

Ustinov College GCR

Emergency Annual General Meeting

Minutes



5:00 p.m., 07/06/2020, held over Zoom

1. Apologies: JI, ML

Present: DM, AH, VB, RS, RR, SK, BR, SH, AL, CA

2. Issues arising from the last minutes

a. Approval of Minutes from the last meeting

Minutes from the Annual General Meeting held on 08/06/19 – *passed at the AGM*

Minutes from the General Meeting held on 22/03/20 – *passed at the AGM*

3. Reports from Officers

a. President [DM]

University matters:

This year the GCR has increased its presence on University-related issues. To mention some:

- BPR2: we supported our porters and housekeepers while the process was under consideration by University, putting emphasis on the impacts our students would have if this review was going forward. Due to the current circumstances, the review has been postponed.
- Bar Staff Review: with University moving towards more standardized pay scales, the decision has been passed to have bar staff paid the minimum wage living rate. I am working with other JCR Presidents to ensure that our bar prices don't get affected since the recommendation is to raise some items by 20p.

We have maintained good connections with other Colleges by continuing to be part of the JCR and MCR PresComm where we have been working shoulder to shoulder in order to protect our students' interests.

As part of my role as President, I have been working on the Induction group where at the beginning we focussed to improve the Induction week and events around all University. This has changed due to the current circumstances and now the group has created a new subgroup called "Induction Task & Finish Group" to counterbalance the effects students might get next Induction period. Another group on which I am member is the WSE Online - Enterprise and Employment where we are looking into delivering more online options on this topic.

College matters:

We have been working closely with College to ensure that the queries raised to us get an answer. One of these queries was the heating/cooling system during parties. Our first parties were very hot and after working with College and taking

temperature readings during parties College now has the control to regulate temperature during these events.

Exec matters:

At the beginning of the year, we got asked by our members to have more transparency on the involvement of the President in University and College decisions. In order to help the President become more accessible to students, we created an Official Facebook Page. We have reached 3,840 people.

We took part for the first time in the National Road and Safety Week to highlight the importance of being visible while walking/riding a bike around Durham.

Our relationship with the local community has been improved over this year; our first "Afternoon tea" event was very well received. Aside from being active in the SPRA meetings and Sheraton Park Facebook Group, we have also increased our relationship with Neville Cross Association, St. Johns Church, Durham Market Place and Town Hall. Local residents are more open to discussions.

We have had a lot of participation from students volunteering in our events and activities. We have achieved a total of 7,301 hours, despite not being able to hold some events at the end of our year.

We are working closely with other Colleges to get an updated version of the Memorandum of Agreement that we have with the University since the one that we have is currently inaccurate.

Lastly, we are very sorry that due to the current circumstances we couldn't deliver all the events we have had planned for you. We hope you have enjoyed your time at Ustinov College and gained a lot of good memories!

Q: Are we going to be voting on the minutes that were meant to be approved at the last meeting, and will the minutes from last week's meeting be voted on at a future meeting?

A: *Minutes that were passed at the last meeting we will keep because they were passed with quorum. As for minutes from last week's meeting, all the discussion will be on record and the minutes will be raised at the next general meeting to be approved.*

b. Treasurer [VB]

This year we remained on track with our budget quite well until Covid-19 changed everything. While we sold fewer GCR memberships than anticipated, the high number of non-members also meant that we easily broke even on formals and trips and even made a slight surplus on some of them. But then came the virus. We realised the gravity of the situation just as we had finished selling tickets for our Castle formal and swiftly refunded all these. Something to note for future execs: the usage of the online ticketing platform FIXR helped a lot with these refunds but also with all previous ticket sales! Since the lockdown we have not spent any major amounts of money, meaning that many of our expenses were cut, such as parties, family events (no Egg Day this year), the Summer Ball, photography (no events, no photos), and even our BT subscription as these payments have been put on hold due to the lack of sporting events. As will be covered in a separate agenda item, we are

also expecting to spend far less on our Summer BBQ than budgeted since we cannot hope to have such an event taking place physically this summer.

We are expecting to come out of this year with an unexpectedly high surplus (for details see attached spreadsheet) but we will be in dire need of this financial cushion next year. We expect fewer students to be physically present in Durham and so it will be harder than ever to communicate the importance of the GCR to new students and to encourage them to become members. Furthermore, the university's apparent strategy to conduct most teaching online in the first term could lead to two waves of arrivals and us having to organise two Induction Weeks to make all new students feel welcome and at home. I certainly do not envy next year's committee for the challenges they are facing!

You can see more about our figures in the finance-based points on our Agenda and in the spreadsheets that have been sent around by email. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions!

