves to:

- Permit each MCR Committee member ONE priority pass to an MCR event per term. This will allow the Committee member to have a guaranteed place at an event of their choosing organised by the MCR Committee (e.g. at an exchange dinner, guest dinner, wine and cheese, etc.)
- The Vice President will keep track of priority pass usage to ensure that Committee members use their allotted number but no more.
- It is up to the discretion of those organising the event should set a maximum reasonable percentage of committee members able to use their priority pass for said event on a first come, first served basis.

Motion passed at Ordinary General Meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2017

## **POLICY MOTION: Introduction of CWOP (Committee WithOut Position) role**

Proposed by: Laura Grima, MCR Vice President

Seconded by: Edward Love, MCR President

**This MCR notes:**

- 1) That the St. John's MCR committee is known for holding a variety of events for MCR members throughout the year that are enjoyed greatly by the MCR.
- 2) That these events take a considerable amount of time and effort from committee members to run, and are often 'under-staffed'.
- 3) That there are many non-committee members in the MCR who may wish to assist with the running of such events without the commitment of being a full-time committee member.

**This MCR resolves to:**

- Introduce the role of CWOP (Committee WithOut Position) role for volunteers who wish to assist with MCR events. This will be done by advertising the role to the MCR. CWOPs will be able to sign up to help at any MCR event where help is required, and if helping, will have a guaranteed place on the event.
- Get the VP to keep track of which events CWOPs have helped out at so that those who have assisted may attend a celebratory CWOP party at the end of the year.

Motion passed at Ordinary General Meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2017

## **POLICY MOTION: Update to MCR Room Booking procedure**

Proposed by: Edward Love, MCR President

Seconded by: Laura Grima, MCR Vice President

**This MCR notes that:**

1. The "POLICY MOTION: MCR Room Booking" annexed to the MCR Constitution as a Standing Order,

which was passed at the Annual General Meeting on 5 May 2013, features inconsistencies, and is no longer fit for purpose alongside College's own updated Room Booking Policy.

2. The ambiguity in Room Booking procedures for the MCR extends to College as well as to each incoming MCR Committee, and in particular the President who currently operates the Room Booking procedures of the MCR at their discretion.
3. In line with Prevent, College has instituted a checklist for the approval of events involving outside speakers, and this checklist must also therefore apply to the booking of the MCR for outside speaker events.

**This MCR therefore resolves to:**

1. Replace the existing MCR Room Booking Policy Motion in order to produce clarity as to the rules and regulations around booking the MCR's spaces, which will be both transparent to current MCR Members and clarifying to future MCR Committees and Presidents, with the following:

1) Any booking of the "MCR spaces" (i.e. the MCR Main Room, TV Room, Games Room, or Meeting Room), can only be made by a Full Member of the MCR, and only through the Room Booking Form found on the MCR Website (<https://mcr.sjc.ox.ac.uk/>).

- a. This MCR Full Member will be wholly responsible for the preparation and running of this event, as well as clean-up afterwards – ensuring that the MCR has been returned to the state in which it was found – and will be required to attend it for its duration.
- b. No booking will be accepted less than 24 hours in advance.

2) The above considerations (1, 1a, and 1b) are the only considerations that apply to bookings of the MCR spaces in which 12 or fewer individuals are expected to be present and there are no external speakers. For bookings which will involve more than 12 individuals being present – whether MCR Full Members, Associate Members, or otherwise – or for bookings for which there will be (an) external speaker(s), the following stipulations also apply:

3)

- a. Having filled-in the Room Booking Form on the MCR Website, the MCR Member making the booking must, after receiving a reply from the MCR President concerning their booking, contact College's Catering Office ([catering.office@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:catering.office@sjc.ox.ac.uk)) no less than seven days prior to the event. The MCR Member making the booking should communicate what the event is (including whether it is by or for a society), when it will be held (including start and finish times), and how many people will be attending (including, if relevant, the expected ratio of MCR to non-MCR Members, see 3h).
- b. The MCR Member making the booking must obtain Decanal Permission – during Term Time this is through the Junior Deans, and outside of Term Time this is through the Senior Dean – no less than seven days prior to the event (i.e. if the event is on a Tuesday or Thursday or Saturday/Sunday in Term Time, Decanal Permission must be sought by the Monday, Wednesday or Friday of the preceding week, respectively, due to Junior Dean Office Hours being on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays during Term Time).
- c. A deposit for £100 will be received by the MCR Treasurer no later than three days prior to the event, otherwise the booking will be rescinded. This deposit will be returned if the MCR is returned to an acceptable state after the event and no loss or damage to that value, a part thereof, or above is sustained by property in, or the built fabric of, the booked MCR space. In cases where loss and/or damage to a value considerably greater than £100 results from the booking, this incidence may be reported to the Senior Dean and fines may be considered, while future bookings by the MCR Member who made the booking will no longer be accepted.
- d. Such bookings cannot be made more than three weeks in advance.
- e. A maximum of two such bookings will be allowed in any given week.
- f. MCR Members will be allowed full access to events held in the MCR building and, for society events, MCR Members shall receive the same rights as society members.
- g. The MCR Committee, by majority vote, the Junior Deans, and Senior Dean, reserve the right to reject or cancel bookings at their discretion and at any notice, as well as to reject bookings from MCR Members who have failed to adhere to the Room Booking procedures for previous bookings or the current booking.
- h. Events with more than 30 individuals in which the ratio of MCR Members to non-MCR Members

exceeds 3:1, e.g. 100 individuals with only 25 MCR Members (4:1), may not be accepted, and will be accepted at the discretion of the MCR President in consultation with the Junior Deans and/or Senior Dean, and perhaps only under certain conditions.

- i. The total capacity of the MCR spaces is 200 persons, and therefore no booking or concurrent bookings which will result in this capacity being exceeded will be accepted.

Motion passed at Ordinary General Meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2018

### **POLICY MOTION: Update to MCR Room Booking procedure**

Proposed by: Gwen Antell, MCR President

Seconded by: Ria Dinsdale, MCR Vice President

#### **The MCR notes:**

1. The policy motion passed at the AGM on 5 May 2013 set the rules to allow groups of more than 12 people to book rooms in the MCR, subject to certain conditions.
2. The policy motion passed at the OGM on 23 January 2018 replaced the previous policy motion concerning MCR room bookings but retained the number 12 as a cutoff for determining whether Decanal Permission is necessary. Namely, bookings where more than 12 people (whether MCR Full Members, Associate Members or other guests) always require Decanal Permission and a deposit.
3. The MCR President confirmed with the Senior Dean in Michaelmas 2018 that the Decanal Team considers the threshold of group size that requires permission to be 20 people, not 12. That is to say, the Decanal Team does not require hosts of groups of 12-20 SJC members to secure Decanal Permission as part of a room booking, except when other, overriding criteria (such as the invitation of external speakers) are met.

#### **Therefore, the MCR resolves that:**

1. All instances of noting 12 people as a cutoff for determining whether Decanal Permission is required should be updated to say 20 people. This includes the room booking form and instructions on the MCR website.
2. All other aspects of the room booking procedure will remain as they are. For instance, events with (an) external speaker(s) will continue to require decanal permission, regardless of the number of people expected to attend.

Motion passed at Ordinary General Meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2018

### **POLICY MOTION: Rollover of single termly priority pass for events for Committee members and auditors**

Proposed by: Gwen Antell, MCR President

Seconded by: Ria Dinsdale, MCR Vice President

#### **The MCR notes:**

1. The policy motion passed 26 April 2018 introduced a priority pass for Committee members. The pass grants a guaranteed place at an event organised by the MCR Committee, subject to certain stipulations.
2. The aforementioned motion granted 'each MCR Committee member ONE priority pass to an MCR event per term.' It is not specified whether people who join the Committee midway through a term, by confirmation at an OGM, are eligible for a pass in that same term.
3. Each Hilary term, 2 MCR members who are not part of either the outgoing or incoming Committee audit the MCR account (Part IV, point 17 of the Constitution). This task is essential to the governing of the MCR and requires a substantive amount of work. However, there is no advertised way to compensate auditors for their effort.
4. Many MCR Committee members have not used a priority pass because they are the ones organising the events to which it would guarantee attendance. In other words, the potential users often are already on the guest list by default.

#### **Therefore, the MCR resolves that:**

1. MCR members who join the Committee after the midpoint in a term (5<sup>th</sup> week and later) will not be eligible for a priority pass in that term. Those who join before the midpoint in a term (before 5<sup>th</sup> week), such as freshers who join in the first OGM after they arrive, will be eligible for a pass. This resolution will incentivize joining Committee earlier, either through the elections process or the first OGM of a term.
2. The 2 auditors will receive 1 priority pass each that can be used in the Trinity term succeeding the Hilary term in which the audit took place.
3. A Committee member may save a pass from one term to use in a later term during their tenure on Committee. For instance, someone who is elected for a Committee position and does not use their first 2 passes (1 each from Trinity and Michaelmas terms) could use either or both passes in Hilary term.
4. For any Committee member who has not used one or more priority passes by the time of handover (Sunday at the start of 9th Week in Hilary term), unused passes (up to 3) will carry over through the end of the Trinity term in which the successive Committee takes office.
5. The newly elected Vice President will manage the outgoing Committee passes in Trinity term in the same way that current Committee passes are managed.
6. Event organisers will retain authority to set an *a priori* quota on the number of places able to be allocated to priority pass holders for a given event. The purpose of the quota is to ensure that MCR members and associate members who are not part of the Committee are still able to sign up and bring guests to events.
7. The motion takes effect immediately, such that members of the 2017-2018 Committee will be able to use any unused priority pass in Trinity 2018. Members of earlier Committees will not be eligible to use passes, because there is no list of who among them used their passes.

Motion passed at Ordinary General Meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2018

### **POLICY MOTION: To Require Committee to Purchase Vegetarian Food and Whenever Possible Vegetarian Drinks for MCR Events**

Proposed by: Gabriella Kountourides, MCR Women's Officer

Seconded by: Gemma Gothard, MCR Social Secretary

#### **This MCR notes:**

A major report on land use and climate change says the West's high consumption of meat and dairy produce is fuelling global warming. Climate change poses a threat to the security of our food supply. Rising temperatures, increased rain and more extreme weather events will all have an impact on crops and livestock. Food production plays a significant role in this and agriculture - together with forestry - accounts for about a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions. Livestock rearing contributes to global warming through the methane gas the animals produce, but also via deforestation to expand pastures. We can take a step at John's to help reduce our effect on the planet by ensuring that events that take place in the MCR, organized by the committee and paid for by the MCR are vegetarian. We understand that sourcing vegetarian wine may be difficult. And so we have worded this motion as 'whenever possible' to allow for this.

#### **This MCR resolves to:**

Ensure that the committee only purchases vegetarian food and whenever possible, drinks for MCR Events, excluding certain items such as alcohol, cheese and second desserts.

Motion passed at Ordinary General Meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2019

### **POLICY MOTION: Ratification of the online vote on the rules for the allocation of rooms after the first room ballot.**

Proposed by: Pol Hernandez Llado, MCR Vice President

Seconded by: Christopher D'Urso, MCR President

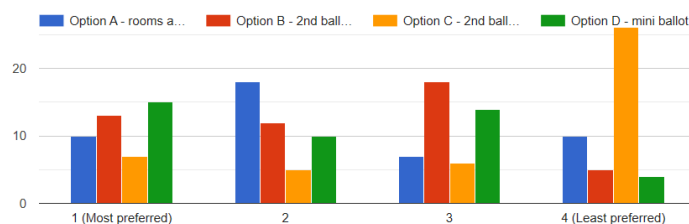
#### **This MCR notes:**

1. The General Motion Rules for the allocation of rooms after the first room ballot was amended and approved in the previous Ordinary General Meeting.

2. The Vice President circulated through the mailing list an online form where people had time to vote on their preferred options.

3. 45 people responded, with the following results:

Please rank options A to D (1 - most preferred, to 4 - least preferred).



