

# Ustinov College GCR General Meeting Minutes



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7:30 p.m., 09/02/2020

1. Apologies: VB, AL

2. Issues arising from the last minutes

a. Approval of Minutes from the last meeting

Minutes from the General Meeting held on 30/11/2019 – *passed on a general aye.*

b. Results of Elections following the last meeting:

**Secretary:** Rebecca Salthouse

**Social Secretary:** James Ireland

**Bar Steward:** Arabeth Lecuyer

**Sheraton Park Rep:** Max Ratcliffe

3. Reports from Officers

a. President [DM]

**University Matters:**

An update from **BPR2**, for those who don't know about this topic, a quick recap: **BPR1** was the first phase of the Operational Review of University. One of the results of this that affected us was the increase in price of formals. On the second phase, University is looking to standardise services and save money; services to be affected will be **Portering**, by standardising shift patterns across Colleges, reducing the number of agency staff and having more porters on shift at weekends, and **Cleaning**, by trying to have the same model in all Colleges and reducing the service to termly cleaning of bedrooms with more regular cleaning for communal areas.

For those who have heard the rumours of Postgrads being pushed to graduate during **Winter Graduation**, David Evans has shared with us that students are not allowed to defer to Summer Graduation. On this topic, if you participated in a previous Winter Graduation and are keen to give feedback, please get in contact with David Evans from the DSU or come and talk to me.

**Community matters:**

Collingwood's MCR is preparing an MCR Pub Night at their bar. So if you want to check out our venue for the Summer BBQ, this will be a good excuse.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of March, the DSU is organising a **Postgraduate Cocktail event** with a free drink on arrival and also they will have non-alcoholic options.

**College matters:**

We are getting ready for our next big events. On June 18<sup>th</sup> we will be having our **Summer Ball**; this is the time to dress up fancy and spend the afternoon taking photos for posterity. It is the only ball that Ustinov host throughout the year and we put a lot of effort in to make it very special. The venue for this year is Ramside Hall and more information about this event will be shared later. The other big event is our **Summer BBQ** where you can enjoy different activities to de-stress after a year of hard work.

College is organizing a **Women of Ustinov** event as part of our International Women's Day celebrations; the project will feature photographs of female students, staff, SCR members and mentors to demonstrate the range of contributions made by women at Ustinov College. If you want to be involved and contribute a photograph, please get in contact with Katie Stobbs, Assistant Principal.

**b. Treasurer [VB]**

It is becoming more and more clear that we are not going to reach the number of GCR members and therefore the amount of income planned for in the annual budget passed at the last AGM. However, I recently did the math and concluded that we are still on track: we have been very careful with spending money and breaking even on formals and trips, so we should be fine!

An update on the issue with college overcharging us for the 2018-19 formals: They have finally figured out what went wrong and sent me an overview of what they believe they owe us. There were still a few errors in their calculations, which I pointed out to them, but we are making progress. I have furthermore been told the prices for this year's past formals, which match what I was expecting, and I should receive invoices for them soon.

Speaking of formals: As most of you hopefully know, we have recently started using an online ticket selling platform called FIXR to allow students to pay for tickets without needing to visit the GCR office in person. We first used it for our Burns Night Formal in January, after which I sent out a poll to ask for everyone's opinions on it. Due to the very positive response, we have continued using FIXR for two more events in the meantime: Newcastle football tickets and the ongoing Fountains Abbey trip ticket sales. For these events I have also showed our Male Sports Rep Christos (who coordinates the football ticket sales) and President Diana (who volunteered for this trip), both of which found it very intuitive and easy to use from a "behind the scenes" perspective. FIXR transferred the money from the Burns Night Formal ticket sales to us six days after the formal, which is very fast when compared to the university.

Finally, there is something I'd like to briefly address in case anyone here read the recent article in the Palatinate student newspaper that ranked college common rooms by their amount of money spent per student. Treasurers from all colleges were very annoyed about said article because this is not something you can compare common rooms by. We all aim to break even, what we earn is what we spend. Some colleges charge high levies, so they can spend a lot of money. Other colleges charge lower levies, so they spend less money. Simple as that. Ustinov has the added difficulty of only a fraction of our students becoming GCR members, so of course our income is very low. On the other hand, by far not all members of our college ever participate in activities the GCR organizes, so you cannot simply divide our spending by the total number of students.

