



Ustinov College GCR Exec Meeting

Agenda

6:00 pm, 29/03/21

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

CA to write the paragraph for the DSU postgraduate information

JB to write details for a social media protocol

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: *SG, MZ*

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

2. Approval of minutes from last meeting.

- a. Approval of minutes from 15/03/2021 – *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 look into legalities of finance taking methods, for example bank transfer. *ongoing*
- d. CA to measure sizes of tools with a tape measure for the allotment box. *Done – longest tool is 6ft (will need a bigger container, or most things inside container and some elsewhere e.g. in observatory)*
- e. CA to draft a free-speech policy based on DSU/independent common rooms policies and pass back to exec for approval *ongoing*
- f. JB to write details for a social media protocol. *ongoing*
- g. DM to check with university and college about the consequences of purchasing drug testing kits *done*
- h. DM to ask the college to request Van Mildert for possible Summer BBQ space, and enquire about Josephine Butler as an alternative option *ongoing*
- i. VV to start process of changing bank (remain non-committed to allow time to pass GM/trustees if needed) *ongoing*

4. Agenda Items:

a. [DM] Talk from Saving You Money Ltd

Deliver a talk informing their JCR about the basics of the tenant-landlord relationship - for example:

- what a tenancy agreement is,
- what an inventory is,
- the important actions to take at the start of the tenancy to give you the best chance of getting your full deposit back,
- the Deposit Protection Scheme process and when to use them;
- ensuring you aren't ripped off when signing up to utilities.

Date is debated - One way of doing it is with a YouTube stream? Not public; need a link for this. First email to incoming students is first week of July; can possibly get some information out for this if needed.

No charge for this.

Will we be able to provide to future students? Need to ask; currently only one link. Can then potentially make a future guide.

DSU has some similar information also, but only text. If it's a stream, then they can ask questions as in Ustinov Live.

He is only in the process of setting up the company - no clear info on the web, but there is a government ID about it - seems legit.

Passes with all in favour.

b. [DM] Welcome Guide for new Postgraduates DSU

- Information including a section on all the Postgraduate Common Rooms/Communities that we have in Durham so, we will need to write a short paragraph explaining what ours is like. We may want to include what we call it (MCR, GCR, PGM, etc...), what we do throughout the year, any facilities we have, trivia about our college, and any social media or contact details that students might need.

[AP] CA to write the paragraph for the DSU postgraduate information.

Anyone is happy to give info if needed.

c. [DM] Ustinov Summer formals

- Following the email sent by College about the menu for both formals, do you have any objections or want to suggest a change on them?

Need to ensure it appeals to the masses.

Passes with 7 in favour, 1 abstention.

d. [DM] College Awards 20-21 review

- Sorcha and I will be having a meeting with College to plan the College Awards, we need to consider which categories we want to have and if we want to add any others in particular. Last year, due to COVID we added some categories. This is what we used last year:

Categories - Submissions will be handled on an online system.

- Serious list (nominations from another person):

- Outstanding Contribution by an Individual to College Life - PhD Student
- Outstanding Contribution by an Individual to College Life - Masters Student
- Undercover Hero
 - o The person you feel has made a great difference to College life 'behind the scenes' but perhaps, doesn't always receive recognition for their amazing efforts.
- Outstanding Contribution by a Non-Ustinovian to College Life

o This could be a student from another college, a College mentor, a member of staff, etc.

- Friendliest Bar Staff Member
 - Best sports team
 - The biggest contribution to college sport (male+female, nominations by team members)
 - Best Non-Competitive College Group
 - Best quiz host
 - Biggest Contribution to Life at Dryburn
 - Volunteer of the year
 - o Any Ustinovian who has been volunteering.
 - Less serious (allow self-submission + video/ pic with them):
 - Most Enthusiastic Dancer
 - o We all know those people who dance their hearts out at the silent discos and Ustinov Live. They may not be the smoothest but they really bring the party home!
 - Best Ustinov Chef
 - Lockdown haircut
 - o The best/ most dramatic/wildest lockdown DIY haircut. If you've dyed or cut your hair since lockdown began, send us a photo.
 - Lockdown fashion
 - o Create an outfit/ costume and send us a photo of your lockdown inspired fashion. This can be inspired by any aspect of lockdown, from a duvet dress to a baking-themed outfit or anything that sums up your time in lockdown.
 - Art/ doodle
 - o Send us what you've made! You can submit a photo if it is a physical art (draw, sculpture) or share the digital file.
 - The best person to have on your quiz team.
 - Most likely to be found in the bar.
 - Best Newcomer.
 - Golden Oldie
 - o For those who have been at Ustinov for a while!
 - Best Adviser.
 - o The best person to go to for advice
 - Most likely to be the first up to sing at Karaoke.
 - Most competitive gamer / Most likely to flip the table during games night.
 - Best dresser.
 - Biggest smile.
 - Best hugs.
 - Most likely to pull an all-nighter.
 - Best pet
 - Most enthusiastic lockdown runner
 - Green thumb
 - Best zoom backgrounds
- Rules:
1. Each category needs at least 3 nominations for the category to be opened.
 2. The GCR President, Treasurer and GCP scholars have voluntarily withdrawn themselves from consideration in the top 3 categories. This is due to them receiving a financial award from College as part of their GCR role.
 3. Please don't vote for yourself if you are nominated. Any such votes will be discounted.