Finally, I have some disheartening news about the Treasurer role which I just found out this year: Up to this year, college has always supported the GCR by giving a 100% accommodation scholarship to our president and a 50% one to our treasurer. However, as part of their measures to reduce spending in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, college have decided that they will no longer provide the accommodation scholarship for the treasurer (but will maintain the one for the president). This is unfortunate as the role of Treasurer is really important and the accommodation scholarship is a great incentive to ensure that it will not be neglected, but unfortunately there is nothing we can do under the current circumstances.

c. Vice President [CA]

It seems a long time ago now that I was elected VP. A lot has happened since then and I'll do my best to summarise most of it. The Summer was a time where we had a small exec committee and so a lot of the focus was on filling in for absent positions and helping each other out. This year at one time or another I have acted as chair, secretary, comms officer and social sec as well as managing facilities issues.

The first big event I was involved in was the Summer BBQ, both as an ex-committee member and a new exec. This was a great event; I was mostly involved in the tech and logistics side and this all ran smoothly (thanks to committees old and new and our many volunteers). After the event, it became clear that our current storage arrangements are inadequate and so I've spent an amount of time improving them. We now have an additional cupboard in Neville House, allowing us to remove all non-tech from the tech cupboard and to divide the social stores based on how often we use things. An amount of BBQ-related items are now stored over at the Observatory since we only need them once a year. The next step is to fully inventory everything we have. This will serve two purposes: committee members will know what we own before purchasing things for events (do we need decorations for a particular theme? Napkins? Craft supplies?). It will also let us record the assets the GCR owns to keep a better track of what money is spent on. This is especially important for more valuable items like the bass speakers we purchased as well as items in the bar and gym that the GCR owns and is therefore responsible for maintaining. This inventory I plan to complete over the summer (hopefully as part of a VP handover), so long as the health restrictions allow it – as our storage is mostly in people's flats.

Throughout the year, I've also been involved in many of our events, including the GMIS and induction week. I've helped our tech officer run several Ustinov Lives and helped out at our late-night parties (basically anything that involves lugging boxes around). We've also had 2 stash orders (although we are unlikely to manage a third). The facilities committee have had some great successes this year. Fiona (the eco rep) has set up an allotment to restart the Ustinov gardening society. This has involved some collaboration from local residents, many of whom are incredibly knowledgeable on these things. The college have also agreed to let the grassy area West of Neville House to go unmown in the hopes of cultivating a wildflower meadow to increase biodiversity. Max (Sheraton Park Rep) has helped us keep the vending machine stocked with college favourites and together we planned and ran a successful pancake night (serving to over 100 people!).

We've also tried to improve the facilities we have as well as add signs to better inform everyone what we offer (such as the library, media cabinet and DVDs, which are sometimes overlooked). With a lot of help from Colin, the observatory has had some decoration in the form of art, team shirts and BBQ photos that were originally in Howlands'. This is still a work in progress (the lockdown has prevented me from doing more). We also still hope to have a projector and sound system eventually set up in the Fisher Room so people can watch DVDs or downloaded films.

Our final big success is that we are in the process of claiming a £8000 refund for fixed assets that we could not take with us when we had to leave Howlands. This will pay for a new Greenhouse and other facilities improvements. The plan is to use it to improve the shared spaces around the college to continue James' (2018/2019 VP) efforts to make the bar and other places feel more homely.

I hope you've enjoyed this year as much as I have, even if it was cut short. Ustinov is meant to be a home and a place for socialising and facilities are a big part of that.

I have also updated our risk assessments, but obviously we will need to do more on this next year.

d. Bar Steward [AL]

This year the bar and café have significantly increased the attention we pay to our allergens relations. Whilst the bar has always been regularly well cleaned by our bar staff, the introduction of free-from options in the bar has directed our attention towards possible areas of contamination between foods and drink. New chopping boards, knives, milk jugs etc were purchased and labelled. Training on the use of these items and the preparation of hot food could be improved, but the implementation of such training was hindered by the coronavirus outbreak. We did, however, implement a new system of cleaning the post-mix tubes and signing off on the gas/keg refills, which has helped Trudie to keep stock.

The free-from food has had some success, especially the soya milk, though some of the trialled products did not sell well. One vegan cookie tasted too much like sand to be reordered. We had a few issues with milk stocking, both soya and normal. After negotiating, we have started reselling glasses and pints of milk. This has been a huge success.

A few events this year have had themed cocktails and mocktails, many of which featured truly terrible puns. The cocktails containing coffee seemed particularly popular, meaning our coffee machine has been put to good use. The advertising

around mocktails was stepped up and seemed to be effective in showing our range of products. I found that I often used 'cocktails' as an all-encompassing term for alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, but that this was not as effective in advertising as clearly stating 'cocktails and mocktails'. I had planned to introduce more box ciders etc to the fridges but the ciders we had took a very long time to sell meaning we did not feel the need to order more for fear of wasting stock.

Sadly, no college drink has yet been decided upon. I had planned to do a vote, but then procrastinated away my pre-pandemic time.

