

Ustinov College GCR Emergency General Meeting

Minutes

7:00 pm, 13/09/20



1. Apologies: *Jl*
Present: *22 present at the start.*
2. Approval of minutes from last meeting.
 - a. Matters arising from the last minutes
 - i. Election Results:
Welfare Officer – Jake Brooker
Passed on a general aye (practice vote 17 for, 1 abstention)
3. Officer Reports:
 - a. **President [DM]**

University matters

- UE (before called UEC) has passed a document that will have some guidelines during the Induction period. This includes a timeline, definition of the bubbles for College and accommodation, and definition of households for livers-out. Students who need to self-isolate are able to buy from University a food pack, this will contain ambient food packages that do not need to be chilled. Individuals would need to use the kitchen on their own and clean it down in between meals. During the arrivals, Belmont Park and ride will be used for Bailey Colleges and Maiden Castle for Hill Colleges. In order to have events with some sort of COVID-19 security, University will provide the use of wristbands to differentiate each segment, on each College.
- No events in town will be allowed during induction, Common Rooms can plan events on College, based on segments, formed by grouping together a number of households with a maximum size of 30 people.
- WSE is working to provide access to the website that will be used for the general WSE, the access will be for Colleges and Common Rooms. Each College club will have a video clip with a later Q&A session.
- 13 students from Ustinov replied to the College Formal Dining survey. Essentially, the three biggest things that students care about are:
 - * Dining with their corridor mates/housemates
 - * Dressing up
 - * Socialising with friends after the formal
- And then priorities differ across different colleges - e.g. the self-catered colleges value the formal food and the meal service experience more than catered colleges. The Catering Services Task & Finish group are going to use the data from this survey to essentially figure out how colleges can run formals during COVID times.
- On the meeting with the JCR Presidents, we discussed some solutions they are trying to implement in order to be able to open their gyms, one of this was to have a Google form so students can sign up and if there is no student volunteer who can be in the gym, one of these students will act as a volunteer. We also review the plans for the Matriculation photo, some of their ideas are having an individual photo of the student and then have a College, another option is having

photos per segments and the last idea was to take some aerial photos with social distancing.

College matters

- Since mid-July Dryburn Court has had issues with their internet, College is looking to have a more long-term solution. Moreover, Dryburn Court will be under working from the 10th of September until December, work will start in Brackenbury and continue to Keenan House, on Keenan House, the work will be per floor, so residents have less impact. This work will be announced on the accommodation offer.
- I have been in conversations with College to address the possibility of opening our bar/cafe area as a study space and the gym, they need strategic approval before they can reopen them. However, they have mentioned that the focus is on the start of next term.
- Brackenbury will not be used for the first term. The College will focus on concentrating students in Sheraton Park first. The configuration of College following University guidelines will be that each flat is a household and they will be combined, depending on their location, to form a segment, We will have segments from A to Q at Sheraton Park and segment R and S at Keenan House, each segment will have between 12 to 30 students.
- Matriculation College photo for the academic year 2020-2021 will be postponed to be taken after March, giving time for students who will join us in January to arrive and hoping the situation is better.
- The cafe/bar area will change the name in order to not confuse the new incoming students, in the College handbook will be addressed as Common Room while the Cafe is closed. The foosball table won't be able to be used, and we are looking if the pool tables will be able to be used.

Exec matters

- The GCR Levy system has been updated with the new levies and following the conditions of access to facilities, a page in our website has been designed to explain what are the differences and benefits of them.
- I have also submitted the President's report for the academic year 2019-2020 and a welcome message for the academic year 2020-2021 to the Ustinovian magazine.
- The HUB is ready to be used, and we now have the dates booked for our formals, we are hoping to have them, however, the Induction formal has been cancelled, making the Bonfire formal our first formal (subject to change). Another changes on our formals are Burns Night formal might not have a bagpipe, we might not have a Castle formal, due to restrictions of access to other Colleges, however, we might be able to use on of the mentor dinner's booked on March and celebrate on that month the Birthday of Ustinov.
- On MCR PresComm we have decided to have a joint Pub Quiz during Induction week.

Q: Is there scope for confusion between the Common Room name compared to the GCR.

A: Potential for confusion is understood. This is common in other colleges. Bar won't be open at all times.

Q: Clarify: "3 options for the tiers are up at the moment"- are we advertising all

three, particularly when the gym isn't open? Could somebody buy accidentally the 3rd tier?