4. We kindly ask that nominees adhere to a strict “no campaigning” rule and do not send unsolicited emails to fellow students asking them to vote for particular nominees.
5. The GCR reserves the right to remove entries if they don't fit the category.
6. By submitting any material, the GCR will own all the intellectual property rights, any material submitted must not be covered by a third party's property rights.

If we have until 19th April for these, then a google doc on the drive might be better. This can also go to the social committee first. We can come back in two weeks and deal with it quicker than once we have the comments.

A few of these comments might not be relevant now; these will be edited in due course.

5. Officer Reports:

a. Bar [-]

- Text for the College Bar Handbook has been shared with College.

See social report – due to licensing, we cannot have the bar outside the college.

b. Clubs & Societies [CV]

- The sport socials finished, unfortunately we couldn't get a game in the last week since Aidan's couldn't make a team for last week. I still haven't heard anything back from PlayerLayer, so I'll try contacting some other people there and see if there are any news. Finally I'll start working with the timeline Diana shared some weeks ago for the Easter term about starting some sport again and re-opening the gym when it's allowed.

Waiting for updates from Team Durham now that outside sports are allowed.

c. Communications [LC]

- Newsletter to go out next week to mark the upcoming birthday/event for Peter Ustinov

Is the extra newsletter specific for Peter Ustinov's birthday? Nothing else to share... could it just be shared in social media? Or just a general email like ones for formal? Try and put it together as normal, and if it's hollow, then review then.

d. DSU [-] (DM)

- There has been some discussion with DSU about the role of the DSU Reps among Colleges and the difference with PresComm. Since some SU Reps are part of the JCR committees but do not interact with MCR students. The view from DSU about SU Reps is that they should represent the whole College, despite being UGs or PGs.

e. Facilities [-] (DC)

- Nothing to report.

Last time in the observatory, we used all spare batteries for mics; there are none left! DM will take some over.

Christos tried to use the BBQ; couldn't find it! College threw them away; they were ours, and also used quite a lot over the summers! Apparently, college might be ordering new ones (alongside the delayed new picnic tables)

f. Finance [VV]

- Current Account starting balance £ 51,317.15

- Income from SELECTA UK LIMITED: £ 108.85

- Current Account closing balance: £ 51,426.00

g. International Officer [MZ]

- Ramadan festival is in two weeks time; even though I am not planning to do any virtual celebration like the other festive, an awareness of it as a social media presence is suffice. The awareness should comprise but not limited to what people should expect from the people who practice fasting during the holy month.

h. Livers Out Rep [FD]

- Over the past two weeks, I have promoted events on the LOs Facebook group and had a meeting with Matthew (Discord guy) and Diana to discuss the details of the talk that he is going to give about living out and dealing with deposits and tenancy agreements. I am currently in the process of deciding (together with Diana) on the best moment of the year to organise it.

i. Social [SG]

- To screen Peter Ustinov film online and to start advertising it.
- Updates on summer BBQ and formals?
- Will the bar be able to open in an outside capacity at all following april 12th?
- Exec committee social (in person!) in May.

See bar report.

Is advertising underway? Website is sorted, but only need a host.

j. Steering [CA]

- Nothing to report.

k. Welfare [JB]

- Nothing to report.

Will be restarting Wellbeing Walks again. Should be fine since within restrictons.

l. University/College Matters [DM]

University matters

- The University was seeking participants (approx. 6) to take part in a focus group about what they would look for in a nursery and what would make them choose a specific nursery over another, as well as looking at ways to enhance the existing University Nursery provision. The feedback they provide will prove invaluable towards enhancing nursery provision in the future. Helen has circulated this information and we got 1 family attending the focus group.

- At the JCR PresComm, Quentin discussed the Paper that went to UEC about the plans for Term 3, and noted that it was not approved, as some members had concerns around whether this would be a good investment for next term and wanted assurances that this isn't going to unfairly benefit home students opposed to international students who can't return to Durham next term. It was also discussed that the events concept on the racecourse was originally to be useful for Experience Durham and SU activity, but that it could become increasingly evident that this will be a valuable space for lots of colleges. This could be a Covid-19 secure environment for larger scale events.

- At the MCR Prescomm we discuss the possibility to hold an Inter-MCR BBQ event, but we need to check government guidelines and venue. Sarah (PG Academic) mentioned that cuts to funding for UKRI meant they are facing a

£120,000,000 shortfall in their budget which meant there was a possibility to cancel grants halfway through contracts, but stressed that this was unprecedented for PhD students.