In case you are curious, we have so far earned £11,320.00 from GCR levies this academic year, which equals 283 GCR members. We have spent £2,809.95 on induction week activities, we expect to spend almost £5000 on the Summer Ball (after ticket sales!) and £8000 on our Summer BBQ, and almost £4000 on parties, karaoke nights, family events and so on. If we were to divide that by the number of GCR members, we would be spending £70 per person on social events, which is already much more than we earn in levies and shows how flawed the calculation published in the Palatinate student newspaper is. Bottom line: money does not dissolve into thin air and everything we make goes back to benefit you!

*Q: Since the Summer BBQ is just one day, is there any chance to decrease the budget for the BBQ and instead put more funding into societies?*

*A: Diana – The budget that we have for the Summer BBQ is £8000, however that may change because of the bad income we have had this year due to the Opt In system where we have to ask the students to pay to become a GCR member. In other years they have had to Opt Out and Livers In were automatically charged; Vera is looking into this. I can't say that we will spend the whole £8000 budget, we will probably spend less. Every year we have a certain amount of money for certain things so we can't say we will take some money from the Summer BBQ budget and put it into funding societies because they probably already have the money. We are trying to be fair to all the societies; we pay for half of the referees for all the societies and if they ask for equipment we try to fulfil all the equipment that they need.*

*Rayan – With regards to societies and funding we try to approach this in the most pragmatic way possible. Most if not all equipment requests have been approved, we cover hire fees for pitches for matches and we cover half of referee fees this year, which is a new policy. However, so far no clubs or societies have shown that they have a massive concern with funding and the policy is that we can be more flexible and look into giving you more funding if societies show that they can't afford things. Quite a few of the societies such as the football and hockey clubs charge a membership fee to the players. We also work within the constraints of the budget.*

*Alex – The decrease in funding hasn't affected the amount we would pay to individual sports teams and societies compared to previous years, it has only affected some of the social events we have throughout the year. The BBQ is an event which caters for all members of Ustinov including families, which a lot of our other events do not cater for as well.*

*Alastair – The total number of people who are involved in societies in the GCR is far fewer than the number of people that attend the Summer BBQ, and so it somewhat makes sense to spend more money on the BBQ when there are far more people that come and enjoy it as part of the tradition of Ustinov. Also another quick point, there are non-GCR members who are members of societies.*

*Alex – We receive a composition grant from the University and a requirement is that it has to be spent on things which every single member of Ustinov can go to so the BBQ is a good way of spending this money because it is inclusive of everyone including families; you couldn't have all 1600 potential Ustinov students join one sports team. The event is also for alumni and the BBQ is one of our most engaging events. We would also be happy to discuss this further with you after the meeting.*

**c. Vice President [CA]**

First of all, I am pleased to announce that the promised improvements to the

Observatory are now underway. Those of you who have used the Fisher Room or Music Room recently will hopefully have noticed that the walls are no longer bare. I'll be continuing to work with the Tech Officer and Facilities Committee to make the place even more homely. The Observatory also has an even more exciting addition - our Eco Rep Fiona has worked to get permission for us to set up an allotment for the college. As of last weekend, there are a number of beds dug over so they'll be ready for planting when spring arrives.

Our music scene continues to be awesome. On Friday we had another Ustinov Live, which was very well attended and featured many fantastic performers. Thanks again to the tech team and bar staff that made the event possible. We'll be aiming to have at least one more of these before the third term starts and are hoping to persuade some of the acts to also appear at the Summer BBQ.

Our second Stash order closed a week ago, I'll keep everyone posted when that gets delivered. We'll be having a third Stash order next term so anyone who has missed out will still have the chance to order this year.

I'm expecting that the pool tables will be re clothed and levelled very soon as match season is already underway. I also have plans to redo the facilities signs that the GCR have around Sheraton Park and at the Observatory to make it clearer to see what we have on offer. On a related note, if anyone notices anything that doesn't work properly or gets broken then let me, our Sheraton Park Rep or an Exec member know so we can get it looked at.

***Q:** The cycling machines and running machines in the gym don't connect to the Internet so we can watch YouTube etc., can this be fixed?*

***A:** Last year they didn't connect to the Internet and CIS said there was no way they could get them to connect, but they were mysteriously connected at the beginning of the year. I will look into it but it depends on CIS and is ultimately out of our control but I'll see what I can do.*

**d. Bar Steward [AL]**

The bar is doing well at the moment. We had a great time selling the Love Island cocktails and look forward to the upcoming Valentines celebrations. There will be themed cocktails and lots of love, so make sure you join in the fun. On that note, there will be a drag night on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February in celebration of LGBTQIA+ history month - SO much coming up.

