



Ustinov College GCR Exec Meeting

Minutes

6:00 pm, 19/10/20

Action Points From Minutes – red is new from today's meeting.

CA to extend last few email accounts

CA to contact someone to fix the vending machine

CA to find out about the updates to green move-in sale, and update details about facilities at SP for handbook

CA to organise an online office hours rota as the new committee comes in

DM to check with college if the volunteer system is enough

DM to check with university and college about the consequences of purchasing drug testing kits.

CV to design and send out a gym interest form which informs them about the additional tasks.

Could potentially draft a volunteer system

BD to sort out the gaps in the minutes from previous years GMs

All to look into online events theatre shows available to stream

SG and social committee to come up with a schedule of activities during the lockdown

1. Apologies:

Present: *BD, DM, CA, JB, CV, MZ, VV, FD, SG, LC*

2. Approval of minutes from last meeting.

- a. Approval of minutes from 16/11/2020 – *passed on a general aye*

3. Matters arising from previous minutes.

- a. CA to extend last few email accounts *ongoing*
- b. CA to contact someone to fix the vending machine *ongoing*
- c. CA to find out about the updates to green move-in sale, and update details about *ongoing* facilities at SP for handbook *ongoing*
- d. CA to organise an online office hours rota as the new committee comes in *ongoing*
- e. BD to sort out the gaps in the minutes from previous years GMs *ongoing*
- f. BD to do write 250 word experience for PG guide *done*
- g. All to look into online events theatre shows available to stream *ongoing*
- h. SG and social committee to come up with a schedule of activities during the lockdown *ongoing*
- i. LC to make Ustinov Live FB group to spread awareness *done - the page was reached by 791 people and received 37 responses (19 went, 18 interested). The focus was to encourage flats to watch together and promote unity despite the lockdown.*

4. Agenda Items:

a. [CV] Allotment Society Ratification

- Ratification of the Allotment society. On Sunday I got the paperwork for the newly-founded Ustinov College Allotment Society. All the paperwork has been

added to the drive. I'm asking to ratify them.

Vote passes with all in favour.

We have a list of assets that we have bought for them, but it is very outdated – should be updated. Also should warn them about college attempting to close without notice.

b. [CV] Gym opening

- There has been some interest lately by people to borrow gym equipment or use the gym so it would be good to maybe run a trial period over the break and see how a system could work. So far i see 2 possibilities, either we have household slots so we don't care about the social distancing and one person within the group will be responsible for cleaning everything after (with a volunteer maybe doing so before the next slot starts) or we have it open in general (with reduced capacity) for some slots per day and we use a set of volunteers to clean the gym between the slots. Also in this case there has to be a gym supervisor to ensure all measures are taken. I would suggest it's easier to start with a household system a bit before the holidays and during them, since it will be easier to monitor a smaller number of people in the beginning. Also in this case we will not need to have the gym staffed (no social distance required). For now I would have no gym membership (or something very cheap) as we don't know for how long we will be able to keep it open and we can't offer many slots anyway. In this case volunteers are doing it for free.

- So in summary, suggested plan, ideally to start the week after the travel window:

- Trial period with the gym open ONLY for households (free for now)

- Only households that show interest will get allocated slots

- Before that, advertise a volunteer system. In this a member of each group using it will be in charge of cleaning before and after and making sure all policies are followed.

- The porters will be in charge of letting people in and checking they are from the same household (wristbands could be used)

- If enough interest and things don't go worse in January, we can think of charging a fee and we will also have a group of inducted people that way.

5 tests? Have bar staff available; can have households in the gym; capacity fine. Should be okay and able to pass the tests.

Lots of requests from students as well, or even to borrow equipment (which isn't possible).

How much interest should we have? Household slots, what times etc. Send out a feeler form?

Issues with giving responsibilities to the porters, since it's not necessarily their job to sort it. If we use households (better than general students?) even with wristbands, porters will have other things to do than checking regularly. Issue would be cleaning between households' sessions. Other colleges are using bar staff – this will be after lockdown. If we don't have anybody to clean, then it wouldn't pass the tests. Bar staff won't be able to do this after lockdown since this is the same system as before. Essentially, we will probably need to have either a paid cleaner or get the staff to help. Does this money come from college?

Should the gym be opened ASAP, or after the travel period (~10th December)?

Vote to attempt to open the gym in the second week of December – passes with all in favour.

It seems like volunteers are the only way forward, since college 'won't' fund and GCR 'can't' fund the cleaning. Could this not be intruding on the housekeepers, and introduce union problems, who could be paid to do the work?