The bar prices are set to increase next year. After university discussions, it has been decided that bar staff will receive a pay increase, and as a result the prices will increase slightly. Our bar, as I hear from Ian, has long made the longest loss in the university. This is, I believe, a result of our wages being considerably higher due to our age and our lack of other colleges visiting the bar. To avoid coming under scrutiny, as a supervisor team we decided to cut back on how many people worked the quiet shifts. Often we found that three people were scheduled to work a shift that could easily be done by two people in a busier bar. There were a few hiccups with staffing levels at the start of this term, but generally this has worked well.

We have some potential changes in bar opening hours but this is still in discussion with Ian and Sarah.

e. Clubs and Societies Officer [RR]

The past few weeks have been rather uneventful for clubs and societies. The college gym remains closed until further notice, as do all sports facilities we normally have access to (the Durham School and Durham High School for Girls). Some of our societies remain active — including the Choir which now has a Facebook page and has offered us a (remote) video performance which I encourage everyone to check out. It is obviously impossible to predict how the year ahead will go but I, as well as whoever takes up the position of Clubs & Societies officer next year, will obviously keep everyone posted as the year goes!

Team Ustinov is also entering into two competitions. The first one is a Strava running club: Strava is a running app that allows you to share your running stats with other people — join the Strava group (link on Team Ustinov's Facebook page) if you like running and you can add your running stats to the club; all colleges send their running stats regularly and there is an ongoing running competition. The second competition is an online sports competition involving a bunch of weekly challenges — we won the first instalment of the competition thanks to Christos sending a video of a very cool bin trick shot but no one has taken part in the second instalment. I will keep posting about these on Team Ustinov's Facebook page if you want to get involved! The next challenge will begin on June 1st.

The Festival of Sports is also an event that was due to take place in a few days but is obviously cancelled. However, Team Durham has decided to look into an online Festival which could involve a number of events including darts (over Zoom), e-sports (including a FIFA competition), a Strava competition and 'mind games' (like chess). If you have any idea of other virtual events the university could hold for the festival of sports, do not hesitate to get in touch tonight and I will send the proposals to Team Durham before the deadline (June 1st). This could be a fun way for Ustinov College to get involved and, who knows, maybe we can steal the victory away from

all the other colleges this year!

f. Communications Officer [ML]

This academic year, I was communications officer who was mainly responsible for maintaining the overall communications between the GCR and college members. The communication channels that I used to circulate news in college included email, Facebook, Instagram, WeChat and WhatsApp Groups etc. I possessed the overall responsibility of the GCR's advertising for upcoming events such as formal dinners, Ustinov Live, Pub Quiz, in an effective and timely manner. This was accomplished through facilitating a good communication between fellow exec members to be aware of which events or news need to be published on newsletters. I also coordinated with the Social Secretary and Social Committee regarding the planning of new events in order to stay vigilant in undertaking the communications duty. Attended weekly GCR meetings to ensure the smooth flow of communication between all GCR exec members and raised any queries I had regarding my role, as I was quite new to the position.

g. Acting DSU Representative [AH]

We did not have a DSU Liaison Officer this year.

It has been an interesting year for the DSU. Many students have sadly had to leave Durham due to lockdown measures. As such, many have been limited in their ability to campaign and put pressure on the University. In these circumstances, it is vital that students have strong representation in the DSU, as these sabbatical officers still have many meetings with senior members of the University.

David, the current PG Academic Affairs Officer, has made significant progress on improving the payments given to PG students who teach and demonstrate. All PG students should now be paid for mandatory training, and PGs, in general, should be receiving a pay rise. He has also raised how inadequate the financial aid application process is for PG students.

The DSU has been lobbying several of the purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) providers to cancel contracts for those who have left due to lockdown, with some success. Additionally, Officers were helping to promote problems that we raised with the University's plans to prevent PG students from graduating in the Summer congregation ceremonies. This was a poorly planned decision by the University and another example of how they treat PG students poorly compared to UG students. With this year's summer congregation cancelled due to lockdown, it is uncertain as to when PG students will be allowed to congregate, and what provisions will be provided for them.

Recently, Assembly was held online for the first time. While not a perfect setup—non-voting members were not allowed to attend—this is a vital step in improving accessibility, which should help increase attendance. By preventing access to members of the DSU, an exception to one of the standing orders had to be made. While the Trustees of the DSU have allowed this given the extraordinary circumstances that the country is now facing, it is worth noting that previously this year the DSU has displayed almost astonishing levels of inflexibility when it comes to the interpretation of its governing documents. An example of this would be the decision to remove the secondary votes of anyone who voted for RON first in the recent Officer elections, despite the election being run using a Single Transferrable

Vote (STV) format. The trustees allowed this, as the election was set up using a STV system, despite the vote not actually being transferred. Many student groups and colleges have deeply criticised the handling of this election.