- The result of the meeting UEC hold, they endorsed the proposals for: enable structured and organised WSE (enrichment and careers) activity to take place for a further seven days after the end of the Easter Term with license agreements, for livers-in, being extended free of charge (less catering) up to and including July 2nd – and up to £50k to cover the operational costs; the purchase of outdoor social space equipment: up to £130k; the employment of Covid-19 marshals for events and activities: up to £150k; the purchase and hire of equipment - staging, sound, lighting and marquee - to enable the creation of a performance event venue at the Racecourse during June: up to £170k; the hire of a marquee to enable Performing Arts rehearsals during May: up to £15k; the provision of a grant to support Widening Participation student access for more costly events and activities: up to £20k; an additional staffing budget to employ casual operational staff at the Sports and Wellbeing Park until the summer vacation when vacant posts will be filled: up to £20k.

- At the Presidents' Forum, we discussed the behaviour of the Community response and the reports some of the Presidents are having from their students, i.e. being followed or entering houses. Hannah Shepherd asked us to signpost these students so they can follow up this. The University is looking into College residence charges for 2021-2022 with three options; no increase on the price, RPI increase (estimate of 1.1%) or greater than RPI (estimate of 2.2%). We also discussed the hardship funds available for International students and if they were enough and accessible.

- In the Common Rooms mock design review meeting we discussed the design of the e-commerce solution that is proposed for all Common Rooms. First we discussed the membership subscriptions option. Presidents will have access to the backend of this so they can add the membership type, date that will be running and a description. Once the student selects the membership they want to pay, the student will have to enter personal information. There are two types of payment methods, an online and "internal trading" (this will be changed later), the last one refers to payments from students who have a hardship or discount. All payments will go straight to the Common Room account. The second thing we discussed was the event management section, in here we can add a series of events with a title, date of start and end of it, a description, any packages (different types of prices), catering (options included and optional), accommodation, extras, others (such as dietary requirements). Active events will have a message if the event is available, if is not available will appear a message with the date that starts and if the event is full it also will appear and the event will be closed. The student who is booking an event can add as many delegates as the event is configured to have as maximum and each delegate will get an email of confirmation once they have booked. Once the event is online it can be edited. For the registration of the event, it can be configured to have mandatory fields with an option to add other fields.

College matters

- College has booked the Summer formal on Friday 13th August at the HUB. After getting the results from the meeting that UEC held, I have asked the College if we could get more picnic benches for Sheraton Park so our students can have

another place to socialize.

- The rough dates for the College Awards Formal are:
 - Mid-April – meeting to discuss details (Sorcha will be invited to this)
 - Early May – open process
 - Early June – close process
 - Mid-June – prepare certificates
- At the CMT meeting we discussed having Livers-out coming to College grounds, 26th April is the key date in terms of access to facilities, however, the University is still working on guidelines. College also informed me that the date for the Castle formal for next Academic year is now booked and will be on the 30th March 2022.

Exec matters

- Text sent to University Council Report: Divisional submissions 2021:
“Our Graduate Common Room (GCR) continues to work hard to provide an engaging and supportive experience for members, with virtual events such as formal dinners and a jazz night, complete with pre-ordered dinner packages delivered to accommodation, entertainment and the Principal’s speech delivered via Zoom! Christmas and Valentine’s Day were celebrated by exchanging gifts between students in an anonymous (and Covid-secure) way. To continue promoting wellbeing among our students the GCR has also arranged decorating and baking competitions, with a box of chocolates as a prize. The GCR has also continued to offer their usual weekly Quiz Nights and Live Mic events throughout the pandemic as well as film nights and other virtual activities.”
- Extension of non personal emails starting, so far Livers-out email has been approved.
- I have emailed Van Mildert College to ask for Summer BBQ dates, however I am still waiting to hear back from them.
- Celebrating Sir Peter Ustinov, I have created two virtual rooms; a gallery with images of some quotes and some videos from his work and a virtual outdoor movie theatre, with a movie from Peter Ustinov on YouTube. The movie is “The way ahead”, which was rated 100%, it has an ad because it was remastered by the people who posted. Moreover, there is an interview of him on the red couch in there. We will use this room for the movie night (I’m still working who can be the host) but anyone can join at any time with friends and chat and move around. For these rooms we will have a page with the links to the gallery and the theatre, and instructions on how to navigate. The page will go live on April 1st and here is the link <https://ustinovgcr.com/2021/04/01/ustinov-100b-day>.
- College has also created a page to promote their events and they have added ours too, link to their page is <https://www.dur.ac.uk/ustinov.college/peterustinov100/>.
- Email for alumni will be sent on the 1st of April, I have shared our plans for the Summer BBQ and invited them to keep an eye for more information. I also added an invitation to be part of our Board of trustees
- College is preparing material for COVID reflections and I have shared some material to be added from the GCR. This includes the images from the winner of our Bonfire formal and individual words that describe our perception of COVID-19.
- Update for the Summer BBQ, I have finally received a response from Van Mildert. I am working with Katie Dowson (College Operations Manager) to set-up a date, so far the only date that they might not be able to accommodate is 7th August. Although many summer events and trade are still TBC. So, I am working to get a Saturday in July.

Functionality of payment systems; the university proposed one is quite nice, but problem would depend on the restrictions that they impose, e.g. only president has access. Would suggest to keep looking for payment systems independent of the university system – c.f. worldpay.

6. AOB

a.

Brad Din

GCR Secretary

29/03/2021