

Ustinov College GCR General Meeting Minutes



7:00 p.m. 27/07/2017

1. Apologies: AB, XM, TP, JO

Present: JG, TAB, WG, MR, AS, AH

2. Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting

Minutes from the AGM held on 05/06 are to be passed at next year's AGM, in accordance with the constitution.

a. Issues Arising from Last Minutes

i. Results of Elections following Last Meeting

Following the last meeting, Jamie Graham, Xiaoxiao Ma, Thom Addinall Biddulph, Alastair Stewart, Alexander Blair, Tom Pitts, Matthew Roberts, Alex Hampton, Will Glossop, James O'Neill and Joe Farrow were all elected for the GCR Committee positions they were standing for.

3. Reports from Officers

a. President [JG]

Despite only holding the position of President for a month, JG has been very busy already due to the move to Sheraton Park. The Sheraton Park site is looking like it is, for the most part, going to be ready on time. College will get the keys from 11th September, and students will be arriving from 17th September, beginning with PGCE and MBA students. The plans for the SP site and some pictures of what the new gym will look like are hanging up in the hall; JG invites all students attending the General Meeting to take a look at the end.

There are a number of things around the site that will need changed or fixed. For example, there is no squat rack in the gym, the gym door opens *into* the gym so could hit someone using the free weights, and there is a pillar in the middle of the gym that will need wrapped. JG notes that College seem to be listening to what he is saying, but is unsure if the university is listening to the feedback from College.

The plans for the bar are also hanging up around the room. The construction company came to college with a plan for the bar, and gave them 24 hours to either accept or refuse the proposal. College decided to refuse it, and instead put the job out to a contractor. They are much happier with the plans they came up with. The construction of the bar is still ongoing, with an approximate finishing date being given as the 27th September – the first day of Induction Week. JG says the GCR are expecting delays and will have to prepare accordingly for IW, therefore most of the events will be held on the Howlands Farm site. The GCR are going to run a minibus between the two sites for Induction Week, in order to get people to and from the events.

JG is regularly attending the Sheraton Park and Neville's Cross Residents Associations. The SPRA have no issues with the bar being put in to the new college site, but NCRA are currently completely against it. An application for a bar license to sell alcohol at the SP site was contested by the local people, including councillors. However, JG says the university is not worried about this; they seem to think that in the end it will go through.

The Ustinov Summer BBQ went very well, and JG extends his thanks to all the volunteers who helped make it a success. The Summer Ball has been booked for next year, but for a Saturday night rather than a Thursday night like this year. All of the formals have been booked for next year.

JG is currently working with TAB to try and make the GCR run a little smoother; a couple of amendments to the SO will be put forwarded in this meeting.

As far as university wide issues are concerned, JG is joining the Sector of Violence and Misconduct Working Group that the university is organising. This working group will be created in order to implement the outcome of various reports that the university have had regarding violence and sexual harassment.

b. Treasurer [AB][absent]

JG: The GCR still has money – a full report will not be able to be given as the handover process from last year's treasurer (XM) is still ongoing.

c. Vice President [XM][absent]

JG: One of the vending machines is currently not working. This is the only update that is currently available on facilities.

d. (Acting) Bar Steward [JG]

JG states that a lot more bar staff are going to be needed, especially for Induction Week. He has been helping hospitality advertise these positions.

JG has joined the Durham Alcohol Policy Working Group, in order to see what their future plans are. For example, the university brought in regulated shots as a result of the last meeting of this group. Attending these meetings will give JG prior warning as to what is changing in the future.

e. Clubs and Societies Officer [TP] [absent]

JG and AB are planning on changing the way that clubs and societies are handled, in particular regarding applying for funding. In an effort to make the distribution of funding more fair, there will be a termly call for money for stash or equipment. There will then be a budgeting meeting to decide who gets what funding.

As the new Clubs and Societies Officer, hopefully TP will get the chance to meet all of the new captains soon.

