

# Ustinov College GCR Annual General Meeting Minutes



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7:00 p.m. 08/06/2019

## 1. Apologies: JO

## 2. Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting

Minutes from the Annual General Meeting held on 31/05/2018: ***Passed on a general aye.***

Minutes from the General Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> November: ***Passed on a general aye.***

Minutes from the General Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> February: ***Passed on a general aye.***

Minutes from the General Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> April: ***Passed on a general aye.***

Minutes from the General Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> May: ***Passed on a general aye.***

### a. Issues Arising from Last Minutes

Nothing to discuss. ***Alex B wishes to issue a public statement that minutes should be passed at the succeeding meeting as soon as possible after completion, as this would be the best practice.***

## 3. Reports from Officers

### a. President [TP]

Hi everyone, this will be a summary of everything I've done over the course of the year. There's been a lot of change since previous years, hopefully everyone enjoyed induction week. Almost all the formals were new for us, so hopefully you've enjoyed those too. We've been looking into what we can do with the space that we have available. I've also been involved with the local residents' association to discuss any complaints and opportunities, this has been a productive discourse and we've co-existed quite well! Events with local residents have also worked really well, such as kids' parties, which have also included Keenan House. We have our BBQ in July and the Summer Ball, both of which we've planning recently and which we have to look forward to at the end of the year. I also have to liaise with the uni, mainly through the PresComm, trying to solve and discuss issues and keep them in the minds of university management. We've done lots of other bits and pieces, but that's a general overview!

**Q:** This time last year there was discussion about extending the no. of late openings of the bar. Has there been any progress on this front, given that the concerns of residents have been allayed?

**A:** So far we've used 5 of the 6 we have. We decided with Ian that it was best to not push for late opening next year but to hold off for the year afterwards, to allay fears that the license will be continually extended. We don't want to rush

this, so it's best not to push too much for the time being. I'll make sure that this discussion is carried on by next year's exec.

**b. Treasurer [EJ]**

Hi everyone! Since our last GM, I've been working with accounts from the previous year and from this year, everything looks fine. I've been working on the budget for next year, which will be addressed shortly as an agenda item. Our trip to Cragside, karaoke, BT sports, Summer Ball events booking, and BBQ stage hire have been the major expenditures, and we've seen an income of £5450. We have some suggestions for the next GCR, which we will bring forward, and I've also been in touch with the DSO to discuss issues affecting Treasurers at the different colleges in Durham. Thank you very much!

**c. Vice President [JO] (apologies)**

Hi all, sorry I could't be here in person. This year has been a very busy year, starting with organising the transition from Howlands to Sheraton. This involved sorting through our storage, deciding what we still needed and arranging it neatly in Sheraton. I also went through our DVD and games library, making a database of what we have and seeing what storage College would give us for these - resulting in the shelving in the bar. The summer also involved other tasks such as standing in as secretary until September and preparing for induction week. This included the GMIS and helping take new students to their rooms. I also had some smaller tasks such as organising coaches throughout the year.

Vending machine stock is the next issues, which Thesi [SP Rep] has helped with massively resulting in record sales. We have also persuaded College to purchase the new lamps for the bar to improve the ambient atmosphere and install the flags we took over from Howlands.

The music room and observatory have also been kept in good repair.

I have also looked into getting a trophy cabinet and leaflet stand which should be arriving soon. We should also be getting some beanbags very soon.

**d. Bar Steward [AMH]**

I'll keep this short, this is the first year of the bar in one location after moving. License extended, we've had quite a few new members of staff, expanded our range of food and drink on offer. We now have cocktails, as I planned, and we also have prosecco and a bell for ringing last orders. The bar also has a nicer atmosphere now, thanks to the lamps. Thank you!

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

We've had a few changes for C&S this year. Before we were able to use training space at Howlands, but not this year, so I've been in touch with Team Durham and different schools to secure 6 training slots. We were also meant to have a swimming pool at DGS, but this fell through, and after securing Freeman's Quay the pool closed for refurbishment. We have several new teams and societies this year, but unfortunately don't have a choir anymore as we've been unable to find a conductor. Hopefully we'll have one next year. I've done a lot of advertising of

activities this year, for example the blog on the GCR website. Finally the gym, we've added a couple of smaller things subject to the requests of students and other things like weights and coat hangers. We sold over 200 gym memberships this year, too!

**Q:** Is there any chance that we could get young children living in the area of college involved in some physical games and sports events run by Ustinovians?

**A:** It's something we've been toying with for a while, in terms of running a family sports day and involving Keenan House, if/when the weather improves then hopefully we'll organise one! If not, I'll certainly encourage next year's committee to do so.

#### **f. Communications Officer [KL]**

Good evening everyone! I really appreciate the support of the Comms team, and would like to thank Connor for designing a really good website. We've updated our Instagram, WeChat, and WhatsApp, and other social media, keeping them up-to-date with events in college. I've been away recently so I'd like to thank everyone who's taken care of Comms in my absence.