4. Option D – mini ballot, was the preferred option with 15 votes.

**This MCR therefore resolves to:**

1. Ratify the results of the online vote.
2. Add the following to the ballot rules:

*“Once the first ballot has been completed, any subsequent rooms that become available will be allocated through the following process: As soon as rooms become available (and Domestic Office tells the MCR Vice President) they will be allocated to the waiting list in ranking order. If more than one room becomes available at a time, they will all be offered to the first person on waiting list then next one, and subsequently until all new available rooms have been allocated.”*

Motion passed at Ordinary General Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2019

**POLICY MOTION: Introduce alternative incentives to attend MCR OGMs**

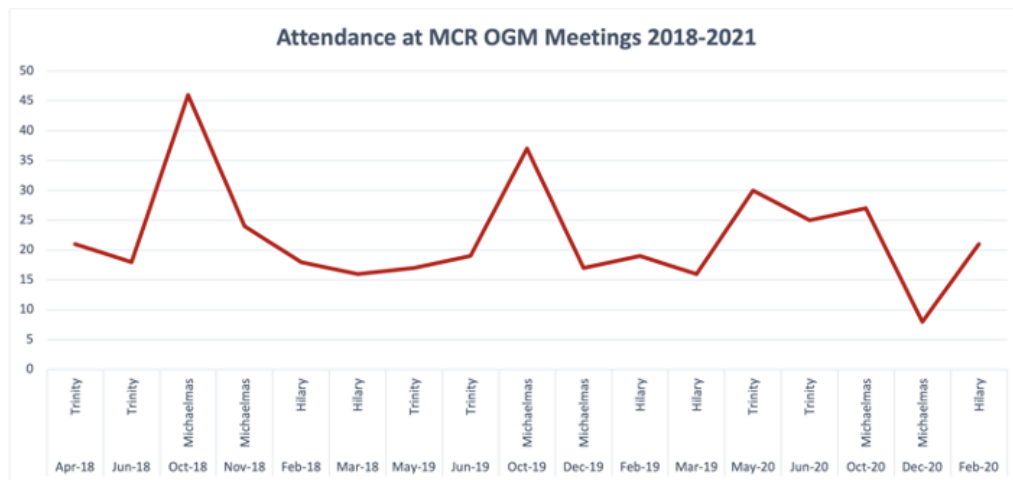
Proposed by: Adam Michael Packer, MCR Returning Officer

Seconded by: Kaitlyn Cramb, MCR Social Secretary

**This MCR notes:**

1. Full membership of the MCR is a privilege held by graduate students at St. John's College, Oxford
2. Currently, there are no conditions for full membership of the MCR other than being a graduate student at St. John's College, Oxford. New graduates are automatically granted full membership without condition from Week 0 of Michaelmas term
3. The MCR uses democratic processes such as OGMs/AGMs, elections and referendums, but tends to record poor levels of attendance or participation. Based on minutes from MCR OGMs/AGMs, there is a spike in attendance at the first OGM of Michaelmas term – most likely related to fourth-year undergraduate associate membership applications – that drops off following this (See: Figure 1). Anecdotally, it has historically been a challenge to reach quorum at OGM meetings
4. Motions that impact the daily lives of MCR students are discussed and debated at OGMs/AGMs, though mostly by a small proportion of the graduate community
5. Non-participation stifles the representativeness of decisions made at OGMs/AGMs
6. Many of the perks of MCR membership are managed by a small group of volunteers on the committee. Attending an OGM/AGM is another way for members to share their appreciation of these efforts
7. OGMs/AGMs have moved online via Microsoft Teams as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has reduced some of the barriers related to physical attendance, such as department locations, the timing of an OGM/AGM, and lack of space in the MCR main room
8. Previously, the MCR has incentivised OGM/AGM attendance by offering takeaway pizzas from chains like Domino's. This is unsustainable, costly and unfeasible during the COVID-19 pandemic while meetings are held online

**Figure 1**



**This MCR therefore resolves to:**

1. Where possible, offer alternative, events-based incentives for full members of the MCR that attend *at least* one OGM/AGM per academic year, such as a free ticket or the opportunity to be added to a priority ballot for an event
2. Make suitable accommodations to this policy where there remain barriers to online participation, like time differences, internet access, accessibility, and other factors related to online video conferencing platforms
3. Review the success of these incentives annually starting from Michaelmas term 2021

Motion passed at Ordinary General Meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2021

## Presidential Reports

The St John's College Middle Common Room, whether measured against the subjective expectations of its own membership, the objective achievements of comparable common rooms, or the sensible esteem in which it is held by other components of the College and of the University, may be judged to be a highly successful institution. Nevertheless, like all student-run organisations, it faces a structural problem of information retention, as institutional memory may be swiftly lost due to the near-complete turnover of personnel on the MCR Committee each year, and the near-complete turnover of membership of the MCR as a whole within four years. This creates an imbalance against other components of the College and of the University, in which individuals may remain in office for decades at a time, and restricts the MCR's capacity to defend and advance its interests.

It is to staunch, to some degree, this loss of institutional memory that I have written this brief and utile report of the affairs of the MCR during my tenure as President, and, upon its delivery, I shall propose that the communication of such brief reports by the immediate past President be written into the MCR Constitution as a mandatory component of the Annual General Meeting, and that each report then be annexed to the MCR Constitution after its delivery.

David J. Townsend  
MCR President 2009-2010

# Presidential Report 2009-2010

**Rents & Charges:** At the Rents & Charges negotiations in Trinity Term 2009, the MCR, JCR and the College negotiated a rise in room rents and general facilities charges for of 4.75% over 2008-2009 levels, as against an Oxford Colleges Cost Index rise of 4.96%. The price of food increased by 4%. The capitation grant to the MCR and JCR also increased by 4.75%. In addition, we negotiated an increase in the academic grant of 9.4% (to a total of £304 for graduates, up from £278) and an increase in the level to which 100% grant is given (to £100, up from £80). The College also committed itself to the institution of termly deadlines for submissions under the academic grant scheme, and although the Finance Bursar expressed her hope that such termly deadlines would be operational from Hilary Term 2010, they have yet to come into effect. The College continues to adhere to its policy of aiming for the middle of the Rent Table, stating that while they are happy to consider greater academic support (like the academic grant), they distinguish this from domestic support (lower rents). The MCR remains unconvinced as to the legitimacy of this distinction, since residence in Oxford is a requirement for all students under the University Statutes, and the College as an academic community is premised on domestic cohabitation.

**Constitutional Review:** I conducted a thorough review of the MCR Constitution and suggested amendments, which were all approved. The major effect of these amendments was to change the system by which undergraduates could become Associate Members of the MCR. Previously, they would all just get the President and Secretary to nominate them (regardless of whether the President or Secretary actually knew them), turn up to one meeting at the start of Michaelmas Term (or maybe not even bother) and all be put through in one motion of acceptance, with very little explanation of why they wanted to be Associate Members. The new system approved by the MCR requires that an applicant for Associate Membership have two full members of the MCR nominate him or her, and requires that the applicant and the two nominators actually attend the relevant meeting (unless given special exemption by the President) or the motion falls void; each application is voted on separately, with the applicant and the two nominators explaining why the applicant wants Associate Membership; no full member may nominate more than 6 persons for Associate Membership in any one year (so the President and Secretary don't end up being the mules they were in the past). This change seems to have had the desired effect of better integrating Associate Members into the MCR community because they now become better known as individuals than was the case before. It should be noted that s 22(2)(b) of the Education Act 1994 (UK) requires that Governing Body review the MCR's Constitution at least every five years, and that the MCR Constitution be subject to Governing Body's approval. The practice of Governing Body in this respect seems to be to indicate consent to any changes we make by remaining silent, as various members of Governing Body are on the MCR mailing list, and so presumptively aware of the minutes of our meetings and any constitutional changes contained therein.

**High Table Dining:** Recognising that the existing system of graduates having to wait for their Supervisor/College Adviser to invite them to High Table was clearly not working, I proposed a scheme (to be trialled for one term) whereby there would be 5 places on High Table 3 nights a week into which graduates could book themselves at the start of term, only being allowed to go once a term (unless there are vacant spaces), having to pay for the dinner themselves, being required not to sit as a single group all together, and being reminded of their booking by the MCR Secretary at the start of the week for which they had booked. The proposal was formulated after talks with the Steward of High Table, the Senior Tutor, the Domestic Bursar and the SCR Butler and went through Joint Council, Domestic Committee and ultimately to Governing Body; in the end it was not endorsed by Governing Body, although some support was expressed, and Governing Body chose instead to remind Supervisors/College Advisers that they have the power to invite graduates to High Table. In the view of the MCR, the reasons for rejecting the proposal seemed to hinge on an under-appreciation of the importance of relaxed interaction between the SCR and the MCR in making graduates feel like part of the College community, an overestimate of the success of existing schemes (such as SCR-MCR wine tasting and graduate lecture suppers, both of which are attended by very few SCR members) and unfamiliarity with the details of the proposal (although it was circulated with other Governing Body papers, many SCR members seemed not to have read the proposal closely as they adverted to supposed problems which had in fact already been obviated in the very design of the scheme). Governing Body did have a more cogent objection on the grounds that High Table had been growing too large and it needed to be cut back just at the moment, but this did not seem to be a permanent problem. There was also an associated proposal for one place on one day each week for a JCR and an MCR delegate (not necessarily always the respective Presidents) so as to ease relations between the student representatives and the SCR, but this was always secondary to the wider scheme. It would be advisable to keep pushing this wider scheme, as it seemed to make some progress, with more and more SCR members coming around to the idea over time; direct conversations with the Tutor for Graduates, the Senior Tutor and the Domestic Bursar might cement the support of these important officers for the scheme.

**Library Opening Hours:** After a campaign stretching over several years (which had originated in 2007 with a petition for a 24 hour library), in Trinity Term 2009 the termtime opening hours of the Library were extended from Mon-Sat 09:00-23:00/Sun 10:00-23:00 to Mon-Sat 09:00-00:00/Sun 10:00-00:00, and the vacation hours extended from Mon-Fri 10:00-13:00 and 14:00-17:00 to Mon-Fri 09:00-17:00. After further lobbying, including my soliciting of many new graduate student invigilators to cover the extra hours, it was agreed to trial in Trinity Term 2010 a further extension, so that termtime opening hours would be Mon-Fri 09:00-02:00/Sun 10:00-02:00 and vacation opening hours Mon-Fri 09:00-21:00. It would be advantageous to confirm these hours as permanent, as they allow graduates to use the Library more, especially during vacation, and provide valuable employment opportunities for graduates trying hard to fund their studies. In addition, it would be advantageous to support the further extension of opening hours such that the Library should open at 07:00 Mon-Fri during termtime, on condition that students using the Library then should have to put up with cleaning and maintenance staff going about their business at that time.

**College Tortoise:** From Michaelmas Term 2009, I initiated a campaign for the College to obtain a pet tortoise as a way of building a greater sense of College community. A cat has been discussed in the past (to replace Oscar, the unofficial College cat, who died in 2004), but cats cause allergic reactions in some students and leave faeces and dead birds around College, the latter being particularly objectionable to the College President's wife. After discussions with the College President, Keeper of the Groves, Head Gardener and Senior Dean, the issue was taken to Garden Committee and received their approval, with the tortoise to be housed on the MCR lawn in a fenced off area with a heated kennel, and for the hibernation period to be kept in a refrigerator located in the Head Porter's office (for security reasons) with a hole cut into the door seal to allow an air pipe and electric thermometer leads to be fed in; there would be a JCR and an MCR 'Custos Testudinis' or 'Testudent' elected each year to take care of it. The JCR and MCR passed motions to cover the expense of buying and maintaining the tortoise. I suggested, and the MCR and JCR approved, that it be called 'Bowser'. Governing Body approved the proposal subject to Dr Burt, Tutorial Fellow in Zoology, investigating whether the College would be subject to the normal standard of care or the very high standard of care (as for university research animals), and whether the College would be liable for accident or injury suffered by the tortoise. Dr Burt decided that, although it was an unclear area, she could not exclude the possibility that the College would be subject to the higher standard of care and would be liable for accident and injury, so she could not recommend the purchase of the tortoise. I have suggested to Dr Burt that we could adopt the solution used by University College, in which the Head Porter (in his personal capacity) is the legal owner of the tortoise but he keeps it on College grounds; additionally, he could allow 'friends' of his amongst the JCR and MCR take care of it. The Head Porter has indicated that he would be happy with this solution, subject to Dr Burt's approval, and at the time of writing I am still waiting on her reply.

**JCR and MCR Charities Money:** After enquiries with the Finance Bursar, I established that 50% of the battels entry 'JCR Overseas Scholar Levy' (which is apparently an optional payment) goes to fund scholarships for graduate students and 50% goes to the JCR for charitable distribution; the JCR then passes on an amount to MCR. For some years successive MCR Charities Officers have been concerned that the MCR was not getting enough money passed on from the JCR, but having obtained data from the Finance Bursar on how many MCR members are actually paying the 'JCR Overseas Scholar Levy' on their battels, it appears that the JCR has not been underpaying us in the last year at least. Nevertheless, it would be wise to change the payment practice such that the money collected from JCR members is paid directly to the JCR and the money collected from MCR members is paid directly to the MCR so that no problems of underpayment can arise in the future.