In a previous meeting relating to Sheraton Park, facilities were talked about – in particular a playing field very close to the Sheraton Park site. Do you know how this field is going to be shared?

The field that was talked about is a public field, so there is no need to book it.

Where is the field?

It is approximately a 100 meter walk from the accommodation at SP.

Is the field flat?

Yes, it is.

f. Communications Officer [MR]

Currently, the GCR handbook for newcomers is being updated. MR calls for suggestions of things that people would like to have seen in the handbook, or things currently in it that could be improved or updated.

MR is currently continuing to promote the remaining events of the year.

Is the current handbook available?

JG says that last year's one is available. Only 250 handbooks were printed to be put into the student welcome packs. However, a pdf of it was put on the USB stick that was handed to all students.

MR states that he will put an electronic copy of the handbook on the website, so that it can be accessed by everyone and people can suggest improvements.

Has anyone asked college whether the GCR are able to contact students after they get their place at Durham University (and before they get their university email account)?

JG says the SO does not mention anything about this. Doing this would require the university to give the personal data of new students to the GCR, and they are reticent to do so.

JG notes that the 2012 memorandum of agreement signed with the GCR (saying we can exist) has an appendix with a list of data the university would pass on. This includes, for example, names and email addresses. Historically, these have not been passed on to GCR, at least in the last 3 years. JG contacted Ian on Tuesday, who did not seem to know anything about this appendix. JG is unsure whether this agreement is still valid, and is waiting for Glen to return from research leave to ask him about it.

Could the university set up an emailing list of all the new students that the GCR could use to send things out to?

JG: historically this has not happened, but is unsure how difficult it would be to set up, or how hard people have pushed for it in the past.

g. DSU Liaison Officer [AH]

AH attended the final DSU meeting of the term. The new DSU officers start from next week. Now that the DSU has a Postgraduate Officer, hopefully relations between the DSU and Ustinov College will improve.

h. Induction Officer [WG]

The first Induction Week meeting was held earlier this week, where an ordered list of events was created. The first priority will be to finish updating the handbook.

There will be mini buses arranged to between the HF and SP site, in order to include as many new students as possible in all of the events.

The DSU are planning on organising a Postgraduate Welcome Night. JG managed to convince them to put it on the first Sunday, as this is a day where Ustinov does not have an event in the evening.

What's happening on the first Friday?

There will be an International Student Welcome Night at the DSU that evening, meaning karaoke had to be moved.

Are there any plans in place for buses running on the Friday and Saturday nights between the sites?

At the moment there is not. JG states the university has only committed to providing these through the transitional funding for Induction Week.

Suggestion from attendee – *The walking tours could perhaps be done on the first weekend, and the Clubs and Societies Fair could be held at both sites.*

This is a good idea, but unfortunately at the moment the GCR does not know what space will be available at SP for during IW.

i. International Officer [JO][absent]

JO is currently planning a trip to Alnwick Castle. This is in the process of being organised, but should be happening mid-August.

j. Livers Out Representative [AH]

A successful trip to trampolining was organised. AH is going to be ordering more stash for current students, and calls to everyone who has not collected their previous order to do so.

k. (Acting) Social Secretary [JG]

The Bollywood party will be happening this Saturday, and the Leavers Party will be happening on the 1st of September.

l. (Acting) Welfare Representative [TAB]

Currently the GCR is out of condoms – this will hopefully be rectified very soon.

TAB and JG are having discussions with college about welfare issues, and hope that a Welfare Officer is elected this week so that work can begin on these ideas

as soon as possible. For example, there will hopefully be a de-stress event leading up to dissertation hand in.

College are getting pushed by the Sexual Violence and Misconduct Working Group at the university to raise more awareness about sexual harassment. In order to do this, College are planning on organising a brunch for each of the blocks of accommodation at Ustinov. They will provide food and coffee, and in attendance will be the college Welfare Officers and either JG or the newly elected GCR Welfare Officer. This will give new students a chance to meet Brenda (the college Welfare Officer), and discuss sexual violence in a friendly, relaxed setting.

