

## Provisional minutes for Churchill College MCR Committee Meeting

Date: 30 March 2023

Time: 7pm- 9:30pm

Venue: Online meeting through Teams

### 1. Attendance:

- a. Present: Reece (President, Chair), Shany (VP-Sec), Kieran (VP- Treasurer, Minuting Secretary), Teo (LGBT+ Wel), Natalie (Bar Tres), Manu (IT Officer), Sarah (Comms and Publ), Imogen (Int Soc Sec), Jon B (Men's Wel), Thea (EDI), Lily (Families), Alexandra (Green), Estelle (FYR) and Meghan (Women's Wel)

Invited to attend and later appointed (see minutes section 4):

Celia (Academic), Rowan (Bar Sec), Jack (Ale and Quail), and Lena (Ext Soc Sec)

- b. Apologies: Jeremy (Men's Wel) and Harry (Bar Tres)
- c. Absent: Cam (FYR), Josephine (EDI) and Elise (Green)

### 2. Welcome [Reece]

The President welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new committee, how the meetings would be conducted was explained and that if anyone had any questions, they could interrupt at any time.

The agenda was then revised to allow the appointment of new officers before the remainder of the meeting so that they could actively take part. This was agreed with unanimous consent.

### 3. Committee Member Appointments [vote necessary]

- i. Academic Officer

The committee's thanks were given to the outgoing Officer Laurie who had resigned before the TGM (Termly General Meeting), the committee noted the good words of the Archive's Committee. The Committee also noted that the Conference of Everything was coming up and this was a particularly vital role for that event.

#### **The appointment of Celia Chen was approved by unanimous consent**

- ii. Disability Access Officer
  1. N/A
- iii. External Social Secretary

It was noted Lena had been acting in the role for some time and that she had previously held the commission before she had resigned following the events of the last committee.

#### **The appointment of Lena Alfter was approved by unanimous consent**

- iv. Equipment Officer
  1. N/A
- v. Bar Secretary

It was noted by the committee that Rowan had also been acting in the role for some time and his support during this time was commended.

**The appointment of Rowan Ong was approved by unanimous consent**

vi. Ale & Quail

The committee noted discussed what the role of Ale & Quail involved beyond the Rules and Procedures reference to activities of an 'Ale and Quail nature.' It was also noted that Jack had held this role before and would be able to provide wise counsel to the committee.

**The appointment of Jack Hughes was approved by unanimous consent**

Manu (IT) requested that the newly appointed officers provide their photo and information so that the website can be updated. Manu (IT) will provide for their MCR emails to be set up.

The Disabilities Access and Equipment Officers currently remain unfilled, the President will try and provide appointments for the next Committee Meeting.

4. Minutes of the last Committee Meeting:

There was some confusion over whether the minutes from the last Committee meeting had been approved. Although some members wished to put forward changes to the minutes. The minutes from the TGM still needed to be obtained from the outgoing President.

*Post meeting note: The minutes from the last meeting had not been approved at the TGM, only the meetings from the previous TGM and therefore will need to be reviewed again.*

The following changes were requested:

Jack Hughes (A&Q):

Correction: the question I asked in the meeting was "A combined £208.05 was expensed to the MCR on two train tickets to oxford, why was it decided on, given that such an expense has never been claimed before in accounts going back to 2017?"

The minutes currently state: "What do you know about expenses spent on a trip to Oxford to attend the sister College event? "

Kieran Heal (VP – Treasurer):

From a fiscal management perspective, it was deemed important to correct the record. In the Michaelmas Committee meeting the Outgoing President had themselves declared acting Treasurer, alongside their role as President. This was nullified by the Senior Treasurer, Finance Tutor, and other college bodies immediately after the meeting. The reason for this nullification is that the college's rules separate these powers so that the President and Treasurer can provide independent verification of each other's actions and provide continuous auditing of the accounts. A union of these powers would have provided totalitarian control to a single officer and was deemed inappropriate. The outgoing Treasurer (Harry) never had access to the accounts. The accounts between November and March have been audited. These will be provided to the Committee post-meeting.

