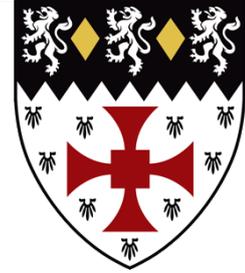


Ustinov College GCR Exec Meeting

MINUTES



18:30 pm, 11/03/20

1. **Apologies:**
2. **Approval of minutes from last meeting.**
 - a. Approval of minutes from the 04/03/20 - *Passed on a general aye*
3. **Matters arising from previous minutes.**
 - a. CA to look at a list of local places to visit on the website. *Ongoing*
CA to look into getting an air hockey table. *Ongoing*
CA/AS to check the extra cost for the additional power cables for the BBQ. *Done*
CA/AS to enquire about the conditions under which we'd need to move inside or have a fixed cover for the BBQ stage. *Done*
CA/AS to see about meeting the tech guy when he is in Durham. *Done*
CA/DM to follow up on catering for the BBQ. *Ongoing*
CA to advertise the board game amnesty. *Ongoing*
 - b. SH to look into Ramadan events. *Ongoing*
SH and AH to start looking into "Getting to Know You" quiz. *Ongoing*
SH to plan the Alnwick trip. *Ongoing - delayed*
 - c. VB will draft an email and forward to ML to send out via comms about the Castle formal ticket sales. *Done*
 - d. ML to post in the committee group weekly about what people want in the newsletter. *Done*
ML to share the PS4 in the newsletter. *Ongoing*
 - e. AH to find out the previous college cocktail's ingredients. *Ongoing*
 - f. RR to get the games society to have a games night in the bar. *Ongoing*
 - g. JI to change the times of the Discos to 02:00 as we already have late openings booked. *Done*
 - h. DM to contact David about photography for the Castle formal. *Done*
4. **Agenda Items:**
 - a. **Coronavirus Planning [AH/RR]**

Increases in cases of COVID-19 are being spread around the UK, and will probably hit Durham soon. It is possible that the University could be closed at some period.

Either way, we can expect a lower attendance at events, and may need to cancel some events. Especially in high budget events such as the Ball and BBQ, do we have any cancellation plans/ insurance we can take out?

* How will this affect future & planned events? I understand that the college/university's guidance is to go forward until they tell us not to but as we are an independent common room and this could have significant financial consequences for us, we might want to settle on the GCR's position (independently of what college and the university's position is — especially considering that it is not unlikely that the university suddenly decides to cancel all events, leaving us with significant money spent in preparation for these events that we can no longer recoup). Most notably, we should very urgently look into the cancellation & force majeure conditions attached to our most expensive contracts for events (for example, with Dusk Till Dawn, any Ball entertainment, etc.).

* Nearer in time, regarding the Castle Formal: I could not find any Refund Policy attached to the Fixr sale of tickets but I expect that, unless the virus suddenly disappears tomorrow, we will have a non-negligible number of students asking for ticket refunds due to the fear of coronavirus.

* I have had similar concerns expressed as far as clubs & societies are concerned — the Choir is notably asking if it should continue with their activities as they have a number of rehearsals coming and plan to perform at Ustinov Live. *Choir rehearsal has been cancelled. We can't advise any differently to clubs and societies about their rehearsals other than what the University advises us – the decision is ultimately up to them whether they would like to continue with rehearsals.*

The University have advised to not plan any events for the next 3 months and not pay for any events for the next week until we hear more. Ustinov Live could be cancelled last minute without any cost – we can potentially advertise this on Friday/Monday unless the University cancel all events. The late night opening is already booked in for the end of term party but can be changed. It would be best to not pay for the party and leave the announcement of the cancellation until after the Uni release a statement. Vote to cancel Dusk til Dawn for the party passed unanimously [11 votes]. We can still advertise that the bar is open and put some music on if people still want to come down. We will wait to hear from University College about the Castle formal; if they cancel then we do not pay and can refund everyone. The St Patrick's Day bar crawl will also be cancelled as bars will most likely be shut.

Summer Ball: all payments that can be held back should be and planned as late as possible. People may not want to buy tickets even if we go ahead and we need to know more about cancellation policies. We can continue with the planning of the Ball, as the situation will hopefully have changed by June, but not sign on anything or make any payments until we have more information.

