

# Ustinov College GCR Exec Meeting



## Agenda

**6:00 pm, 08/03/21**

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

CA to extend last few email accounts

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

CA to look into legalities of finance taking methods, for example bank transfer.

CA to measure sizes of tools with a tape measure for the allotment box.

**CA to draft a free-speech policy based on DSU/independent common rooms policies and pass back to exec for approval**

**JB to write details for a social media protocol.**

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

DM to ask the college to request Van Mildert for possible Summer BBQ space, and enquire about Josephine Butler as an alternative option

VV to start process of changing bank (remain non-committed to allow time to pass GM/trustees if needed)

#### **1. Apologies:**

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

#### **2. Approval of minutes from last meeting.**

- a. Approval of minutes from 01/03/2021 – *passed on a general aye*

#### **3. Matters arising from previous minutes.**

- a. CA to extend last few email accounts *ongoing*
- b. CA to organise an online office hours rota as the new committee comes in *ongoing*
- c. CA to check the SOs to see who needs to approve the bank transfer *done*
- d. CA to look into legalities of finance taking methods, for example bank transfer. *ongoing*
- e. CA to measure sizes of tools with a tape measure for the allotment box. *ongoing*
- f. DM to check with university and college about the consequences of purchasing drug testing kits *ongoing – see report*
- g. DM to ask the college to request Van Mildert for possible Summer BBQ space, and enquire about Josephine Butler as an alternative option *ongoing – see report*
- h. VV to start process of changing bank (remain non-committed to allow time to pass GM/trustees if needed) *ongoing – will have to wait until April for Barclays to take new customers*

#### **4. Agenda Items:**

##### **a. [VV] Worldpay plugin**

To have a "plug-in" (code) for the Worldpay to actually work it will cost us ~£75 (approximately from \$80). They have a developer who will then be able to assist

in the event that there are issues in the future. Hence the issue is more or less resolved.

*Is the cost additional on top of the previous subscriptions? Only a one-time cost; total cost is still less than university charges, and much less than redesigning the whole website.*

*Total cost is likely less than £500, so can be passed by exec.*

*Given it's not something that we need until not academic year, is it worth postponing this until next year, and pitch it to AGM and work into budget cost for annual expenditure etc.*

*Still should wait until we've looked into bank transfers etc.*

*We should leave this until at least the bank move has happened, and still need to answer outstanding questions about if this is best value for money. However, for now it doesn't seem unreasonable to propose this at an AGM.*

**b. [MZ] Free speech policy in Ustinov GCR**

In light with the incidents in the Ustinov GCR social media, I would like to ensure that every activities whether organised by the GCR itself or the one shared among Ustinovian should comply with the Code of Practise of Freedom of Expression. Based on the reaction in the social media, it does not indicate the Code of Practise is applied. Thus this codes of practice does not only need to be disseminated thoroughly but explained thoroughly to those people who thought to be marginalised. Added to that, this incidents also had tarnished our image and thus further action need to be taken to those who have violated it.

*DM is in contact with trustees to write down explicitly a free speech policy.*

*DSU policy? Possibly incomplete; could be objected against. We would adapt this policy anyway, to accommodate our requirements.*

*Should specific action be taken in the WeChat? Or should we just develop a free-speech policy, and think about what should be included in this?*

*Do we just share events with a disclaimer that we are not running the events and any complaints should be directed to the organisers? Should we include something about what we can share in the free speech policy. Depends on what's written in the policy, but broadly, we would not be responsible for the events, but should do our diligence to make sure that the events are not likely to cause offence by default. We've already had an external trustee respond directly in the WeChat; potentially some questionable comments made. This will be discussed with the trustees at some point; we can pass on comments to the chair of trustees. Anything further said should be generally agreed by exec. Best to leave it for now and write a policy.*

*[AP] CA to draft a free-speech policy based on DSU/independent common rooms policies and pass back to exec for approval*

*Should anything be included in particular?*

*LC will take over sharing events in the WeChat group.*

**c. [JB] Removal protocol**

How to deal with students who violate the conditions of access to our social media groups?

*JB happy to write some procedures for this.*

*[AP] JB to write details for a social media protocol.*

*This applies well for the whatsapp, but will this be helpful for the WeChat? We should definitely have the same procedure for any group, to avoid bias.*

*The procedure that we write should deal with what we do if we need to kick someone out, but circumstances to kick someone out should be determined on a*

*case-by-case basis.*

**5. Officer Reports:**

**a. Bar [-]**

- University is creating a Bar Handbook and the College has asked us to give a paragraph to introduce it.

**b. Clubs & Societies [CV]**

- Sport socials continue and again walkover win for Ustinov. Also we have prepared an email with Diana. About access to the observatory, common and seminar room, it has been sent to college but they haven't shared it yet with the livers-in.