The DSU is currently taking part in a democracy review. The first phase has been completed, and results are available on the DSU website. The new Opportunities Office will be beginning the next stage of the Democracy Review in the next academic year. More information, and the opportunity to provide input into this review, is available on the website.

h. International Students Officer [SH]

The role of ISO has been an interesting one for a number of reasons. From planning trips to dealing with Exec meetings on a weekly basis, I've had the opportunity to work with some brilliant people and learn from them about Ustinov and the work that the GCR does. Having completed this term, I feel like it's been nothing short of a fulfilling experience. Even though I was a little late to join, the experience has been most meaningful.

Over the last year, we have been on a few trips. The first was to York. Students were taken to the beautiful city and got a chance to check out the amazing markets and the beautiful Cathedral. The trip, much like the others, was during the day, with students leaving in the morning and returning by evening. The next trip was to Fountains Abbey. Students got a chance to check out a world heritage site that is almost a thousand years old. While we did have more trips planned, the unfortunate impact of the pandemic made us put those plans on hold. However, I trust that the trips that did pan out were enjoyable.

Apart from our fun trips, the Ustinov GCR has celebrated a number of cultural events, from Diwali and Holi to Christmas and more. We tried our level best to ensure international representation of diverse cultures, living up to the Ustinov Motto. We also celebrated other holidays like Halloween and New Years! While we tried our level best at each step, it was regrettable that some of our plans were met with a halt due to the ongoing situation.

During this period, we have introduced International Students' contact sessions. In doing so, I have had the opportunity to hear out a lot of you and learn about your struggles. Some have been addressed and some were beyond our reach. But the best part about these sessions was that we were able to work together as a community to resolve a lot of the problems that we were faced with. From introducing more representation through different celebrations to finding a way to help each other learn new skills to better settle into life in Durham.

While I would like to believe that as ISO I did the best I could, considering other commitments and circumstances, I am conscious of unintentional error. As such, I hope that they will be viewed with indulgence and that you will accept my apologies. I am grateful to everyone on the GCR committee and to all Ustinovians for entrusting me into the role. I am particularly grateful to executive committee who have in all cases helped me better settle into the role and guided my decisions whenever I was confused.

For anyone choosing to run for ISO next, I wish you luck and I hope you'll have as much fun on the job as I have. To everyone in Ustinov, thank you and I hope that once all of this is over, we are able to meet again. I hope we'll remain in touch! Stay well!

i. Livers Out Representative [SK]

I have been representing the students currently living out of Ustinov since February 2019 and it's been a great experience till now. In terms of my report, I started work with increasing communication between Ustinovians who are not residing in the college by encouraging dialogue, disseminating information about events organised for Ustinovians both at Ustinov and outside. I targeted private student accommodations and areas that are not too close to the college and spread word about events, office hours and the exec as a whole for any grievances, help or a friendly chat for livers out. We also undertook office hours outside of Ustinov closer to the Science site to cut the travel time to Ustinov for livers out wherein Amy and I decided to take turns doing office hours during the day and while my chance to sit on the rotation could not come up due to Covid-19, we had livers out reach out to us with the help they required, thus it was a fruitful activity.

One of the major concerns for livers out was the travelling to and from the college on days when trips or formals were organised and after discussions with some of the students, talk about taxis and discounts for travelling to their accommodations from social events and an additional stop for buses during day trips in the centre of the town was underway. Unfortunately, no further trips or social events were possible due to Covid-19.

Coming to the activities during lock-down, while the majority of livers out have now left Durham - certain students who are residing in private accommodations have been facing problems pertaining to rent and facilities in their accommodations. This was discussed in detail in GCR executive meetings and the GCR, as well as the Student union, are constantly working through the process of getting a favourable response from the landlord and owner companies in question. The Durham SU has also formally written to individual accommodation companies requesting them to co-operate and help students with easing their monetary burden. A detailed information chart about this housing pledge is available on the SU's page. While some of the companies have been positive and quick in their response, we are still awaiting an answer from some and Diana has very kindly requested the SU to send them a formal reminder. Fingers crossed for the livers out staying at these private accommodations.

As a collective, the GCR has been doing a lot of social media out-reach including the really popular Instagram takeovers from our members. I would just like to once again remind you that I am in Durham, Ustinovians can reach out to me whenever they wish with any kind of help they require!

j. Social Secretary [JI]

It is safe to say that this year has not exactly gone as we had all planned. We all wish that we could be back in Durham and making the most of what time we have left under the banner of our University and college. Luckily, for Ustinovians, we have been an exceptionally active community right up until the onset of COVID-19. We have engaged in events ranging from bar crawls and quiz's to jazz evenings and formals. This last academic year has been a busy one for the GCR and exec members too, riddled with office hours and committee meetings and it has been a privilege to watch so many individuals come together for nothing more than their love for their college.