**Kendrew Quadrangle:** With the construction of Kendrew Quadrangle nearing completion, we have been given figures on how this will affect the number of graduate rooms available. Kendrew Quadrangle will bring online 38 new graduate rooms and 30 undergraduate rooms (and 2 disabled-access rooms for either graduates or undergraduates). The 27 graduate rooms in 19-20 St John Street will be taken offline for refurbishment, and the 30 undergraduates moving into Kendrew Quadrangle will vacate the Blackhall Road rooms, turning them over to become graduate rooms. In 2010-2011, then, there should be a net increase of 41 graduate rooms. The longer term future of the graduate housing on St John Street is unclear, as the College has declined to state whether they plan to sell all these houses or not. The Kendrew Quadrangle is in very many ways a magnificent construction which will immeasurably improve the student experience at the College by the addition of another gymnasium, a large bop room, music practice rooms and so forth; nevertheless, the MCR and JCR have both expressed disappointment at the poor use of space in the Kendrew Quadrangle student rooms, which are already of limited size. This poor use of space is primarily the result of the superfluous inclusion of a bathroom in every single student room, rather than the normal situation of one bathroom being



shared by 5 or 6 people. Questions have been raised about the utility of having one third of the total space in student rooms taken up by a bathroom that is only in use for a few minutes each day, and whether the rooms have been designed principally with students or with conference guests in mind. The extra labour required from scouts to clean 70 individual bathrooms rather than about 15 shared bathrooms also seems an unnecessary imposition on them. Furthermore, there have been concerns over the lack of storage/shelf space and the lack of bed space in student rooms: on an inspection tour, one of the MCR Culture & Media Officers was not physically able to fit into the bed 'enclosure' without significant contortion of his body. The MCR and JCR Presidents were in Hilary Term 2009 for the first time invited to attend, as observers, the meetings of the Committee for the Development of the Kendrew Quadrangle where the major decisions about the outfitting of the quadrangle are decided (before these decisions are presented to Domestic Committee for general approval, without minute scrutiny by that Committee). In reply to the concerns expressed by the MCR and JCR at least as far back as early 2009 about bathrooms, storage/shelf space and bed space in the Kendrew Quadrangle student rooms, SCR members have stated that previous MCR and JCR Officers were extensively consulted on the construction plans; however, even taking into account the possibility of previous MCR and JCR officers being particular fond of the idea of having their own individual bathrooms, the fact that the MCR and JCR Presidents were only very recently admitted to the committee that actually makes the ongoing detailed decisions about the planning of Kendrew Quadrangle tends to undermine the SCR's argument on this point. I would very strongly suggest that future MCR Presidents lobby hard to be admitted to the actual decision making committees in respect of any future construction or major redevelopment works on student accommodation, as it is we, the students, who are the primary users of these buildings, not the academics of the College, much less the architects of the construction, and so it is we, the students, who are in the best position to represent how these buildings will be used and what the users of these buildings will consider important in their design and construction.

Miscellaneous: I ensured that the Appointments Committee which chose the President, Secretary and Treasurer of the 2011 SJC Ball would have equal JCR and MCR representation on it and that all positions on the Ball Committee, including Ball President, should be open to MCR members. When it turned out that no MCR members ended up being on the Ball Committee, I negotiated with the Ball President to appoint an MCR Ball Representative to be installed on the Ball Committee. The MCR Committee and I worked to beautify the MCR building and make it a more personalised and welcoming place for the graduate community. I arranged the taking of an MCR Committee photograph (which I hope will be the first of very many to grace the walls) and encouraged keen MCR photographers to start taking photographs of MCR life which we might frame and put on the walls as replacements for the black and white 'atmospheric' photographs of smashed windscreens and tumble driers. After some years of successive MCR Committees talking about getting a coffee machine, this year's Epicure researched and selected a Nespresso coffee machine for the MCR to buy, the ongoing costs of which are covered from the MCR's budget, making it free for MCR members and their guests to use. It has made the MCR a more interesting place to spend time during the day, particularly after lunch (when people used to have to go to the College Bar to obtain coffee, for a price, and of a coarser quality). By chance, early in my term of office, I caught some unauthorised undergraduates in the MCR building playing pool one evening, and, not recognising who I was, they spontaneously confessed that their keyfobs gave them access to the MCR even though they had no right to such access. Having made some further enquiries with MCR members who had been undergraduates at the College some years ago, I discovered that this phenomenon had been current even as long as 5 years ago, and surmised that it resulted from a creeping error in the administration of keyfob access by the MCR: when undergraduates are admitted as Associate Members, their keyfobs are enabled for access to the MCR building, but if the MCR President does not remember to ask the Clerk of Works to disable this access when these undergraduates leave/change rooms at the end of the academic year, then the inheritors of these enabled keyfobs will have access to the MCR despite not being themselves Associate Members of the MCR. Recalling that there had been a problem with theft of books and a laptop in the MCR building the previous year, and not knowing how many unauthorised undergraduates could get into the MCR building, I considered that I had no choice but to tighten the security of access to the MCR building, and so collected genuine MCR members' keyfob numbers by e-mail over several weeks (checking them against the list of MCR members provided by College), and then asked the Clerk of Works to wipe all student access to the MCR and enable it again only for the keyfob numbers I had supplied to him. Most MCR members managed to provide me with their keyfob numbers in time for the wiping and restoring, and so experienced no disruption of access, but there has been a trickle of requests for re-enabling of access by genuine MCR members who did not send me their keyfob number in due time, either because they were out of Oxford at the time of the wiping and restoring or because they did not get around to replying to the numerous e-mails I sent about the matter before it was necessary to wipe and restore access. With much expenditure of time, I have compiled a list of MCR members and their fob numbers, including Associate and Honorary Members with information about when they will cease to hold that membership status and so when their keyfobs should be disabled for MCR access. If the list is kept up to date in this fashion, it should be very easy to e-mail the Estates Manager (who has taken on this duty) at the end of the academic year and tell him which keyfob numbers to disable so that the problem of unauthorised access will not recur. After the JCR President and I expressed concerns about students not being represented on certain committees (most importantly Finance Committee) and, for the committees on which we did sit, the division between Agenda A (unreserved business) and Agenda B (reserved business, for which we had to leave), the College President agreed to hold informal summit meetings of himself, the JCR President and I to brief us on what had been decided at recent committee meetings at which we did not have representation at all and what had been decided under Agenda B on the committees on which we did have representation on unreserved matters. He affirmed that for committees with an Agenda A/Agenda B split, the default position was that matters should be on Agenda A unless they were commercial in confidence or related to the treatment of a particular individual, in which case they would be moved to Agenda B. Neither the JCR President nor I was entirely happy with being excluded from commercial in confidence matters, as these seem to be important to the lives of students and without us there was no direct student voice being heard on these matters. We were both of the opinion that College should be able to repose trust in us, as adults elected by adults to be their representatives – as beneficiaries of the College charitable trust elected by the majority of the beneficiaries of the College charitable trust to be their representatives – not to divulge confidential information. Nevertheless, these summit meetings with the College President are a step in the right direction and should be regularised to once or twice a term; they should ideally occur before the meeting of committees without student representation or with an Agenda B, as occurs in student representatives' briefings with their Head of House/Senior Tutor/Senior Dean at other colleges, so that the College President may speak indirectly for students in such situations. The refurbishment of the College Bar has largely been driven by the hard work of JCR members. In the Rents & Charges negotiations, the JCR President secured a promise from College to fund refurbishment of the Bar and Bar Extension and it has been the research and detailed costings provided by the JCR Domestic Secretaries which really got the project moving. If renovations to student areas are desired, it seems that they work best with enthusiastic student involvement impelling them forwards. In Hilary Term 2010 the MCR approved the creation of a division of the MCR Budget to fund the purchase of video games, since video game consoles had been purchased over the last couple of years without an ongoing funding commitment to keeping the game library up to date and interesting. The MCR Committee appointed two Representatives during its term in office: an Electronic Equipment Representative who was to have oversight of the speakers, bop electronics, television, subscription television package, video games, DVD player and so forth; and a Bicycle Representative who was to provide free minor repairs to MCR members' bicycles and advice on how to procure major repairs. After the MCR website had been limping away for some years without major updating and had not been updated at all for a couple of terms, I raised at an MCR meeting the possibility of asking College to formally take it over (including assuming editorial control), but fortunately a member of the MCR volunteered to become Website Officer and he has since been building a new MCR website. Near the end of my term, I saw that the MCR Committee handover process could be made a good deal easier if, as in the JCR, MCR Officers had generic e-mail addresses (e.g. mcr-president@sjc.ox.ac.uk), under which they could be subscribed to various mailing lists. With the aid of the College Computing Officer, I organised for these generic e-mail addresses to be established.

Acknowledgments: I would like to offer my whole-hearted gratitude for the hard work, enthusiasm, competence and good humour of the rest of the MCR Committee 2009-2010. While I cannot, unfortunately, engage in an individual appraisal of the great qualities of each MCR Officer, it is enough to say that they toiled cheerfully, successfully and voluntarily, for no more substantial reward than the hope of making the MCR community an enjoyable one, in which hope they were, in the event, well justified. I must give especial thanks to my fellow Executive Officer of the MCR Committee, Secretary Stuart Broadfoot and Treasurer Vusumuzi Nhlahlala 'Fats' Dlamini for their labour, skill and solidarity.

David J. Townsend  
MCR President 2009-2010

# Presidential Report 2012-2013

This report details how the Committee in 2012-2013 organised events, provided services, and represented members.

## Communication

We made significant changes to how we communicate events and services to members.

- We launched a new St John's College MCR Facebook group so that members could find out about MCR events, announce details of their own events, advertise items that they own, ask questions, or circulate information that they thought would be useful to MCR members.
- We reintroduced the weekly MCR newsletter, announcing details of news and events for members.
- We introduced Google forms for members to sign up to events, very much simplifying the sign up process.
- We revamped our website, adding new sections on communication, events, the MCR Building, and welfare.
- We reused noticeboards in the MCR Building to publicise services.

## MCR Building

We introduced many new features in the MCR Building. Following these changes, members now use the MCR Building substantially more than in previous years.

- We refurbished an abandoned room to create a new Meeting Room with substantial table space for work, meetings, and social events. The Meeting Room also has a whiteboard, projector, and board games area.
- We introduced a free tea and coffee service.
- We added a new games console (PlayStation 3) and sound system in the TV Room.
- We restocked the kitchen with new kitchenware, including cutlery, cookware, and very distinctive mugs.
- We redecorated the MCR Building with plants and photographs.
- We installed new speakers for the Main Room, used for bops and social events.
- We installed shelving in the Committee Cupboard to increase and organise storage space.

## Rents and Charges

We made an agreement with the College over Rents and Charges, considering the significant problems affecting graduate finance and a projected 5.07% corrected inflation (VNI) in College charges.

- We agreed a 3.6% increase in rent, food costs, the Academic Grant, and MCR capitation.
- We agreed that the College would fully fund the cost of student languages courses (LASR and OPAL) at the Oxford University Language Centre.
- We agreed that the College would fund the part refurbishment of the MCR Building.
- We agreed that the minimum temperature for student rooms would rise from 15°C to 18°C.
- We agreed that freezers would be provided in student kitchens.
- We agreed that the Academic Grant would cover the cost of monitors, desktop computers, and peripherals.
- We agreed that the College would install wireless hubs throughout student accommodation.

## Constitution

We updated our Constitution following a review from a Constitutional Committee and ratification at two consecutive General Meetings in Trinity Term.

- We agreed that the MCR Committee should have the following structure: the Executive (including President, Vice President, and Treasurer), the Secretaries (including Cultural Secretary, Social Secretary, and Victualler), and the Officers (including Desserts Officer, Environment and Ethics Officer, Returning Officer, Welfare Officer, and Women's Officer). The Executive and Secretaries form the Board.
- We agreed that Board positions should be put to annual elections in Trinity Term. The elected Board would then appoint Officers subject to ratification at a General Meeting.

## Freshers Week

We made significant changes to Freshers Week over the last two years.