For the trial period, for each household have 1 or 2 inducted people who have to do before and after slot.

Depending on the way we phrase the information form e.g., "would you want to use the gym, given that you will have to do these extra responsibilities"?

After this point, many people will have left. If a household doesn't have a volunteer, they won't be able to use the gym. Confusion with the gov rules, but of course depends on university. Easier to use as households since gives confidence to university.

Plan of action: [AP] CV to design and send out a gym interest form which informs them about the additional tasks. Could potentially draft a volunteer system.

[AP] DM to check with college if the volunteer system is enough for gym reopening..

Seems to be contradictory to demand a certain level of rigour and professionalism, but unfair to then expect us to pay for this... who should pay for this if the volunteer system is unacceptable?

Other colleges are doing induction videos, and then in-person recap.

Re money/charges, have a trial period of free gym from the 10th December until say, January and see how it goes. Give us more time to think about how it worked.

Vote to open gym with trial until January passed with all in favour.

DM to check first, then send out the form.

c. [DM] DSU Assembly feedback

- Any feedback from the motions that will be presented in the Assembly?

- Documents have been shared by email previous to the meeting

Summary of the motions:

1) The future of education under Covid-19: SU Core Position

The university should be addressing digital poverty

The University should ensure study spaces are open and safe

Efforts should be increased to make course material more accessible

Postgraduate researchers who teach should continue to be properly trained, supported and paid where they are involved in teaching and academic support work.

The SU academic officers should lobby:

for an automatic one-week extension, when it is asked for by students, as well as

the re-introduction of the No Detriment policy for both Undergraduate and

Postgraduate Taught students, similar to that of academic year 2019/2020.

There should also be equivalent mitigations for postgraduate researcher

2) Housing and Accommodation through COVID-19: SU Core Position

Young people are twice as likely to have suffered job loss

Some students may not be able to return home for Christmas

Some students may not want to return after Christmas

SU officers should lobby:

Durham University to ensure that students who cannot return home over

Christmas do not face additional accommodation fees for 2020/2021 academic year

Durham University to terminate tenancy agreements early for students who cannot, or do not wish to, return to Durham for Epiphany Term 2021

PBSA providers to terminate tenancy agreements early for students who cannot, or do not wish to, return to Durham for Epiphany Term 2021

To renew the Student-Landlord Pledge and continue work with private landlords and agents to ensure student tenants are treated fairly and with compassion and

flexibility. Link:

Durham SU Student-Landlord Pledge @ Durham SU

*3) Wider Student Experience through COVID-19: SU Core Position
SU Officer should lobby:*

University to provide both online and in-person WSE opportunities

University to provide high quality online opportunities that will remain beyond the pandemic.

To ensure all WSE activities take place in a controlled, risk-assessed manner, in line with current legislation and guidelines.

University to remove unnecessary barriers that may prevent participation in WSE, including membership of specific groups.

University to provide grant funding for public initiatives to increase the availability and accessibility of face-to-face opportunities.

University to ensure a balance remains between WSE opportunities and Academic Commitments. This includes a guarantee that Academic workload remains the same as with previous years and Wednesday afternoons remain free

University provides Student Leaders with thorough and clear communication about their short term and long term plans for how WSE will be affected and activities carried out.

University to create a peer support network for Student Leaders during this time. Support services for students, both across the University and in individual colleges, should be appropriately funded and supported during this period, especially with regard to increasing their visibility to students.

The Students' Union will provide resources and training to Student Group Exec members to ensure they are confident in running safe and inclusive online events.

4) Cut the Rent

The rent is too damn high. Accommodation fees are well above most student's maintenance loans and have risen above inflation in recent years.

Durham University currently fails to meet the NUS recommendation that 25% of first-year accommodation be affordable (50% of the maximum maintenance loan).

Durham University continues to cut staffing facilities in colleges

*Durham University provides no breakdown on how accommodation fees are spent
Assembly resolves to publish and support the demands of the ripped off campaign:*

1. Immediate cap on fees for a standard, single catered rooms to be $\pounds 6746.1$

2. We demand an annually published breakdown of how college accommodation fees are spent. 3. At least 25% of rooms to be at 50% of the maximum maintenance loan, which will currently be $\pounds 4601.50.2$

4. To have a significant discount for returners living in college, to enable the university to reach its aspirations of housing 50-55% of students in College affiliated accommodation by 2027 to maintain strong college identities and communities.

5) Motion to condemn the actions of the Durham Union Society

The Durham Union Society (DUS) has failed to prevent and effectively penalise incidents of racism/misogyny amongst both its membership and leadership.

