



# Grey College MCR

## Ordinary General Meeting

### 25/01/2015

### Minutes

Exec in attendance: Andrew Plygawko (**AP**, President), Daniel-Thorpe (**BDT**, Vice-President), Yanxin Xie (**YX**, Treasurer), Craig Fisher (**CF**, Secretary), Mathilde Lair de Gourmont (**MLdG**, Social Secretary), Becky Williamson (**BW**, 4<sup>th</sup> Year Rep.), Matthew Kirk (**MK**, Web Editor). Additionally, James Collinson (**JC**, Postgraduate Tutor).

Nick Klein (**NK**, JCR President) and Will Hockedy (**WH**, JCR FACSO) were in attendance for merger discussion.

**AP** - Two agenda items; Merger and vacant Social Secretary position.

## Merger

Will start with merger. History- MCR previously voted to go down JCR merger path over becoming DSO, MCR exec have met with **NK** and **WH** to work out final terms/practical considerations. JCR trustees drafted an 'Explanatory Note' document based on previous 'Memorandum of Understanding' document and circulated to MCR exec.

**NK/WH** - Discussed background and pros of merger:

- MCR had to choose between merging with JCR or becoming a DSO
- **NK**, **WH** and their predecessors thought it best to be one cohesive group
- Postgrads and undergrads would have same entitlements as current JCR do
- Formals - Currently two booking systems and segregated seating
- Sports and societies - Have been JCR/MCR 'merged' for some time but need to sort out an official system
- No insurance issues about MCR members working in shop, toastie bar, etc.
- MCR will be able to vote/run in JCR elections

- Spending money would have restrictions to fit with JCR charitable objectives, some restrictions exist in DSO option too
- MCR president on JCR exec as voting member, and JCR rep on MCR exec
- JCR President/FACSO would have legal responsibility for MCR
- More cohesion - easier for ex JCR postgrads to stay involved
- Have discussed legal bit, now want to discuss practical bit

**BW** - MCR Exec are concerned that certain things are being changed without discussion with MCR exec.

**MK** - The trustee's Explanatory Note is too 'blurry' and lacks detail when compared to the Memorandum of Understanding we previously worked with. Is ok for now but what about the future when the current MCR exec are gone and there is no memory of the details? Needs more details in writing.

**CF** - Confirmed. Explanatory Note originally given to us does not resemble several of the initial agreements (e.g. ability of MCR to set its own annual fee, MCR representation) and is much less detailed.

**NK** - Originally there was more detail but a trustee (a constitutional lawyer) recommended that a less detailed version would be fine. Explanatory note was altered to again include the MCR representative after the MCR exec raised their concerns.

**MK** - We're sure you (**NK/WH**) have the best intentions but we need to sort out the issues now. Even if we have one member as a trustee they won't have any power over all the other trustees. You two will be leaving Grey before next year and many of the MCR exec will not be here next year so we need to sort the issues out now (but we don't want to rush things).

**Darren Scott** - In two years time nearly all of us will have left Durham and if the document is too vague then it will be open to interpretation.

**NK** - Highlight specific parts of explanatory note that concern you, then refer them to myself and the trustees. Explanatory Note should be detailed enough but not outline everything. Can't have MCR tables at formals.

**JC** - Explanatory Note says that 10 % of the MCR must turn up to JCR meetings.

**AP** - We don't have 10 % of the MCR at this MCR meeting...

**WH** - JCR meetings are useful forums for discussion so is good to have representation.

**JC** - What about applications to the funds (e.g. for a T.V?).

**WH/NK** - Only required at JCR meetings for non-budgeted items over £300. MCR members would pay the JCR £47 per person per year though a certain amount of this (~ £15 per person per year) would go to the MCR in its budget.

**Jonny Crawford** - We have nice things now (e.g. less stressful formal booking process) and we may lose out. We'll lose control of a vast amount of the £47.

**MLdG** - Formals - Will be a lot more competition for formal places. MCR has many international students who are only here for one year (compared to the 3 years of a JCR member) and most are new to the college system and the process of formal booking. It would be a shame if they can't get onto formals since for certain formals they only have one opportunity to attend.

**WH** - Some JCR members have trouble getting onto formals. For Phoenix Ball we have a priority booking system that could perhaps be applied.

**AP** - Would the JCR members be concerned with this? At the JCR meeting that discussed the merger, some members had concerns that the MCR gets too much already, what if they had more chance to get onto formals?

**NK** - Are in the process of simplifying formal booking system.

**CF** - What happens if 10 % of the MCR fail to attend the JCR meetings? Will any funding be cut?

**WH** - The MCR is not technically a sport/society. JCR exec assigns funding first to important items, then to extra items. The MCR would have the £15 per person budgeted. The JCR meetings are only for applying for extra money towards items.