- We ran a varied social calendar during Freshers Week (Welcome Party, Freshers BBQ, Quiz Night, College Bar Crawl, Culture Night, Oxford Tour, Cocktails Night, Desserts Night). We provided (as at all social events) good-quality, non-alcoholic drinks at all events.
- We introduced a Help Desk, staffed by volunteers, who could answer questions from Freshers, provide advice, and ensure that someone friendly could meet Freshers in the MCR Building.
- We created new online materials that provided comprehensive information for Freshers.
- We rewrote and restructured the Freshers Guide.

## Services

We introduced several new services for members.

- We trained the first MCR members as peer supporters. Peer supporters offer accessible and informal opportunities to talk through issues that might concern students.
- We introduced welfare supplies, provided through the Welfare Officers.
- We introduced a bicycle rental scheme, shared between the JCR and MCR, allowing students to rent bicycles, helmets, and lights for a one-off annual charge.
- We introduced a DVD rental system so that members could rent from our DVD collection for free.

## Policies

We agreed several policies to standardise how we make decisions.

- We agreed that, in most cases, only people who do not have access to comparable, alternative service providers (such as other JCRs and MCRs) should be eligible for associate membership. Exceptions include mature undergraduates and fourth year undergraduates at St John's College. We introduced this policy to ensure that graduates at St John's College benefit from MCR events and services, and are not restricted due to demand from people who already have access to comparable, alternative service providers.
- We decided not to allow external societies to hold events in the MCR Building, except in cases when there is substantial benefit to members. We introduced this policy in response to complaints from members due to disruption and blocked access to rooms, damage and loss of property, and significant interference to scheduling MCR events.
- We agreed that the allocation of members to limited capacity events should be decided randomly through the use of a random number generator. This also applies to other allocation decisions such as the flat ballot when we used a public, random allocation system.
- We agreed that priority should be given to full and associate members above members' guests at all limited capacity events.
- We agreed to provide good-quality, non-alcoholic drinks at social events.

## Committee

- The Vice President (Madu Jayatunga) organised the room ballots, General Meetings, and Committee meetings.
- The Treasurer (Leigh Paton) organised the MCR's finances.
- The Cultural Secretary (David Lewis) organised cinema trips, concert trips, a trip to Stratford-upon-Avon, a tour of the Houses of Parliament, and other cultural events. David also managed our periodicals.
- The Social Secretaries (Gaelle Coullon, Ross Haines, Ant Hibbs, and Tobias Wieczorek) organised six bops, six exchange dinners, our Christmas Dinner, and other social events.
- The Victuallers (Johnny Crockett and John O'Rourke, Tom Blackburn and Jeongmin Thomas Han) organised six guest dinners.
- The Desserts Officer (Sarah Davidson) organised six desserts nights.
- The Environment and Ethics Officer (Nick Cooper) organised our termly charity donations, chaired a Charity Committee that distributed profits from St John's College Ball 2011, and led our recycling efforts.
- The Returning Officer (Adam Povey) organised the annual election, and reviewed electoral procedure.
- The Sports Officer (Ross Haines) purchased new sports equipment for the Sports Cupboard.
- The Welfare Officers (Miriam Hillyard and Paolo Ronchi) significantly increased our welfare provision, including free welfare supplies, and organised six post-bop brunches. Paolo also organised six wine and cheese events.
- The Women's Officer (Klara Wanelik) organised women's informal formals and other social events.

I thank all of the Committee for their efforts over the last year. Everything we do in the MCR, from the events we attend to the services we use, is entirely dependent on the generosity of volunteers who give up their time to make them happen. I wish the very best to the next Committee.

I hope that you have all enjoyed the last year. The MCR is a remarkable community and, to each and every one of you, I hope that it is an amazing part of your time here at St John's.

Richard Lau  
President 2012-2013

# Presidential Report 2013-2014

## Committee

- The Vice-President (Ross Haines) organised the room ballots, General Meetings and Committee meetings, as well as acting as Sports Officer, maintaining the sports cupboard and organising trips. He also assisted the President with rents and charges discussions and other projects.
- The Treasurer (Gauri Ang) managed the MCR finances.
- The Culture Secretaries (Tom Blackburn, Flora Kennedy McConnell, Carly de Jonge) organised a variety of events and excursions, including film nights, theatre trips, cinema trips and visits to places of interest. They also reviewed and managed the periodical subscriptions.
- The Social Secretaries (Sean Robinson, Steph Larcombe, Tom Han) organised six bops, seven exchange dinners and other social events, including grad tables, the Christmas dinner and the summer garden party.
- The Victuallers (Nick Cooper, John Harfield, Paolo Ronchi) organised six guest dinners and six wine & cheese tasting events.
- The Desserts Officer (Caitlin Clunie O'Connor) organised six desserts nights.
- The Environment & Ethics Officer (Melissa Bailey) organised the termly charity donations and worked with the College to ensure goods are sourced in an ethical and environmentally friendly way. She also organised special E&E events jointly with the Victuallers and Welfare Officers.
- The Returning Officer (Tom Preston) organised the annual election.
- The Welfare Officers (Marina Lambrakis, Ed Peveler) organised welfare events, including six post-bop brunches, maintained and distributed a range of welfare supplies and coordinated welfare provision alongside the Peer Supporters.
- The Women's Officer (Emma Claussen) organised women's lunches and other events. She was also involved in formulating plans and running events for the '2000 Women' celebrations.

## Rents & Charges

- We agreed a 2.5% increase in rent, food and MCR capitation.
- We agreed a 12% increase in the academic grant, as well as initiating an investigation into the possibility of termly repayment of the grant and forward spending (which would allow students to spend multiple years' grants in one go for large cost items such as personal computers). These are yet to be implemented and I encourage the new (and future) MCR Committees to continue pursuing such changes.
- We agreed that the thesis binding grant would be increased to £40 per thesis, up to a maximum of £80 in total.
- We voiced concerns about the criteria for allocating funds via the special grant, in particular the requirement that the recipient must present at any conference for which they wish to receive funding.
- We proposed that the costs of electricity and insurance were covered by the College, rather than the students.
- We proposed that the College create a grant to cover the costs of Visas for international students who require them to study in the UK.
- We proposed that clinical medicine students are reimbursed for the costs of travelling to and from placements, including the John Radcliffe Hospital.
- Discussions of these proposals opened the door for further consideration by the Rents & Charges Committee, should representatives from the MCR wish to pursue them.

## Freshers' Week

- We organised a variety of events across Freshers' Week which were intended to accommodate a range of interests and primarily to provide new graduates with a relaxed environment to meet other MCR members.
- We published detailed information on the MCR website for Freshers, ran a help desk in the MCR, organised tours of the College and offered the 'meet and greet' scheme for those new to Oxford.
- This year saw a dramatic increase in the graduate student intake, from 60-70 in the previous year up to roughly 100. This made the task of organising Freshers' Week even more difficult, and I thank all those who volunteered to help.

## **MCR Building**

- We opened up the MCR room booking policy, most notably allowing external groups such as University societies to use our facilities. Constraints on bookings were carefully considered and discussed to ensure that the security of the building and its contents was not compromised, and access was not restricted for MCR members. Many of the events held have also been of interest to MCR members.
- We created an online booking form for rooms in the MCR building, simplifying the process and making it more efficient.
- We installed a ceiling-mounted projector in the meeting room.
- We installed a surround sound system in the TV room.

## **Miscellaneous**

- We trained additional Peer Supporters, increasing the total number and therefore the accessibility of this service.
- We oversaw the activities of the 2014 Ball Committee, by hearing reports from the President at each General Meeting, and by representing the MCR on the Ball Steering Committee. In particular, this allowed ideas and concerns to be actively discussed at every opportunity.
- We were involved in formulating the proposals for the new library and study centre project, with the College welcoming feedback on all aspects of the plans. This project is ongoing, and I hope that graduates will maintain an active interest in its development.
- We were involved in planning the '2000 Women' celebrations. In particular, our Women's Officer and other volunteers worked closely with the organisers to arrange varied and exciting events to celebrate this milestone.
- We conducted a survey of opinions from graduates about formal and informal hall. The results demonstrated that many graduates feel these could be improved in a variety of ways, and I hope the new MCR Committee investigates options further with the College to incorporate some of these ideas.
- We encountered a problem with one of the MCR Committee budgets, particularly towards the end of the year. This issue, largely down to a breakdown in communication resulted in a significant over-expenditure in this budget. Going forward, it is essential that committee members are prompt in submitting claim forms and maintain regular communication with the Treasurer to ensure that problems like this do not occur.

I am extremely proud of what the MCR Committee achieved this year, and I thank its members for volunteering their time to offer support, provide services and organise events. They did this specifically to ensure that our experience here is one that we will all remember fondly. Looking ahead, I wish all the very best to the new MCR Committee.

I end by saying that it has been a privilege to serve this amazing community. I thank every one of you for your support, and for making my time as MCR President enjoyable, interesting and fulfilling. Best wishes to all of you for the future.

Anthony J. Hibbs  
*MCR President 2013-2014*

# Presidential Report 2014-2015

## Committee

- The President (Marina Lambrakis) oversaw the Committee's activities, chaired General Meetings, represented and lobbied on behalf of the MCR to College, OUSU, and other bodies, and dealt with the MCR's correspondences, including collating the weekly newsletter.
- The Vice-President (Ross Haines; Eden Tanner) organised the room ballots, General Meetings and Committee meetings, as well as attending College committees, taking part in the Rents & Charges negotiations and assisting the President on various projects throughout the year.
- The Treasurer (Gauri Ang) managed the MCR finances, including dealing with the Sky account and the Punt Club.
- The Culture Secretaries (John-Mark Allen, Sarah Penington, Ed Peveler) organised a variety of events and excursions, including film nights, theatre trips, cinema trips, and walks. They also managed the periodical subscriptions.
- The Desserts/Pizza Officers (Andreas Goebel, Stefano Ortona, Lisa Choi) organised food nights.
- The LGBTQ Officer (Thomas Preston) organised events, including socials and film nights.
- The Returning Officer (Nick Cooper) organised the annual election, as well as a by-election for the position of Vice-President in Michaelmas term 2014. He also acted as the MCR OUSU rep, attending OUSU Council, and organised the termly charity donations.
- The Social Secretaries (Kieran Fitzpatrick, David Heaton, Jan Cosgrave, Rita Nissim) organised bops, exchange dinners, grad tables, and other social events, including the Christmas dinner, the summer garden party, and whiskey and coffee tastings.
- The Victuallers (Max Emmerich, Steph Larcombe, Pirada Trongwongsa) organised guest dinners and wine & cheese tasting events.
- The Welfare Officers (Paul Gerstmayr, Jon Templeman, Katherine Fender) organised welfare events, including post-bop brunches, teas, and awareness events and workshops, maintained and distributed a range of welfare supplies, and coordinated welfare provision alongside the Peer Supporters.
- The Women's Officer (Shana Caro) organised women's lunches, the annual women's dinner, and women's garden party, as well as more informal gatherings and film nights. She was also involved in formulating plans and running events for the '2000 Women' celebrations.

In our final term, the Committee also created the positions of BME Officer and Disabled Students Officer, in order to allow these to be included in the Committee elections. This means we are now one of the few graduate common rooms to have officer positions for all the liberation groups. The position of Environment & Ethics Officer remained vacant.

## Rents & Charges

The Rents & Charges negotiations were attended by the President and Vice-President (with input from the Treasurer), where we presented a report on graduate finances. Prior to beginning the negotiations, we conducted a survey of the MCR to establish where the community's priorities lay, in order to best represent these.

- We agreed a 3% increase in rent and the academic grant (to £388), and 3.5% increase in food costs.
- The committee also agreed various administrative changes to the academic grant. It was agreed that the grant could be claimed for termly (to avoid the rush of applications in Hilary term), and that graduates with at least one full fee-paying year beyond the current academic year would be able to forward spend against the following year's allowance for large purchases.
- To account for the fact that graduates are based in Oxford outside termtime, it was agreed that the MCR grant would be increased by 20% as a one-off adjustment to the baseline budget, in addition to the 3.5% increase agreed across the common rooms.
- We negotiated a £5000 budget to refurbish the Pool Room in the MCR, in order to make it into a space that is more widely used.

**Freshers' Week:** Freshers' Week 2014 ran along similar lines to previous years, with a broad range of events across the week. A separate Freshers' Week Committee was set up, and was headed by the President. It is **recommended** that in future years, the organisation of Freshers' Week is formalised and a procedure established for the appointment and operation of the Committee, to streamline the process and ensure that institutional memory is maintained, particularly over such initiatives as the meet and greet scheme.