**c. Communications [LC]**

- Newsletter 16 published this week: items included strava running competition, various DSU notices and regular social events. The valentine's baking competition winners will be in next week's issue  
- Monitored the WeChat group during the controversy on that platform alongside other members of the exec - it was decided to defer to college and address the issue more formally

**d. DSU [-] (DM)**

- Next Assembly is this Thursday 11th, I have shared the documents in case you have any questions/suggestions.

**e. Facilities [-] (DC)**

- Pat testing of equipment was done on March 2  
- Risk assessment to be done with both Ian and Emma ( the barbecue), and discussed with administration  
- Booking system seems to have a problem with some individuals' memberships and they do not show up  
- For the time-being they just send me proof to fix this  
- Bar to remain closed for time being but cafe might see some revisions during Easter term, but will still be bookable for studying/ as communal area  
- Gym updates to come around mid April  
*Due to a delay in getting memberships to master copy.*

**f. Finance [VV]**

- Account Balance: £51,317.15  
- I paid the £80 for the cheese last Tuesday.  
- Spoke to Barclays – they are not taking new customers until April so I will call back then. Procedure seems simple, however.

**g. International Officer [MZ]**

- Nothing to report.

**h. Livers Out Rep [FD]**

- I'll be emailing the Durham alumnus who contacted us asking to start a collaboration. Apart from that, I don't have anything else to report.

**i. Social [SG]**

- Nothing to report.

*Possible quiz host for Peter Ustinov's birthday.*

**j. Steering [CA]**

- I've now updated the copy of the constitution that appears on the GCR website. As discussed previously, none of the changes are to the text, only the section references and numbering. It should now be clear what the numbers mean and how to refer to a given clause/ section.

- Following recent events, I'm currently trying to work out how we might go about formalising our complaints procedure to make it more transparent what would happen if we receive a complaint. There are three distinct cases I can see: complaints against a student, against a committee member (probably including exec) and against a trustee. Each of these would need to be dealt with in a slightly different way. In many cases [primarily for complaints against students], it seems likely a complaint would need to be referred to college/ University if it is considered serious enough to involve their disciplinary procedures... this might depend on the complainants wishes (although I suppose there may be cases where the exec could make a formal complaint on behalf of an anonymous party?). For committee/ exec there are other steps that could be taken, depending on the nature of the complaint.

- While I am unable to propose any changes to the SOs or other governing documents, I can certainly look at making some drafts to be passed on to other members of the exec for editing and potential proposal at a GM.

- Following discussion a couple of weeks back about the bank account, the consensus/ precedent is that this is not a decision that needs to be passed at a GM. Updates on the situation will need to be provided to the membership at future GMs though (certainly at the next one and possibly beyond if it continues to be a work in progress).

**k. Welfare [JB]**

- This week there has been some unacceptable conduct on our college WhatsApp and WeChat message groups. Some students on the WeChat have persistently contested the sharing of a post regarding a talk about the Uyghur genocide. Subsequently, another student "trolled" the WhatsApp group in "parody" of this situation and was henceforth removed for breaching the conditions of access to the chat. Through the invite link, this student rejoined and posted multiple messages misrepresenting the WeChat situation and attacking those students, as well as me for removing him and challenging me to remove him again. I tried to contact the student privately with no success and have given him a final warning.

**l. University/College Matters [DM]**

University matters

- The Accommodation group is working to get feedback from students, this feedback has been proposed to be made by focus groups. The group has shared some questions that would like to have answered.

- The DSU is working on a Postgraduate guide and has asked us to send a statement from Ustinov.

*Might be hard to get focus groups at the moment; maybe better to just get people to share opinions. Will make a link and post around typical places.*

### College matters

- In April, the porter will be making notices to the bikes that are stored in the racks to dispose of the ones that have been left.
- I have contacted Palace Green to get access to Peters Ustinov's installation speech in order to have some material to commemorate his 100th Birthday. So far, I have planned to share a quote from him every day in April in our social media.

### Exec matters

- I have asked College to help us to contact Van Mildert College and Josephine Butler to host our Summer BBQ.
- St. Cuthbert's Society is looking into refunding 1-year PGs their levies due to the disruptions caused by COVID and the lack of activities they could offer to them.
- University is not very keen on Common Rooms to distribute the Drug testing kits. There is more discussion to follow.
- SPRA meetings will be now bimonthly, next meeting has been programmed for 13th May and then 1st July, this is in order to have shorter meetings. They are planning to apply to Parish Council for a blue plaque for the 100th anniversary of the building of Neville House.

## **6. AOB**

- a.** Currently the favourite date for a social is this Friday. I'll make a post/ Zoom session soonish. Requests for what you want to do are welcome.

Brad Din

GCR Secretary

08/03/2021