A: We're waiting for induction week, since that's when we need to advertise levy prices. We have checked with website coordinators and are able to change when needed and ensure that it is working as expected. Third tier isn't advertised yet.

b. Vice-president [-] (written by CA)

- In addition to the facilities mentioned by Diana, we are also looking into how to run the Observatory and GCR office whilst allowing for social distancing and cleaning. Some of the office purposes can be replaced with a virtual office hours - this will let people ask questions and get advice without needing to visit reception. For things which need to be done physically, we are working on a system to ensure that volunteers and visitors can interact safely.

- The observatory booking system is already very close to what is needed to let us use the space, we just need to make sure that cleaning of touch points and access to hand sanitiser/ soap is always possible.

c. Treasurer [DM/CA]

- College is waiting for Jeremy Cook to have his approval so the money from the transition fund can be transferred to the GCR. We are also still waiting on the £8k payment for assets lost during the Howland's move. We have submitted the annual report for the 18-19 academic year to the Charities Commission and are still working on change of signatories for the bank.

- We have made almost all the payments related to Virtual Ustinov Day (which will end up totalling around £2900) along with some CS stuff and various minor things that have come up over the summer (thanks Vera for assisting with this).

- We currently have £34,121.54 in our current account and £48,428.31 in our savings account. *This is in-line with previous years savings.*

Q: Process of getting signatories transferred over complete?

A: Still ongoing – problems contacting the bank.

Q: Who are the signatories – was previously Diana and Vera, trying to change to Diana and Connor. Issues with signatures not matching, but contact on the phone hasn't been fruitful. In-process of being completed.

d. Welfare [JB]

- I have run inventory on welfare supplies such as sexual health and menstrual products to make sure we are well-stocked for the induction period and Michaelmas term. Preparing campaigns for the next month. We intend to cover three main areas during the quarantine and induction period; as well as the usual campaigns on alcohol awareness and sexual health, we will also focus on loneliness during a period that could be quite isolating for some individuals living in or out of college.

- Fortunately we will be able to provide a variety of virtual social events that enable livers-in, livers-out, and remote students to participate as one collective. We will of course be collectively publicising these communal events and opportunities to socialise that will be available during the induction period, to maximise attendance, and are also working on other methods of helping students meet and interact with those outside of their flats/segments. I am also creating a 14-day (or two 7-day) self-care campaign(s) with a daily task that students can either complete alone, with people in their segment, or friends

virtually.

- Many of the welfare-related events that were planned over the spring and summer were unfortunately not possible and will hopefully be able to be rescheduled for later in the academic year. We aim to celebrate Black History Month this October with several virtual events (including a lecture and quiz), and to do the same for Pride, Disability Awareness, and International Men's and Women's Day.

- As set in motion last year, we will continue to offer welfare hours to students that align with regular office hour slots for members of the Welfare Committee. With that in mind, please remember that there is plenty of support available to students regardless of whether they are currently in Durham or away. For signposting and direction please email welfare.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk.

Q: Do you think we'll still be doing virtual events next year.

A: Depending on regulations, if we can't hold in person events then yes. Even if we can hold events in-person, we of course will hold virtual events alongside these to help those who are shielding/distance-studying etc.

e. Clubs & Societies [CV]

- Main concern in the past weeks was to come up with a plan to re-open the gym for the next year. Still no final decision has been made but we're working towards it.

- There was an opportunity for Ustinovians who have a gym membership to use the MC gym which has opened again but we still haven't heard anything else from college or Maiden Castle.

- It's official that there will be no college sport at least till January 2021. Team Durham is looking to restart the college leagues in Epiphany term. However there's still the chance to have training slots. So far Durham High School of Girls have told us they will not offer their gym at least till January 2021. MC will be able to offer some but limited slots in their facilities.

f. Communications [-]

- We have created our new facebook group "Ustinov College 2020-2021" and linked the general GCR Facebook page, our Livers-out page, Dryburn residents page and the President page. We also have Whatsapp and WeChat groups ready for the new year and have been working on updating our website with information to match the Covid situation as well as using the new Sharepoint platform that the University is trying to encourage use of.

- We have shared our past events with the Nevilles Cross Residents, and have been added to their magazine. We've also created a new 'GCR Alumni' group on Facebook to help us keep touch with ex-students who may want to still be involved in online events or come along to future Summer BBQs.

Q: How many Ustinov groups are there? Many people are in 4+ groups; which ones are good?

