

Ustinov College GCR General Meeting Minutes



7:00 p.m. 28/4/2019

1. **Apologies:**

Present: TP, SL, EJ, JO, MR

2. **Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting**

Minutes from the GM held on 10/2/19. *All GM minutes for the year will be passed at the upcoming AGM.*

a. **Issues Arising from Last Minutes**

i. **Results of Elections Following Last Meeting**

Following the last General Meeting, the roles listed below were filled:

Election Officer:

Yao Song

Social Secretary:

Laur Nita

Male Welfare Officer:

Eduardo Joel López Torres

3. **Agenda Items**

- Motion to pass the updated 2018-19 GCR budget. Copies of this budget will have been circulated via email prior to the meeting. *The budget requires updating given that GCR membership has turned out to be an opt-in system, rather than an opt-out. The annual budget needs to be updated and passed to reflect this. Due to the unexpected opt-in system, this will result in a loss, but this loss will not be as large as expected. We still have sufficient money to run all planned events, but we're aiming to minimise the loss as much as possible.*

Q: On the basis that we won't be the only college making a loss from this system, do we know if anything is being done in terms of grants from the University to make up for this loss?

A: True, it affects other colleges, but Ustinov more than others due to Livers Out not paying the levy as they don't live in college. Thus, it's affected our college more than others. Other JCRs are seeking a return to opt-out, but though there are no real objections to an opt-out system we're aiming for this. We expect that it will be opt-in again next year, but we're hoping to raise this with the University and discuss it alongside other JCR heads to see if grants will be possible.

Q: Big events in the summer tend to be remembered and enjoyed the most. Can we still ensure a great experience for this year's events?

A: The budget for the ball has not changed, so this will reflect experiences in previous years. We're spending less on the BBQ than we did last year, but we spent more than

normal in 2018, so it will be more similar to the 2016/2017 BBQs. We're hopeful that these events will be just as successful and enjoyable as in previous years!

Motion to pass the updated GCR budget for 2018-2019 – 22 in favour, 1 abstention. The budget is accordingly passed.

4. Reports from Officers [to be held during the meeting from]:

a. President [TP]

It's been fairly quiet over Easter, however there's been a lot of work towards the Operations Review, which has now been proposed to students and shown to all the JCR/GCR presidents. This is a major restructuring which will affect 12 of the 16 colleges and around 200 staff. This raised concerns that we'd get less help from staff in running college events and supporting students. Presidents are pushing for this to be something that the University has to consult students on. The review has now been upgraded to admit that its impact on students will be moderate, not minimal, so we're aiming to help these things go ahead in a way which will affect colleges, staff, and the student body as little as possible. Updates and information will continue to come from the University and the DSU regarding its progress, but I'm still waiting for our next meeting, which I believe will be next week.

I've also been working on the Summer Ball and Summer BBQ. I'm finalising details now! We've booked Paul Skerritt Band and some more great entertainment. It's a fantastic event and I really recommend you go! Ball is almost done, BBQ is still being organised with Van Mildert and we're still sorting out acts/staging/etc., but hopefully advertising for the BBQ will be coming out in the next couple of weeks.

b. Treasurer [EJ]

I've mainly just been moving money around, so I'll let you know the highest expenditures and income which we've had. We've received £10,044 from the University, we paid £693.05 for the Burns Night formal, and we've spent £463.20 on Committee t-shirts. We made £1450 from the income from activities, paid £462 for the Newcastle football trip, received £4704 for the composition fee, and spent £500 on the Bamburgh trip. We were expecting more from the composition fee, as we're about £1000 short of what we were promised, but I'm currently in touch with the finance team trying to sort this out. I've also run the kids' Easter party, done office hours, and that's pretty much it! We currently have £32,882.53 in our current account, and £48,323.36 in our savings account. We have two accounts to allow money to be moved around, or (in the case of the latter) used in emergencies. I'm happy to answer any questions about these figures – just ask me and I'll share them with you.

c. Vice President [JO]