Sadly, with the world adjusting to the 'new normal', participating in college life has become infinitely more difficult for each of us. We have newfound responsibilities, drastic changes to adjust to and deadlines to hit but yet, Ustinov is striving to provide the support and relief that we all need in these difficult times. We are continuing with our quiz nights, we are preparing for Ustinov Live...online, we are beginning to implement games nights to provide a fresh experience to our college members. On top of this, the GCR and executive committee are continuing to plan for the Ustinov summer BBQ in whatever form it may be possible. We are meeting several times a week to keep things on track to help maintain some form of familiarity and connectedness with a pre-Covid way of life.

Regarding next year, it is difficult to imagine what life will be like at the University of Durham. Many of you as well as myself will be moving on. However, we have fortunately had a number of manifesto's for next year's GCR and executive positions so I imagine that Ustinov will be in good hands. What college life will look like next year, I do not know but like many of you, I am thankful that I got to spend the 19/20 academic year in good company here at the college and could not imagine it being any other way. I hope that you are all well and staying safe during these extraordinarily strange times and wish you nothing but the best in your future endeavours.

As ever,

James Patrick Ireland
Social Secretary

k. Welfare Officer [BR]

After I took over after the AGM last summer, we followed tradition and held a stress-less summer with adult colouring books and pencils in the bar. We also held a dog day with the Northumberland Wag n Wheel Newfoundland group and the Chuchos' taco truck. The day was a success, engaging the students and the local residents and we had hoped to repeat the day this summer, but Covid got in the way; I hope that this can be repeated in future years. I also attended welfare training at the DSU, with Diana and Connor, which was helpful in planning for the year, hopefully something similar will run again this year for incoming exec. During the GMs over the summer we proposed several changes to the standing orders to the role of the welfare committee, including creating the role of Disability Representative and adding the ISO and the Livers' Out Representative to the wider welfare committee to help student concerns to be addressed.

In preparation for the start of the year, I got in touch with the university counselling and disability services, alongside the local sexual health services to put together information packs and information emails for the incoming students. I also rationalised the welfare supplies, throwing out some condoms that went out of date a decade ago! I have now clearly labelled the expiry dates on the welfare supplies to help with the handover. We only had to order one batch on condoms this year, and there are still some left for the start of next year, this alongside not having any events in the late epiphany or summer terms resulted in the welfare team coming in well under budget.

During the first GM of the year we filled all the positions on the welfare team (including the newly created Disability Representative position) and two of the positions were contested. The welfare team has been amazing this year, and I'd like

to thank them for everything they have done. At the start of the year, we held welfare drop-in sessions twice a week, although, low demand meant that we moved into the regular welfare rota with when the welfare team would be present being advertised. This was also done in the previous academic year and it is likely to be the case in future academic years. However, I hope that future welfare officers continue to have separate welfare drop-ins at the start of the year to increase awareness of what the welfare team can do and that we are here even if, they are not continued throughout the year.

The welfare team hosted several campaigns mostly with a pub quiz, alongside other members of the exec and committee, including for mental health week, women's history month and LGBT history month. We also planned to host a Drag Show, planned by Nicole our LGBT Representative, initially as part of LGBT history month but after some unforeseen circumstances we postponed the event to take place in May, to fit in with the week running up to Durham Pride. However, this ultimately had to be cancelled due to Covid -19.

Jess, the Women's Welfare Representative, organised a collection for a local shelter in county Durham, of clothing, toiletries and other household donations. We have had a large number of donations, and would like to thank everybody who has donated, and we will organise delivery of the donations at a point when it becomes safe to do so. The welfare team also proposed changing the title of the Male and Female Welfare Representatives to the Men's and Women's Welfare Representatives to allow the positions to be more inclusive, and this was passed at a general meeting.

This year the welfare officer started having bi-weekly meetings with College's wellbeing team. This has enabled us to raise issues with college and to work together to get positive changes. We created gender neutral bathrooms in both Neville House and Sheraton House and college were able to place shelving units in the disabled/gender neutral bathrooms so we can now provide welfare supplies in there too. We also worked with college to provide clear signage for the sanitary bins in college accommodation, translated into eight languages. Hopefully, these meetings will continue with future welfare officers to keep making small changes in college that will help the lives of Ustinovians.

The Covid-19 crisis has hugely affected the lives of Ustinovians, and we have tried to provide information about how to access support services through emails and social media posts. Alongside other members of the exec and committee we have provided information about free and relatively cheap activities you can do from home during the lockdown, including discounts on workout and meditation apps. We will continue to provide information of support available as we get it and to help direct queries that people have to college and the university via Diana. Some members of the exec and wider committee created a lockdown diary on Instagram, which received positive comments from students. Wider use of social media could be something utilised by future welfare committees.

Online nightline training is available and will run over the weekend of the 13th and 14th and 20th and 21st June if anyone is interested in signing up. The link has been posted in the Ustinov Facebook group.