The bar has also been in talks with our Eco Rep Fiona about how we can make the bar more sustainable. Tomorrow we have a meeting about the use of plastic cups and are looking into creating a vegan menu. If anyone would like to show their support for increased availability of vegan foods (cheese, milks etc.) please message Arabeth Lecuyer, the bar page or Fiona! We need to know people will buy it to be able to order it.

Lastly, if you are playing games in the bar and need certain lighting or sound, please let the bar staff know in a polite way. Bar staff are only human and will occasionally forget the needs of certain teams - a quick reminder before your game helps everyone.

**e. Clubs and Societies Officer [RR]**

**Sports Report:** by the time the meeting takes place, we will know who out of Loughborough or the Ustinov Men's Basketball Team won the Varsity Game earlier this afternoon - either way, congratulations to the team led by Alberto for making it to the Varsity! (*We won!*) Our racket sports team are growing: we will soon have a squash team ready to develop (if you would like to get involved, get in touch) and we will be re-launching our tennis team. If you are interested in playing tennis or running the tennis team, please fill in the form that was posted on the Facebook group a few days ago. All teams are doing fairly well; and if you would like to get involved in any new sports now that the sun is slowly coming back and staying up for more than 3 hours a day, check out the posters we have in the notice board in front of the Bar. We should also have swimming arrangements pretty soon as I met Team Durham on Friday to discuss this - we will let everyone who said they were interested in swimming know in due time. Very few people showed interest in a cricket club and, as such, we will not be launching a cricket club for the foreseeable future unless enough people show interest!

**Funding:** A number of clubs and societies requested money at the last funding call - all claims have been approved in part or in full. In other sports news, our recent Super Bowl event was a success and I hope you all enjoyed the hot dogs and quality half-time dancing.

**Clubs Report:** Our clubs have been doing good - the Hairstyle & Lifestyle Society has been running a few events in the past few weeks and notably for Chinese New Year; our gaming society will be ratified very shortly and should soon hold games nights in the Bar fairly regularly for those who would like to get involved and enjoy our wide range of games; the Love Island Society has been watching Love Island every once in a while in the Bar and has partnered up with the Bar to offer Love Island themed cocktails and mocktails and our Choir has also been growing and has represented Ustinov College recently at the Intercollegiate Cathedral Evensong, which was a success - please get in touch if you too would like to join the choir and sing in some of the best places in Durham! We also have a new Meme Society - if you want to get involved in memes, join them on Facebook.

**f. Acting DSU Representative [AH]**

I attended Assembly this week and so can give you a quick summary of what is going on in the DSU, how this affects Ustinov, and how I voted. The international students' experience survey closes on February 14<sup>th</sup>. I encourage international students to fill this out to ensure that DSU campaigns and lobbying is not just catered to domestic students. The nominees for student officers and trustees should have been announced by the time of this meeting. Due to some changes passed in the governing documents, SU reps are now allowed to promote specific candidates, and so I shall be advertising who I'm planning on voting for, and why.

The PG academic affairs officer has been investigating some of the hidden issues that face PG students, notably financial support and applications. He has created a working group to further investigate these issues, and they have found that the PGT application portal is very poor, and needs urgent updating. Additionally the student support fund needs a lot of work — currently to receive financial support from the University you must fill out a 17-page form, and have previously shown that you have taken out a commercial bank loan. This is completely unacceptable, especially given the significant fees that some PG students are forced to pay. The university is currently taking the view that the decrease in applicants for this support is evidence of students at Durham having no issues with the affordability of their experience. This view is naïve at best. Progress is slowly being made to give PG students who

teach/ demonstrate better working conditions. The current plan is to map students onto the University pay scale (should hopefully come out as pay grade 6 which is a minimum of £14.67/ h). Work is also being done to address potential pay gaps between those on employment contracts and those who are classed as casual workers.

You should be being paid monthly for teaching that you do — David has asked for students to email him with details if this is not the case. As many of you are aware, the DU finance system is essentially failing at the moment, and this will probably impact timely payments.

Cuth's PGM committee has created a campaign called "To PG or not to PG" which is now being expanded across the University. The aim of the campaign is to ease the stress for people who are currently applying to Postgraduate courses. To do this, they are asking current Postgraduate Students for their advice for these students, which may be based on your own experiences of applying or something you wished you had known or done differently. If you would like to be involved in this, let me know.

