

Minutes of the MCR General Meeting

Held on Sunday 9 May, 2010

Present: Members of the MCR Committee, Members of the MCR (enough to make quorum)

Index

- 1) MCR Buttery
 - 2) Constitutional Change for inclusion of Post Docs as Associate Members
 - 3) Sports Budget
 - 4) Sky HD
 - 5) Meatless Mondays
 - 6) HiFi system
 - 7) The MCR Bar
 - 8) MCR t-shirts
 - 9) Any other business
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1) MCR Buttery

While waiting for enough MCR members to arrive to vote we discussed the idea of an MCR Buttery, an idea that has been in operation for a few years in Keble MCR. This would be a new fridge or a clearly labelled section of the current fridge in which is stored soft drinks, chocolate bars, sweeties, etc. which could be taken out at any time. Payment would be made by an honesty box.

The possibility of payment via a tally sheet that is then transferred to battels (as in Keble) was raised but decided not to practical. Also the idea of alcoholic drinks was dismissed, though there has been no investigation into this.

Generally those present thought this was worth a try, and it was well received by those that answered the MCR survey (around 70 people).

Sceptic Jamie doesn't think people are honest enough. Angry John recounted the tale of his stolen largers. Though no vote is made, it is agreed that the Committee should consider implementing it on a trial basis if they wish.

2) Constitutional Change for inclusion of Post Docs as Associate Members

The original motion was

This MCR notes that:

1. As of current, the majority of Post Doctoral students do not have a college affiliation.
2. For many such students, this often leads to a sense of segregation from the life and culture of a college community.
3. The SCR has expressed support for the idea of Associate Membership for such Post Docs, but with the proviso that they have a supervisor at Worcester.

This MCR resolves to:

1. Confirm approval from the college to extend Associate Membership to Post Docs who express an interest in joining, conditioned upon their supervisor being a member of Worcester College.
2. Upon approval, amend the constitution by adding in Article 1, Section B, the following sufficient condition for Associate Membership:
"c) Post Doctoral students, who have a supervisor currently a member of the college."

Proposed by: Jamie Frost
Seconded by: Kate Beard

It was quickly pointed out that this is unnecessarily restrictive since most Post Docs do not have supervisors. Instead it was decided that it should be any academic member of a faculty, who is not affiliated with a college and does not have the automatic right to affiliate with a college (e.g. someone who has previously been a member of an MCR of another college), that is recommended by a Fellow of Worcester.

Wise Jess explained that previous discussions with College had ended with the question of how many people this may affect. This is still unanswered.

Things swiftly moved on to the idea of a cap, a points based system, an amnesty on current illegal MCR Members (one was present in the room and another in the computer room – a serious problem) before it was decided to pass the buck onto the Dean by introducing the need for his approval on any new Associate Member introduced by this process. This is already in the constitution for any Associate Member.

It was also noticed that there was no current disciplinary process in the Constitution for getting rid of MCR members, let alone ones introduced by this process. Something to think about.

So the amended motion read

This MCR notes that:

1. As of current, the majority of Post Doctoral students do not have a college affiliation.
2. For many such students, this often leads to a sense of segregation from the life and culture of a college community.
3. The SCR has expressed support for the idea of Associate Membership for such Post Docs, but with the proviso that they have a sponsor who is a Fellow of Worcester.

This MCR resolves to:

1. Confirm approval from the college to extend Associate Membership to Post Docs who express an interest in joining, conditioned upon having a sponsor who is a Fellow of Worcester of College, do not currently have and have no automatic right to affiliation with another college.
2. Upon approval, amend the constitution by adding in Article 1, Section B 1, the following sufficient condition for Associate Membership:
"c) Post Doctoral students, with a sponsor who is a Fellow of Worcester of College."

Vote: 15 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

3) Sports Budget

The motion was

This MCR notes that:

1. The MCR Sports Rep has not previously been allocated money for the purchase of new/replacement sports equipment for use of the MCR.

2. Immediate and basic purchases could include a new set of pool balls, a new cue and a darts mat - the latter a big step in reducing the number of broken darts.
3. It would be nice to have some basic communal sports equipment such as footballs.

This MCR resolves to:

1. Release £120-150 of the MCR budget for purchase of such sports equipment.

Proposed by: Jack Wright
Seconded by: John Pearson

Athletic Jack clarified that this was a one-off spend, rather than part of every budget. Also, "£120-150" should be interpreted as "a maximum of £150". Fierce John pointed out that each item would have to be justified to the Treasurer.

Vote: 15 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

4) Sky HD

The motion was

The MCR notes that:

1. Especially since its replacement, the lounge TV is a facility frequently used by MCR members.
2. This new TV is Full HD, but our Sky service includes only standard definition programming.
3. An upgrade to a HD service is of very minimal additional cost.
4. A Sky HD subscription service comes with a Sky+HD box. This is capable of storing a large number of movies and programmes, which can be easily recorded in advance. This would be a valuable service, particularly in cases where multiple people wish to use the TV at the same time.
5. A large number of MCR members stated in a recent survey they would be interested in this upgrade.
6. Our existing Sky receiver box is very old and has occasional technical difficulties with regards to connecting cables.
7. A large number of channels would be replaced with HD equivalents, such as the sports channels, main terrestrial channels, Discovery, History, movie channels and Sky One.

The MCR resolves to:

1. Release £30 for the installation of a Sky HD satellite dish, and allocate £10 extra a month for subscription to the HD service.

Proposed by: Jamie Frost
Seconded by: Tomi Johnson

Champion of Democracy Jamie mentioned that 54% of survey responders stated they were 'keen' or 'very keen' on this. Also, £40-50 is already spent on Sky per month. It is pointed out that being able to record programs might solve a lot of problems, hopefully more problems than it creates.