**MCR Building & College Facilities:** Various changes were made to MCR facilities this year, including the acquisition of a new coffee machine, and the restocking of the MCR kitchen's equipment. More substantially, we passed a motion to make the **MCR toilets** gender neutral (by removing the gendered signs). Throughout Michaelmas and Hilary terms the MCR lift was out of order, and as a result of the considerable delay in getting it fixed College agreed to change the engineer company in charge of maintaining the lift. After a consultation in the Rents & Charges survey and discussion in the Hilary term OGMs, the **Pool Room** was refurbished over the Easter holiday with new furnishings (sofa, armchairs, beanbags), and has been repurposed as a games/lounge room (name to be concluded, currently known as the Room Formerly Known As The Pool Room). A new TV was installed in the TV room and the old one moved here; our games collection has been expanded, and the space made more

comfortable and welcoming. Our hope is that this will lead to this room being used much more by MCR members, as a relaxing social space that can double up as a quieter, more comfortable workspace.

There were also a few changes made to some College facilities, mainly on request from MCR members. The most significant of these concerned **security at Hart Synnot House**, particularly in terms of bikes. (A motion was passed at an OGM mandating us to lobby College on this issue.) As a result, new, more secure bike racks have been installed, and the College have committed to improving security at the Leckford Road sites, including Hart Synnot House. We also secured a commitment from College to provide **food waste bins for Hart Synnot House** (upon request from residents), and it is hoped that this provision might expand to other College sites in the near future.

**Communication:** The MCR newsletter continued to be sent out weekly, with notices of events and other news items. The format was changed slightly, so that the introductory message includes a summary of MCR events for the week, along with an update from the President on current Committee projects and initiatives. This was also reflected in the running of General Meetings, which now include **updates from Committee members** at the start of each General Meeting in the interests of transparency.

**Constitution & Elections:** The Returning Officer undertook a major review of the Constitution, mainly with the purpose of deleting extraneous or inaccurate clauses to streamline the Constitution and bring it in line with current practice. There was also a consultation on proposed changes with MCR members. The final version of the Constitution was passed at a General Meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2015, with the following substantive changes:

1. The **structure of the Committee** was simplified, so that we moved from the tripartite structure (Executive, Secretaries, Officers) to a bipartite one, collapsing the distinction between Secretaries and Officers. The Committee is now composed of Executive and Non-Executive Board Members. According to the new Constitution, all Committee positions are now up for election in Hilary term (where previously, Officer positions were appointed after a new Committee had taken office).
2. **Role descriptions** for each Committee position were added to the Rules of the MCR (appended to the Constitution). This means that they are enshrined in MCR governing documents, but are easy to amend if the MCR deems it necessary.
3. The **elections** process was clarified and updated (Part VII of the Constitution). The main clarifications were to state that we use the Single Transferable Vote system, and to clarify that candidates who campaign in teams will nevertheless appear on the ballot as individuals. Further, as already mentioned, all Committee positions are up for election in Hilary term.

**Policies & Mandates:** Much of this year's work was around policy and campaigning, both within College and more broadly.

1. **MCR Events Policy**, passed at a General Meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2014. According to this, we agree that harassment will not be tolerated at MCR events. To this end, there shall always be a designated point of contact at every event, which shall normally be the event organiser, except in the case of bops, where there will be trained First Responders on shift throughout. It is the responsibility of the designated point of contact, upon receiving an allegation of harassment, to notify the Junior Deans, who are tasked with adjudicating this. The First Responders will be overseen by the Welfare Officers.
2. A motion was passed at a General Meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2014 mandating the President, Welfare Officers, Women's Officer, LGBTQ Officer, and Social Secretaries to attend a **Sexual Violence training** session, run by OUSU.
3. A motion was passed at a General Meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2015 mandating the President to oppose the resolution to Congregation on demolishing the **Castle Mill** accommodation complex, and to conduct a letter-writing campaign to all members of Governing Body expressing the MCR's opposition.
4. **Room Ballot Privileges**, passed at a General Meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014. After conducting a survey of MCR members, a motion was brought in accordance with the survey results to remove room ballot privileges from the Social Secretaries and the Treasurer, and to maintain them only for the President and Vice-President.

In addition to these, the President and Vice-President worked on various campaigns with College. We were successful in lobbying for a scheme whereby College will pay for **transport to and from a Sexual Assault Referral Centre** if this is required by a College member. Together with the JCR, we established **working groups** to look at the College Harassment Policy and Suspended Status Students Policy, both of which were ongoing during handover.

It has been a privilege to lead the 2014-15 MCR Committee, and I am immensely proud of and grateful to all those who served on the Committee across the year, as well as those who served on the Freshers' Week Committee. The MCR relies on people volunteering their time and efforts to organise events, provide services, and make graduate life at St John's that much more enjoyable and supported, so a huge thank you to everyone who did so this year. Thanks are also due to MCR members, for your support but also for challenging me to represent you to the best of my ability. I hope I have done you proud.

I'm also honoured to have been on the first all-woman team leading the SCR, MCR, and JCR, with women Presidents and Vice-Presidents in each common room. I hope you will agree that the College is making leaps and bounds in the areas of welfare, equality, and liberation (including in the MCR), and keep in mind how lucky we are to be at St John's, a college which offers an extraordinary amount of support to its students. I wish all the best to the new Committee for the coming year. Over and out,

Marina Lambrakis  
*MCR President 2014-15*

# Presidential Report 2016-2017

## COMMITTEE

- The President (Katharine Burnett) oversaw the Committee's activities, chaired General Meetings, represented and lobbied on behalf of the MCR to College and OUSU, dealt with the MCR's correspondences, including collating the weekly newsletter.
- The Vice-President (Anthony Payne) organised the room and couple's ballots, General Meetings and Committee meetings, as well as attending College committees, taking part in the Rents & Charges negotiations and assisting the President on many projects throughout the year. <sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>
- The Treasurer (Laura Grima) managed the MCR finances, helped organise General Meetings, and introduced an 'Enrichment Budget' to allow MCR members to enrich their MCR space and experience with items chosen from an open poll.
- The Culture Secretaries (Martin Urschel and Christopher Arran) organised a variety of events and excursions, including film nights, theatre trips, comedy nights, cinema trips, and walks. <sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>
- The LGBTQ Officer (Anna Olerinyova) organised events, including exchange dinners and socials.
- The Returning Officer (Kelli Francis-Staite) organised the annual election and acted as the MCR OUSU rep, attending OUSU Council.
- The Social Secretaries (Juliane Gong and Arkaprabha Chakraborty) organised bops, exchange dinners, grad tables, and other social events, including the Christmas dinner and the Regency Ball. <sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>
- The Victuallers (Catherine Paverd, Phacharaphorn Phanomvan, Shi Yu Chan) organised 6 guest dinners and 6 wine & cheese tasting events. <sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>
- The Welfare Officers (Victoria Davies, Josh Calder-Travis, Anna Spearing-Ewyn) organised welfare events, including post-bop brunches and awareness events, consent workshops. They also maintained and distributed a range of welfare supplies, and coordinated the first respondents and the welfare provision alongside the Peer Supporters. <sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>
- The BME Officer (Joseph Diwaker, Samuel Kim) organised events, including socials and potlucks. They also helped college with the inaugural St John's BME Dinner and initiated the International Dinners in co-ordination with the JCR.
- The Disabled Students' Officer (Olivier Lennon) provided welfare and a point of contact for students.
- The International Student's Officer (Trevelyan Wing) organised socials.
- The Environment and Ethics Officer (Ainslie Johnstone) organised events, started an E&E newsletter, and lobbied College on a number of issues.
- The Women's Officer role remained vacant throughout the term, despite the efforts of and much to the disappointment of the Committee. The President (Katharine Burnett) lobbied on behalf of the liberation group at College committees, represented the MCR at the Women's Network Advisory Group, and organised events, including the Annual Women's Dinner and a High Tea in order for the budget to not go unspent.

## RENTS AND CHARGES

The Rents & Charges negotiations were attended by the President and Vice-President (with input from the Treasurer), where we presented a report on graduate finances written by the Vice-President with direction from the President. Prior to beginning the negotiations, we conducted a survey of the MCR to establish where the community's priorities lay. We also coordinated with the JCR, to present a united front to the College. The MCR and JCR proposed a 1.5% increase in rent and fixed charge, and a 1.5% in food costs. We accepted an increase of 2.75% to rent, fixed charge and food costs and a 2.75% increase to the MCR capitation and a 7.26% increase to the Academic Grant. The MCR President and Vice President raised the concern about the availability of rooms for graduates in the MCR Room Ballot. We followed up on an agreement at the previous year's Rents and Charges to re-grade the rooms and for College to allocate a protected number of rooms to the MCR for the MCR Room Ballot to be more transparent and to provide greater security to those who entered it. The MCR President followed this up until they left office, and handed over the issue to the new committee. The MCR President and Vice President raised the issue of lack of internet provision for Observatory Street flats. The College agreed to investigate first, if the flats could be connected to the University network and, if that was not possible, then that the subsidy should be increased. Since it was not possible to connect the flats to the network at present, the College agreed to increase the subsidy by £15. The MCR President and Vice President requested that the MCR building be refurbished. We requested new carpets in the downstairs rooms, the floor to be sanded and polished, and the room to be repainted as it was showing wear. The MCR President held a poll to decide on which colours to paint the MCR. It was decided to keep the College red, but to paint the back wall white to brighten up the main room. New items were also bought for the MCR, including a new fridge and a less wasteful coffee machine. The MCR President and Vice President requested that the MCR Computer Room be updated, with the purchasing of newer PCs, printers and scanners. This was agreed to by the College. However, after multiple reminders from the MCR President and Vice President College informed the Exec that they would be removing all PCs from College and that they would not be buying new equipment for the MCR Computer Room. The MCR President and Vice President heavily opposed this change, primarily for reasons of accessibility. The idea of turning the MCR Computer Room into a study space when this change was slated to happen was floated by the MCR Committee.

## FRESHERS' WEEK

Freshers' Week 2016 ran along similar lines to the previous year, with a range of alcoholic, non-alcoholic, welfare, and social events. It was disappointing to see few MCR members volunteer to support those of the Committee who dedicated their time to Freshers' Week. However, the feedback received showed that the Freshers still enjoyed their week and we hope this success



continues to be built on in future years.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Transparency and communication remained a core value of the MCR Committee. The MCR newsletter continued to be sent out weekly, with notices of events and other news items. The initiatives begun by the Committee of 2015/2016 were continued: the MCR newsletter introduction contains a summary of MCR events and General Meetings began with updates from Committee members in the interests of transparency. The MCR President and Vice President also decided that the website was not fit for purpose, but were not able to get the initiative of a new website off the ground due to complications arising from the use of MCR funds to employ an SJC student (which was the preferred course of action). The President and Vice President updated the information on the website, as well as the welcome message. The President and Vice President also updated the MCR Handbook (as it was out of date). The President deleted inactive profiles and old members from the MCR Facebook Group that had graduated many years ago to ensure that the group continues to be an MCR community. The Welfare Officer (Victoria Davies) created a Welfare Guide for new and returning MCR members so all Welfare information was in one place. The President and Vice President requested that College provide the College e-mail addresses of all new students so that they could add the Freshers' to the MCR mailing list to avoid people "falling through the gaps". College informed us that they could not share College e-mail addresses with us due to privacy laws, and so the President and Vice President updated the Fresher's Pack and asked for it to be distributed in advance by the Graduate Administrator. The Environment and Ethics Officer distributed a 'top tips' newsletter with E&E tips and events going on around College, the University, and Oxford.

## **ENGAGEMENT AND ELECTIONS**

The MCR Committee noted that engagement with the MCR and those interested in running for elections had dwindled to an all-time low. For the second year in the row, hustings were attended by only some of the outgoing committee and the candidates. Similarly, many of the positions (including the entire exec) were either uncontested or unfilled. Much of this year's work was around increasing engagement with the MCR and increasing the number of people who would like to get involved with the MCR Committee. To increase engagement, it was decided that the best way was to put on a large variety of engaging events that got graduate students invested in their MCR again and to update the MCR building to create an inviting communal space. The MCR Committee also noted it would be best to ensure that Fresher's Week brought the new students into the Community. The year was highly successful, producing hustings that were hosted in Garden Quad Auditorium and that were the best attended in at least three years. The number of candidates had doubled from the previous year; it was particularly noted that the MCR Committee went from having no Women's Officers to two.