## 5. College Committee Appointments

The committee unanimously agreed to the following appointments to college committees:

Committee	MCR Committee Member(s)
College Council	Reece McCoy, Shany Richaud
Governing Body	Reece McCoy, Shany Richaud
Ethics and Reputational Risk	Reece McCoy
Archives Committee	Celia Chen
Finance Committee	Kieran Heal
CCRFC (Combined Common Room Finance Committee)	Kieran Heal, Jack Hughes, Imogen Harrison
Education Committee	Thea Fennell (Tentative)
EDI Committee	Josephine Tumwesige, Thea Fennell (Rotating basis)
Estates Committee	Elise Devey, Alexandra Tien-Smith (Rotating basis)
Financial Adversity Support Committee	Reece McCoy
Health and Safety Committee	Cameron Young, Estelle Strangmark (Rotating basis)
ICT Committee	Manuel Muller
Library Committee	Celia Chen
Student Facilities Committee	Jonathan Bennett, Natalie Potter
Sustainability Committee	Elise Devey, Alexandra Tien-Smith (Rotating basis)

Thea agreed to tentatively take on the commission to the Education Committee but requested more information on what the committee business involved. A rotating basis means only one officer may attend the committee at any time and those officers may decide between themselves who will attend any given meeting.

## 6. Committee Business

### a. President

#### i. Guest Night

The success of Lent Term guest night was noted by the President and the Committee, and their thanks passed on to Imogen.

ii. Rent increase of 7% approved by college council

The President gave a statement on the rent increase for the 2023/24 Academic Year, and the documents that had been sent around the committee the last month were discussed, and attention drawn to.

Discussion focused on the one percentage point that would be used to fund the 'Tamsin Bursary.' The point of this bursary is to provide a significantly easier to access pot of funds. Whereas most hardship funds require a full breakdown of people's circumstances and accounts (and can include parents) this fund would not. The committee discussed how it should be used to balance the disparity between different scholarships (UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) + UKRI pegged vs self-funders for example). The committee acknowledged that the first step would be to obtain more information on how MCR members are funded, as currently this information is not held by anyone in college and makes working out where the fund would be most effective difficult. The committee asked to be kept informed of further discussions.

The committee noted that the effect of electricity costs and college subsidy was often being overlooked alongside the 7% rent increase and the effects of that should be more widely investigated.

iii. 36 Storey's Way bands decided

The committee noted that 36A/B would come online next year and that its bands had been decided.

iv. Briefing note sent out explaining this increase

The committee's attention was drawn to the briefing note that had been sent out to the wider MCR.

v. Tamsin Bursary

The committee noted the above discussion, and that the questionnaire is being reviewed by Rebecca and Mairi.

vi. Mastership search

The committee was asked to provide support to the search for the new Master. Currently members of the MCR had met with the head-hunters to provide their advice for what they felt the master's role was and what they wanted to see in a Master. Over the summer 10 people will be needed for a period of three weeks for the final stages of the interview process which will involve discussions with students and their input into the decision process.

More details of what this will involve will be sent out closer to the time, a wide range of student experiences were being sought.

b. Secretary

i. Gazette

The committee noted that the Gazette will be sent out weekly during term; one week before and one week after each term ends. The deadline to submit things to the gazette: one week before the event, so it can be included.

ii. Introductory meeting with the Master

The executive had their first meeting with the Master a few weeks ago, this focused on general introductions and the Cost of Living. Matters brought to the master's attention included: Supervision rates, support for Families and Medical students, engagement with national government. The master also asked to discuss how the MCR would be run differently this year to last.