The SU Core position to decolonise the curriculum passed. As this is a core position, no immediate actions will be planned at this stage. While I supported this motion, I made clear that I'm worried that the practicalities of changing course material will fall on postdocs and early career researchers, who most likely will not be paid for this extra work. The UG academic affairs officer assured me that this will not be the case.

The motion for the DSU to divest from Barclays also passed. The university has committed to cut all investments with fossil fuel companies, but still banks with Barclays, which spent \$24bn financing fossil fuel companies between 2016 and 2018. I abstained from this motion. While I am not opposed to the motion in principle, no alternative banks were provided, and it was strongly implied that colleges would also have to divest from Barclays. This could be very difficult for colleges, especially independent common rooms (like ours), and would put a huge amount of work on future treasurers. The proposer tried to walk back these comments — instead saying that this vote would just be a vote on principle. I'm not sure how Ustinov could boycott Barclays on a university-wide level, but potentially still deal with them as a GCR. I would prefer more of a plan rather than grandstanding statements that could end up doing nothing. I voted to create an Open Forum, as I believe giving students time to properly argue the benefits of a motion is important, especially as the timeframe of Assembly and actions of the Chair does not always allow this.

Finally, the vote to remove the "Secret Ballot" procedural motion resulted in a tie! And thus failed. I voted against this motion. I believe that SU reps should always be accountable for their votes in Assembly, and the open format we used currently is generally ideal. To vote on a motion by secret ballot, 2/3 of voting members in Assembly must vote for it to be used for that motion. While there has not been a case that this has been successfully used in the last three or four years, there may be a time when it is needed, and the vast majority of voting members would all have to believe this is the case. If the procedural motion is removed, then Assembly could not add it back, Governance and Grants would have to, and I feel that they would be unlikely to do this.

*To highlight what Diana said earlier about David Evans' work for the Winter*

*Graduation, the University sent out a survey to students asking people who had graduated in winter what they thought about it and the feedback from the survey wasn't that negative but the University have refused to release the surveys themselves. As Ustinov has a lot of PhD students, if you have any thoughts on how not being able to graduate in June will affect you in terms of funding, access, job requirements, then please let David Evans know. The main reason the University says that students have an issue with Winter Graduation is the weather. It is not just that it will be cold; there is currently no marquee provided and people will have to queue up in the cold weather for hours on icy cobbles. Women could be wearing heels, which is a safety issue, and there could also be older family members or those in wheelchairs.*

**g. International Officer [SH]**

We have had a number of ISO sessions and so far, the international community seems to be doing well. There have been no major complaints and if there are complaints, I'm more than happy to hear them out. The GCR is here to help! *A lot of students in the ISO sessions felt like there was a communication barrier and would like English lessons. Thanks to Fiona we have arranged lessons informally for students. We will have more of these ISO sessions taking place with the next one scheduled for the 28<sup>th</sup> February.*

We have had trips to Newcastle and York. There is another one coming up, where we are taking you to Fountains Abbey in Ripon. We'll do as many more trips as possible. If you would like to suggest trip ideas, I'm more than happy to hear them out as well.

**h. Social Secretary [JI]**

During this term the GCR will be hosting a number of events. We will have just experienced Ustinov Live with some fantastic performers from here in the college. Further down the line however, there are a multitude of experiences that have been or are in the process of being planned. For example, Ustinov will be hosting a karaoke evening on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February. Shortly after, the GCR, GCP and LGBT+ society will be teaming up for LGBT history month to host a drag night with volunteer performers and karaoke on the 28<sup>th</sup> February. A bar crawl has also been planned out for St Patrick's Day and thanks to Arabeth, the bar will be offering various Irish themed cocktails before we cross into the centre of the city. Fortunately, we have managed to convince St Cuthbert's, St Chads, St Johns and Hatfield to allow Ustinov to crawl through their college bars.

Further down the line, we have been planning for a "Jazz and Wine" evening at Ustinov; we have received interest from Josephine Butler College Jazz Band for the event and will be releasing more information about this event shortly. Further to this, Ustinov will hopefully be hosting an inter-MCR cocktail evening in the city centre.

**i. Welfare Officer [BR]**

This term we will be continuing our welfare themed pub quizzes with a sexual health quiz next week, the day before Valentine's day and an International Women's Day themed quiz at the start of March. On top of the pub quiz, Phil will be showing Erin Brockovich on the Monday film night before International Women's Day as part of our events for the week. March is also women's history month and we will be working alongside college and Cafe des Arts in the GCP to create a "women of Ustinov" photo installation. If you would like to get involved, the details for how to send in a photo are on our social media and weekly newsletter and college's emails.