## **LIBERATION**

The MCR President and the Liberation Officers all showed a dedicated commitment to the continued emphasis on Liberation Roles within the MCR, College, and University. Liberation initiatives throughout the year included: The MCR President and LGBTQ+ Officer lobbied the President with the JCR to raise the Rainbow flag following the Orlando Massacre. The MCR President and JCR President also requested that the Rainbow flag be flown for the entire of LGBTQ+ History Month. The College rejected this, and so the MCR President and the JCR President agreed to hand-over the project of buying an MCR and JCR flag-pole (as is done in other Colleges) that we could display the flag on in 2018. The MCR President organised the College's Annual Women's Dinner with input from the JCR Women's Officer. The MCR Committee created the role of Student Parents and Carers Officer to support MCR student parents and carers, and to ensure the MCR's stated commitment to hold family friendly events and provide a family friendly environment in the MCR is adhered to. The MCR President attended the Nursery Advisory Committee (in the absence of a Student Parents and Carers Officer at that time) as a representative from the MCR and lobbied for a student bursary to be created. The MCR President also attended the opening of the Bainton Road Nursery. The BME Officer (Samuel Kim) and Victualler (Phacharaphorn Phanomvan) oversaw the introduction of the inaugural Annual College BME Dinner and attended a BME focus group. The President and Vice President, in cooperation with the JCR, successfully lobbied the College to appoint a Tutor for Ethnic Minorities. The President and Vice President lobbied the College to replace the platform lift in the MCR as it was not fit for purpose, and had not been for quite some time. After a long time, the College finally built a bespoke lift. The President and Vice President attended 'Race 101 Workshop Facilitator Training' and wished to implement this in Fresher's Week alongside Consent Workshops. They were unfortunately unable to do so due to a lack of Facilitators. The International Student's Officer and BME Officer helped College implement the International Dinners. The President and Vice President lobbied College to send members of academic and non-academic staff to 'cultural sensitivity' training and 'mental health 101 training' for them to better support students. The first 'batch' of trainees attended this year. The President formally noted her objections to the College's implementation to Prevent, both in College committees and in her Governing Body speech. The President, Welfare Officers, and Disabled Student's Officer all coordinated a detailed response to the College's Welfare Review and demanded that the College do more to support those with Mental Health Issues. The President and Vice President supported the introduction of Kosher and Halal meals, and a Ramadan formal.

In addition to these, the President and Vice-President worked on various other campaigns and events throughout the year with College, OUSU, the MCR Committee, and the JCR. Many of which were reported throughout the year at General Meetings and in the newsletters. It has been a privilege to lead the 2016-2017 MCR Committee, and I thank all the Committee for their efforts over the last year. Particularly as we were relatively 'understaffed' at times. The MCR community relies on the generosity of volunteers who give up their time and energy to run events, distribute supplies, lobby on their behalf, provide welfare support, and much more. I hope that you have all had an enjoyable year, and have felt supported, included, and welcomed by your MCR.

I wish all the best to the new Committee for the coming year.

Katharine Burnett

*MCR President 2016-2017*

## Presidential Report 2017-18

**President:** Edward Love; **Vice-President:** Laura Grima; **Treasurers:** Xue Jiao and Kelli Francis-Staite; **Social Secretaries:** Alix Hibble, Arkaprabha Chakraborty, Natalia Perez-Campanero, Samuel Garratt; **Victuallers:** Janine Gray, Rose Hodgson, Luuk Metselaar, Ria Dinsdale; **Welfare Officers:** Anna Spearing-Ewyn, Joshua Calder-Travis, Céline Brendler-Spaeth, Samuel Kim; **Culture Officer:** Maximilian Schüßler; **Women's Officers:** Eve Twivy, Ashley Orr, Sophie Westenra; **LGBTQ Officers:** Laura Garmendia Sanchez, Robert Britten; **Black and Minority Ethnic Students' Officers:** Phacha Phanomvan, Imran Naved; **Disabled Students' Officer:** Gwen Antell; **Student Parent and Carers' Officer:** Hila Levy; **Environment and Ethics Officer:** Angelika Love; **International Students' Officer:** Jelle Verburg; **Sports Officer:** Johannes Wiesel; **Returning Officer:** Tunrayo Adeleke-Larodo

### Communication

This year a report was circulated for each term of tenure, communicating to the MCR a summary of the outcome of each term's committees, as well as representation, advocacy, and domestic matters. These reports will also serve as a means of preserving more detailed stage-by-stage institutional memory for future Presidents and Committees, including negative results, given the two-side limit of this Presidential Report for the Standing Orders. As well as being circulated on the MCR mailing list, these reports were provided as part of a compendium of fully-digitised Handover documents (including the extant back-catalogue of committee agendas and minutes) which were handed-over to the MCR President for 2018-19 on a single USB stick. The rationale behind this compendium is that it will help to preserve institutional memory, and committee accountability.

### Rents & Charges

- The MCR's Graduate Finance Report for the 2017 Rents & Charges Committee was produced following a comprehensive questionnaire produced by the MCR Committee Executive. This served as a valuable tool for making our case to the Bursars and will serve as a future resource for tracking the change in the financial situation of graduates over time.
- Rent, Fixed Charge, Food, Academic Grant, and MCR Capitation increased by 2.95%.
  - This figure was 0.3% below College's own estimations of their increase in costs for the academic year 2017-18, 0.2% above Oxford-wide estimations of other Colleges' increase in costs for 2017-18, 0.3-0.5% below the rent increase for University-owned Graduate accommodation, and broadly in line with contemporary RPI.
- Freezers – these will continue to be provided for kitchens with adequate space.
- Laundry – the current contract will expire during academic year 2017-18 and is to be reviewed ahead of the implementation of an online top-up system – replacing the unreliable and unpopular card top-up system – by academic year 2018-19.
- 'Graduate Study Space' – the MCR's Computer Room was refurbished as a communal study space with new desks, chairs, monitors, keyboards, mice, and other office resources, with a further 'box of bits' (adaptors, charging cables etc.) for loan to MCR Members.

### MCR Building and Facilities

- College-wide Computer and Printing Review – by the beginning of the academic year 2017-18 all desktops were removed from communal computer rooms in order to eradicate the risk of breaches to the College network and were replaced with print terminals which allowed each College member to print remotely via College's new printing network.
- Loan Laptops – with the removal of communal computer facilities, loan laptops were secured following meetings with the Fellow for IT and Senior IT Officer and will be issued by the JCR and MCR Committees and the Lodge for MCR Members who required a replacement short-term.
- MCR Website – following a financial motion, the website was re-built in collaboration with the Senior IT Officer, with a budget to be allocated henceforth for its maintenance by a web master.
- Child-friendly MCR – our inaugural Student Parent and Carers' Officer, Hila Levy, made considerable steps towards improving the MCR's facilities (e.g. baby changing, tumblers, crockery, and cutlery), as well as providing a summary of suggestions and best-practice for certain events.
- Recycling Bins – now available in the MCR Main Room, as well as in Kendrew Café, and more can always be provided upon request to other parts of College in which they are missing.
- Lockers – an inventory of all the lockers in the MCR was made, abandoned lockers were cleared, and the loose bunch of keys has been appropriately labelled for use.

### Graduate Accommodation

- Food Waste Bins – these can be provided for kitchens at addresses from which the Council collects.
- Bike Security – while extended CCTV coverage is to be rolled-out in the coming years, immediate changes were made such as circulating to Freshers dos and don'ts of locking bikes in public as well as in College, while the bike racks at the Pusey Lane Flats, St John Street houses, President's Drive, and Hart-Synnot House were secured further or replaced.
- Laundry Subsidies – from Michaelmas 2018, Hart-Synnot House residents were provided with monthly per capita charged laundry cards for use in tumble-drying clothes in order to discourage the drying of clothes within the flats themselves (which compounds perennial issues with mould).

## **Graduate Matters**

- Graduate Student Profiles – discussions at Web Consultative Committee, as well as a survey of the MCR, led to an agreement to provide space on the College website for PGR students to publish an online profile.

## **Constitution**

- Student Parent and Carer's Officer – ratification of this role as instituted by the previous MCR Committee (and removal of Culinary Events Officer).
- Room Booking Policy – to allow the specific booking of each “space” within the MCR (i.e. TV Room, Games Room, Meeting Room, and Main Room), as well as to keep the MCR Room Booking Policy autonomous while still in-line with College's responsibilities under PREVENT, a new Room Booking Policy was drafted, in collaboration with the Senior Dean, for the MCR Standing Orders and agreed at the first OGM of Hilary 2018.

## **Policies and Mandates**

- Off-ballot Room Provision – a new system for allocating Graduate rooms off-ballot was implemented by College for academic year 2017-18 without consultation of the MCR Committee or MCR Members. Following feedback by affected MCR Members, the MCR Executive met with the Senior Dean, who agreed to edit the policy in-line with that feedback, as well as a full review by the MCR Committee for 2018-19.
- Equality Forum – reinstituted and held in Michaelmas 2018. Agreement was secured at Equality Committee of Hilary 2018 that Equality Forum will henceforth take place every term before Equality Committee, with the minutes of each Forum feeding into the agenda of each Committee.
  - The BME Officers, in collaboration with the Tutor for Ethnic Minorities, began discussions with College regarding the provision of financial support for International Students who require visas in order to attend conferences abroad.
- College Accessibility Audit – the Disabled Students' Officer raised particular issues for consideration with the Master of Works at Domestic Committee during 2018.
- Peer Support Training as well as First Responder Training were again both offered for interested MCR Members, with the MCR Committee encouraged in particular to undertake the latter.
- The MCR President and Returning Officer attended OUSU, now OxSU, Council fortnightly, and secured a Third Vote for almost every session by implementing a rota within the MCR Committee.

## **College Facilities**

- Online or Card Topping-up of Bod Cards – this issue is raised every year and was clarified in discussion with the College Accountant. Such solutions are currently impossible due to College's unwillingness to pass the increased cost of such provision onto students, but a new digital system will be implemented as part of College's digitisation of the Finance Office in the coming years.
- New Hall Tray System – the Head of Catering implemented this system for meals at lunch.
- Meal Booking Deadlines – Informal and Formal Hall Booking deadlines were moved forward to 11am by the Head of Catering, in order to reduce waste.

## **Representation**

- Rainbow Flag – agreement was secured, in collaboration with the JCR, at Governing Body during Hilary 2018 that the Rainbow Flag would be flown (from the Middleton Hall flagpole) for the remainder of LGBTQ History month, and henceforth for the duration of that month annually.
- Women's Dinner, BME Dinner, International Hall, and a Ramadan Formal were all held.
- Kosher and Halal Dinners – these are now available and can be booked for Informal or Formal dinners in advance, and at a subsidised rate equivalent to cost of standard options.

I am most grateful to the 29 members of the MCR Committee for 2017-18 who invested their time and emotional energy into representing and advocating on behalf of MCR Members, as well as advising, supporting, entertaining, and celebrating the MCR Community over the past year.

I wholeheartedly thank the MCR Committee for 2018-19 for taking over these responsibilities, and I wish them every success in their respective roles in the coming year.

Edward O. D. Love

## Presidential Report 2018–2019

*Gwen Antell, MCR President 2018–2019*

### COLLEGE POLICY & FACILITIES

The College made strides in regards to equality and inclusion during the Committee year. **Accessibility information** will finally be provided on the College website and linked to the central University page. Partnering with the Works Office, toilets throughout College were re-signed as **gender neutral** (having been reverted to binary at some point after students first successfully lobbied for neutrality several years ago). The Decanal Team and then Governing Body agreed to **allow children (those under 16 years) to be brought as guests to meals** in Hall, with the exception of JCR guest dinners due to safeguarding concerns. A **breastfeeding policy** was made so people could privately access the Nurse's room in North Quad to express milk outside of the 8:30–10:30 Nurse's hours. October 2018 marked the first of an annual lecture series to celebrate **Black History Month**. Also in Michaelmas, the College unveiled portraits of long-serving **non-academic staff**, which are now distributed throughout SJC buildings. Contrary to the spirit of this latter event, in Hilary it was announced that non-academic staff would no longer be allowed in the College Bar. The MCR Committee solicited responses from MCR and JCR members about this decision and sent a letter with personal testimony and survey results to the senior College staff. Upon receipt of the report, the General Purposes Committee quickly rescinded the decision to restrict access to the Bar.

### MCR POLICY & FACILITIES

**Policy changes:** The MCR revised 3 policy motions. Singles' and couples' **housing ballot rules** changed to more clearly and fairly state the way that suspended students would be ranked. The **priority pass** for Committee members was extended to the account auditors, and it was agreed that unused passes could roll over through the end of the Trinity term of the next Committee. Lastly, in consultation with the Senior Dean, it was agreed that the cut-off for requiring **Decanal Permission** for events would henceforth be 20 attendees instead of 12. The other criteria for Decanal Permission (e.g. the invitation of external speakers) still apply.