The committee's opinions on future topics to discuss were requested, the general MCR will also be involved soon.

iii. SU (Student Union) Council Meetings on 2<sup>nd</sup> May & 15<sup>th</sup> May

The committee noted that if they had any concerns, regarding SU, to inform either Secretary or the President at least one week before these meetings so they can raise the concerns properly.

iv. College Council Meeting Update

The discussions at college council were fed back to the committee by the Secretary, notable discussions included Rent & electricity, which the committee had already discussed. The inclusion of students in the refurbishment of the Chapel was also requested. The committee raised concerns over where the funding for the refurbishment came from and why there was a need to refurbish the chapel. The Treasurer informed the committee that at Finance Committee the Capital Expenditure report did include funding for the Chapel, but he was unclear on the exact reasoning, and it may have related to infrastructure around the chapel. A discussion on the separation of the Chapel and the College trustees also occurred. The committee resolved, without vote, that the President should investigate the matter further.

v. College Governing Body Meeting

The committee was also updated on the meeting of the Governing Body. It had a discussion regarding 36 Storey's Way and other College buildings as significant agenda items. The committee noted they had also discussed that business.

c. Treasurer

i. Accounts update

1. Full accounts

The committee noted that the signatories on the MCR account were being changed over from the Outgoing President (Michaela) to the Senior Treasurer (Mairi, Senior Postgraduate Tutor). Once this had been complete Reece (President) would also be added to the account. The committee also noted there have been some difficulties with this process. The committee agreed, without vote, with the proposal of the Treasurer, Finance Tutor, and Senior Treasurer that a second college officer be added as a signatory to the account. This would enable changes to the account, which require two signatories, to occur above politization of outgoing/incoming officers. The committee resolved that these were actions for the Treasurer.

2. Guest Night accounts

The committee noted that the Lent Guest Night had made a loss of -£222.67 and that they had received a full balance sheet of the event. This represented a £2.30 subsidy for each MCR member at the event. The committee noted that this was a reasonable subsidy of the event and was in line with the new rules set out by the CCRFC. The committee also noted that this included all expenditure of the event and the drinks reception had not had to be charged to the Bar Account as previous Treasurer's had.

## ii. Publishing of accounts

*Accounts of 2021-22 Academic Year circulated in advance*

The committee noted that they had received a copy of the audited accounts of the 2021-22 Academic year, and that these would be made available to the MCR body shortly. The committee were also informed that this was the first time the accounts had been fully audited in a significant period.

The committee's attention was also drawn to flagged transactions. The committee questioned what was meant by a flagged transaction. The committee noted that they meant there was some form of accounting error. Flags included: that they were not included in the list of transactions that Treasurers were required to keep but did appear on the bank statements, flags where the values between the two differed, or transactions that had been merged but included separate budgetary items and had not been attributed to either.

Of particular concern to the committee were transactions missing from the Treasurer's list of transactions as these include more information about what the transaction is for. The committee were further concerned that there were several unexplained transactions, and it could be the case that the MCR owes money to bodies that it has no record of – particularly regarding swaps. The Treasurer stated that the values of these expenses would be 'ring fenced' for at least the next academic year to minimise the risk to the MCR accounts should the funds be required.

It was noted that the committee, through Jack, had flagged the two transactions regarding the Outgoing President and General Secretary's trip to Oxford. It was agreed that they had appropriate approval from the college but the problem with the principle of not informing the committee was a fault. The committee requested that alongside the accounts the Treasurer's suggestion of a list of 'lessons learned' and good practice accounting from the mistakes of the 2021-22 accounts guide be produced. The committee agreed that these transactions could remain flagged, but better explanation of each flag should be provided.

*Post meeting note: The tickets also included single one-way tickets bought at the time of departure without a railcard and given that this travel had been planned significantly in advance how to deal with Travel Expenditure in an appropriate way mirroring the departments will also be added.*

The committee noted that the accounts will be made public to the MCR after they have been approved by the Senior Treasurer and the Finance Tutor (as Chair of the CCRFC).

## iii. Merging of Public and Private Account (Motion for decision)

The committee were asked to approve the Treasurer merging the public and the private accounts into a single account. The 'Public Account' is the account to which the MCR has received funds from the College's Common Room Finance Committee (CCRFC) to which it submits a budget alongside every society and receives an annual audit. The monies in this account must follow the rules set forth by the committee.