A: We tend to organise by year – most recent will be 20/21.

g. DSU Representative [-]

- At the beginning of August, the new officers have taken their position. We have shared our new Facebook group and we have sent updated information, so the section for Ustinov College is up to date in the DSU website

Q: Comment from Alex Hampton – previous DSU rep

"The DSU has budgeted £7K on stage 2 of their democracy on an external review (the stage one external audit cost £2k), despite student feedback that this is a poor

use of funds. Given that a large number of student groups have had their funding cut, eg. Palatinate, could you please push the DSU for some transparency as to how this is a good use of limited funds, especially as the decision was made before students were consulted about the format of stage two. Student feedback from these consultations was heavily against having an external review."

A: Yes, we will push.

h. International Officer [MZ]

- Since taking over as ISO, most of the progress that I have made revolves around the posting of International celebrations on social media. As the pandemic has stopped us from doing any trip, acknowledging the presence of the international festive and celebrations are made. However, in the future, I have planned to do several trips as the lockdown is gradually lifted. This can be done by doing trips concentrated in the North East. For example, we can visit monumental places in York, the seaside at Whitby, or the magnificent Bamburgh Castle. The long-distance trip such as going to Edinburgh can be made for the next term with the expectation of the pandemic cases has dropped.

- Besides that, I also act as a BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicities) representative where I am responsible for the welfare of the BAME together with the university-wide campaign. Thus, I have been in touch with DPOCA (Durham People of Colour Association) on the pertaining matters. Added to that, I have proposed in this AGM meeting for a precedent BAME representative post as the issue of BAME should be beyond the pedigree of 'international'.

i. Livers Out Rep [SK]

- Nothing new to report except I now have a finalised version of the housing guide. This will shortly be available on the GCR website.

j. Social [JI] (written by CA)

- While we've not been able to run all the events we wanted to this summer, we did still manage to run our virtual college day (a socially-distanced BBQ alternative). We were live for almost 7.5 hours on YouTube, presenting live music and awards as well as working in some prerecorded content from many Ustinovians - including some sports captains, eco rep, college choir and loads of other talented musicians. We also had some side-entertainments running on discord, including a series of challenges put together by this years quizmasters. I'd like to thank everyone that took part, including those who joined us from home and commented along but of course also every single one of our volunteers, whether camera operators, social media team or our tech guys. Our stream now has 1000 views and I think stands as a great example of what we can all do together, even when we are fighting against unfavourable circumstances.

k. Bar [-]

- From a meeting between Bar stewards and University, it was shared the policies on how the bars should operate, similar to what we can see in Pubs in town. A person taking people to a table (booked in advance for a 1-hour slot) and people will be ordered through a member of the staff. No loud noise is allowed, such as music or TV. Tables have to be arranged by segments so they do not need social distancing, otherwise, the capacity of the bar will have to be reduced.

Q: Bar opening time?

A: Deadline will be 21st September – need to pass a series of safety tests. Waiting on

track and trace, and bar training for covid-safety policies and track and trace system.

Q: Pool tables available?

A: Work in progress – waiting for advice from league. Hoping to have football table, pool table and darts available, but need to wait until we have a firm idea of allowed numbers. Pool leagues might be different.

4. Agenda Items:

a. **Motion to pass the updated 2020-2021 GCR annual budget.**

Copies of this budget will have been circulated prior to the meeting.

The only changes to the version shared for previous meeting – now that tiers have changed, the prices for memberships that we might or might not have have changed. Hopefully we will be able to get lots of students at the first tier £1 (300 students); we hope that they will upgrade to full tier 3 (200 students) as the main income for the levies. The best case is that we will be able to host the typical parties (the only real form of spending – formals and trips tend to break even). We changed the Netflix and Disney+ to allow variety in viewing. These parties would be in January, so still plenty of time. If we can't host these events, then still can try and do the social parts.

Formals break even, same number of parties (late night openings – checking with college about this).

Other big changes include gym memberships numbers – still hoping for a reasonable signup if we can hold a system for this voting

Proposer: Diana Martinez

Secunder: -

Alex Blair formally opposes the motion in its current form.

Q: Concern for the budget as written is that it is meant to be a response to the budget passed at AGM – varying on university Plan A and Plan B scenarios. Delays understood. Main concern is that it doesn't appear to be significantly different to previous budget, aside from updates about which induction week can occur; this appears to be a budget hoping for a full year of events, rather than preparing for a socially distanced year. Does the GCR know what the minimum budget for a socially distant year is?