#### **g. DSU Liaison Officer []**

[TP] We don't have one atm, but with my meetings with presidents and uni staff ive been fairly involved. So far ive been to a lot of their regular meetings and have met frequently with the DSU president and staff. One of the big wins we've had this year from the postgrad rep is that PGR students will get free printing next year, other than that we have weekly updates from them, and one upcoming event they have is a town hall with the VC of the university regarding increase in student numbers over the coming years, and the issues which this will raise for local residents and students alike, so come along if you'd like to voice any concerns or issues on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> June at 4.30, in Elvet Riverside. I'll probably be attending, so if anyone can't make it let me know your questions and I'll pass them on.

**Q:** Last year the uni proposed changing accom prices to reflect room quality, initially stopped bc not sure about consultation, any updates?

**A:** I haven't heard any updates, the uni has published a paper about pricing on the back of the #rippedoff campaign, so lowering prices is an ongoing debate, but I haven't seen anything specifically about this.

**Q:** Is the paper you mentioned available online?

**A:** Probably available online, but alternatively I have a copy which I can send round or post on the DSU website.

#### **h. International Officer [MR]**

Hello everyone, over the course of this year we've had several trips. Our first was to York as it was easy to get to, and helping people acclimatise to the NE. Logistically intense, but very successful, with 150 people attending. After that was Beamish, which was also popular, although sadly we are yet to organise a return visit to help people make the most of their one year pass. Bamburgh and Lindisfarne visit got very positive feedback, beautiful weather and visually stunning. Also made use of our National Trust membership! Last trip was to Craggside, which

also made full use of this membership, with another solid turnout of 50 students. I'd encourage the committee going forward to repeat this trip, and to continue making use of our National Trust membership. I'd also like to thank Lana for helping to get the Keenan House community involved. We also organised a Durham City Tour, which I'd also recommend again for the future, especially around induction week, to help newcomers get to grips with the city. One aspect of my time here has been trying to publicise the uni's hate crime reporting system, this is still a work in progress over the next couple of years and its tools are still being developed, though. It is, though, something that I hope my successor will stay involved with.

#### **i. Livers Out Representative []**

[TP] This is one position which hasn't been filled, unfortunately, but we've managed to put on a few events for livers out including drinks at the start of the year, an event last term, and quite a few trips organised with MR. If anyone is keen to run more events for livers out in future it'd be great if you'd like to get in touch and discuss the role.

#### **j. Social Secretary []**

[TP] We've had quite a few events throughout the year, testing what we can and can't do with our late openings. The social committee have been really helpful in running events this year! We have the Ball and BBQ still to come, and hopefully an End of Year party which will be organised by the next exec. If you want to run an event then please do get in touch with us and we'll help you to organise it!

#### **k. Welfare Officer [JL]**

Good evening everyone, I'm quite new to this position so I've tried to build on what the previous officer has done over the last year, so for example we've had a lot of events for pride week and advertised it widely. We've done several welfare events during exam term, and a couple of welfare breakfasts and lunches earlier in term. We update the welfare webpage on a regular basis, and have an active welfare committee. We've kept the condoms well stocked, and advertised things like the mental health service, sexual health services etc. within college.

### **4. Report from the Trustees**

From Jamie Graham, student trustee and deputy chair of the board of trustees [apologies].

This year the board of trustees of Ustinov Graduate Common Room has met termly to oversee the financial and legal position of the GCR.

The board itself has seen some change in membership, most obviously with the change in Officer Trustees (Tom Pitts, Alastair Stewart, Joel Lopez Torres, James O'Neill, and Annie Moore). Further to this, we have gained Alex Hampton and myself [Jamie Graham] as student trustees, and Thom Addinall-Biddulph as an alumni trustee who was shortly elected chair of the board of trustees. We also wish to thank the two outgoing alumni

trustees, Marc Owen Jones and Jesper Pedersen for their deep contributions to the GCR over the past few years and wish them the best with their future endeavours.

This year has posed some difficulty for the GCR committee. While we now operate wholly on one site, the change to an opt-in system for the GCR levy has resulted in a financial deficit compared to what was expected in the annual budget 2018-2019. The amended budget approved by the general meeting last month and subsequently the trustees has acknowledged the necessity of a short-term deficit to be offset by the GCR's reserves in order to maintain parity of student experience. The GCR holds no official reserves policy, but it has been noted that ongoing deficits in future years should be avoided.

The treasurer has presented the GCR's accounts for 2017-2018 to the board of trustees, which subsequently confirmed these accounts for submission to the membership at this AGM and to the GCR's chosen accountant before submission to the charity commission. Further clarification from University finance regarding the future status of levy payments would be appreciated, but sadly cannot be expected. As has been noted in previous years, an investment made in the distant past of £2,000 still resides with the University which the GCR has had difficulty recovering. The GCR has been tasked with further investigating the return of this investment.

Several legal matters have been presented and discussed by trustees, including that relating to access to services such as the gym and the ensuring trustee eligibility. Greater documentation will now be kept regarding trustee declarations of eligibility, and some changes for gym access for non-members will be made for next year.