I've been working on 5 main things. We've been trying to tailor the vending machine order to what people want, and this seems to be going well so far. We'll

be putting in another stash order soon – you’ll be updated on this in the near future. I’ve been speaking with the wider committee about making the bar/café social space in Sheraton more welcoming, which will be a good step forward. £100 from college on making it a warmer environment, We’ve received £100 from College to put towards this, so we’re hoping to buy things like lamps and fairy lights to replace the strip lighting in the evening. I’m also going to make and send out a survey to see what else students would like to see in this space. The pianos and drums in the Observatory have been tuned and fixed, so those wishing to practice can use them once again. I’ve also been working with GCR to sort out things like coaches, the Summer Ball, and the Summer BBQ.

d. Bar Steward [AMH]

[JO] We now have a beer of the month. This is currently Birra Moretti this month, but the beer will rotate monthly!

e. Clubs and Societies Officer [VB]

Most Ustinov teams have now completed their league matches! Four of them will be honoured at the College Awards Formal at the end of the week: Men’s Basketball, Volleyball, and Pool A for winning their leagues, Women’s Basketball for winning the Women’s Basketball Trophy. Two teams still have most of their league matches ahead of them, so if you are interested in cricket or tennis, feel free to get in touch with Vera! There is also the Festival of Sports on Sunday the 9th June where hopefully many of our teams will participate. Team Durham has furthermore started an inter-college cross country competition, but Ustinov does not have a team yet. But if anyone is interested in competing, please get in touch with me (Vera)!

Everything seems to be going fine with the gym and we have decreased the membership fee to £10 for individuals joining from April since half the academic year is now over.

The swimming refunds system seems to be working fine, even though the university is extremely slow with transferring money. Unfortunately, Freeman’s Quay pool will be closed for renovations from 6th May, so the free swimming arrangement ends then. The university seems optimistic that we will be able to use the Durham School swimming pool from the next academic year but there will unfortunately be no other swimming option in the meantime.

f. Communications Officer [KL]

I’ve been advertising things on WeChat and social media, sending emails, and generally keeping up awareness of events. I will be sending updates about upcoming events in the next few weeks so keep an eye out for those!

g. DSU Liaison Officer []

[TP] Things with the DSU have been winding down outside of term, so we don't have much to report outside of the Operations Review, as previously mentioned. The DSU is hoping to resurrect Cut the Rent campaign before the end of the year, so check their emails and follow them on Facebook if you're interested!

h. International Officer [MR]

The last major trip was to Bamburgh, and around 50 people came. We could get to Lindisfarne for free, and got great weather and some really positive feedback. The coach cost £500, but we only made a loss of about £50 on this, likely due to kids attending, but this is well worth it. Our next trip will hopefully be in May, and we'll be starting ticket sales on Wednesday. I will recommend to the Executive Committee that we stick to the same pricing as Bamburgh tickets, as we're trying to be as cost-neutral as possible. We should be able to get in for free, ticket price is only for coaches. That's it for now!

i. Livers Out Representative []

[TP] We've been trying to bear Livers Out in mind, but it's tricky given our current reduced committee. We've been trying to organise some events for the coming weeks, but we're hoping to get a proper rep soon who can be dedicated and willing to run these events. Let us know any suggestions for events that will boost engagement and we'll try our best to run them!

j. Social Secretary [LN]

[TP] We had a very successful end of term party, and the kids' Easter party went really well and got good feedback. Upcoming events in the next month include Eurovision, which will be a big event in the bar, and Durham Pride on May 25th. We're hoping to run some events in the week prior to Pride, and have a party to coincide with the weekend, and we can hopefully get some volunteers to help with that. I look forward to any suggestions for events from Ustinovians!

k. Welfare Officer []

[TP] We currently don't have a dedicated Welfare Officer, but the wider Welfare Committee have been doing quite a lot of work, and the people running tonight will hopefully fill this role! We've ordered latex-free condoms for the bathrooms, but these still need labelling so that people don't take these instead of the normal ones. We'll hopefully be getting posters about sexual health up in the bathrooms soon too.