There will be a launch party here in the Sheraton cafe for the installation to which everyone is welcome. This month is LGBT+ history month and we have several events lined up. We will be screening Milk on the 17<sup>th</sup> February for film night and we will be hosting Usitnov's debut drag show Platypussy in the bar on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February. So far we have two acts, please let us know if you would like to perform.

Jess has been organising a collection for Changing Lives, local shelters in county Durham, thank you to those people who have already donated, including the housekeeping team who have donated six bags of old clothes. If you haven't yet donated, please feel free to donate quality used clothing, pyjamas, bedding and kitchenware as well as new craft supplies, make-up, toiletries, hair brushes, sanitary products, tea, coffee and biscuit.

The GCR have been keeping the welfare supplies in the bathrooms topped up and we have moved to more eco-friendly tampons. College has also started putting up the signs we created in the bathrooms about what should and should not be put in the sanitary bins in rooms. I am currently organising drop in sessions at the science site and Dryburn with dates to be announced. We still have welfare office hours in the GCR office every other Thursday, Monday, Wednesday and Saturday and can be got in touch with via our email or over Facebook for appointments outside of those times. If you need extra time or special arrangements in the summer exams, please get in touch with the Disability Service as soon as possible as, while the deadline isn't until March, it can take a while to get everything sorted.

#### 4. Agenda Items

##### a. Venue for the Summer BBQ update [DM]

After a lot of work and thanks to our Chair Alex Hampton, we have secured Collingwood as our venue for the Summer BBQ. The event will be on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August this year. Please book that date in your calendar! *If you would like to get involved with organising the BBQ or have ideas about entertainment or decoration then you do not need to be a part of the committee, feel free to send me a message and get involved.*

##### b. Motion to amend the standing orders on the titles of the female and male welfare representatives to alter these titles to Women's and Men's welfare representatives

The GCR notes that:

- The welfare team feels that 'female' and 'male' have connotations associated more closely with biological sex than gender.
- The welfare representatives are here to represent all members of Ustinov College, including transgender members.

The GCR believes that:

- Changing the titles of the roles as proposed will make their purviews appear more inclusive as 'women' and 'men' align more closely with gender.
- This may encourage transgender members to contact the appropriate welfare representative if they have an issue that they feel they need to discuss.
- Although the male and female welfare representatives represent the needs and concerns of binary transgender Ustinovians who fall under their

purview, the welfare representatives feel that the names of the roles currently do not reflect the inclusivity that the roles have.

- Changing the titles will properly center the welfare responsibilities of these roles on gender rather than sex.

The GCR resolves to:

- Amend Section 4.8 a) of the Standing Orders from:

*“The committee shall consist of: Welfare Officer (who shall chair Welfare Committee), President, Male and Female Welfare Representatives, LGBT+ Rep, Disability Rep, International Students’ Officer, Livers Out Rep, Sheraton Park Reps and the Dryburn Reps.”*

to read

*“The committee shall consist of: Welfare Officer (who shall chair Welfare Committee), President, Men’s Welfare Representative, Women’s Welfare Representative, LGBT+ Rep, Disability Rep, International Students’ Officer, Livers Out Rep, Sheraton Park Reps and the Dryburn Reps.”*

- Amend Section 11.1.2 a) of the Standing Orders from:

*“...Male Welfare Rep  
Female Welfare Rep...”*

to read

*“...Men’s Welfare Rep  
Women’s Welfare Rep...”*

Proposed by: Nicole Terry

Seconded by: Joe Wilcock

**Vote:**

*The motion was passed unanimously [32 votes].*

## 5. Hustings

### a. Communications Officer

**Candidate:** Maggie Lou

**Manifesto:**

“Hi, my name is Maggie Lou and I am applying for the position of Communications Officer in the Exec because I think communications can be improved and strengthened within the college.

I have previous experience in relevant roles through proactive communications with real businesses in my role as Sponsorship Officer to seek funding and partnerships for Durham University Business Society, and strategy execution for GCP SUCCESS. Transferable skills such as communication, negotiation, perseverance, teamwork and time management will be executed for the responsibility as Communications Officer.

If elected, I aim to:

Objective 1) Ensure a healthy and strong communicative relationship between the GCR Exec members and all members of the college, by reaching out through emails weekly, launching posts and keeping up to date.

Objective 2) Bring new advertising and marketing ideas to the table, to promote a positive and welcoming public image for all members. To create promotional campaigns on Facebook, Instagram page etc. Or as there is a big percentage of Chinese students in the college, maybe promote a WeChat Ustinov group chat to get them more involved in activities, and liaise with the social secretary to work on it. This adheres to the diversity and international image of Ustinov.