The constitution of the GCR is due for review by trustees, and the GCR chair (Alastair) is currently undertaking this review given changes within University structure. Once trustees and the PVC (Student Experience) have confirmed the alterations a motion will be passed to the membership with the altered constitution.

Participation in the committees of the GCR has been slightly down on previous years, but this is understandable given the reduction in livers in. As always, the GCR appreciates the efforts of those who choose to stand for positions, who provide an outstanding service to students.

By all accounts, the GCR has had a good year with regard to the provision of events and services. On the whole, the GCR committee has successfully handled the transition to Sheraton Park have the thanks of trustees for their immense efforts.

Finally, the trustees wish those candidates standing tonight for positions within the committee the best of luck. We look forward to working with the successful candidates in the future.

## **5. Agenda Items**

### **a. 2017/2018 Accounts [EJ]**

#### **i. Proposal**

*To pass the 2017/2018 GCR accounts.*

**We've had confirmation that the accounts are sound, so if there are any questions or doubts regarding the accounts then this is the time to raise them! They've already been submitted to and approved by the accountant.**

Proposer:

Secunder:

**ii. Supporting Information**

The spreadsheet with the accounts was sent out to all Ustinov students with the agenda.

**iii. Questions**

N/A

**iv. Vote**

Favour – 25

Against – 0

Abstaining – 0

***The accounts are accordingly passed.***

**b. Proposal Regarding Annual Budget [AB]**

**i. The GCR notes:**

- a) That effective financial management of the GCR is challenging without effective financial planning and comparison to previous financial performances of the GCR;
- b) That such financial planning is most appropriately made by an outgoing GCR Treasurer, who has more experience in financial management of the GCR than newly Executive Committee members;
- c) That a requirement to present a GCR annual budget at Annual General Meeting is likely to help guide the financial planning of the Executive Committee of the following year, and improve transparency of the GCR finances to GCR members.

**ii. The GCR proposes:**

To amend the Standing Orders of the Graduate Common Room as follows:

- a) On page 6, under Procedure at Meetings/Reports, subsection c):

To replace “*At an annual general meeting, the Treasurer shall present the accounts of the GCR...*” with “*At an annual general meeting, the Treasurer shall present:*

- i. The accounts of the GCR for the most recent concluded financial year, for review by GCR members prior to submission to the Charities Commission;*
- ii. An update on the provisional accounts of the GCR for the current (ongoing) financial year to date, including a comparison to the last presented GCR Annual Budget;*
- iii. The GCR Annual Budget for the following financial year, including, but not limited to,*

1. *Estimated surplus from GCR membership payments and financial contributions from the University;*
2. *Estimated expenditure for insurance, accountant fees and licensing required for continued operation;*
3. *Estimated expenditure for induction week activities;*
4. *Estimated surplus and expenditure for formals;*
5. *Estimated surplus and expenditure for the Summer Ball and Summer Barbecue events;*
6. *Estimated surplus and expenditure for other Welfare, Steering, Facilities, and Clubs and Societies activities;*
7. *Estimated overall net surplus/expenditure for the next financial year.*

- b) On page 28, under Members of the Executive Committee/Treasurer, add subsection h):

*Responsible for writing and presenting the GCR annual budget for the following academic year at an Annual General Meeting, following consultation with other Executive Committee and Finance Committee members.*

**Proposer:** Alexander Blair (GCR Treasurer 2017/18)

**Secunder:** Eduardo Joel Lopez Torres (GCR Treasurer 2018/19)

**iii. Vote**

Favour – 30

Against – 0

Abstaining – 0

***The motion is passed accordingly.***

**c. 2019/2020 GCR Budget [EJ]**

**i. Proposal**

Last year the GCR proposed an annual budget that included projected outcomes and covered the biggest expenditures in order to make it easier to run activities. It was very helpful for this year's GCR since we only ran events at Sheraton this time. Therefore, a budget for next year is proposed to help next year's GCR to keep running the activities. [See accompanying document]

Key points:

- Lower expected income from memberships
- Induction week has some minor adjustments as we are now on 1 site
- Much of the rest is very similar
- This budget has a deficit of £3083, which we can cover from our savings. Future GCR committees will need to work on reducing this so that we can again run a budget surplus.

**Proposer:** Eduardo Joel López Torres

**Secunder:** Tom Pitts

**Questions:**

**Q:** I think that college should really be paying for the welcome packs rather than the GCR, as part of the student experience and a fairly minor cost they should cover it?

**A:** College provided orange welcome packs for livers in, and as far as the money for the welcome packs goes it pertains to the handbook which we distribute, as well as things like condoms and energy drinks which are widely distributed at the beginning of the academic year. The college will continue offering packs for livers in though.

**Q:** This looks like a fantastic and very thorough budget. For the previous year's numbers, are they actual figures or are they part of the previous year's budget?

**A:** Not the real one yet, but the one passed at the previous general meeting. Some of them are the actual numbers, but not all.