Resolves:

To ban the DUS from participating in our events and to strongly encourage Sabbatical Officers not to participate in DUS events

The assembly also resolves to publicly separate itself from the DUS by not advertising events held by the DUS or promoting the organisation to its members.

The assembly also resolves to not host events of the DUS in Dunelm House.

All passed on a general aye

d. [DM] Drug Testing Kits

- Would the GCR be willing to pay for drug testing kits that were available for students to use as SSDP were not able to secure the funding from the University or from the SU?

- At the JCR PresComm meeting we had a visit from SSDP. Currently the University has a zero tolerance on drug taking and that anyone caught using or possessing drugs could be immediately expelled. They aim to suggest a policy similar to that of Bristol University's drug policy as this would encourage students to seek help and have access to support and counselling.

- If anyone was interested in Bristol's drug policy you can read it here:

- <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/support/wellbeing/policies/harm-reduction/#:~:text=The%20University%20of%20Bristol%20understands,they%20may%20fear%20being%20punished.&text=Substance%20use%20is%20not%20to,the%20supply%20of%20illegal%20drugs.>

Should the GCR advertise these, and where should they money come from? Contact welfare, and it would be anonymous, but a method to keep students safer such that their drugs are what they are buying. What are the repercussions of circumventing the university policy? We are an independent college and are a charity. They can't do anything like this, but if there is some underlying agreement, we are knowingly allowing things to happen to occur on university property.

This is probably not something which the exec have the potential to make; would probably need to be passed at a GM; could have consequences for the GCR as a whole. We would also need to be sure on the potential consequences. Even if we aren't able to fund it ourselves, should we even campaign for this. Regardless, this needs to be put to a GM to whether we should take a vocal stance, or take a stance and use budget for this. Still need more information for this. [AP] DM to check with university and college about the consequences of purchasing drug testing kits.

e. [DM] Social activities after lockdown

- With the "normal" restrictions of bar operating and rules on the pub quiz, if we want to run the Pub Quiz night we might need to change it to other night when the bar is not open.

Pub quiz typically on Thurs, but bar is open Thurs/Fri/Sat. Can't have the two at the same time. Can't have both people talking and bar staff taking orders according to college.

Should we move both online quiz and in-person quiz to the same day?

Online stays on Thursday, and in-person moves to Wednesday.

Hence, the needs of the bar, and the needs of the GCR are now distinct, whereas they used to be harmonious.

This will start when lockdown finishes so in less than 2 weeks time.

f. [DM] Rules on our social media

- After the incident in our WhatsApp group, we need to have some rules on the behaviour that is not allowed in our social media and how to deal with the student(s)

We have rules in the description, and inevitably have some rules by precedent or acting. Do we need to do anything else for this?

Should we let him back into the group at some point? Do we need a policy or adapt

on a case by case basis? Had some previous issues, but nothing significant has come of this. Probably best to evaluate individually; leave for now.

5. Officer Reports:

a. Bar [-]

- Bar Sabbs (and staff) have been used to deal with post, run and supervise gyms, supervise social spaces, facilitate bar takeaways, deliver meals in catered colleges, as well as take up many smaller jobs that have relieved pressure immensely on JCR Presidents and college ops staff. For this reason the JCR PresComm sent an email to Jeremy Cook asking that the renewal of their contracts for a second term is carefully considered in the strongest possible terms.

- Bar sabs activities feedback from two Colleges:

- H&B to run the gyms, social spaces, etc

- JB post, gyms, spaces, facilities, tracking, bar takeaway, supervision, rota making

b. Clubs & Societies [CV]

- The system about booking slots in MC has been advertised but I'll try to push it a bit more in social media with the Team Ustinov account. The board game lending system has also been in the newsletter last week but so far no requests.

- I'm planning on making a post on our website about the sport stash update. It's annoying we still don't have the website though.

Could put these updates in with social stuff as well.g

c. Communications [LC]

- Advertisements on socials have included: Movie night; Pub quiz; Ustinov Live; Alcohol Awareness; Road safety

- Newsletter 4 sent out - included "board game renting" and winners of the Diwali competition

Discussion with Sorcha regarding the Pets of Instagram page for Ustinov... this will be looked into next week

- For the coming week, there will be a push for GCR membership across social platforms as well as any events in the social calendar

d. DSU [-] (DM)

- This week was the launch of the Democracy Survey and I have shared the information on Facebook, I will share it with Luke to be on our Newsletter.

