

JCR Open Meeting Minutes

Meeting on 25.1.2022 at 17.00 UK time

List of Committee Members

Names, initials and pronouns	Role and * to mark non-attendance
Jamie Charles, JC , she/her	President
George Stokes, GS , he/him	Vice President
James O'Garro, JO , he/him	Treasurer
Jacob Hougie, JH , he/him	Secretary
Keelan Shorten, KS , he/him	Welfare
Vasilisa Grachova, VG , she/they	Welfare
Ben Palmer-Welch, BPW , he/him	Welfare
James Walker, JW , he/him	Academic and Access*
Kitty Joyce, KJ , she/her	Green
Yifei Zheng, YZ , he/him	Catering, Accommodation and Facilities
Matthew Wadey, MW , he/him	Sports and Societies*
Gosia Szakowska, GoSz , she/her	Ents
Muhammad Mahmoud, MM , he/him	Ethnic Minorities*
Neve Baskar, NB , she/her	International Students
Emma Gibson, EG , she/they/he	LGBTQ+
Lucy Trusler, LT , she/her	Gender Equalities
Claire Collins, CC , they/them	Disabled Students*
Izaak Mammadov, IM , he/him	Computing

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Summary of Key Points

1. The Corpus Challenge is delayed until the 6th March and discussions are ongoing
2. The JCR voted to renew the Active Policies on Confidentiality in Liberation and Welfare Roles, Committee Gift Declarations, Accessibility Statements and Accessible Formats.
3. The JCR voted for an amendment to the JCR President’s Room Active Policy, allowing the JCR President to choose another Prize

List room, with the approval of the JCR at an Open Meeting and the approval of College.

4. In reference to the newly amended JCR President's Room Active Policy, **JC** submitted a request to **GS** for Y6 rather than O0. The JCR subsequently decided it would be most appropriate to defer this request to another Open Meeting, to give proper notice under the new Active Policy.
5. **GS** briefed the JCR on proposed changes to the Prize List, heard JCR opinions on the proposals and members were asked to express their opinions on these proposals, which **GS** and **JC** agreed to use as a guide for their discussions with College.

The gauge of feeling was somewhat in favour of the proposal to replace the algorithm for prizes with random lots from those with 1st was .

The gauge of feeling was opposed to the proposal that, if someone rejects a prize room, they should no longer receive a discount and that the spare room be given to another, randomly chosen, person who got a 1st.

The gauge of feeling was opposed to the proposal that choosing prize rooms should be done in time slots not by ranking was also rejected unanimously.

0. Administrative Matters – Apologies and Approval of Minutes

After a brief wait, the meeting begins at 17.19.¹ **CC** and **MW** have given apologies for not attending. **JW**, **MM** absent without apology.

1. Welcome and Introduction (**JC**)

JC expressed her hope to minimise the length of the meeting, while ensuring good democracy.²

2. Corpus Challenge Update (**MW**)

In the absence of **MW**, **JC** briefed the JCR on the Corpus Challenge (6th March, not 6th February), including the JCR³ paying for buses and ongoing investigation into the formals.

Alex Mann (AM) questioned preparation for people throwing up on the bus and **JC** responded that sick bags should be provided.⁴ ⁵

Summary: The Corpus Challenge is delayed until the 6th March and discussions are ongoing

¹ After some discussion over the merits of stealing people from different locations, or offering snacks (or booze) to entice people, **JC** went to the library to steal people and retrieved the final 4 people to reach 25

² There were wings for dinner

³ That is, the JCR budget, not the JCR (undergraduate body) as individuals

⁴ Perhaps another reason why there needs to be non-clubbing options?

⁵ Please, do not throw up on the bus back from the Corpus Challenge.

3. Renewal of Active Policies (**GS**)

GS summarised each policy and then asked if there were any comments, followed by a vote.⁶

3.1 Confidentiality in Liberation and Welfare Roles

Sets out the need for confidentiality.

Vote for renewal: 24 in favour and 1 abstention

3.2 Committee Gift Declarations

Gifts to JCR officers over £3 must be reported to the Secretary.

Vote for renewal: 25 in favour

3.3 Accessibility Statements

JCR events must have accessibility statements

Vote for renewal: 25 in favour

3.4 Accessible Formats

The JCR must provide accessible formats.