**Vote:**

Favour – 30

Against – 0

Abstaining – 0

***The budget is passed accordingly.***

#### **d. Removal of References to College Council from the Constitution [TP]**

##### **i. The GCR notes:**

- There are a number of references to 'College Council' in the constitution. For example, on the first page under Background D it states:

*'Under the Education Act 1994, the University of Durham acting through Ustinov College Council has a statutory duty to ensure that the GCR operates in a fair and democratic manner and is held to proper account for its finances. The GCR therefore works alongside Ustinov College Council in ensuring that the affairs of the GCR are properly conducted and that the educational and welfare needs of the GCR's Members are met.'*

- Last year, College Council was abolished, and there was not a direct replacement set up.
- The responsibilities College Council had regarding Common Rooms has been moved over to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Colleges and Student Experience.
- Alastair (GCR Chairperson) received advice from Martin Brader, Assistant Principal of Ustinov College, who had spoken to Kate Deeming from Governance Support, regarding what wording should be used in place of College Council.

##### **ii. The GCR believes that:**

- The Constitution of the GCR should be updated appropriately now that the responsibilities of Common Rooms are no longer with College Council.

##### **iii. Proposal**

*Mandate the Chair to replace all references to Ustinov College Council in the Constitution with 'the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Colleges and Student Experience) or their designated representative'.*

**Proposer:** Tom Pitts  
**Seconded:** Sam Littlewood

**iv. Questions**

**Q:** Do you have a date for when we are going to get the actual body which will be replacing this? When will a decision be reached?

**A:** This will be up to the PVC for Student Experience, then incorporated into the constitution and agreed upon.

**Q:** To clarify, when you say to replace college council, would the GCR be able to see the changes and specific edits after they've been made?

**A:** Yes, that could definitely be made available, and it appears to be a straightforward change.

**Q:** How does this affect our independence?

**A:** Compared to the college council which had a range of members, we will now have a single individual, who will likely be a delegate of the PVC.

**Q:** In the event of a dispute, how would this be resolved?

**A:** We still need to see a contingency policy, so we will be pushing for this.

**v. Vote**

**Favour - 31**

**Against - 0**

**Abstaining - 0**

*The motion is passed accordingly.*

**e. Removal of the Appointments Committee from the Constitution [TP]**

**i. The GCR notes that:**

- In the constitution, it currently states that the Trustees shall establish the 'Appointments Committee' (4.4) in accordance with their powers under Clauses 71 and 72.
- The Appointments Committee is only mentioned twice more in the constitution, which says Alumni Trustees and External Trustees must be approved by a simple majority vote by the Appointments Committee (and then ratified at a General Meeting).
- This year we have appointed a new alumni trustee and are looking to appoint another one in this meeting. In both situations it was unclear to all the Trustees what the Appointments Committee was and what the intention of it was. It caused what seemed like unnecessary confusion.
- It is difficult to find a convenient time for all non-officer Trustees to attend Trustees meetings as it is. If the committee was envisaged as being a smaller group of Trustees this seems unlikely to be able to happen.

**ii. The GCR believes that:**

- The confusion should be removed, and rather than setting up an Appointments Committee future Alumni Trustees and External Trustees

should be appointed by a simple majority vote by the current Trustees in a quorate meeting (and then still should be ratified at a General Meeting).

**iii. Proposal**

- a) *Remove 74.4 of the Constitution which says (The Trustees shall establish...) 'Appointments Committee;'*
- b) *Edit Section 64 of the Constitution under 'Alumni Trustees' from 'Up to 3 Alumni Trustees shall be appointed by a simple majority vote of the Appointments Committee...' to 'Up to 3 Alumni Trustees shall be appointed by a simple majority vote of the Trustees in a meeting...'*
- c) *Edit Section 66 of the Constitution under 'External Trustees' from 'Up to 3 External Trustees shall be appointed by a simple majority vote of the Appointments Committee...' to 'Up to 3 External Trustees shall be appointed by a simple majority vote of the Trustees in a meeting...'*

**Proposer:** Tom Pitts

**Seconded:** Sam Littlewood

**iv. Questions**

N/A

**v. Vote**

**Favour - 28**

**Against - 0**

**Abstaining - 0**

*The motion is passed accordingly.*

**f. Membership of the GCR [TP]**

**i. The GCR notes that:**

- Currently in Section 24 of the constitution it states that members of the GCR shall be *'each and every student who has not opted out by notifying the GCR or Ustinov College of his or her wish not to be a Member of the GCR.'*
- Last year, members of Ustinov College were automatically GCR members unless they indicated using the online system that they specifically did not want to pay for their membership.
- The whole context surrounding this criterion changed at the beginning of this year when the 'Opt-In' system was put in place.

**ii. The GCR believes that:**

- Section 24 should be amended to reflect the change in how students obtain GCR membership.
- The change should remain flexible enough that it covers both the current opt-in system for memberships and any potential change to the way payments for memberships are taken in the future.

**iii. Proposal**

*Amend Section 24 of the Constitution (Clause 12.1) to read `each and every Student meeting the conditions of membership and is currently up-to-date with respect to the GCR levy.*

**Proposer:** Tom Pitts

**Secunder:** Sam Littlewood

**iv. Questions**

**Q:** With regard to non-student GCR members, could this be investigated in order to bring it in line with non-student members?