Is this going to be geared specifically toward sexual violence?

As far as JG has been told by College, it seems that it is. They may also go through other matters, such as how to be a good flatmate (by keeping kitchens tidy, etc.). JG is unsure how exactly college are going to tackle this.

4. Agenda Items - at quorum

a. Induction Week Budget [JG]

- i. Proposal:** *The GCR shall approve a budget of up to £3,915 to spend on Induction Week.*

Proposer: Jamie Graham

Secunder: Will Glossop

ii. Supporting Information

What follows is a breakdown of the costs that have been taken into account when calculating the total estimated budget:

1. Games Night: £250

Cost of pizzas.

2. Icebreaker Quiz: £60

a. Prizes - £30

b. Props - £30

3. GCR Brunch: £450

Cost of food. Was £323.32 last year, but the event will be running over both HF and SP this year.

4. Green Move Out Sale Buses: £350

For three buses for the day, the cost of which will be split three ways with College and Greenspace.

5. Film Night: £50

a. Popcorn - £30

b. Film(s) - £20

6. Ustinov Live: £100

Cost of drinks for performers.

7. Paul Skerritt Band: £500

Covers the band fee.

8. Formals: £500

Approx. £500 total for decorations + subsidy.

9. Karaoke: £175

Approx. £175 for DTD.

10. Party Night: £170

- a. DJs – approx. £150.
- b. Decorations – approx. £20.

11. Walking Tours of Newcastle: £260

Covers cost of tour guides.

12. Trampolining: £250

Covers entrance fee for 50 people.

13. General Meeting: £250

Cost of pizzas.

14. Advertising: £550

- a. Printing off posters/calendars - £100
- b. Printing off GCR Handbook - £400
- c. Chalk Boards - £50

Total Estimated Budget: £3,915.

The budget for last year was approximately £3000, however this year some events will be held at both HF and at SP, so there will need to be a slight increase in spending.

iii. Questions: *Should the budget not be increased slightly, just in case? It doesn't seem to be too high at the moment.*

JG states that he does not believe there is much need to raise the budget. Last year the budget was around £2,900, and not all of it was spent.

You don't seem to have included buses in your budget, why?

The buses will be covered by the transitional funding given to the GCR by the university – this is different from the usual GCR account.

iv. Vote: 1 objection, 24 for, no abstentions. The budget passes.

b. Amendments to the Standing Orders [JG]

i. Motion to Alter Complaints Procedure

1. The GCR notes that:

- The standing orders currently state that any complaints from GCR members regarding the President or Chairperson the outcome of which the complainant is unhappy with may then be referred to the College Officers for advice.
- In past instances where this situation has arisen, the College Officers have not felt that this is part of their role.
- As a charity, it is logical that complaints of this nature should be referred to the Board of Trustees.

2. The GCR believes that:

- Our complaints procedure should be clear and effective.

- This cannot be the case if our procedure directs GCR members to an inappropriate place.
- The board of trustees is an appropriate place for unresolved complaints about the GCR President and/or Chairperson, so long as the President and Chairperson, who are trustees, are not involved in discussion of and response to any such complaints.

3. Proposal: *Amend Article 8.iii of the Standing Orders to read "If the complaint is directed towards either the President or the Chairperson and/or the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome they may approach the Board of Trustees for advice on the matter, provided that none of the Officer Trustees are involved in discussion of and response to any such complaint."*

Proposer: Jamie Graham
 Secunder: Alastair Stewart

4. Questions: *Has the GCR asked people who will now be in charge if they will be ok with it?*
 TAB points out that the people in question are on the board of trustees for the GCR, and therefore are obliged to.