Objective 3) Reach out to a wider audience outside of Ustinov College, to attract more postgraduates to get involved with Ustinov activities such as Inter MCR formals that we will be hosting etc. Increase Ustinov College's publicity image.

Thank you for reading my manifesto and I look forward to hearing back from you soon."

**Hust:**

*Hi everyone, I'm Maggie, for those of you who don't know me, I'm a Masters student studying Business Management with International Business. I'm Chinese but I was raised in Singapore. I can speak English, Chinese and Spanish so my language abilities would be useful as a comms officer. I've decided to run for this position because I'm really into marketing and running campaigns, and I have previous experiences that might tailor to the skills needed to be communications officer. I was previously Sponsorship Officer for the Business Society so my main responsibility was to seek funding and sponsorships from real businesses; I had to maintain a good relationship with managers from different companies and ask if they were interested to host a guest speaker event or talk to reach out to members of our society. I'm also the strategy planner for the GCP SUCCESS society so I would say that my strengths lie in my communication, interpersonal skills, organisation and time management, which I think is quite crucial to be a communications officer. I feel I am quite creative as well in terms of designing a strategy or making promotional posts to get everybody involved. Especially I would like to raise that there is a large percentage of Chinese students living in College so I feel it is important to include them in events.*

**Questions:**

**Q:** *As a communications officer you may have to announce bad news as well as all the good news of upcoming events. How would you tell the GCR that Peter the Platypus is dead?*

**A:** *I didn't know he was dead? I don't really know how to answer that.*

**Q:** *In terms of students who don't always engage in college life such as those living out or students from China, what would be your plans to reach out to them and make them aware of events?*

**A:** *I'm aware that there is a Ustinov group chat and I feel a lot of Chinese people like myself are very involved with the chat as their main social media platform to get involved with events. If I get elected to be Comms Officer I would definitely translate the main posts on Facebook or Instagram, or create Chinese posts, to raise more awareness to Chinese students and get them more involved. Another problem is that a lot of our events involve alcohol and for a lot of Chinese students it is not in their*

*culture to drink, so I feel like we need to promote more events such as a food culture cooking exchange sort of event so Chinese students would be more likely to get involved. They could teach international students how to make Chinese food like dumplings in exchange for “British food” if they would like to learn how to make a good pie or something like that.*

**Q:** *What do you think is the most effective way of advertising our events that will target as many people as possible in college?*

**A:** *I would say the most effective way is obviously online so use of social media. Also to make digital posters so not necessarily posters like in the bar because a lot of people live out as well. Another interesting way would be to have polls for good event ideas to see what is the most popular.*

**Q:** *Given that Facebook, as well as Instagram accounts, is the main way of promoting events, what is your familiarity with these platforms and are you willing to use these accounts and set up live streams of the meetings for example?*

**A:** *I’m very familiar, I use all forms of social media as well as WeChat; I shouldn’t do because I probably spend too much time on social media rather than on my academic work! I would say I am tech savvy, and I really like designing posts. In terms of commitment I would definitely spend a lot of time on it.*

**Q:** *One of the main roles of Communications Officer is to coordinate the Newsletter, which goes out once or twice a week with a summary of all the events occurring. Would you be up for doing this?*

**A:** *Could I say no? Time management would play a huge role in it, but I am quite good with writing essays so I would say that’s not really a problem. I would check my emails regularly to see what people send to collate into the Newsletter.*

**b. Livers Out Representative**

**Candidate:** Shreya Khandelwal

**Manifesto:**

“AGENDA POINTS:

1. As Livers Out Rep, I will ensure better engagement amongst livers out from all over Durham and increase engagement between livers out and Ustinovians.
2. I will ensure that trips and Ustinov events are inclusive of them by ensuring pick-up and drop-off points in town and by ensuring that for major Ustinov events their access to the Café/bar is made easier.
3. Ensuring livers out are better engaged in the Ustinovian community by way of engagement with the local residents.
4. Ensuring better communication between the College and the Livers outside of social media groups.
5. As a liver out, I live in a private student accommodation, along with other Ustinovians who don’t have a way or incentive to maintain communications. I will create a database which includes details about their courses and living preferences.
6. Will work with the ISO, Welfare Officers to ensure drop-in sessions.
7. Will make office hours more accessible to livers out.”