**A:** This was a point raised previously, this is covered elsewhere in the standing orders and constitution.

**v. Vote**

**Favour – 29**

**Against – 0**

**Abstaining – 0**

***The motion is passed accordingly.***

**g. Change to Honorary Life Membership Terms [AB]**

**i. The GCR notes:**

a) That students and other members of the College and the University who have made an exceptional contribution to the GCR or to realising the objects set out in the Constitution may be awarded Honorary Life Membership of the GCR.

b) That the eligibility criteria for GCR Honorary Life Memberships (HLMs) was changed in the 2017/18 GCR Annual General Meeting to:  
*Students of the college only become eligible for nomination for an HLM upon graduating as a member of Ustinov College or finishing their course.*

c) That, following the changes made in the 2017/18 GCR Annual General Meeting:  
*HLM members receive the GCR members discounted rate at all Ustinov events such as formals and Balls. If the Honorary Life Member becomes a student again at the university, this benefit is removed until they graduate again/finish their new course.*

d) During the last Annual General Meeting, this change of eligibility criteria was enacted on the basis of i.) to minimize the risk of candidates being proposed for the sole benefit of discounted rates at Ustinov events during their time at Ustinov college, and ii.) to promote the probability of candidates with significant lasting legacy for the GCR beyond any committee tenure being nominated for HLM status.

e) However, it is noted that the time difference for some candidates between active engagement in the GCR and Ustinov College and formally finishing their course can be significantly longer than for others, and the

eligibility of these candidates would be disadvantaged as a result, irrespective of their contributions to the GCR.

- f) As a result, it would be favourable to permit nomination of student candidates who have made exceptional contribution to the GCR for HLM status whilst they are still an active part of the Ustinov community, but with the award of HLM status deferred until conclusion of their course in order to minimize the risk of conflicts of interest arising during nomination.

**ii. Proposal**

To amend the Standing Orders of the Graduate Common Room as follows:

- i. On page 22, under Honorary Life Membership of the GCR, to add below:

*For any person to become an Honorary Life Member, a motion must be put to an Ordinary GCR Meeting giving the name or names of the person concerned. The motion shall require a two-thirds majority.*

A new subsection:

*If the motion for Honorary Life Membership as described in subsection b) passes, and the candidate is a student of Ustinov College, they shall be awarded Honorary Life Membership at the point at which the student graduates or otherwise finishes their course. If the motion passes and the candidate is not a student of Ustinov College, the Honorary Life Membership shall take effect immediately.*

To remove:

*Students of the college only become eligible for nomination for an HLM upon graduating as a member of Ustinov College or finishing their course.*

**Proposer:** Alexander Blair

**Secunder:**

**iii. Questions**

N/A

**iv. Vote**

**Favour - 29**

**Against - 0**

**Abstaining - 0**

*The motion is passed accordingly.*

**h. Changes to the Standing Order regarding the Facilities Committee [VB]**

**Proposer:** Vera Bieber

**Secunder:** James O'Neill

**i. Proposal 1.1**

Under “Facilities Committee” (page 16) remove mentions to a library, MUGA, and shop, none of which currently exist at Ustinov. Add the Observatory to the list of facilities. The new section b iv would now state: “Collating Dryburn and Sheraton Park accommodation and facilities issues, relating to the site, laundry, gym, Observatory, etc., and bringing them to the notice of the Executive Committee.”

**ii. Proposal 1.2**

Under “Vice-President” (page 27) change “Common Room” to “common area” and add the Observatory to the list of responsibilities to state: “Responsible for the upkeep of the common area and of the GCR Office in Sheraton House, the Observatory, and for coordinating the activities of the Sheraton Park Rep for this end.”

**iii. Supporting Information**

These are minor changes to reflect our changes in facilities.

**iv. Vote**

Favour – 30

Against – 0

Abstaining – 0

*The motion is passed accordingly.*

**i. Changes to the Standing Orders regarding the Communications Committee [VB]**

**Proposer:** Vera Bieber

**Seconded:** Eduardo Joel López Torres

**i. Proposal 2.1**

Under “Communications Committee” (page 17) in the section about the newsletter it states that the newsletter needs to be sent out twice a week. Change this section to “Sending out the email newsletter weekly.”

**ii. Proposal 2.2**

Under “Press Secretary” (page 40) remove specific mentions to weekdays of newsletter and change frequency to weekly: “Responsible for emailing the GCR via uv-info in a newsletter weekly. The newsletter is to be sent out on a weekday chosen by the Communications Committee. All items included need to be submitted by a fixed deadline.”

