

MCR Committee Meeting, Minutes
Tuesday 3rd March, 6pm, Franks kitchen

Discussions:

Existence of Committee Google Docs

MCR Committee informed that they exist, and it was agreed that in general they're useful for ongoing committee related information. They can be accessed via the MCR website (mcr.worc.ox.ac.uk)>Information>Committee Only where you should find a link. Alternatively, log into Google docs with the username (in the email field) **worcestermcr** and the password **1duckling**.

There's an internal committee calendar to which you can subscribe, and this can sync itself with other calendars you have.

(Sam: In particular take a look at the MCR Budget which Martin put up in February to get ideas of amounts available to spend.)

Action: Find out dates of college meetings this term and input these - Sam

What the priorities of MCR Committee should be this term (particularly with regards to rent negotiations, the budget, renovations) and what Peter intends to push forward with College.

Peter mentioned that the previous committee have lacked funds to run everything they wanted to this year, and we shouldn't have to economise on certain things. Jamie suggested this was due to overspend during MT'12 rather than a lack of funds.

Members don't pay an MCR subscription fee, this comes out of the 'college fee'. Currently receive £2000 from college each term but no money for associate members (who pay a fee to be associated members). This amount has not increased in a long time.

In general there is a lack of transparency from college with regards to the budget (pointed out that this may be linked to their charitable status and a need to account for certain portions of the money, but even if this is so, it would be nice to know how). Also it is unpopular that we have to apply for certain parts of our budget, it would be better if we could receive everything as a lump sum. We shouldn't have to be justifying ourselves all the time if this is money allocated to the MCR.

Peter would like to ask college to increase the amount we receive each term, and to link this amount to the increase in college fees and the number of associate members. Everyone agreed this was a good idea.

Peter suggested linking MCR budget negotiations to the rent negotiations and requests for funds for renovations. The idea of linking a rent prices to the MCR budget was not overly popular, it was suggested those two 'pots' should be kept separate.

When it is the case that we need to apply to specific funds, there should be a formal procedure outlined containing the criteria that must be met to be eligible to receive the money, and we should be kept informed as to the reasons for success/failure of applications.

Currently have planning permission for 2 windows to be installed in the MCR (1 downstairs behind sofa, 1 above in the computer room) to increase natural light, for which we have £2000 saved. The quote of £5500 includes re-flooring, and plastering the walls downstairs. The College Society have expressed a keenness to fund this project next year (this year they gave money towards resurfacing the tennis courts).

Asked if anyone's interested in joining a rent-negotiations team. Rent increases occur each year, and there's a negotiation between college, JCR, and MCR representatives to keep the increase reasonable. The Van Norton's Index (VNI) is published by the Bursar's committee and suggests what this increase should be based on inflation. It is useful because it adjusts itself each year to take account of if it was wrong previously. JCR agreed to a 3 year fixed increase plan a few years ago, it was pointed out that this was a bad idea for the MCR because of our high turnover rate by comparison, as it leaves no lea-way for further discussion on the matter. JT (and Gabriel) have expressed interest in being involved in the team, with meetings set to take place half way through term.

Action: Peter to request a larger MCR budget from college, linked to the number of members.

Linus to find out when rent negotiation meetings will take place and put together a team to decide on the desired outcomes and attend these.

How we intend to run brunch and bar nights, and other events (keep the previous rota system?)

Keep a rota system, 2 people for brunch, 2 for bar nights. If you want to swap, sort that out yourself and make sure your shift is covered.

It was asked why we shop at Taylors for bread, and mentioned that this is the only place open before brunch in the morning, and fresh bread's nicer than day-old bread. It was pointed out brunch starts at 11.30 by which time the supermarkets and other retailers are open.

Action: Sam to send round a rota before term starts.

Do we need to advertise for a bar manager or alternatively who is happy to cover this post?

Karim happy to cover this post for now, with the option of reopening nominations at a later date if necessary.

Motion 1: Switch our brunch affiliation to a cheaper provider

Currently we spend £70-80 a week on brunch. While this initially seemed a lot, it was pointed out that this is actually good value considering the number of people that come to a typical brunch, which is very popular, and the best-attended non-alcoholic MCR event.

No pressing reason could be found to change from buying bread from Taylors. Prices at Sainsburys were thought to be pretty much the same as Tesco but if someone wanted to do an online comparison of our brunch shopping basket that opinion could be revised. The location of the MCR Nectar card was sought, with the thinking we'll probably build up enough points for a free brunch each term.

Bulk buying was suggested, however there have apparently been food-theft problems in the past when food is stored in the MCR. A lock on the fridge had previously been suggested but found impractical for other reasons.

Action: Find the MCR Nectar card.