4. Agenda Items

a. 2018-19 Accounts [VB]

- i. Proposal: *To pass the 2018-19 Accounts subject to the final audit from the accountant being complete.*

Proposer: Vera Bieber

Secunder: Connor Armstrong

- ii. Supporting Information: The spreadsheet with the accounts was sent out to all Ustinov students with the agenda.

Every year the GCR has to submit their accounts to the charities commission. They are submitted 10 months after the end of the financial year, so the end of June. These are the 2018-19 accounts, which mostly cover payments conducted during the previous Treasurer's tenure. They are currently being audited by the accountant.

Vote: *The motion passes [28 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention].*

b. 2020-21 GCR Budget [VB]

- i. Proposal: *To pass a budget of £72,045.00 for the 2020/21 year based off an estimated income of £63,600.00.*

For the past two years we have been passing annual budgets for the upcoming academic years at our Annual General Meetings which have been very helpful for the executive committees to track their spendings and ensure that they fit within the big picture. Therefore, we have drafted a budget for the 2020-21 academic year.

Proposer: Vera Bieber

Secunder: Rebecca Salthouse

- ii. Supporting Information:
While the 2019-20 year will likely end with an unexpectedly high surplus due to Covid-19, we believe that the pandemic will lead to a significant decline in our income next year: the university is trying to save money wherever it can which will likely impact our composition fee and with fewer students being present in Durham and social distancing measures in place it will be harder to encourage new students to become GCR members. Furthermore, if there will be two main waves of arrivals (September & January), we will need to organize two Induction Weeks to make the students feel welcome and to give them a real Ustinov experience. We are therefore budgeting to make a loss of £8,445.00, which will be funded through the surplus made this year.

Q: [AB] My concern is that this budget seems to be written for Plan A and it was noted that University Plan B, with social distancing in place, and cutting social events to 10-20% will be more likely. The events that the budget is

based on for Induction weeks will likely have to be run at a lower capacity. Is there a budget written for University's Plan B scenario where a lot of events will be run online?

A: [VB] *If a lot of social events will not be held during the first term, the plan will be to push these to later in the year, so even if certain events cannot be held at the beginning, they could still be moved. We can't change the budget from last week because it is an emergency AGM.*

[DM] *We are in discussions with University and they are intending to go through with Plan A if possible, so this budget is more appropriate. We are looking into how we will have students on site and in colleges so I think this budget will be more adequate.*

Q: *If we do have Plan A then I think this will be great, but there is a significant risk that this will not be the case and the budget has a significant expenditure that may not be appropriate. For a new exec to come in and see this budget it may cause problems – would it be possible to make a proposal to amend this budget?*

[VB] *The new exec won't be entirely unexperienced as we have the same president.*

Amendment to the proposal from Alex Blair: *To pass: A) a budget of £72,045.00 for the 2020/21 academic year based off an estimated income of £63,600.00 for the operation of the GCR if AY 2020/21 falls under the University's Plan A scenario, of minimal impact from COVID-19, on the requirement that a second suitable budget is proposed and passed by the GCR at the next general meeting (or by Sep. 1st, whichever is sooner as provided it is before such a date that the GCR must decide on Levy payment charges) for the operation of the GCR if AY 2020/21 falls under the University's Plan B scenario, in which events predominantly will be digital in nature.*

Proposer: *Alex Blair*

Seconder: *Alastair Stewart*

The date included is September 1st under the assumption this would not affect the ability to change levy payments by this point. The worst-case scenario would be we would have an invalid budget, but this is no worse than having a budget that is completely inappropriate due to the situation. VB accepts this amendment.

Vote on the amended proposal: *the motions passes [23 in favour, 2 against, 3 abstentions].*

c. BBQ Budget [CA]

After some long discussions between the exec and also with all our trustees, it sadly seems as though the 2020 Summer BBQ will not be able to go ahead in its usual form. While we still have over 2 months to go, it is very unlikely the Covid-19 outbreak in the UK will have progressed far enough to hold a normal event. We considered trying to put on a scaled back, socially-distanced event but this doesn't seem feasible. Many people have already left Durham and may not return for a while and those that remain would only attend if they were certain it would be safe. We certainly couldn't justify spending the full budget on such an event. In addition, the GCR has responsibilities to our members and to the general public and I don't think we could guarantee regulations would be followed throughout.

We did contemplate moving the event to later in the summer, and perhaps to a venue which would better lend itself to social distancing but again we don't see this as a workable alternative. It would be better to instead plough the same money into making the 2021 BBQ event bigger and put a focus on reaching out to alumni (especially recent graduates) and invite them back to celebrate what they couldn't this time around.

We are instead looking into online/ virtual alternatives for August 1st. While none of these will be able to live up to the spectacle of our usual BBQs, we are hoping that we could still run an event that will bring people together and provide a few hours or even most of an afternoon and evening of entertainment.