**iii. Supporting Information**

Newsletters have been sent out weekly for the past two years. A higher frequency is unnecessary. Furthermore, there is no need to set a specific day of the week in the Standing Orders. Rather, this can be left flexible to accommodate for personal schedules and to ensure that the GCR newsletter does not crash with the College newsletter.

iv. **Questions**

**Q:** The timeframe is quite ambiguous...

**A:** Depending on how the Press Secretary chooses to work, e.g. send it a day in advance or a couple of hours before, this is more suitable.

v. **Vote**

Favour – 25

Against – 0

Abstaining – 2

*The motion is passed accordingly.*

j. **Changes to the Standing Orders regarding the Clubs & Societies Committee [VB]**

**Proposer:** Vera Bieber

**Secunder:** Christos Vlahos

i. **Proposal 3.1**

To add the following point to the duties of Clubs & Societies Officer (page 30): “Liases with Team Durham, College, the University, and all other necessary contacts to ensure that all GCR clubs and societies have access to suitable training facilities.”

ii. **Proposal 3.2**

To move the following point from the duties of Sports Reps (page 41) to the duties of Clubs & Societies Officer (page 30): “Attend Team Durham meetings to represent the views and interests of Ustinov GCR and its sports clubs and societies.”

iii. **Proposal 3.3**

To add the following point to the duties of Sports Reps (page 41): “Attend Team Durham meetings if the Clubs & Societies Officer is unable to, in order to represent the views and interests of Ustinov GCR and its sports clubs and societies.”

iv. **Supporting Information**

Unlike previously, our clubs and societies now no longer have automatic allocations at Howlands Hall and arrangements at different facilities require a lot of communication with Team Durham, Experience Durham, and representatives of local schools. This should be reflected in the Clubs & Societies Officer’s duties. Furthermore, Team

Durham expects the Clubs & Societies Officer to attend their meetings (not the sports reps), so it makes sense to move that duty. However, the Sports Reps should cover for the Clubs & Societies Officer whenever necessary.

v. **Vote**

Favour – 26  
Against – 0  
Abstaining – 0

*The motion is passed accordingly.*

k. **Alumni Trustee [TP]**

i. **Proposal**

*The GCR shall appoint Nick Cresswell as Alumni Trustee.*

**Proposer:** Tom Pitts

**Secunder:** Eduardo Joel López Torres

ii. **Supporting Information**

Over his time with the GCR, Nick was an Election Officer, President and then Chair. Over the course of the latter two positions Nick was Chair of the Trustees. During his time as President was when the Trustee Board in its current form was convened, working with Matt Hann, who was at the time Chair and helped lay a lot of the framework for the board. The most significant contribution was helping lining the GCR up ready for registration as a charity, which was run with and undertaken by Marc, who succeeded him as GCR Chair of Trustees. Of course, Nick's contributions to the GCR go beyond this short summary, however this is perhaps the salient information. This has already been passed by the Trustees.

iii. **Questions**

**Q:** Is he a suitable candidate?

**A:** We now have forms disqualifying those candidates who are not suitable, so as far as we know no.

iv. **Vote**

**Favour – 30**  
**Against – 0**  
**Abstaining – 0**

*The motion is passed accordingly.*

l. **Lifetime Membership [MR]**

i. **Proposal**

*The GCR shall appoint Tim James to a lifetime membership.*

**Proposer:** Matthew Roberts

**Secunder:**

ii. **Supporting Information**

Tim's contributions began before the College even existed, contributing to the graduate society which would become Ustinov. He founded the Boardgame Society, and myriad events relating to this helping to form social bonds. He's also one of the mentors in the Mentor Program, a member of the SCR, and a great supporter of Ustinov sports team and of the college as a whole, so I believe he is deserving of a lifetime membership on these bases.

iii. **Questions**

**Q:** Do we have any examples of his contributions prior to the founding of Ustinov?

**A:** We have failed to find any specific information, but have it on good authority that he had a lifetime membership with the Graduate Society and helped to form a lot of the structures which would eventually become Ustinov College.

iv. **Vote**

Favour – 31

Against – 0

Abstaining – 0

***The motion is passed accordingly.***

**6. Hustings**

**a. President**

**Candidate:** Diana Martinez Trejo

**Manifesto:** *Hello, I'm Diana and I would love to be your new President. I'm from Mexico and a PhD student in Engineering. I have absolutely loved the past two years in Durham - Ustinov has played a key role in that and now I would like to help out with the college. I'm organised, open-minded and team-oriented. I have the necessary experience and passion to handle the demands of this role. For the past year, I served as President of Mexican Society at Durham whilst also being involved with GCP at Ustinov. I've worked with both the DSU and the College so I'm familiar with how things work and appreciate the level of commitment required to take on this responsibility.*

*Overall, our GCR is well-run by hardworking volunteers, and my main aim is to continue the good work and build upon it. More specifically, as an international student, I understand how difficult it is to live in a new culture, away from family – so my major focus would be to build on our sense of community. I'll do this by ensuring we start-off strongly in Welcome Week, and then maintain momentum by regularly organizing inclusive events that reinforce our "Ustinov family vibe" - brunches, food trucks (e.g. Chucho's tacos in May), dance classes (beginners/fun), picnics/walks/day-trips.*

*Finally, I would also like to ensure smooth relations with the locals, and try for collaborations between GCP and GCR to organize activities and events that have broad appeal amongst students.*

**Hust:** Hello I'm diana im from Mexico and a 2<sup>nd</sup> year phd student. Ustinov has been my home since I arrived in durham and would like to give back to the community. I'm familiar with how to run a student body, having been involved in the GCP. Overall I think our gcr is well run by our hard-working volunteers, and I think we need to build upon that. My focus would be on involving international students; as one myself I know how hard it can be to settle in. I'd have a programme of various events, as outlined in my manifesto, to help build a sense of community and to help people to have fun!