The committee raised concerns that future Treasurer's may not have the same experience and competence handling the rules of the CCRFC and understanding the set-up of the accounts and therefore a basic two account system may be the best way for them to ensure they remained compliant. The Treasurer was asked what difference between the two account rules there was now,

to which there was effectively no practical difference if basic account management was done in future. The committee raised concerns that account management had not necessarily been done sufficiently in the past and may not be in the future. The committee also questioned whether merging the two accounts could cause a potential loss of liquidity, or bankruptcy in future. This was incredibly unlikely to be the case and given the current state of both accounts there would have to be a significant failing in account management – significantly beyond the issues that had already been discussed for this to be possible.

The committee agreed that a small reserve £1000 (1/7<sup>th</sup> of the annual expenditure) should be kept ringfenced, to be able to cope with possible account management issues.

The committee wanted to know what would happen if the CCRFC rule changes that allowed this process were reversed. The Treasurer informed the committee that it would be hard to tell and would depend on the negotiations of the MCR at the time, however it would be difficult to separate the accounts back out again. The committee were also informed that any changes to the rule would have to be discussed and agreed in the CCRFC, which the MCR holds three seats on and therefore the MCR would be significantly involved in the conversations of. All three bodies (JCR, MCR and Fellowship) had also been in favour of the current rule changes, and it was not likely to be a long-term problem.

The committee welcomed the extensive discussion but felt that they did not have significant experience of the accounts or the previous rules to determine whether the decision would have significant long-term effects on the financial capability of the MCR – and therefore some officers wished to abstain.

*Motion: The committee approves the merging of the Public and Private accounts into a single account.*

*Nay: Reece*

*Abstain: Jack, Manu, Teo, Natalie, Meghan, and Celia*

*Aye: Kieran, Immy, Lena, Thea, Lily, Sarah, and Rowan*

*The other officer's present had no recorded vote.*

### **The motion to merge the Public and Private accounts into a single account passed**

#### iv. Expenditure of reserves

The committee were informed of the current extensive reserves of the MCR accounts, which currently in total are the equivalent of twice the annual expenditure of the MCR. This is likely to result in the MCR being ineligible for funding from the CCRFC this year. However, the CCRFC was open to the idea of those reserves being drawn down to fund long-term investments or projects. Officers were therefore asked to present their ideas to the Treasurer, and a general call for ideas will be sent out to the wider MCR soon.

#### v. Finance Committee update

*A Finance Committee Meeting brief was provided to the Committee in advance of the meeting.*

The committee noted that the most pertinent matters had been discussed in previous headers and there were no questions on the Finance Committee update.

d. Academic Officer [Celia]

The committee again noted that Conference on Everything is coming up – **29<sup>th</sup> April**, and they would work together to put this event together.

e. Publicity and Communications Officer

The committee were reminded to contact Sarah for publicising events and that there was now a good system in place. The committee were also reminded to provide their information for the Instagram introduction.

f. Men's Welfare

No update was received.

g. Women's Welfare

The committee were informed of ideas focusing on: Mentorship talks, Careers for Women in Cambridge, and the possibility of organising women's only gym introduction sessions. The committee provided assistance on how to start tackling these ideas and hoped to help more.

h. LGBTQ+ Welfare

The committee discussed ideas to organise an MCR Artsy event on a provisionally weekly schedule. It was suggested liaising with the Art Club over what they already do.

i. Family Representative

The committee were updated on plans to hold an Easter Egg hunt by the families team and that the Senior Tutor and Post-graduate Senior Tutor had reached out to talk about how best to provide support to families. Lily asked whether there could be a document produced that provided more information about where to go in college for particular forms of assistance, such as tents and updates to the playground. It was discussed how this would need to be thought about more deeply as it is currently just a collection of knowledge in people's heads and what the best format would be to get that into, in the meantime contacting the committee Teams/WhatsApp would provide a good place to start. A longer-term goal for the committee would also be enabling more family friendly elements of MCR events and it was suggested that liaising with the SCR for the events they provide for families could also be helpful.