A: This budget was planned for activities in induction week when we could've had used the bar. The new news about changing sizes of segments etc is complicated – we are waiting for university guidelines. There is scope to protect what we can offer to students within the bar – still possible to have some events. If this changes and everything is digital, then we will have to review and change a lot of things. E.g. formals haven't changed despite government advice since uni have said that we can do formals.

AB reply: appreciate that these have been adapted and things are changing very quickly.

Wording of the AGM was that we need a socially distanced year, reasoning being that we can adapt Vera's budget for scenario A, and a new forecast made for a digital budget with planning for spending on essential payments and activities (multiple induction weeks etc). Not enough prediction power for avoiding things later on; the GCR can't answer this at the moment, if in a fully socially distanced year, what is the budget looking like for this.

DM reply: The way we have proposed the budget was thinking of socially distanced

events, despite the numbers that we would have. We were coming with plans for different segments/bar etc – that is what presented. At the moment, things have changed, but this was after the budget was sent. We don't know if we'll be able to have socially distanced events with the numbers that we were working with at the beginning; difficult to keep changing the budget that the government change guidelines. That's why we have this budget that covers both the worst case and best case scenario; how we're spending money and how we're getting the money back. AB reply: Having a budget that is sliding, allowing for degradation, having two budgets where one plans for socially distanced year, and another (already passed) for an in-person year, where if things open up, we can switch budgets from one to the other. If we stick with this sliding change, there is no foresight of how bad or how good it can be – it would just be updated every two weeks with new advice. Trying to do a new budget accounting to socially distancing would be better – this is a good budget and good adjustment to previous, but it's not a socially distanced budget

Comment from Alex Hampton – total membership numbers 200 upgraded. We didn't receive much more than this in previous years. In regards to annual budgets, we changed to this in 2017 – previously we voted on budget at each GM. Given that there is so much uncertainty, would it be easier to pass smaller budgets at each meeting? There's no point passing a load of money to spend in May, when we wouldn't be able to spend it.

Q: Any scope for passing two budgets; one that can be used in the plan A scenario and one in the Plan B scenario?

A: This is what has currently been proposed. As an amendment, we couldn't just tack on this last minute.

Q: Alex Hampton has touched on this – has there been any update of in-person students that we're expected to live in college? How many are we expecting?

A: To live in college – expect approximately 400 students

Comment: Last news, there were very few rooms filled compared to what was expected. Has this changed? See earlier Hampton comment – if it seems that in the first term, there are fewer in-person events, then this seems optimistic to have 200 upgrades. Previous years had ~270 GCR members with a full college – it might be difficult to achieve this.

Comment: AGM budget passed – uni is no longer operating with a plan A or a plan B scenario. The uni doesn't have two situations they are switching between – if we pass a second socially distanced budget, there should be some conditions that should be met/not met etc to decide which budget is used. If this is in the power of a GM, or the power of the GCR exec, there is currently no way to decide this.

DM reply: It's still going to be complicated since uni has now 5 scenarios, but they're even making more now. It depends on the government advice as well – makes it very difficult to have case scenarios when the uni doesn't have it. Uni is reducing the number of rooms in all colleges for PGs, and so they are sending them to Ustinov. Other colleges are losing PGs, but we should have a higher number than previously.

AB reply: If it is changing so quickly, echo the thoughts from earlier – if we cannot predict long terms budgets, and cannot have the foresight, then maybe the smaller budgets should be passed. Some payments/fees will be necessary at the start of the year. But some of the other events would be okay if we had to pass them later on

e.g formals. Authorise these budgets when we need to, which is more based on the number of levies that come in, seems like sensible, rather than making up a budget that might not be relevant in three weeks time, let alone the course of the year.

Q: What are the implications in terms of filing our accounts with the charities commission if we were to pass a budget that is significantly (magnitude of tens of thousands of pounds) different to our actual expenditure?

A from Alex Blair: Budget isn't submitted to the charity commission. Budget itself is different; this is for planning the GCR financial outlook and predications – expectations for next year planned by outgoing exec, and make best estimate possible so that at the end of the year, we haven't lost a load of money more than expected. The commission do not see it, they see the end figures. The budget is more about good practice and accountability of the GCR by its members.