We are beginning to test out possible tech to do this sort of this, with the aim of using the Ustinov Live in a couple of weeks to see how engaged people get and how comfortable we are in handling a bigger streamed event. With this in mind, we have two budget proposals, representing the two different possibilities we can see at the moment.

Regardless of budget, attendees will only be present virtually, either through participating in the live comment stream or joining chat rooms on Discord. We may additionally have a Zoom call (or equivalent) running but we don't expect that this would be open to all (although we may invite individuals to join occasionally). Event highlights would include:

- Music - either live or pre-recorded (but intended to sound live rather than like a studio recording). This might (hopefully) also include a group performance, featuring recordings of a large number of Ustinovians.
- Online college awards ceremony - with expanded set of awards to allow for recognition of more Ustinovians in some less serious categories.
- Contests on the day, such as having the best outfit or designing a theme-appropriate drink.
- We are also planning on suggesting a possible menu with the bar steward offering a masterclass on how to make simple cocktails/ mocktails.
- Quizzes and games: our aim here is to adapt the weekly pub quiz to make it easier for many people to participate without having to faff around with technology. We may also incorporate simple games, either using online platforms (like Jackbox) or following the format of radio panel games.
- Playlist compiled by Ustinovians - whenever there is some down time between acts/ events we will run a playlist assembled from requests submitted before (and even during) the event for people to enjoy together.

Initially a poll will be held to find which of the following options should be put forward to a motion. The motion will then be voted on.

The budget proposals:

i. Option 1: Virtual Ustinov Day

Physical presence with stage and tech team to broadcast live music from location (possibly from Ustinov Bar).

This will mean the event should feel noticeably different from an online stream and we can try and capture some of the atmosphere of a live performance. The tech team that we usually hire also have professional expertise in this area, meaning we will not be solely reliant on committee and Ustinovians to ensure things run smoothly. We have recently been in touch with them and they have been running similar events for the music industry and are confident that this can be done safely for volunteers, tech crew and performers (they have a number of established precautions that we would put into place to maintain social distancing).

The intention here is that the staged music will be of a standard that makes it worth the extra budget. We aim to use multiple cameras to capture the live performances and enough audio equipment to fully capture the ambience of a live band, such that the sections we record to stream ourselves will approach the quality of a real concert. This will be interwoven with segments pre-recorded by Ustinovians and non-music entertainment as listed above.

Total: £3000, broken into

£1300, tech crew + gear hire

£400 tech redundancy (unexpected costs eg extra audiovisual equipment, venue hire)

£1000, talent

£300, redundancy

Q: My biggest issue is partly that this is essentially £3000 for a glorified version of a live stream, regardless of how good the technology is. However, my main concern is that college days (and no doubt summer BBQs) are predominately about a community coming together, which is impossible to achieve at home, regardless of Zoom etc. At the end of the day, my fear is that you'll have people who are joining an organised event for however long they fancy, and then dissipating again. I think this event shouldn't be cancelled but £3K seems absolutely absurd; I was wondering if you could provide any specific details/examples as to why this first option justifies a £3K price?

A: *The biggest price of this is the tech team, and then the performers themselves, which is what we need to make this a special event rather than pre-recorded material. We have cut the price by nearly 2/3 on our original proposal and because it is going online, our reach is bigger; we have the potential for people all over the world to get involved. The fact it will be left online afterwards means people can watch it after the date if they are busy and people can dip in and out, you don't need to attend the entire event.*

Q: *I think this is a very good idea and is ambitious for sure but my concern is if we*

don't do something like this and we have a predominantly virtual year next year, it will be hard to describe to someone what the GCR is doing. I think this is a good idea doing it for a BBQ where we have additional members of the community we can extend the invitation to, for example new students and locals, and see just how well a digital event works if we go all in. I think the Virtual Ustinov Day is ambitious, but a very strong proposal and I am concerned that if we didn't go big, what would be able to do next year? It is a good proposal to learn what we would be able to do if we get a professional tech team on board.

In terms of justifying the price, I don't anticipate we would spend the full £3000 but this is the maximum we would need to put on the event.

I think this is good how this is essentially an experiment for events for the upcoming year. I'm still reluctant to say that I will withdraw my concerns as £3000 for the tech team doesn't necessarily help address the issue of people attending the event and you may be overestimating the number of people who will turn up when they are by themselves and separated from college. However, in line with looking to see what the possibilities are this is an okay use of £3000.

The idea of trying to go into October and Induction week entirely online without doing anything virtual and large scale before would be difficult, especially when you have people who are new to Durham and you need to get them included. The fact that anyone could enjoy this on their headphones whilst cooking, or whilst playing a game, or in a house with their friends playing these games, all of these are good and examples of people benefitting from us putting on this event.

Last week there were some suggestions of ways to promote communication between attendees for example on Discord so there will be some way of communicating.