**Hust:**

*Hi guys, my name is Shreya, I don’t live here so you don’t see me as often as you probably see the people who live here. I’m doing my Masters in Law and I live in*

*Gilesgate. Ustinov is my college, my picture hangs on the college wall, but I don't live here and sometimes engaging in events is problematic for those who live out. There is no real incentive such as convenience to come all the way for Ustinov Live for example. For all the events and trips such as Burns Night and Fireworks, the first thing I have to think about is I'm going to have to travel to the place, whereas Livers In can get coaches from Sheraton. As Livers Out Rep I would mostly work on the inclusivity factor. I have met Ustinovians who live out since arriving here but there is no real interaction between us as we don't come to Ustinov as often as people who live in as they have the convenience of coming down to the bar and socialising. I think communication is important, on top of making it convenient for Livers Out to be part of Ustinov, through social events and Newsletters. There is communication but I feel like we need more than just social media. If we had friends I would be more interested to come over here and be a part of the community. I think Ustinov should meet us halfway to help Livers Out so events are not just always at Ustinov. Another point I wanted to raise was to make meetings more accessible, because coming every Wednesday for exec is a task so I would look at options of making a drop-in session available for Livers Out, somewhere near town maybe a café near Gala.*

**Questions:**

**Q:** *If you had to bulldoze Nevilles Cross (including Ustinov) or Gilesgate, which would you go for?*

**A:** *I've paid so I don't want to bulldoze my house.*

**Q:** *We have been trying to get Livers Out involved in trips. Would you work with us to arrange for the coaches to pick up from a point in the city centre as well as from Sheraton?*

**A:** *This is something I would want to try and do as I went on the trip to York and I had to leave early to get to Sheraton to make the coach and the coach did drive through the centre so I think there could have been a pick-up point at say the Gala and a few other points. There would be no extra cost and the convenience factor is big for people. It would be easier for Livers Out to get to Gala instead of Sheraton.*

**Q:** *In previous years we have had various events put on specifically for Livers Out, usually centrally located in town or walks around Durham, things that would be easier for those who don't live here at Sheraton. Do you have any particular ideas for events you would put forward to try and engage with Livers Out more?*

**A:** *There was talk about bar crawls and things that are not just in Ustinov and these will attract anyone who lives out, especially if it is an event that is more than just alcohol or more than just food, this will attract more than just one kind of person. I think a café would be a good idea to engage everybody.*

**Q:** *One of the most stressful points in a PhD student's life is trying to find accommodation in second year, especially if they lived in college in first year. In the past there have been accommodation talks to try and help students find accommodation in future years, is this something that you would be willing to help facilitate?*

**A:** *I can help other people get accommodation for example people coming from India don't have a lot of idea of where to stay outside of college so I would be more than happy to talk with PhD students and arrange talks.*

**Q:** *When we plan events at Ustinov we try to make sure they are intercultural. A lot of people do also live out so how do you propose you will get them to come here from wherever they are living?*

**A:** *I think there has been a lot of intercultural activities revolving around food here at Ustinov and they have actually attracted a lot of international students living out to come to Ustinov. I know a lot of people who have attended these events and I am now more comfortable with coming to Ustinov more because I have met friends through these events. These events do increase inclusivity and their incentive to come here. If these events were happening here as well as some events in town then I think this would be great and would increase the number of new faces you see around Ustinov.*

**Q:** *There is a Facebook group for Livers Out that tries to highlight events around Durham specifically for people living out. If elected would you run the group?*

**A:** *Yes sure I would be happy.*

**Q:** *One of the issues for Livers Out is getting back from events. If the event ends at 12 people don't want to be walking back alone. Would you have any plans for coordinating groups of Livers Out to head back together?*

**A:** *Sure yes, I think this would be good for people coming in and out because it is easier if you have friends to share a taxi. I could make a Facebook or Whatsapp group for people going back to the same area. A taxi pool for Livers Out would also be a good thing.*

**c. Ball secretary**

**Candidate:** Amy Bartlett

**Manifesto:**

*"Hi guys! I'm Amy, and I'm running for the position of Ball Secretary. As some of you may already know, I would love to help out with the Ustinov Social Committee!*

*During my time as an undergraduate in Sheffield, I was the Social Secretary for the Photographic Society and the Activities Officer for the Women in Business Society. Both roles placed me at the centre of the decision making processes for both academic and non-academic socials and events. I believe that the work I did for the Women in Business Society's end of year event and after party, in particular, has given me ample experience that will aid me as your Ball Secretary. My main duties included: liaising with venues and guest speakers; helping organise food and drink; promoting the event on social media; decorating the venue; and, co-hosting.*