j. First Year Representative

The committee were informed that there would provisionally be an event at the start of next term.

k. EDI Officer

The primary goal of the EDI officers was to current update the EDI section of the MCR website. Manu informed the committee this was likely to be a rolling thing that would require more input going forward.

l. Disability Access [vacant]

m. Green Officer

The committee were updated on the success of the Clothes Swap event and that there was a plan to run a similar event when people move out towards the end of the year.



n. External Social Secretary

The committee were updated on the swaps that had happened this term and those that were planned for next term.

o. Internal Social Secretary

The committee congratulated Immy on the success of Guest Night and were updated on planning for the next one in June. There is more time to plan for the next one and the first meeting will be held in the beginning of May.

The committee were also informed on the initial stages of planning a 4<sup>th</sup> July event.

p. Computing Officer

The committee were updated that the priority at the moment is the accommodation ballot taking place shortly. There are also updates to the MCR pages that are required. Currently Manu is comparing our site to other MCR sites for whether there is anything that we are missing that we could provide. A page that was suggested that the MCR could provide would be one on 'How to handle misconduct.'

q. Equipment Officer [vacant]

r. Bar Treasurer

The committee were updated on the health of the Bar's account and were asked to promote the MCR Bar request form that had been signposted around the bar for the last month. The committee were also reminded of the hours change over the quiet period, which would start on the 17th of April.

s. Bar Secretary

The committee were informed of the work that had already happened with regards to Staff T-Shirts coasters and the help towards Guest Night. They were also updated in there not being a plan for Exam Term and that where rotas would be provided at the start of term and that no big training session was expected.

t. Ale & Quail

The committee noted the Ale and Quails task of arranging the New Committee dinner.

7. Other Business

a. Lessons from Auschwitz Universities Project Attendance

The committee were informed of a UK Government sponsored program aimed at tackling antisemitism in UK universities. The committee were keen to take part. It involves two seminars alongside a trip to Auschwitz.

The costs of £59 per attendee had already been approved by the Senior Treasurer and Finance Tutor, on the condition that it benefit the wider MCR. The officers who attend must be able to attend pre-departure seminar and post-return seminar. Provisionally the committee were interested in sending one Exec Officer, one EDI Officer and one other officer if there was availability. The post-training MCR event could be focused on Holocaust Memorial Day next January, however there would be significant planning to do. It was noted this was particularly relevant to those at Churchill College, given its history.

b. Suitable venue for a large event mid quiet period, with AV

The committee need to investigate a space that needs to avoid being near the library for event's during the Quiet Period. The committee would provisionally investigate seminar room 3/4 or club room or whether one off exemption could be used.

c. Teams

The committee had a discussion on the use of Team for communications and there was some discussion of returning to google drive. However, it was noted the functionality of the two was quite different. Some officers felt strongly against the use of Teams, however there was no consensus and Teams would continue to be used. The committee also discussed what effect Teams vs other software had with regards to the MCR's compliance with GDPR and security arrangements.

d. Events

The Committee were asked to provide their events for the Easter Term Card.

#### Actions

- Internal Social Secretary – Book the last Saturday after next term as Guest Night (speak to David Oakley).
- President – Draft Term card.
- All roles – Fill in the term card with events you plan on organising or important dates.
- Bar Treasurers to get a bank account by 24<sup>th</sup> April or will become a sub-account of the MCR account.
- Question on why the Chapel renovation is being paid for by college – Finance committee meeting minutes need to be reviewed, then report back next meeting.
- Green officer – clothing for next event.
- MCR bar officers to clean MCR bar.
- Treasurer to merge accounts.
- IT Officer to run accommodation ballot.
- Ale and quail to arrange handover dinner.
- Information to be provided for Thea about education committee.
- Teams information sheet and photos for publication, for officers who have not completed it already.
- Arrangement of a new shed for MCR storage.

**The President ended the meeting at 21:30**