Vote: 11 for, 1 against, 3 abstentions.

[Note: Since this vote the installation fee has risen to £60. The Committee has agreed to go ahead with this despite the increase.]

5) Meatless Mondays

The original motion read

This MCR notes that:

1. Every main meal option served at hall includes meat.
2. It is biologically unnecessary and even less healthy to eat meat at every meal.
3. Meat options are more expensive than non-meat options to prepare. Serving non-meat options will provide cost-saving opportunities for the college.
4. Transporting meat is bad for the environment.
5. Vegetarian options at hall are constrained by the meat option (for example, if the meat option is sausage, then the veg option is veg sausage), and are reserved for vegetarians.
6. There are many viable vegetarian options that need not be constrained by meat options, and one should not need to be a vegetarian to enjoy them.
7. "Meatless Mondays" would make it easier for students to choose healthier meal options.
8. "Meatless Mondays" would provide cost-saving opportunities for the college.
9. "Meatless Mondays" would only affect lunch and first hall, and it would not prevent students from eating meat at every meal if they so chose; students would be able to elect to have a meat sandwich at lunch, or to attend second (formal) hall for a meat option, or cook for themselves.

This MCR resolves to:

1. Support the hall in providing a meat-free main option for lunch and first hall one day per week ("Meatless Mondays"). Students may still choose to eat meat by selecting meat sandwiches at lunch, or selecting to attend second hall, or by preparing a meal themselves.
2. Liaise with the JCR and SCR to present a similar motion.

Proposed by: Sarah Price

Seconded by: Alex Bernard

Lots of concerns and questions raised. There is no mention of breakfast in the above motion. Members were concerned this motion is putting beliefs of some onto others (though this wasn't seen by all as necessarily a bad thing). There was debate about whether this is about reducing the College's carbon footprint or providing better vegetarian options. The current situation was also discussed: vegetarian options are given preferentially to vegetarians when there is a problem with numbers. Principled Alex informed us that complete meat-free Mondays were in operation at 5 other colleges.

Those at the meeting thought the problem with the current motion seemed to be due it being a half measure. The main motivation for the motion was seen to be the environmental cost. In light of these things it was generally decided a better motion would be for a complete meat-free Monday.

So the last part of the motion was amended to

This MCR resolves to:

1. Support the hall in providing only vegetarian options one day per week ("Meatless Mondays").
2. Liaise with the JCR and SCR to present a similar motion.

Vote: 11 for, 2 against, 2 abstentions.

6) HiFi system

The motion read

The MCR notes that:

1. The current sound system downstairs in the MCR is extremely old, and its lack of coverage and volume renders it entirely insufficient for the purposes of MCR events held there.
2. This is particularly problematic for events such as the MCR quiz, where even at full volume, many at the back of the MCR found it difficult to here.
3. The suggestion of a new HiFi system was highly popular in a recent survey conducted on the MCR.
4. The Maintenance staff have kindly offered to install any such new sound system.

The MCR resolves to:

1. Release approximately £510 of the budget to invest in this new system. A quote that has been offered to us by Richer Sounds is as follows (although we may wish to choose an alternative):
 - * 1 x Cambridge Topaz Cd5 V4 - £119.95 (CD player unit)
 - * 1 x Cambridge Sr10 - £229.95 (Receiver)
 - * 2 x Gale Silver Monitor - £159.90 (4 speakers)
 - * Cabling - £0 (offered for free as part of the quote)
2. Liaise with the Maintenance staff to install 4 corner shelves around the ground floor of the MCR and wire hooks.

Proposed by: Jamie Frost
Seconded by: Tomi Johnson

Presidential Jamie announced that this could be brought as part of the previous year's budget, which would otherwise remain unspent. So the HiFi is in some way free, and in another way £510. German Filip demanded that the HiFi be able to play mp3s on USB and CD, while confirming that not-stupid Jess was not being stupid to ask if an iPod or something similar could be played through it. All agreed this would be important also.

Vote: 15 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

7) The MCR Bar

The motion (if you can call it that) read

1. Discussion of when the MCR bar opens
2. Changing the "Bar manager" position to "bar czar" to both increase perceived prestige and repute of said position, and promote greater internationalization of MCR.

Proposed by: Corey Johnson
Seconded by: Laura Polasek

The discussion of when the MCR bar opens was saved until the end. But it was agreed that we should ask the Dean to allow the Committee to open the bar after GCD, exchanges and the MCR pub quiz, with the usual bar opening times applying. This request is expected to be granted.

After clarifying that the "bar czar" motion was not just a joke, caring Corey argued that the new name would help fill the position. Defeatist Emily responded saying that every position is difficult to fill. It was agreed that a change in the Constitution would not be worth it, so instead it would be an informal name change.

Vote: 14 for, 0 against, 1 abstention.

8) MCR t-shirts

The motion read

1. Creating college MCR polos/shirts/whateva [sic.]
 - 1.1 Other MCRs already do this
 - 1.2 Maybe have MCR cover overhead costs (embroidery setup charge, etc:-probably around £20-£30) then sell products to MCR at cost.
 - 1.3. I [Corey] am willing to do research for this.

Proposed by: Corey Johnson

Seconded by: Laura Polasek

Absent Jim mentioned that this had been done a few years back and was quite popular. It was decided that czar Corey would lead a 'T-shirt committee' consisting of him and lovely Laura, which would organise this in collaboration with the Treasurer. Once a design was decided a range of t-shirt types would be offered and sold at cost to the MCR.

Vote: 14 for, 0 against, 1 abstention.

9) Any other business

No one remembers who first raised it, but all those present suddenly became really enthusiastic about board games. In particular: GIANT JENGA. The general consensus was that the MCR should purchase some board games.