**Constitutional changes:** The MCR made 2 amendments to the Constitution. The document now includes a **statement of values** around issues of diversity and equality and sets the expectation that MCR Committee members must actively uphold these values. A new Non-Executive Committee position was added, an **Interfaith Officer**, to be open for filling in the next election cycle. The position was envisioned to be a point of contact for people regarding religion, faith, or lack there-of; and to organise and provide advice to other Committee members about MCR events that relate to religious occasions. With the addition of an Interfaith Officer, there are 13 representation roles in the Committee, exactly half of the Non-Executive positions. While it is desirable to ensure that the MCR considers the interests of every under-represented group, the MCR in future may wish to consider converting the 13 single-interest roles to 4–8 general diversity representatives, to promote intersectionality and increase the efficiency of Committee governance.

**Facilities:** The MCR replaced the TV in the Games Room (which was acquired through 2014 Rents & Charges but was broken in 2017). The Committee removed and/or replaced many dysfunctional or missing smaller items. A baby changing station was installed and the Committee purchased a new high chair and children's cutlery. The College Gardeners turned over the container garden space behind the Museum Road house to the MCR for the summer, and a team of students grew a variety of vegetables there.

### RENTS & CHARGES

The MCR Executive Committee surveyed MCR members about their priorities and authored a 13-page report on postgraduate student needs. Particular concerns included: the growing discrepancy between real funding value and Oxford cost of living, a now insufficient number of College rooms to house postgraduate students, the exclusion of 4<sup>th</sup>-year DPhil students from Academic and Special Grants, and the hardships of students who are parents/carers. The joint Rents & Charges Committee agreed to a 2.95% increase in rent, fixed charges, food, grants, and MCR capitation. (In comparison, the general adjusted Van Noorden index was 3.38%.) The Committee also agreed that students allocated a room off-ballot (i.e. for reasons of disability) should only be charged the rent of a B-grade room, regardless of their actual room grade. It was clarified that students could use the Special Grant to cover visa expenses related to the travel covered by the grant. The MCR also received a provisional sum for facilities refurbishment.

## FRESHERS' COMMITTEE

The 2019 Freshers' week included 25 MCR events. The Freshers' Committee, chaired by Adam Packer, provided a calendar and timetable that labelled each event with information on accessibility, family-friendliness, and whether alcohol would be present. Each fresher received an SJC keep cup at induction. Also notable was that on Friday night, a sought-after slot for many activities, the MCR was reserved as a space for LGBTQIA+ socialising. In reflecting on the week, the MCR encouraged that there be a handover meeting between Committees, and that Freshers' Week events should be organised during Trinity term.

## MCR COMMITTEE

**The President** (Gwen Antell) oversaw the Committee's activities, wrote weekly newsletters, managed room bookings, maintained the physical MCR space, chaired OGMs, attended SJC Committee meetings and Equality Forums, voted in OxSU council sessions, and liaised with College on matters arising.

**The Vice President** (Ria Dinsdale) ran the room ballot in Trinity and the flat ballot in Hilary, and allocated reserve places over summer; organised OGMs and the Committee dinner; oversaw MCR associate membership affairs; and assisted the President in matters arising.

**The Treasurer** (Alix Hibble) proposed a well-researched annual budget and oversaw the MCR accounts.

**The Social Secretaries** (Adam Packer, Dhruva Bhatt, Jana Muschinski, Sam Garratt): organised 2 BOPs, 7 Exchange Dinners, the Christmas Dinner, the Handover Party, a joint Garden Party with the Australian and New Zealand Society, and smaller, more relaxed events such as chill-outs at independent cafés. BOPs were moved from the MCR to the Kendrew Events Room to upgrade capacity, hire professional lighting, and prevent damage to the MCR floor.

**The Victuallers** (Aislin Sheldon, Guy Fowler, Thomas Carswell) organised 5 guest dinners and regular Wine & Cheese events. They procured a commendable vegan cheese selection.

**The Welfare Officers** (Alex Wilson, Hannah Nazri) fulfilled supply order requests, held a pumpkin carving event and baking sessions, and arranged for a weekly, led group meditation.

**The Culture Officers** (Alex Fyfe, Olivia Graves, Ruby-Anne Birin) organised weekly movie nights in the MCR and a larger event each term, including cinema trips and a jousting tournament at Blenheim Palace; and catalogued the DVD collection, for which they dedicated a cupboard and wrote user instructors.

**The Women's Officers** (Aleksandra Ziolkowska, Angelika Love, Gabriella Kountourides) supported the SJC Women's Network, ran a popular Women's Leadership Programme, liaised with the JCR to organise a Women's Dinner, and started an MCR lending library of books authored by marginalized voices.

**The LGBTQ+ Officers** (Dani Cugini, Laura Garmendia Sanchez) organised social events such as film screenings and the first annual intercollegiate MCR LGBTQIA+ dinner in hall.

**The BAME Students' Officer** (Imran Naved) succeeded in petitioning for Halal food in hall, organised socials with different ethnic foods, and was a contact for BAME students.

**The Disabled Students' Officer** (Eleanor Milnes-Smith) worked with the Senior Dean to revise the off-ballot room allocation process, helped amend MCR housing ballot rules regarding suspension of status, and assisted other Committee members in running accessible events.

**The International Students' Officer** (Pol Hernandez Llado) ran an international formal dinner and facilitated MCR conversation groups for foreign languages.

**The Parents & Carers Officer** (Hila Levy) successfully lobbied for College to make a private space available for breastfeeding and advised on College policies and MCR purchases.

**The Environment & Ethics Officer** (Louis Claxton) coordinated the purchase of SJC keep cups for all MCR and JCR members, ran a charity ballot, and organised a swap event in the MCR on moving day.

**The Sports Officer** (Johannes Wiesel) managed the MCR sport kit, organised the College Sport Dinner, and coordinated an SJC team for the Town & Gown 10k.

**The Returning Officer** (Alex Picksley) voted in OxSU council meetings, ran nominations and hustings for the incoming Committee, and migrated MCR elections to the OxSU online system.

# Presidential Report 2019-2020

## Christopher D'Urso, MCR President

**Vice President:** Pol Hernández Lladó; **Treasurer:** Alice Kerr; **Secretary:** Lucy Field; **Social Secretaries:** Patric Bonnier, Gemma Gothard, and Jana Muschinski; **Victuallers:** Ioana Grigoras, Liam Peck, and Ellen Taylor; **Welfare Officers:** Ria Dinsdale, Andrea Estandía, Maja Friedemann, Sebastian Kopp, and Tunrayo Adeleke-Larodo; **Culture Officers:** Yan Chen and Rachel Coombes; **Women's Officers:** Gabriella Kountourides and Aleksandra Ziolkowska; **LGBTQ Officers:** Adam Packer and Alex Waldman; **Disabled Students' Officer:** Alejandro De Los Angeles; **International Students' Officer:** Hira Javaid; **Student Parent and Carers' Officer:** Ignacio Perez Karich; **Interfaith Officer:** Ruby-Anne Birin; **Environment and Ethics Officer:** Aislin Sheldon; **Sports Officer:** Laura Boddy; and **Returning Officer:** Brian O'Callaghan

I am incredibly grateful for the support and countless hours of hard work dedicated by the 28 members who served on the MCR Committee this year. The MCR plays a critical role in not only advocating for the best policies to enable the academic and personal success of our members. It also helps to create a unique sense of community, a home away from home at St John's. It has been one of my greatest honors and privileges to serve as President, and I am proud to share the following updates regarding our accomplishments and activities this past year.

### Rents and Charges

The MCR Executive Board participated in Rents and Charges negotiations with the Principal Bursar, Finance Bursar, and JCR Executive Board. The Van Noorden Index (VNI), which calculates the cost of inflation for Oxford colleges, was estimated to be 3.96% for the 2019-2020 academic year when adjusted for the previous year's under-estimate. The MCR Treasurer prepared a comprehensive analysis describing how the cost of living has consistently outpaced increases in graduate student stipends, meaning that postgraduates are spending an increasing proportion of their stipends on rent. While we understand that the College cannot irresponsibly utilize its funds to subsidize student expenses, we argued that the College's ability to be a "perpetual college of learning" requires being able to recruit the highest caliber of students and those students being able to afford to attend. The Bursars proposed a 3.2% increase. I highlighted how the College has not surpassed a 3% increase in recent years and many other Colleges had agreed to lower increases. Therefore, we agreed to a 2.8% increase, which was the lowest increase in three years and the lowest increase relative to the VNI in at least seven years.

Based on the responses to the MCR Rents and Charges Survey, we also convinced College to make several changes related to billing and payment. The first was to switch to quarterly billing in order to reflect the reality that postgraduates live in College all-year round and to provide more predictability with expenses. The second was to permit students to receive their academic grant reimbursement as a bank transfer rather than a Battels credit. The third was to transition to online top-ups of Bod cards for meal and bar purchases. The fourth was to expand the eligibility criteria for the Special Grant to cover mandatory fieldwork as well as relax the requirement that students must present at a conference to receive funding. The latter requirement had effectively precluded many first-year postgraduates from receiving funding to attend conferences, which can be particularly useful as they are exploring their field and honing their research interests.

Additionally, we highlighted how the MCR has consistently suffered a shortfall in accommodation. Every year, MCR members are forced into the private market. Given the low cost of College rooms compared to private rentals, College accommodation serves as an important form of financial support for postgraduates. The College agreed that it would seek planning permission to build more accommodation in the Pusey Lane neighborhood. Furthermore, the College noted that it would be transitioning to a new system called Kx to manage accommodation. This would eliminate the need for paper slips to track when students sign their keys in and out and prevent processing errors on Battels. Finally, we received funding to repaint the MCR interior and £1,000 for new interior decorations, which have still not been used and remain available to future Committees.

### Accommodation

The MCR Vice President instituted two policy changes with respect to accommodation. The first pertained to students requesting single gender bathrooms for religious reasons. After extensive consultations involving College officers such as the Fellow for Equality, the College determined that it would not institute single gender staircases/bathrooms since it would present logistical challenges and conflict with the College's mixed gender ethos. However, it advised the MCR to offer the two lowest-ranked ensuite rooms on the MCR room ballot to students requesting single gender bathrooms for religious reasons, provided that those students were ranked high enough on the ballot to receive a room.

The second policy change pertained to the allocation of additional rooms that become available over the summer. This issue produced some controversy within the MCR, so the MCR Vice President circulated a survey for MCR members to vote on the three suggested proposals. Ultimately, it was determined that as rooms become available, they will be offered to the waiting list in ranked order. However, if multiple rooms become available at once, they will all be offered to the first person on the waiting list to choose and so on until all new rooms have been allocated.

### MCR Governance

To reduce the administrative workload on the MCR President and Vice President, the Constitution was amended to create a new Executive Board position of Secretary. The Secretary would compile the weekly MCR newsletter; handle meeting notices,

agendas, and minutes; and review MCR room booking requests. This would enable the President and Vice President to focus more on policy matters. The Constitution was also amended to create a second Environment and Ethics Officer position in recognition of the greater number of meetings and events at the University level on climate action. This increased workload was making it difficult to cover all aspects of the E&E portfolio. Finally, the MCR passed a policy motion requiring the Committee to only purchase vegetarian food and beverages for MCR events, excluding alcohol, cheese, and second desserts.

### **MCR Building Improvements**

During the Summer Vacation, the Works Department constructed a fixed bar in the MCR Main Room to facilitate the serving of food and beverage at MCR events. We also conducted an extensive clean-out of the MCR, removing the unused vending machine, old furniture, and other junk which had been accumulating in the MCR. More work is still needed on this front, particularly to clean out the MCR Committee cupboard. Additionally, we purchased several new items for the MCR, including Bluetooth speakers, a new coffee machine, a foosball table, a stand mixer, a fondue set, and a popcorn machine.

### **MCR Committee Recruitment**

Given the perennial issues in recruiting members to run for MCR positions, I conducted research on the executive privileges that other Colleges offer their MCR Committees. I presented these to the Senior Tutor and Home Bursar, and together with the JCR President, we agreed that the rent rate of the President's room would be downgraded from A+ to C and the Vice President's from A+ to B. The MCR Committee would also be provided £500 per term in meal credits to distribute based on an allocation voted upon by the Committee. This proposal will be presented to Domestic Committee in TT20 for approval.