**Questions:**

**Q:** The first question is a compulsory one, have you been under investigation for any criminal offense, as you need to be a trustee as President and this is one of the requirements?

**A:** No!

**Q:** The President will be involved with various communities and committees. How do you plan to approach engaging with these bodies as a representative of Ustinov?

**A:** That's a good question, we want to bring a future to Ustinov so we need to work with the community to sort things out. It will take time, but I've been engaged in a similar process since January, so as soon as I become aware of a problem I will begin working on that, and make sure that my team are involved too!

**Q:** It was mentioned earlier that the GCR is running a deficit, so what would you do to raise funds?

**A:** I'd suggest using a food truck, but we can also search for people that can volunteer at events in order to save money.

**Q:** Being President involves a huge investment of time into things related to the university as well as college, and happen all throughout the week. Do you think you'd be able to use your time wisely to run events successfully?

**A:** I'm very good at time management, I really like to have an agenda so that we don't have clashes. My workload next year will allow me to be more free to address GCR issues and run events, and my other responsibilities will have finished by then, so I will have the time to be a proper GCR president!

**b. Vice-President**

**Candidate:** Connor Armstrong

**Manifesto:** *Hi, I'm Connor. I've been on the GCR committee for 6 months now and have enjoyed getting more involved with the GCR; helping to run more events and do odd jobs. Whilst I'm at Ustinov, I want to continue to help out and make sure our calendar runs smoothly so I've decided to run for vice-president.*

*I've found it great to be part of an instant community of postgrads, starting with the induction week and keeping up throughout the year. I'm keen to make sure that experience is as good for newcomers next year as it was for me (as well as keeping returners entertained). I have past experience running a university society so have some idea of what is involved and how to make events successful. I would like to continue the work James has started in turning Sheraton Park from a pair of buildings into the new home of Ustinov college by continuing to make additions and improvements to our facilities.*

*I've had experience being a quartermaster (storesman) for a cadet group so am used to managing rooms crammed with various objects as well as organising*

*my time, both of which should be useful for a VP. I will be quite happy to look after the GCR stores and office in addition to other duties – including any heavy lifting!*

**Hust:** Hello, I'm a first year PhD student here. I've really enjoyed my current roles and would like to do more to help the college. I'd like to continue the work that James has started in terms of making Ustinov a nicer place to live, and taking care of our various facilities. I'm currently making sure that everything is tidy and accounted for prior to next year. I have some experience of this role already, as described in my manifesto, being president of a uni society during my undergraduate degree.

**Questions:**

**Q:** The role of VP, especially in a time of a diminished committee, is to fill in for otherwise vacant role. Would you be willing to do this?

**A:** As far as reasonably possible, yes.

**Q:** Do you have any plans that you'd like to implement to make Ustinov feel more welcome to live in?

**A:** I've been making sure that all our games are completed, and I've been looking at leaflet stands. Also generally making laptops and laptop chargers easier to use in the bar.

**c. Treasurer**

**Candidate:** Vera Bieber

**Manifesto:** *Hello! I'm Vera from Germany, current Clubs & Societies Officer, and running for Treasurer.*

*The past year has been challenging for all of us on the committee, dealing with the move of the college to Sheraton Park and all its implications. Throughout, my goal has always been to create the best possible experience for all Ustinovians: I revamped the gym membership system (easier to use than ever before!), supported the purchase of equipment for the gym, connected students with each other who were interested in sports we did not previously have on offer, thus overseeing the creation of four new sports teams, and kept the GCR blog alive throughout the year as a channel to communicate our teams' experiences to all of you.*

*Besides my role-specific work, I also updated the GCR website with all new information that came with the move last summer, created a booking system for the Observatory (which I have been running all year), and was in charge of the ticket reservation forms for all formal dinners and the summer ball.*

*I love to give my time to the GCR and next year I would like to do so as Treasurer. I have been part of the Finance Committee this year and wrote the internal cash handling instructions for GCR committee members, so I already have a basic understanding of the GCR financial matters. Anything else, I look forward to learning. I would be very grateful for your vote!*

**Hust:** I was CS officer this year and now I am running for treasurer. I've been very involved in GCR things this year and I want to continue to offer the best possible experience for Ustinovians. This year I ran the gym membership system as well

as helping those who wanted to set up new clubs and societies. I also spent some time updating the GCR website including creating and running a booking form for the observatory. I was in charge of the booking systems for formal/ ball ticket reservations as I have a lot of experience with spreadsheets which will help me as treasurer. As CS officer I was involved in looking over club and society finances so I am already familiar with treasurer-related issues.

**Questions:**

**Q:** As Treasurer one of the main tasks is to count the money, and find out when payments are due to arrive, as well as things to do with office hours etc. How do you suggest we improve this system, and track the income from formals and such similar events?