5. Hustings

a. Welfare Representative

Candidate: Ouyang Xueyan

Manifesto: I am very keen on welfare, I will try my best to help other people in this area. Besides, I have enough time to plan and assist the daily job.

Hust: Good evening everyone! I'm running to be your next Welfare Officer. As a student I believe having a well-functioning welfare system is important because university life can be very stressful, so it's important to have a support system in place. It's important to understand everyone's needs and offer a peer-support

system for them. I'm an international student, so I believe I can get more international students involved with college. I wish that all students could have a perfect life in Ustinov, and if elected I'd hope to help all Ustinovians. Thanks!

Candidate: Jia Lai

Manifesto: Hi, this is Jia. Being a Ustinovian for several months here, I wish that I could have a chance to become a member of the committee and hopefully do my best to offer help and make sure people feel happy living here.

Hust: Hi everyone! This is my first time delivering a speech in English which is stressful but exciting! This is the most relatable role I'm applying for, as I used to work as a volunteer in china promoting sex education, creating posters and flyers and distributing them to students all over the school. It was a really rewarding job that I enjoyed. No matter whether sexual, physical, or mental health, all of these issues are really important for university students, and if I were elected I'd do my best, and hopefully my previous experience will help me too. Thank you!

Q: We're getting close to summer, which is when dissertations are due, so many students will be focusing on finishing these assignments. In previous years the welfare team has made food freely available during the last months of the academic year to help provide a supportive environment. How would you help students in this stressful period?

A: (Ouyang) What I can do is make myself available always for people to share their troubles, and to communicate with them to make them feel better.

(Jia) I would hold an event or small gathering to invite everyone to come and share their experiences of stress and anxiety so that we can talk about it, and share our experiences so that everyone can talk about how they're feeling. If anybody wants to reach out to me I'll make sure I'm there, and I'll try my best to help through face-to-face communication.

Q: As the Welfare Representative you have three other welfare reps working under you. How will you work with the welfare team, and help everyone work together for welfare in college?

A: (Jia) First of all I'm going to take everyone for a meal to get to know everyone, and then once we get to know each other everything will go very naturally. I'll hold meetings to organise events and posters.

(Ouyang) When I join the team I'll get to know you all and discuss decisions with you so that we can get to know each other. Thank you.

Q: One of the upcoming parties is Pride. The committee was planning events for a pride week. What events do you think we could do in this week?

A: (Ouyang) I'd be happy to talk with the welfare committee and pick up some tips.

(Jia) I'd start with designing some posters which is an easy way of helping to raise awareness. We have lots of different students from different countries so we don't have a common consensus on this issue, so the first step is to make a really interesting poster and create some interesting content that can interest everybody.

b. Dryburn Representative (x2)

Candidate: Jia Lai

Manifesto: Hi, this is Jia. Being a Ustinovian for several months here, I wish that I could have a chance to become a member of the committee and hopefully do my best to offer help and make sure people feel happy living here.

Hust: Hi, I'm also running for Dryburn Representative. I feel like I could do this job well, as it requires someone to talk and solve problems in a timely way, and I believe that I can do this well. I'll be in Ustinov a lot in the coming months because of academic work, so I'll be around a lot to answer questions and help out.

Q: Are you planning to go and meet people at Dryburn in this role?

A: Absolutely, it's good to have a face-to-face conversation rather than communicating by email, so I'd be willing to go over and talk about living conditions and other issues.

Q: A big part of this role is being involved with kids. Would you be happy creating events for kids in college?

A: Definitely, I love kids! I can't wait to get to know them, and I'll try and get some games to play with them.

AOB

Q: Why are none of the minutes available for the previous GMs and exec?

A: [SL] All of these minutes will be done by the end of this week, and the minutes from Exec meetings are all available online, and will be uploaded to the GCR website on a rolling basis. I will upload the Exec minutes from April once I've gained access to them. The GM minutes will all be passed in the AGM, which will be later on in the year. They will then be made available to view on the GCR website.

Sam Littlewood

GCR Secretary

28/4/2019