Motion 2: Try to get our booze through Colin in the JCR so we can keep the same prices but potentially make some money to reinvest in the MCR/an MCR event

Colin has said purchasing liquor through him might work out cheaper, but cans are unlikely to be so. The MCR do have a cash and carry number, however no one has transport for getting there. If we wanted to buy in bulk it was suggested we could ask for storage space in the JCR bar. Currently the bar manager stocks up on special offers from Tesco, these deals are often better value than buying from the cash and carry.

The bar is generally run at cost, and we shouldn't be making profit on the bar. Cocktails and spirits are sold at a slight loss but this is evened out by bottles and cans. It was decided to re-evaluate the prices of cocktails at some point this term

Motion 3: Discuss the viability of a Welfare BBQ during Trinity

Idea very popular with everyone. Need to find out whether Welfare have a separate budget. In the past there has been a bbq at the end of TT and half-way through the summer for anyone who's around.

Action: Find out if Welfare has a budget, pick a date and run this by college (Junior Dean?) if it's going to be on the main site.

Motion 4: Choosing/creation of A Committee THEME SONG

Popular: I like big budgets and I cannot lie. I've forgotten the others, sorry.

Motion 5: Bank account that allows us to have a debit/credit card so we can open an account with Tescos and Majestic

Simon is looking into this when he returns, we may have to switch bank but no objections were raised here.

Motion 6: Look into the cookies and chlamydia event that the JCR do to subsidise the budget

The NHS provide free Chlamydia testing kits to the JCR welfare team/rep. For every test that gets taken the JCR receives £5, from which they buy cookies for participants and reinvest the rest in JCR activities. The JCR currently hold events once or twice a term. It was suggested JT

asks the JCR welfare team how to order these kits, and everyone was in favour of a similar MCR event. The money raised could go towards a Welfare bbq later in term.

Motion 7: Money for refurbishment in the bar

Deferred discussion until we have more information on what money is available.

Suggested that we collate suggestions for what needs doing (eg pool table resurfacing) via email. (Sam - My suggestion would be to open a GoogleDoc rather than email.)

Motion 8: Bicycle clear-out outside Franks (if this is the right place to raise this issue)

Would like to remove unused bikes from outside Franks Building. How do we label bikes? Putting stickers on bikes to be kept. What happens to old bikes? Don't know, would be nice if we could sell them. Anna keen to do a charity bike sale.

Action: Karim is going to contact the housing rep James Alexander to find out how we go about getting a bike cull. Cc in Linus and Laura.

Motion 9: Could we suggest a social event to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee?

Message from Gemma that it's already a busy weekend, but the idea of a "Diamond Jubilympics" theme was very well received.

Motion 10: Chairs and tables on terrace outside MCR

Decided this was a motion to bring to the next General Meeting.

Motion 11: Changing the guest night charging to online.

It is difficult for some MCR members (eg those with labs or who teach) to get to the Buttery during opening hours to buy tickets. The current system where it's unclear whether or not you can buy for friends from the Buttery is not great, and it would be preferable to be able to book online just like for other formal halls (just with 2 fewer guests).

Jamie reports that the IT department have had their budget stripped right back and are stopping all developments on college based systems, and that this request would not get through the IT committee. It would be more difficult than it might at first appear to implement different prices for members and guests, and to limit bookings to just MCR members (ie stop the JCR signing up).

There was disagreement over whether this was a big issue for the MCR, with the majority of committee members feeling that the current system (buying tickets from the Buttery) was unsuitable and being keen to ask for or find an alternative. It was pointed out that during the Pump Quad renovations planned for next year, the Buttery is likely to be out of use and an alternative purchasing system will need to be found anyway (if formal halls are even going ahead).

The suggestion of formulating the request into a motion for a general meeting, to mandate the IT rep (or whoever is meeting the relevant college person) to ask for a change was not thought to be the best way forward.

An alternative suggested is to have a GoogleDoc where MCR members sign up themselves and guests up to Guest Night. This document gets passed to college who add the ticket charges to individual's battels.

An objection predicted from college is that they won't like not having the money for tickets paid in cash, up front.

Action: Linus to speak to the bursar at their next meeting to propose implementation of our alternative sign-up method.

Motion 12: Generally aiming to have more events outside of term, as long as people are happy to run them.

Peter asked what permissions we need to seek for having extra events. Anything using college grounds needs permission from the Dean, but within the MCR (building) we should be fine to do what we like providing it doesn't disturb conference guests.

The new Dean has expressed his openness to approving more events, and the MCR have a good reputation for being 'well-behaved'. May-Chan the sub dean/Junior Dean is a good person to deal with. Other ideas currently being toyed with include picnics or a Croquet & Pimms event, which will be looked at again once there's been a discussion regarding the available budget.

Any other business.

Laura enquired what permission she needs to seek to hold sports events. Anything that uses any of the college sports grounds will need permission.

Anna suggested we keep the same charities chosen at the start of Michelmas for the remainder of the year and wanted to check this is ok. It is.

A General Meeting will be called later in the term, however 6th week this term clashes with the MCR Garden Party so we'll decide when is best at the start of term.

The food served was delightful.