General Meeting: we may not meet quorum and also we may have to cancel if the University advises this. Definitely not a good idea to provide pizza. We may need an emergency meeting after the first one. It is also on the same day as the Easter Family Party – the food has been ordered and cannot be cancelled.

b. Vending Machine Purchas [CA]

Proposal to pass £200 – passed unanimously [11 votes].

c. Budget for allotment seedlings [CA]

We have received a large number of seeds for free so at present, do not need many bought this year. Exceptions include potatoes and onions.

Proposal: pass £10 to cover purchase of seed potatoes and onions. This could in theory be taken from a new personal budget but we believe it should be included with the money already spent on starting the allotment (which is adding up somewhat but we are almost there). *Motion to pass £10 – passed unanimously [11 votes].*

5. Officer Reports:

a. Bar [AL]

We could see which of the past cocktails (e.g. Love Island, Valentine's themed cocktails..) sold the most and then we could take the best and put out a poll and use this as a college drink.

b. Clubs & Societies [RR]

- Josephine Butler College will soon implement a new locker system where the key will be kept in a locker that can be opened by anyone authorised to do so with their campus card; and the key can then be returned by anyone else (it does not require surrendering your campus card or returning the key with the same campus card). This will save their porters' time and I am not opposed to it since their President has addressed all the concerns I had last time this was brought up. I am currently drawing up a list of a few people for every club that uses the Durham High School for Girls to add them to the list of authorised people. They will then need to be inducted by the college's Operations Manager — and we are trying to find an appropriate time during the week.

- I will shortly email Team Durham to arrange facilities for sports over the vacation and will keep you posted

- For swimming, it would appear that Team Durham is fine with giving us the £200 and has simply asked that we invoice them for it and then it is up to the GCR to provide some sort of system for individual refunds. I will simply need to ask for further details as to what they want us to do precisely in terms of keeping records, etc. *Is there any way of buying tokens from Freemans for swimming that we can give out? AP: RR to look into this.*

Tennis poll has shown some interest so we should be able to get a tennis club up and running again.

c. Communications [ML]

Newsletters will be posted on Thursdays. The newsletter will be sent out tomorrow afternoon.

d. DSU [AH]

By the time of this meeting the DSU elections should have been released, and are as follows:

President — Seun Twins

Welfare and Liberation Officer — Ewan Swift

PG Academic Affairs Officer — Sarah McAllister

UG Academic Affairs Officer — Nailah Haque

Opportunities Officer — Anna Marshall

RON has been disqualified.

The vote breakdown should be out on Monday.

I'll also have attended the latest SU reps meeting, and shall be attending Assembly on Thursday. *One of the motions is to make sure all the workers receive minimum living wage, which could be detrimental to bar profits if all bar staff receive this. The bar staff will also have to take on more work for not a large increase in wage and potentially lose shifts. Following discussion, Alex will vote down this motion.*

e. Facilities [CA]

The tech part of the jazz event was a success. We would like to point out that the event took the tech team around 10 people-hours to prepare for, run and pack away after. While we are very happy to do this, it is worth bearing in mind for future event planning (some kind of food based compensation might be worth considering in the future?).

With the stash arrival, I have postponed advertising a board games amnesty. On a similar note, I am planning on making media cabinet and pool signs very soon.

We have finally had some success with the Greenhouse investigations. It seems as though there was a promised reimbursement from the Howlands transition that was never paid; if everything goes well, we should hopefully receive £8k to cover the loss of fixed assets. Some of this should be spent on a new Greenhouse, after which we need to have a think what else could be provided here that is currently lacking. This should probably be used to buy assets etc. that will keep value for some time (so mainly facilities-based) as it is a one-time payment to cover asset loss. On a related note, I will be coordinating a full inventory over the summer to enable us to record properly the value of GCR property and use it for future accounts submissions.

f. Finance [VB]

Figures:

Balance Brought Forward (04/03/20) £46,902.14

Vera Bieber (GCR Adobe) (08/03/20) -£24.96

Vera Bieber (GCR Netflix) (08/03/20) -£8.99

Bidfood (Feb2 order) (08/03/20) -£203.05

Butler JCR (Jazz band) (08/03/20) -£115.00

Balance Carried Forward (11/03/20) £46,550.14

g. International Officer [SH]

Some students are concerned about going home over Easter with COVID-19 and not being able to return so a lot of people are staying here. It would be an idea to have a welfare drop-in session for this and will be coordinated with Bryony. Alnwick trip has been delayed for the foreseeable future.