**CF** - What about arrangements for a get-out-referendum just in case the future MCR members feel the merger isn't working for them?

**NK** - Speak to Tom Allen for advice. It is harder to leave a DSO than the JCR.

**AP** - JCR members at the JCR meeting mentioned we haven't paid the JCR levee for this academic year but can still attend JCR events. Will there be a back-payment?

**NK/WH** - JCR levee does not cover sports/societies (the composition fee does). It does cover maintenance, gym, JCR, JCR President and FACSO salaries, shop (etc.), free entry to Grey Day. Currently the MCR levee subsidises any of the above which are applicable anyway.

**JC** - E.g. Grey Day this year we'll pay the JCR ~£360 (as we have done in previous years) to match any JCR money (per person) spent on the event.

**AP** - How far are we along, regarding finances?

**WH** - A new bank account has been opened and finance will be transferred when we're ready.

**NK** - Finances -

- Spending restrictions will apply (to comply with the JCR's charitable objectives)
- Can't buy loads of alcohol (**AP** - We currently don't anyway)
- MCR won't have a bank card. Exec members will have to pay with own money and then be reimbursed
- DSOs have bank cards but are checked over by one person who is responsible for all DSOs

**CF** - Will buying games/DVDs etc. conflict the JCR's charitable objectives?

**WH** - No, should be fine.

**AP** - Freshers' week?

**NK** - Will need to discuss this. Is useful to have the JCR President and FACSO around over the summer available to help out.

**Jonny Crawford** - In previous years Laura Da Costa organised MCR freshers' week but she'll not be around next year.

**WH** - Agreements about freshers' week should be policy based leaving room for things to be changed around when we see what does/doesn't work.

**NK** - Any more questions?

\*No further questions\*

**AP** - Will send out explanatory email to MCR and open voting. Will inform **NK** and **WH** of result of voting.

**NK** - This is a vote for the legal side of things, can continue to discuss in future.

- If 'yes' vote - MCR have access to JCR website, voting, mailing list etc.
- If 'no' vote - Renegotiate. If still 'no' then will have to go down DSO route and JCR will have to undo changes

**Darren Scott** - Functional details are what will make or break this. What happens if we vote 'yes' to the Explanatory Note now but certain things can't be worked out or agreed upon between the MCR and the JCR?

**AP** - If that's the case the exec have previously agreed to have one more vote to ratify further changes.

**WH** - Will inevitably be things we haven't thought of. Won't be able to negotiate with DSO option.

**MLdG** - Explanatory Note issue - MCR President is only an observer at the trustee meetings so is unable to vote.

**NK/WH** - Postgrads can run for four of the eight trustee positions (since they are student trustees).

**MLdG** - Slight issue with wording in Explanatory Note that suggests that the MCR Treasurer is in charge of the main JCR financial account...

**NK/WH** - Will be rephrased.

**\*NK** and **WH** receive no further questions and so leave the meeting at this point\*

**George Shaw** - What limitations are there on the £15?

**AP** - Not too many.

**George Shaw** - Will they turn down finance applications on the grounds we already receive £15 per person anyway?

**BW** - The £15 is for budgeted stuff, applications to the JCR are for non-budgeted stuff.

**MK** - It's not written anywhere we are getting £15 per person. It's too vague and the information about the agreement could be lost in a couple of years if not written down.

**MLdG** - Charitable law - Need it written down. Verbal agreements don't matter.

**JC** - We should list all our issues with the Explanatory Note.

**AP** - What happens if the JCR have already ratified the Explanatory Note as it is and we want to change it?

**CF** - We've already told the trustees most of our issues with the Explanatory Note and tried to change things but they didn't change much more than allowing Andrew to observe the trustee meetings again and allow him to attend JCR exec meetings again. They don't want to make any major amendments so the final Explanatory note won't be much different to the one the JCR voted on. We need to be specific with our list of concerns, not too vague for us to have any chance of them changing.

**AP** - We should make the list now, then submit it to the trustees to see if they'll change anything, then open voting.

## **Social Committee**

**CF** - Laura Braun has returned to Germany and so the second Social Secretary position is vacant. Nobody has come forth for election and so Mathilde remains the only Social Secretary. This could be a lot of work for one person particularly if they have deadlines approaching etc.

I propose the formation of a Social Committee of volunteering MCR members who would like to help out and get more involved in the social life of the MCR but who cannot necessarily commit the time or take on the responsibilities of a full Social Secretary. Any work organising/running events would be flexible so there is no obligation to help out if you're too busy and because members would not be full exec officers (which would require a constitutional change) there is no

need to hold husts or elections since anyone is welcome to help out if they can. It would be a great way to make any event ideas you have a reality.

If anyone is interested please email Mathilde  
([greymcr.socialsecretary@durham.ac.uk](mailto:greymcr.socialsecretary@durham.ac.uk)) or any member of the MCR  
exec