5. Vote: 23 for, 2 abstentions, no against. The motion passes.

ii. Motion to Alter Election Procedure

1. The GCR notes that:

- We often struggle to fill all of our committee positions, especially in non-exec roles.
- We should make it as easy as possible for people to run for these posts.
- In other Durham college common rooms, it is standard to allow members to put themselves forward for a position at the meeting itself.
- There is no longer any purpose in requiring seconders for nominations to GCR committee positions, as the new voting software provided by the university does not allow seconders' names to be entered.
- Requiring seconders in any case provides very little benefit to the electoral process, as this is a very low bar for a candidate to clear.

2. The GCR believes that:

- For non-exec positions where nobody has submitted a manifesto by the stated deadline, it is appropriate to allow GCR members to nominate themselves at the relevant general meeting for said positions, with their hust as minuted by the secretary of the GCR then serving as their manifesto on the voting platform.
- The requirement for seconders should be removed from the standing orders.

3. Proposals:

- Amend Article 3.2.b of the Standing Orders to read “The date for the close of nominations will be set by the Chairperson, who will inform members of the date at an appropriate Ordinary GCR meeting or via an email sent to all members. All candidates must have submitted their manifestos to the Steering Committee by this date. If a position not on the executive committee has received no manifestos by the close of nominations, any GCR member may nominate themselves for that position at the GCR meeting in question, with their hust as minuted by the GCR Secretary then serving as their manifesto.”
- Remove 3.2.c (requiring proposers and seconders).
- Remove 3.2.d (stating that members of Executive and Steering Committee may not propose or second candidates).
- Amend 3.2.e. to read “Nominations should be made to the Chairperson and accompanied by a manifesto of no more than 250 words. Nominations may be made at the relevant GCR meeting in line with the conditions set out in 3.2.b.”

Proposer: Jamie Graham
 Secunder: Alastair Stewart

4. **Questions:** *Could Executive Committee positions that have had no nominations be advertised again 24hrs before the meeting?*
 TAB says that this can be done as standard policy; there is no need to amend the constitution to do this. He says this can be discussed at the next Executive Committee meeting. TAB points out that sometimes the DSU is not happy with saying that certain roles do not have any nominations, but it is up to the GCR whether this is done or not.
5. **Vote:** 23 for, 2 abstentions, no against. The vote passes.

5. Hustings

a. Bar Steward

Candidate: Vinay Utham

Manifesto: *My name is Vinay Utham and I am a second year PhD student in Finance. I have been working behind the bar since November 2015.*

I am interested to run for the bar steward position since I believe that my 2 years' worth of experience working behind the bar puts me in a good position to ensure that the Ustinov Bar runs smoothly and to ensure that Ustinovians are provided with a memorable socializing experience.

If elected, the following are the objectives that I aim to achieve:

1. *Ensure that the transition from Howlands Bar to Sheraton Park Bar remains hassle-free.*
2. *Ensure that the bar environment at Howlands and Sheraton remains the same so that Ustinovians enjoy a comfortable experience no matter where they are (Howlands/Sheraton).*

3. *Ensure that the bar shifts are distributed proportionally to all bar staff members in line with their availability and preferences (Howlands/Sheraton).*
4. *Take a stock of the existing alcohol choices and make changes where necessary (especially with regards to Whiskies).*
5. *Create awareness about drinking responsibly by spreading word about the various apps available that help people keep track of their alcohol intake.*

I have previous event management experience that I gained during my undergraduate studies, which provides me with a relevant skill set required to carry out the duties of a bar steward. Therefore, I believe I would be a good fit for this position.

After all, at the end of the day "That's What I do: I Drink and I Know Things."

Hust: I am in my 2nd year of a PhD in finance at the Business school. I have been working at the Fisher House bar for almost two years, and so know it very well. If I am elected, I plan to ensure a smooth transition from HF to the new bar at SP. I believe that, despite the problems with the new site, the success of the bar will be determined by the ambiance that it provides. I would hope to create a similar environment to Fisher House.

As Bar Steward, I would like to look into the restocking of alcohol. There are some whiskies, for example, that do not sell much at all, yet more of it is bought. I would like to look into this.