- Culture Commission work will be launching a feedback form. This provides the opportunity for any student to anonymously discuss what Durham culture means to them and the contribution sessions are for students that are keen to continue the conversation and have more themes and issues they want to raise.

e. Facilities [-] (DM)

- On Saturday I have arranged the cover we have in Neville house in order to fit the board games, the Christmas decorations will be moved to the cover on SH307. I am planning to start an assets list that will be passed to Victoria to have it in our records.

f. Finance [VV]

- Current Account: £33,779.33 (no transactions were made).

- Laurence and I went to Ustinov and emptied the pool tables on 19/11. I placed the coins in the safe. The total added was £26.20, 2x£10 bags and £6.20 in loose

coins. All spreadsheets are updated accordingly.

g. International Officer [MZ]

- I have wrote a letter to the senior leaders of Durham University as part of campaign run by Durham People of Colour Association. The letter can be viewed in our Instagram account. At the time being I am the PoC rep for DPOCA covering the BAME rep roles.

- Added to that, DPOCA next activity is to raise fund for Christmas which each college to choose 3 gifts from the list they have drawn up and then fundraise the cost of 20 of each gift - whether that means going out and buying it and then dropping it off to them before they give it out, or donating the value of that gift so that they can go out and buy it and then donate it on our behalf.

h. Livers Out Rep [FD]

- I have not had much work since Monday. I have just kept up with emails from livers out, posted on the Facebook group and finalised the mailing list.

i. Social [SG]

- In terms of activities this week, board-games and movie night didn't see any sign ups. Pub quiz was popular, and there is Bingo tonight (saturday) which is looking popular as well.

- Running the events again next week to see if they gain anymore traction.

- Going to look at launching some xmas themed events too, particularly the candy cane gram or xmas treat bags.

We ran an online Ustinov Live on Friday. We had around 25-35 viewers for most of the stream and the chat was relatively active with some audience participation/shoutout requests. While quieter than the events in the bar, this seems reasonable for the online version. We streamed for almost 2 hours and currently have almost 250 views.

j. Steering [CA]

- Nothing to report.

k. Welfare [JB]

- Co-signed our letter to Durham University for the 17 Letters, 4 Words campaign alongside MZ. Posted for International Men's Day and Trans Day of Remembrance. Constantina (Sheraton Park Rep) now also offering online contact hours and we shared a post detailing all welfare hours available now. Constantina will also be helping with the testing program. Sending Ustinov Welfare information for the library's 12 Days of WellBEEing campaign.

l. College Matters [DM]

University matters

- On Thursday I sent our letter as part of the "17 letters 4 words" campaign.

- At the JCR PresComm SSDP ask presidents to join the 'Durham University Harm Reduction' facebook group, also noted that students could message the page for help and support and noted that they provide a 'Freshers' Pack' of harm reduction information and leaflets. We also discuss the formation of a new working group that will be working on the Accommodation fee review, it was agreed that this working group would have 2 Officers, 2 JCR Presidents, 2 MCR Presidents, and 1 President per #RippedOff group.

- At the MCR PresComm DSU mention that they are pushing for the LFT to be

until the 18th December to accommodate more PGs. Also Sarah, our PG Academic Officer from SU, mentioned that she had set up the PG Network Forum and was currently collecting testimonials from PGs for the 'To PG or Not to PG' campaign. We are also working into having an inter-MCR arts competition.

College matters

- On week commencing on 23rd College will be implementing the Lateral Flow Testing for livers in, the booking system for livers out is live from Friday 20th at 3 pm. College has sent information to all students so they take an informed choice whether they get the LFT or not
- College will be sending an email to our Alumni in order to keep them update on the activities around College, as part of the GCR we added this paragraph: "In College, much of our 'normal' programme for the Michaelmas term continues, albeit virtually. The Graduate Common Room continue to offer their regular quiz nights – alumni are very welcome to attend – and they are running virtual Ustinov Live at which they are also keen to have alumni presence. To keep up to date on activities they are planning, you can follow the GCR on Twitter (UstinovGCR), Instagram (@ustinovgcr) and Facebook (Ustinov College GCR – Durham University). If you would be interested in applying to join the GCR Board of Trustees as an Alumni Trustee, please see their invitation letter to find out more."

Exec matters

- During the meeting on the IndyComm we discuss some of the point of the SLA (Service Level agreement) and it was pointed that we should check the government website (link: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1994/30/part/II>) since University doesn't seem to understand the scope of a Students Union. We are looking to have a meeting with Quentin and all Independent Common Rooms to discuss some issues with the last version of the SLA.

6. AOB

a.

Brad Din
GCR Secretary
23/11/2020