*If elected, I would not only strive to make our summer ball the best it can be, but I would also be keen to help out with other GCR socials. As an MA Anthropology student, I am not tied into set teaching hours, so I will most likely be around whenever I am needed, and will have enough time to help plan and carry out events to the best of my ability."*

**Hust:**

*Hi guys I'm Amy, I'm a Masters Anthropology student new to Durham this year and I would like to be your Ball Secretary. As some of you already know I have shown interest in the social committee before and I would love to get involved. I had quite a lot of experience at my old university; I was social sec for two different societies and*

*my job involved planning events and trying to get people to sign up. Most of my responsibilities were planning the event, contacting people for venues, food, drink, activities etc. so I am very happy to get involved in that way. I don't know what has been planned so far for Summer Ball but I would like to get involved. The Summer Ball has to be a big inclusive event because apart from the BBQ it's the last main event. In terms of organising transport, if you can't get coaches then maybe organising taxis for people who live out would be good, or those at Dryburn. I would make sure there are interesting non-alcoholic drinks, and send out polls before to work out what people want from the Ball because I have heard that certain people are not feeling very represented.*

**Questions:**

**Q:** *The most important part of the Ball is the theme. What ideas have you got for a theme?*

**A:** *Seeing as we are in 2020, the 1920's could be a good theme for example Gatsby has been done a lot of times before, or maybe Peaky Blinders. Another idea would be a Secret Garden theme because it's summer. I think getting students' input on what they would like to see is important so I would definitely be up for having drop-in sessions.*

**Q:** *You mentioned that some people said they were feeling under-represented, how would you deal with this?*

**A:** *It's rare that you can 100% cater to every single person. I think giving people the chance to have their say will help a lot then you can have ways to compromise and find something that everyone will be happy with.*

**Q:** *A job of Ball Secretary would be having the name tags in on time and printing them. Would you be able to do this?*

**A:** *Yes I am an anthropology student in University one day a week so I will definitely have enough time.*

**Q:** *Do you have any specific ideas about how the site itself (Ramside) could be utilised? Going to Ramside to discuss opportunities would be useful, have you thought about going there to see what could be made available from the venue and using that as a way of coming up with ideas?*

**A:** *Definitely, I have not been, I don't have a picture in my head of what it looks like so definitely going and seeing what could possibly be done would be an important first step before promising anything that can't be fulfilled.*

**Q:** *You mentioned potentially providing taxis for people who live outside Ustinov, how would you get the funding for this and set it into motion?*

**A:** *I would have to speak to the committee and college, at the moment it is just an idea I don't know if it would be possible. For a collegiate University you expect you shouldn't have to go the extra mile for people to be involved in the events so I think it is the least that can be done to provide transport for everybody.*

## 6. Any Other Business

### a. Open roles:

#### **Jordan Warren, Candidate for Ents Officer:**

*Hi I'm Jordan, I'm studying for a Masters in Law, apologies for not submitting a manifesto in advance but as predicted January to February has been hellish for me in terms of job applications so I wanted to wait until now to apply so I can give my full attention to the job. I know the Summer BBQ is a big part of the Ents Officer's role, I'm really excited about that. I know Diana already mentioned that having student input would be great such as student questionnaires. Also building on things that people have already mentioned, inclusivity is a big factor; if you don't drink alcohol you don't want to be just offered a J2O or lemonade, mocktails would be a great thing especially at the Summer BBQ. Being a vegetarian myself the last thing you want is a dry bean burger when everyone is walking around with ribs, burgers and everything, so that would be a big factor as well. Another part of being Ents Officer is being responsible, I only have two days in Uni, so I'm really flexible in this regard so I'd be happy to do all the jobs. Thank you!*

**Q:** *What does Ents stand for?*

**A:** *Entertainment officer.*

### **b. Fiona (Eco Rep) – BSL event on Tuesday**

*I am hosting a British Sign Language event 7-9pm on Tuesday (11<sup>th</sup> Feb) here in the bar if anyone wants to come along. Also there is a Climate Strike on Friday.*

**c. For the last couple of years, the Principle of the college has come to the beginning of GMs in order to address the students directly and answer any questions. Could we ask Sarah Prescott to come to a future GM in order for us to ask questions? A couple of people have requested this.**

*Alex – I will happily ask Sarah Prescott. It is well within students' rights to have an open forum to ask questions.*

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Rebecca Salthouse

GCR Secretary

09/02/2020