I would like to create a social awareness about controlled drinking. I would like to work with the welfare team in order to do this.

Finally, I drink and I know things.

Questions: *There will be two beers on tap at Sheraton park – which two would you recommend are put on?*

I would recommend Guinness, as it sells very well. Kronenbourg is another top seller.

Do you have any improvements to the bar plans that you would like to put forward?

I find the bar looks sexy, and so things do not need improved yet. The most important thing will be the ambiance that is created.

There are two hospitality managers. How will you be able to delegate between the two personalities of Trudie and Sarah to make sure that the bar staff and them get the best experience?

I find that it is best to take a diplomatic approach. I do not agree with everything that they say, however if I put forward my opinion in a diplomatic way, then there is more chance that a compromise will be reached.

Members of the Executive Committee do extra things, for example clear up after parties. Are you happy to do this too?

Yes, I am happy to do this.

b. Welfare Officer

Candidate: James Smith

Manifesto: *After reading Gaurish's entry to the critical series of blogs run by the Ustinovian and the subsequent discussion highlighting the negative Ustinov*

experiences of others, I have decided to run for welfare officer. As a fully-qualified pharmacist, I feel I am well-suited to provide welfare support to my fellow Ustinovians and I have experience working in a range of health and welfare sectors (incl. hospital, community pharmacies and mental health clinics), providing confidential counselling and advice to hundreds of people. If elected, I propose to reinstate on-site welfare office hours (2 times/week in term time, 3-4 times/week during exam seasons), whereby anyone with health or welfare concerns can come and talk about them in a confidential environment. These sessions will be advertised on the day through social media to promote the welfare service and increase accessibility. Furthermore, I will ensure my email and mobile is readily available to all Ustinovians and will reply to messages promptly. This will also enable livers out to directly contact me for advice or arrange a confidential meet on-campus or in town if required, ensuring they won't have to go out of their way to obtain support. I will also write a series of informative blogs regarding welfare issues (such as 'the physiology of stress') to provide Ustinovians with general information and advice. Finally, I will work hard as a member of the exec to help organise events and attempt to ensure that everyone's Ustinov experience is a happy experience! Thank you!

Hust: I am studying a PhD in Chemistry, and am living in Ustinov this year. I found the fact that the role of Welfare Officer was not filled to be quite disgraceful. It is the role of the College to look after its student's welfare, and so it was a real shame that it was not filled.

I am a qualified pharmacist, I have run sexual health clinics before and have dealt with welfare in many forms, so would bring a lot of experience to Ustinov. Being a trained pharmacist, I am trained in listening to people, and will be able to help fix their concerns if possible. This could be helping people to take part in events, or in more serious circumstances pointing them in the right direction to get further, more qualified help. I would like to hold brunches so that students can get to know me as the GCR Welfare Officer.

I believe that social media is very important. I would like to write blogs or posts on Facebook making people aware of sexual health and how to deal with stress. I would be able to extend the role of welfare to general health, as my pharmacy experience will allow me to point people in the correct direction.

Candidate: Joshua Walton

Manifesto: *Hello, my name is Josh, a second year Chemistry PhD student. Having started my PhD in an awkward time of the year; April, I was thrown straight into college life at Ustinov. For the past year I've played (badly) for the Ustinov football team and enjoyed some great events. I also undertook my undergraduate here at Hild Bede, meaning I've got an understanding of the city and the collegiate system.*

The position of Welfare Officer has been empty throughout all of my time at Ustinov, an executive position that I believe shouldn't go unfilled. After all, the first point of the constitution declares "The GCR is devoted to the educational interests and welfare of its Members". Although the position has been covered by acting representatives, I think the role deserves a dedicated officer.

As Welfare Officer I would look to make a few more changes about Ustinov's sites; predominantly raising awareness and working to ensure the welfare of all students. The issue of awareness shall be compounded by the college being spread over three different sites this next year.