AP: SH/BR to arrange a welfare drop-in session.

h. Livers Out Rep [SK]

Livers out drop-in sessions started today at the CLC on the science site. One student showed interest in the session being held in town. Shreya will share information about living out after college tenancy ends, such as details for estate agents and

information about the different areas you can live in Durham.

i. Social [JI]

See agenda point a.

j. Steering [AH]

The new office hour rota has been created, and for the first time we are having regular drop-ins in town to hopefully help engage livers out. All new committee members are up on the board and website. The next GM will be held on Sunday 22nd March.

k. Welfare [BR]

Everything is fine(!)

l. University/College [DM]

University matters:

At the JCR PresComm meeting, the membership of their College Advisory Board was discussed; the consensus was at least 2 students from their exec and some students following Common Room's recommendation (depending on the issues/goals of the college). Aiming to have an equilibrium between students from the Common Room and people chosen by the Principal.

At the IndyComm meeting, we discussed a system that Van Mildert is designing to be incorporated on DUO as an add-on so we can have better access to the payments of the levy for next year. This system will be shared with University and we expect it to be accepted.

At the Pre-Mediation meeting, the following concerns were discussed:

- Discounting of the RON candidate in the recent elections will cause distrust of the SU amongst the wider student body. In our view, the discounting of the RON candidate goes against prior precedence and a disproportionate response to the original allegation made involving a President; there were no prior steps to solve the issue before the decision was made to discount the RON candidate. We confirmed that the RON campaign was not directed at the individual candidates, but acknowledged that the election results have taken too long to be published, thus causing distress to the candidates running. We confirmed that the intention of the RON campaign was to alert the SU to the issue surrounding them being representative of the wider student body. We expressed that a breakdown of the results should be published, including those pertaining to the RON candidate.
- We raised concern over the apparent readiness of the SU to use legal action to resolve issues, without consulting opposing parties through proper internal mediation.
- We expressed concern over the SU's ability to represent student views. Currently, the SU represents its own views, while we are individually elected to represent their Common Rooms to the wider University.
- The distribution of university-allocated monies to the SU and Common Rooms was unfair; currently, the former received substantially more funding than the latter.
- SU Officers are often too busy with meetings in the central university to connect with the students they represent (compounded by the fact that they do not live in

College, have lots of staff working around them, and have an isolated office space) and therefore we should be able to take a more active role in the SU.

- The University has a formal relationship with the SU, but an informal relationship with the Common Rooms; this should change.
- Lack of information sharing: the SU has access to critical information, but it is seldom shared or discussed with the Common Rooms; greater communication is needed between the SU and Common Rooms. We are concerned that we do not get to hear how we are being represented at university meetings by the SU. We are rarely approached for opinions/feedback outside of our regular PresComm meetings, which are not always attended by a SU representative.
- SU Assembly: a number of issues were raised, a review of the function of Assembly is needed, and refocusing of the SU representative role in Colleges is needed. The atmosphere at Assembly is intimidating; anonymous voting has not been allowed, thus causing the issue when votes are cast in terms of SU representatives from the Colleges feeling intimidated. Greater visibility of the motions/selection of the motions is needed pre-Assembly.
- We felt that power-sharing between the SU and Common Rooms needs to be agreed fairly (including representation on key university committees).
- We also raised concern about a number of the incoming Officers and their sincerity in their willingness to work on developing a relationship with the Common Rooms. One of the newly elected Officers posted on social media a comment including a teasing/derogatory comment about the students who voted for the RON candidate.

College matters:

At the SPRA meeting, local residents expressed their wish to make a drawing competition after our Easter Family party. I have pointed out that I will keep them posted in case our event gets cancelled due to Covid-19. Local residents ask us to help them publicise the Co-wheels car that is parked at College to our students. Helen Martin is the ambassador for the Durham running festival and has asked us if Ustinov College would like to have an international team who can participate in this event. She will share more information that we can send to our students. At the CMT meeting, we agreed to continue with plans of all events, until further notice. We have to send final numbers on Monday for the Castle formal, and will be cautious with food at our Easter Family party; I have spoken with Trudie and she will make arrangements so that kids don't get access to the food.

Exec matters:

At the IndyComm meeting, I asked for advice on how to deal with the possible payment from College to have sabbatical positions on our exec. Their advice was to search if College would agree to do a restricted fund to the GCR. Another point that was discussed is the use of a certain card payment platform between all common rooms so that we can get a reduced fee for transactions. On 4th June from 1 pm to 4 pm we will have the "IndyComm Induction meeting".

6. AOB

Rebecca Salthouse

GCR Secretary

11/03/2020