**A:** We need to make sure people have a thorough office hours induction, and to have instructions on the wall to refer to. I'd count the money as often as possible to keep on top of things.

**Q:** The GCR is still trying to claim back a longstanding loan to the university. How will you prompt the university to respond to this?

**A:** I have a lot of experience at communicating with university staff when they've proved unresponsive, so I'd work hard at this!

**Q:** One of the biggest problems so far is changing ticket prices to make the budget as close to neutral as possible. What else would you suggest?

**A:** We need to push GCR membership more, and get the college to promote what the GCR is prior to the meeting beginning! I'd also encourage my successor as C&S to push this as they also get funding directly through the GCR.

**d. Bar Steward**

**Candidate:** James O'Neill

**Manifesto:** *My experience for running for Bar Steward comes from three years as bar staff at Ustinov College Bar and two years on Exec, as international Student Officer and Vice President, respectively. Having been a Team Leader for almost 3 years, I have gained experience in changing kegs and gas cannisters, performing the line cleaning, and coming up with ideas to change the bar for the better. In addition, I am very familiar with the current layout of our bar and the duties that need to be carried out, the areas where the bar can be improved, and the things that bar staff need to keep on top of to make the space a workable environment.*

*As your bar steward I would look mainly into two things with regards to the improvement of the bar: firstly, to try and expand our existing drink selections by introducing new cocktails and mocktails and by introducing a box cider alongside the kegs ; and, secondly through a liaison with bar management and the GCR, I aim to advertise the bar in a more comprehensive manner, especially with regards to the new drink choices as well as the various events which we screen (Champions League matches, Snooker championships, episodes of popular TV shows) and which take place in the bar area.*

*Thanks for listening :)*

**Hust:**

**Questions:**

#### **e. Welfare Officer**

**Candidate:** Bryony Rogers

**Manifesto:** *My name is Bryony and I would like to be your welfare officer. I am a second year PhD student and am currently the Female Welfare Representative. While on the Welfare committee this year I have been involved in the organisation of the welfare brunches, International Women's Day, and Pride weeks. As Welfare Officer I would continue some of this year's initiatives: including the welfare breakfasts and lunches; organising free fruit during the dissertation period; and the alcohol awareness roadshow. Additionally, I would organise a stress-less petting zoo in September, something which has been a success at other colleges. I would create new information leaflets for induction packs providing information on university disability and counselling services. I also want to ensure that the needs of livers-out and Dryburn residents are fully met by the welfare team and they able to access welfare hours, so I will liaise with the Livers-Out and Dryburn Representatives about the possibility of having welfare representatives at livers out brunches or coffee mornings, and welfare hours at Dryburn, if there is demand for it. I am approachable, friendly and a good listener; and have previous experience as the welfare officer for one of the Durham Divas cheerleading squads where I acted both as the squad's first aider and as a confidential link between the squad and the captains. I have also undergone safeguarding training in my role as a swimming teacher. I look forward to working with the Ustinov community if I become Welfare Officer.*

**Hust:** Hi everyone my name's Bryony, I'm currently your female welfare representative and so I have quite a lot of experience in welfare events and changing things to boost participation. I would quite like to get people aware of what the uni as a whole offers (e.g. counselling, disabilities, mental health services), so I'd use flyers and other strategies to promote these in Ustinov. Puppy days are very difficult to organise, but I am aware of a petting zoo which has successfully visited other colleges, so I'd try and implement that at Ustinov. I'd push for more healthy food on the bar during exam terms, and have experience as a welfare officer outside of Ustinov too. As a swimming instructor I've also undergone safeguarding training. I want to establish links with the welfare teams in other colleges to push the needs of postgraduates, and provide a more cohesive welfare package.

#### **Questions:**

**Q:** There isn't currently much use made of the website by the welfare team. How would you use this?

**A:** I'd include contact details, flyers with information, and generally maintain the page so that information is up to date as policies change or new services become available.

**Q:** Previously we've seen successful welfare events being held outside of college for Ustinovians. Would you consider running similar events?

**A:** Definitely, these were really successful, so I'd like to do breakfasts in college and lunches on the science site to provide a space to relax and have lunch.

**Q:** There's been a push for Exec members to have training in sexual violence awareness and such related things, as run by the DSU. How would you boost turnout to training?

**A:** I think it's really important that all members receive this training, as it's helpful for the college community to know that they have a range of people to talk to and get information from. I'd really push the consent course during freshers' week, too, in

order to boost participation and raise awareness. I'd also post on social media about DSU events as well as Ustinov ones, and work more closely with the DSU welfare officer to get more representation for issues affecting postgraduates.

**Q:** One of the difficulties encountered so far is really low attendance at some of our events. How would you boost participation?

**A:** They were very well advertised, but I'd start issuing promotional material and organising things further in advance. We could open some events to postgraduates from outside of Ustinov, such as our LGBT+ awareness workshop during Pride week.

## **7. Any Other Business**

N/A

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Sam Littlewood

GCR Secretary

08/06/2019

Edited by Connor Armstrong

Vice-President

09/05/2020