Opposition comment: No opposing to necessary costs etc accountancy fees and insurance. Need to vote on this as it currently stands, but may need to submit another motion – according to standing orders, we can submit an emergency motion if it would be significantly detrimental to the GCR.

Vote: passes as stands with 11 in favour, 4 against

b. Motion to create the role of BAME representative

i) The GCR notes:

Currently the International Student Officer is in charge of Ethnic minority of which the latter should be beyond the scope of 'international'. A dedicated post with the objective for the BAME students to have a good sense of belonging is vital in ensuring engagement and a better university experience.

ii) The GCR believes: An inclusive environment will lead to an effective GCR in promoting the needs of BAME students within the GCR, for instance, ensuring GCR events are promoting the voice of BAME and also participating in university wide campaign. We also believe that a dedicated post will create an awareness on the welfare of BAME students.

iii) Proposal:

To create the role of BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) Representative and thus make the following changes to the Standing Orders

To create section 11.3.4.4, which will read as follows:

11.3.4.4 BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) Representative

- a) Acts as a contact for all Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic members of the GCR and addresses their concerns.
- b) Represents all Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic members of the GCR in the GCR committee and College.
- c) Liaises with the Durham People of Colour Association to include Ustinov GCR in any university-wide campaigns.
- d) Organises regular BAME socials at Ustinov.
- e) Works to promote the objects of the GCR as set out in the Constitution.
- h) Sits on the following committees: GCR Committee, Welfare Committee and Social Committee.

2. To edit Section 4.8 a) which reads 'The (Welfare) committee shall consist of: Welfare Officer...' to include 'BAME Representative'.
3. To edit Section 11.1.2 a) which reads 'The following positions will be elected during Michaelmas Term:...' to include 'BAME Representative'

Proposer: Muhammed Zulkifly

Secunder: Jake Brooker

Q: Alex Blair – like the idea of BAME rep on GCR. Particularly situation with covid and other problems this year – would there be the risk of having this unfilled? Will the new responsibilities be under another individual who is in place? Is this breaking out already-existing responsibilities within another role

A: This role is advertised in the same way as other roles. There is a lot of caveats in terms of hard to travel etc, but BAME is a new thing for GCR, so might be attractive for new applicants. If this is not filled, then still under ISO and welfare positions.

Comment from Alastair Stewart (ex-chair): might need to amend also 4.3a) is list of social committee members as well. Only a procedural correction, making sure is accurate, no need for amendment.

Vote: Passes with 15 in favour, 1 abstention.

c. Nomination of Alastair Stewart for Honorary Life Membership

Since 2017 Alastair has been engaged in the GCR, firstly as secretary, where his interest in nearly all Exec matters began with many long conversations on a broad variety of issues that lasted long into many nights over the years. Alastair has been a staple force in the GCR office, processing applications and keeping on track of office hours. Even after retiring from the exec he remained on the committee as Tech Officer and helped the very small 2019-20 exec get used to their multiple roles. He was always there to answer questions, give advice and proofread motions, invariably making them better; he never said no to a person in need! His key role running Ustinov Lives has been a feature throughout his time at college, helping it evolve into the impressive setup we now see through Alastair's passion, hard work and enthusiasm for a labour intensive set-up that nearly always goes without thanks. As Tech Officer he was the driving force behind this summer's Ustinov Live at Home Edition and Virtual Ustinov Day, neither of which would have happened without him and both of which were huge successes. He persuaded people to send in their pre-recorded performances, even doing some of the video editing himself, and was the incredible director of Virtual Ustinov Day using equipment and software he first saw the day before! Besides giving four years of practice to college sports, playing for the Ustinov Ultimate Frisbee team, and aiding in their league promotion of 2018. He's a tireless and knowledgeable force for GCR Exec matters and who has given much of his spare time to the college and the performative life of its graduate common room. And it's fair to say, when we think of the GCR Exec from 2017 to present, amongst few others, we think of, Alastair.

Proposer: James O'Neill

Secunder: Bryony Rogers

Comment: Alex Blair – Alastair did an exemplary job, picking up tasks which might not have been picked up on, throughout the entire time that Alex was involved with the GCR. Setting up remote ticketing system, I should say, rather than remote payment (that was Vera), but it set up the infrastructure that made things possible. Alex Hampton and Matt Roberts fully agree with this nomination.

Vote: Passes with 15 in favour, 1 abstention.

5. Hustings:

- a. None.**

6. Any Other Business:

- a. None.**

Brad Din

GCR Secretary

13/09/2020