### **MCR Committee Updates**

The following MCR Committee members provide updates on their activities for the year:

**The Vice President** ran room and flat ballots; secured new accommodation on London Rd; organised OGMs and Committee dinner and photo; attended Equality Forums; and assisted the President in matters arising.

**The Secretary** worked with the President, Vice President and Treasurer to ensure the smooth running of committee meetings, OGM's and AGM's. She arranged the agenda, took minutes and most importantly ordered pizzas from The White Rabbit! The Secretary also circulated a weekly newsletter detailing upcoming events within the MCR, College and University.

**The Social Secretaries** organized exchange dinners, pub crawls, two bops, and the annual Christmas/Oxmas Dinner. Exchange dinners were held with Christ Church, Jesus College, St Antony's, Lady Margaret Hall, Linacre, Keble, Trinity, Mansfield, St Peter's, and Green Templeton College. We led a joint bar crawl with Magdalen College in June 2019 and attended several of their "Liquid Lounge" events. We additionally held a college picnic and pizza night during Trinity Term 2019.

**The Victuallers** organised several guest nights that were appreciated by the MCR community and their friends. Among the themes, we had a Midsummer Night's Dream dinner and a Harry Potter dinner, both incredibly popular. We also organised joint MCR/SCR wine and cheese events every term and a series of chocolate tasting events with Linden Chocolate Lab.

**The Welfare Officers** organised welfare events, including postbop brunches, distributed a range of welfare supplies, and coordinated the first respondents and the welfare provision alongside the Peer Supporters.

**The Culture Officers** enjoyed hosting regular film nights in the MCR - we sampled a wide range of genres, from the 1966 Czechoslovak surrealist comedy-drama 'Daisies' to Pedro Almodóvar's masterpiece 'Julieta'. One of the highlights of the year was the hugely popular MCR Paint Night, for which we provided paints, brushes and canvases, and let members of the MCR freely channel their creative energy. We also went on various outings to events in the city, including a trip to the production of 'Cabaret' at the New Theatre, and a visit to Phoenix Picturehouse to see 'Parasite'.

**The LGBTQ Officers** organised several social events for LGBTQ+ members of the MCR, including Drag Race UK screenings and an Intercollegiate LGBTQ+ Formal Dinner. They regularly contributed to the College's Student Equality Forum bringing forward plans for LGBTQ+ History Month as well as introducing a Gender Expression Fund for trans, non-binary and gender diverse students.

**The E&E Officer** increased vegan food options in the MCR, including a supply of oat milk (which has a carbon footprint over 3 times smaller than dairy) in the fridge. She also spread awareness of Veganuary and had 20 MCR members sign up to eat vegan food for the month of January, celebrating with a pizza night at the end of the month. Finally, the E&E Officer started the college garden with a group of MCR members and organised trips to OxGrow and talks on climate change and veganism.

**The Returning Officer** organised Sunday Cake, featuring desserts to cater to all dietary needs from Barefoot Bakery (yes, they were as delicious as they sound), as well as the elections for the new MCR Committee.

# Presidential Report 2020-2021

## Christopher D'Urso, MCR President

**Vice President:** Maja Friedemann; **Treasurer:** Diego Berdeja Suárez; **Secretary:** Alex Waldman; **Social Secretaries:** Kaitlyn Cramb, Andreea Maria Oncescu, and Ellen Taylor; **Victuallers:** Tara Diviney, Greg Howgego, and Elise Meijer; **Welfare Officers:** Anna Clark, Andrea Estandía, and Fatemeh Salimi; **Culture Officers:** Isabel Budleigh and Matthew Prudham; **Women's Officers:** Rebecca Buxton and Gabriella Kountourides; **LGBTQ Officer:** Ben Liow; **BME Students' Officers:** Minying Huang and Krishnendu Ray; **Disabled Students' Officers:** Alejandro De Los Angeles and Marie White; **International Students' Officers:** Charlotte Hand and Hira Javaid; **Interfaith Officer:** Ruby-Anne Birin; **Environment and Ethics Officers:** Sam Garratt and Anna Olerinyova; **Sports Officer:** Brian O'Callaghan; **Returning Officer:** Adam Packer

Less than two weeks after the Committee assumed office, the Prime Minister announced a nationwide lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, immediately placing on hold our plans for a new year of MCR activities. We quickly needed to adapt and transition our programming and meetings online as many of our members returned home to all corners of the globe. Likewise, many of my policy priorities for the year assumed a backseat as the focus shifted toward helping shape the College's pandemic response. The sections that follow provide a brief summary of the key policy issues we worked on this year as well as the Committee's efforts to maintain a sense of community during these unprecedented times.

**COVID-19 Response:** In the early days of the pandemic, I secured assurances from the College that international students as well as British postgraduates who could not viably return home would be permitted to remain in College. I also helped obtain a rent waiver for all students for the Easter vacation, including those who remained in College, and an ongoing rent waiver for all students who cannot return to residence. Over the summer, as the College planned for the return of students, I advocated for the prioritization of postgraduate research students, which was adopted. The JCR President and I also convinced the College that student kitchens, which they had originally planned to close, could safely be reopened. Furthermore, I negotiated for the accommodation and food costs of quarantining international students to be covered by the College. During Michaelmas Term, I encountered less success in lobbying College to ease restrictions on student life that went far beyond UK Government guidance. For instance, College prohibited guests, including long-term partners, in student accommodation even though such visits were permitted under Government guidance. I argued that such onerous restrictions placed the College at greater risk by forcing students to socialize in less safe locations like pubs, restaurants, and private homes. I also advocated for differentiating policies between the MCR and JCR considering that 85% of positive COVID cases across the university were undergraduates and the majority of COVID infractions were by undergraduates. Moreover, I requested that College permit students who lived in ensuite rooms and wanted to avoid the risk of self-isolation to opt-out of households by rescinding kitchen access, but this was not adopted. In HT21, as the UK returned to a national lockdown and imposed stricter border restrictions, I lobbied College to cover the testing and quarantine costs for international arrivals. While College only agreed to support quarantine and mandatory testing costs as a hardship matter, they agreed to reimburse the Test to Release for students to end their quarantine early. Finally, I secured a waiver of the Fixed Charge for all students for HT21 due to the closure of key College services.

**Rents and Charges:** As a result of COVID-19, the College agreed to freeze rents and charges for the 2020-2021 year. With respect to items from previous rents and charges negotiations, the College has now transitioned to a card-based top-up system for Bod cards but has not yet implemented online top-ups. COVID has delayed the repainting and renovations of the MCR. The College has agreed to convert the Lighting Store on Pusey Lane into additional student accommodation.

**Accommodation:** The MCR faced a significant accommodation shortfall this year since rooms were removed from our ballot for COVID-related reasons. We convinced the College to delay the planned renovations of 18 and 19 Blackhall Road to provide additional flexibility but still had less rooms available. Additional rooms were released late in the summer vacation. These rooms were generally of a higher quality than those on the original ballot, which led to calls from MCR members for us to re-run the ballot. The Accommodation Office would not permit this, so we followed the procedures agreed in the 2019-2020 year. In HT21, the College warned us that the accommodation shortfall would be even more pronounced for next year. I, therefore, lobbied the College President to rent additional properties that could be offered to MCR members as if they were College accommodation. She was amenable to the recommendation and agreed to raise it with the relevant College staff.

**College Policies:** Considering the difficulty we traditionally face in recruiting for the MCR Committee, we successfully negotiated for College to provide certain executive privileges to encourage members to run. This included downgrading the rent rate for the President's room from A+ to C and the Vice President's from A+ to B and providing the Committee with £500 per term in meal credits. With respect to other issues, the College agreed to review the off-ballot accommodation process to tighten the eligibility criteria and clarify the process. Furthermore, we agreed that the College, rather than the MCR, would administer requests for ensuite accommodation for religious reasons, which had become a contentious issue within the MCR.

**Welfare Support:** To improve graduate access to welfare support, we hosted the first Welfare Induction as part of the MCR Freshers' Week. It was also agreed with the Welfare Dean that she would meet regularly with the MCR Welfare Officers to improve communication, she would meet with all new postgraduate students in either MT or HT of their first year, and she would make clearer her role as the first point of contact for students seeking welfare support. Furthermore, I advocated for the College to hire a second counsellor to expand availability and provide students with a choice as to who was a better fit.



**Associate Membership:** In TT20, the Committee suspended accepting new associate members due to COVID-19. In HT21, the Committee began a phased lifting of these restrictions by accepting applications from partners and those in a caring relationship with MCR members. However, new associate members were not yet allowed to access the College site.

**MCR Governance:** At the final OGM of HT21, a Policy Motion was passed instructing the new Committee to consider ways to incentivize OGM attendance. Such perks could include placing OGM attendees on a priority ballot for MCR events.

**Committee Activities:** The following Committee members provided updates on their activities for the year.

**The Vice President** ran the room ballot in Trinity and the flat ballot in Hilary; helped in organising Freshers' week; coordinated the MCR website; organised the committee dinner; oversaw MCR associate membership affairs; and assisted the President in matters arising.

**The Treasurer** primarily focused on record-keeping this year. Due to the difficulty of gathering enough executive board members in one place, it was not possible to hand over the mandate of the bank accounts. As a result, the mandate holders in last year's committees had to affect all payments. The Treasurer also administered the MCR Recreation Fund and reusable mask orders. The committee used about 70% of the year's budget. There is, however, no reason to believe that a similarly reduced amount will be used next year as life begins returning to normalcy.

**The Secretary** kept the MCR virtually connected by disseminating information regarding upcoming virtual social events and extracurricular opportunities. In addition, the Secretary created an MCR student concerns form that was appended to each MCR newsletter with the hopes of fostering a space for students to anonymously or non-anonymously share concerns with the MCR committee, pandemic-related or otherwise.

**The Social Secretaries** organized virtual and, when possible, small group events to maintain social contact. These included virtual escape rooms, cocktail nights, a magic show, and a paint night. For freshers week, they hosted a scavenger hunt, small group pub visits and a virtual meet the grads event. To bolster community ties, the Social Secretaries also organized college families and encouraged get-togethers with subsidies. Finally, they organized the Michaelmas and Christmas formal dinners.

**The Victuallers** organized household hampers of wine and cheese for fresher's week to replace the traditional wine and cheese event that is normally held in the MCR. They also hosted an evening of mince pies and mulled wine in the College marquee at the end of MT20. The Victuallers capped off the year with a virtual wine tasting, which was very enthusiastically received by the MCR members with a sign up of over 60 people.

**The Welfare Officers** organised welfare provisions for new graduate students isolating in College after their arrival. This included essential supplies, snacks and entertainment items. They held virtual drop-ins online throughout the first lockdown and an in-person welfare lunch in Freshers week. They ran consent workshops at the beginning of the year and have continued to provide welfare supplies throughout. The Welfare Officers have also been in dialogue with college on matters related to graduate welfare during the pandemic.

**The Culture Officers** put on virtual movie nights, ran a virtual book club and successfully instigated the Pidge Present initiative, through which MCR members staying in college over the winter vacation could choose a small present to be sent to them. The Culture Officers also helped to run the series of in-person movie screenings put on by the college in MT.

**The Women's Officers** organised four online book clubs, each with 12 MCR members. They were sent e-books/physical books and we met weekly to discuss. It was a wonderful way to stay in touch during the pandemic.

**The BME Students Officers** put together a Guide to Equity and Liberation for the MCR and organised an Uncomfortable Oxford Tour during Freshers' Week. Subsequent initiatives included an Intersectional Online Film Night and providing both EDI and anti-racism workshops to members of College in partnership with the Diversity Trust. The BME Officers contributed to discussions as part of both the College's Equality Committee and Working Group for Race and Equality and regularly shared details of events and resources with the MCR via email.

**The International Students Officers** were still able to hold the MT20 International Formal where we greatly enjoyed our amazing chefs' spin on Persian cuisine and a reminder of pre-pandemic times! In the run-up to freshers' week, they also dropped juggling balls outside quarantining students' rooms and held weekly juggling workshops which then turned into our own John's Jugglers club which is still ongoing!

**The Sports Officer** worked in partnership with the College Sports Officer to offer some organised sporting opportunities and access to sports facilities over the summer break and in MT despite government-mandated restrictions. In fact, SJC offered one of the most comprehensive sports programs of any college over the period.

**The Returning Officer** voted in OxSU council meetings and ran the annual election for the MCR committee in Hilary term. Additionally, the Returning Officer ran a competition with the college ('Hilary @ Home') to collate student and staff images/videos of life during lockdown. These will be shared on the MCR Instagram page.