We would have presenters throughout the day. YouTube and Facebook both have a comment stream which would be synced so in between acts and entertainment, presenters would be able to interact and answer comments, so it gives a sense of involvement. We will have no idea how it will be received until the day, but I believe very strongly that it is worth trying. We will have almost 2 months after Ustinov Live to work out the logistics.

I actually don't agree at all that things like Zoom can't develop a community feel about them. I know that people have been attending the pub quiz from all around the world and they have not necessarily been in groups. For the tech team in order to make this as nice as possible, we need this budget and it could be a really nice thing and bring some Ustinovians and others together.

ii. Option 2: Ustinov Live ++

This will be relatively similar to the online Ustinov Live event but with a small budget to see if we can find some external acts who are able and willing to record performances for us to stream.

Total: £700, broken into
£500, talent
£200, redundancy

iii. Option 3: Ustinov Live

If this budget doesn't pass, we can still try and run an online only event. This will rely solely on Ustinovians to provide performances and so will generally be a smaller event, similar to the Ustinov Live performance we are looking at holding in June.

Vote on which BBQ option will be put forward: *Virtual Ustinov day passes [19 votes], Ustinov Live ++ [8 votes], Ustinov Live [0 votes].*

Vote to pass a budget of £3000 for Virtual Ustinov Day: *The motion passes [21 in favour, 8 against, 0 abstentions].*

d. HLM for Miriah Reynolds [AB]

- i. Proposal: *I nominate Miriah Reynolds for an Honorary Life Membership in the GCR, in appreciation for her service as Treasurer 2013/14 and Eco Rep 2014/15, during which time she launched the Green Move-Out Sale, a project she continued to organise even after her Eco Rep tenure. Miriah also remained on-call for some years afterward, ready to hold GCR office hours when staff were called away, respond to esoteric queries about historical GCR practices, and generally lend a hand whenever asked, especially during the crush of Induction Weeks.*

Proposer: Alexander Blair

Secunder: Vera Bieber

Vote: *The motion passes [28 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention].*

1. Hustings

a. International Students Officer

Candidate: Kalel Alsaeed

Manifesto:

This is Kalel Alsaeed, I am from Saudi Arabia. I received my Master's degree in Physics from Wright State University-US where I spent a year working for the International Office. Now I'm doing my PhD and this is my first year.

Kalel did not attend the meeting so is disqualified from running for this position.

Candidate: Muhammad Zulkifly

Manifesto:

Being an international student always makes me curious about adapting to the local culture and the need for assimilation. If I am elected for this post, I will fulfil the needs of the international students and ensure that they live to the fullest during their time in the university.

First, I would like to organise a monthly watching Newcastle United football game live as the experience of EPL is very valuable for the international students. This can be done by engaging with the football club and if possible, getting a student discount.

Second, drawing a synergy with a welfare officer in tackling the issue of hate crimes. Based on the data from gov.uk, hate crimes in County Durham, caused by race has increased from 474 to 507, on the other hand, based on religion has increased from 67 to 78. Thus, providing a safe environment for students particularly international students is important.

Third, most of the postgraduate students in Ustinov have a family including children. Thus, organising family-friendly events and activities is indispensable for them as it will help not only the student but their family as well to adapt to the environment and culture.

Lastly, organise a monthly event based on the continent. For instance, a particular day in a month, one can organise 'colourful Africa' and the next month 'unique Asia'. On that day, a representative from each nation of the continent can share the value (food or anything nice) of their nation with colleagues.

Hust:

My name is Muhammad, I am a first year PhD student in politics and economics, and before this I did my masters for the last two years in Durham. Culture and diversity, and safety is very important when students come to study abroad. I would like to organise monthly events based on the different continents, so for instance a particular day in the month we could organise a Colourful Africa, and people from that continent can share food or anything for their nation. As mentioned by Shaf in the previous meeting, he said that not a lot of people attend the events so maybe this kind of event can take into account different people's interests and come up with events that a lot of students can attend. Safety is very important, especially from the perspective of people studying in a new country that they may not be familiar with, especially with the current situation.

Questions:

Thank you very much for coming back and doing the hust again!

Q: Next year there is a significant chance we will have a number of students not in Durham and in their own countries. How would you keep students engaged and feel part of the Ustinov community?

A: *One example is planning virtual events like the Ustinov Day and looking at people's main interests. In the future we can focus on e.g. gaming nights.*

2. Any Other Business

Thom A.B (Chair of GCR trustees): I would like to say a quick thank you to the outgoing current exec and general committee members for taking the GCR through this strange time. Thank you for all your hard work this year and I hope everything continues to go as well as it has been!

CA: Thank you for passing the budget for Virtual Ustinov Day, we will do our best to make this the best event we can. If anyone has any suggestions for ideas for the day or can potentially help out in Durham then let me know.

AH: I would also like to thank everyone and would encourage anyone to run for positions next year, it's really fun!

Rebecca Salthouse

GCR Secretary

07/06/2020