I'm willing to do the work required to try assure the best possible welfare for the students of this college.

Hust: I have spent my last five and a half years at Durham, the first four years of which were at Hild Bede which has a great welfare service. The constitution says that a college must provide welfare, and I would like to help.

I believe that I can do this by increasing general awareness around college, through holding brunches or tea breaks. This would give people a chance to meet me, and get rid of the stigma surrounding welfare. I would be able to talk to people about sexual health. There has not been an STD drive in the one and a half years of me being part of Ustinov – this should be changed.

I would also like to encourage people to join the various sporting activities that Ustinov offers. People might be scared to join sports as they think they are not good enough – I would like to make it clear that Ustinov College teams welcome all students of all abilities.

Questions:

Aside from Welfare, as an executive committee member you will have to help out with the nitty gritty GCR stuff. Are you willing to commit the time to do this?

James: I worked on a committee at my previous university. I am happy to be the sober one during parties in order to help clear up at the end, or help students who have had quite a lot of alcohol and need assistance. I pride myself on my organisational skills.

Josh: I would like to set up a formal rota, so that executive committee members do not drink at certain events, and therefore are able to help at the end.

There was a Welfare Officer five year ago at Ustinov, who had specific hours of the day that they made available for students to talk to them. Are you willing to do something similar?

Josh: I am not trained in this area, but will happily seek the appropriate training if I get the role (for example, Night Line training). I will try to make a regular slot, but would like to make myself available so that people can talk to him.

James: I would like to try to reintroduce formal welfare office hours, perhaps twice a week. I have spare time in the evenings that I would be willing to dedicate to this.

If an international student, or a female student international or not, needed help but was not comfortable speaking to one of you, how would you deal with this?

James: Having worked in Malaysia, I am culturally aware. However, I perhaps would get College involved, so someone more professional could help. I believe it will be very important to encourage new students to apply for the role of Female Welfare Officer.

Josh: I believe it is important to have a Female Welfare Officer. I would not force the issue; I would find someone to help the person.

You will have to chair Welfare Meetings, which should involve a number of other roles. How will you encourage people to fill those roles?

Josh: I would plan to increase awareness through emails, drives and by making myself available and open to talk to. Hopefully this will convince people to join.

James: I will do this by advertising the roles properly, by pointing out the benefits of filling the roles, and raising more awareness about the roles and the GCR.

You will have to sit on a number of the university committees. Do you know which ones these are?

James: No, currently I do not.

Josh: The Executive Committee of the GCR, the DSU Welfare Committee, the GCR Welfare Committee, the Trustees.

If one of you does not get the position, will you go for something else?

Josh: I was outraged that this role was not filled. I probably would not apply for another role.

James: No, this is the one role that I feel that I am qualified for. I would still be willing to give pharmacy advice, however.

TAB: The hustings are now over. Voting will close on Monday.

6. Any Other Business

- a. *Given the change to the Standing Orders, will you read out the committee roles that have not been filled?*

TAB: The non-executive positions that are currently open are: election officers (x2), female welfare rep, LGBT+ rep, male welfare rep, ball secretary, deputy social secretary, DUCK liaison officer, ents officer, formal secretary, tech officer, video master, ecology reps (x2), Dryburn rep, Howlands rep, Sheraton Park rep, GCP liaison officer, press secretary, webmaster, assistant treasurer, female sports rep, male sports rep, student trustees (x2). These will be up for election in October.

- b. *This question is regarding communicating to students via email. Will you have an answer on this in time for people to find out ways they can get involved in College before they arrive? I can imagine a new student would find it quite overwhelming on arrival.*

JG: If I am able to get the student's email addresses, then yes the information will be sent out before arrival. Currently the GCR has access to the university accounts, but students only have access to these when they matriculate.

- c. **TAB:** The next General Meeting will be held on the second Sunday of Induction Week.

Alastair Stewart

GCR Secretary

27/07/2017