Vote for renewal: 25 in favour

Summary: The JCR Voted to renew the Active Policies

⁶ The current Active Policies can be found on the JCR website here:
<https://www.jcr.corpus.cam.ac.uk/active-policies>

4. Proposed amendment to JCR President's Room Active Policy (**GS**)

JC handed over the chair to **GS**.

GS briefed the JCR on the proposed amendment to the Active Policy that grants O0 to the President. The amendment allows the President not to live in O0, but to live in another prize room, with an Open Meeting and College's approval. **Kit Edgecliffe-Johnson (KEJ)** noted that the President can currently go through the normal ballot process if they choose not to live in O0. **JC** noted that the president needs a big room as JCR storage is done in the president's room, but may not need (or be able) to live in O0.

AM questioned which year group prize list O0 would go into, **GS** noted that, in theory, the distinction is chosen each year, so it may need to vary by context, but being prescriptive isn't needed.

KEJ noted that O0 is helpful for the JCR for storing heavy things on a bottom floor room, near to the gate, but also that other prize rooms being given to the president overrides the reward system of the prize room system. **JC** recognised that it is possible for a president to get an alternative accessible room, but the need to use the president's room for storage makes it difficult to ensure the president gets a big enough room, but also added that O0 is noisy, which causes major problems; this is especially true as the Open Meeting can ensure a suitable room is chosen and that the president is not treated with unfair benefits. **KEJ** noted that storage can, in theory, be done elsewhere, and that this could set a precedent for the president living elsewhere. **JC** noted that the

policy is biased to the president living in O0 by creating hassle for a change. **JC** noted the difficulty in using other storage locations which may not be as secure.

Eleanor Ivimey-Parr (EIP) asked if O0 could be given to another JCR Member,⁷ but **AM** noted that the JCR President still ought to be rewarded, saying that he found O0 a reward and a practical benefit.

IM noted that since O0 goes onto the prize ballot, the rest of the JCR would not lose out under this system.

Vote to approve the amended Active Policy: 14 in favour, 4 against, 7 abstentions

Summary: The JCR voted for an amendment to the JCR President's Room Active Policy, allowing the JCR President to choose another Prize List room, with the approval of the JCR at an Open Meeting and the approval of College.

5. Request from JCR President (**GS**)

GS returned the chair to **JC**.⁸

In light of the passage of the amended Active Policy, **GS** requested that **JC** be allowed Y6.

AM questioned whether the president should be allowed to use the new Active Policy immediately as people may not know it was happening. **JC** responded that there is minimal time before the Room Ballot, certainly

⁷ The secretary, perhaps?

⁸ Returning to its rightful place

not to get a quorate Open Meeting. **IM** did not believe that this was unconstitutional.

JC noted that, from the agenda and the proposed amendment people could have worked out what **JC** was going to request a room change. **AM** and **KEJ** disputed that this was sufficient for people with objections to come. **GS** noted that it was constitutional to vote on this, so it was down to the chair. **KEJ** asked if the JCR could vote on whether to allow the vote.

Malachi Gee (MG) noted that Agendas should be clearer, for accessibility reasons.⁹

JC decided to wait until another Open Meeting to vote on this matter, to allow proper notice, but asked that attendees help to get a quorate Open Meeting in time.¹⁰ **GS** noted this would likely have to be within the next week.

Summary: Subject to the newly approved amended JCR President's Room Active Policy, **JC** asked **GS** to propose that **JC** be allowed Y6 instead of O0. It was decided that this was inappropriate as it would have been too difficult for those with objections to prepare. A vote on the matter will be held at a later date.

⁹ **MG** pointed out here the great irony of having just passed the Accessibility-related Active Policies and we all felt collective shame

¹⁰ Oh no, more minutes to write!

6. Discussion of possible changes to the Room Ballot Active Policy (**GS**)

GS briefed the JCR on proposed changes to the room ballot, seeking opinions from the JCR. The proposed changes are as follows:

1. The prize ballot would be based not on an academic ranking algorithm, but instead a random allocation of 10 from those who get firsts.
2. If someone on that list of 10 rejects the prize rooms, they would not get a discount and the 11th (12th, etc.) person drawn for the prize list would be offered the room. Thus the rooms would not go on the reserve list.
3. The prize list would no longer be based on ranking choices and sending their list to Tutorial, but individual would be given a specified time period to choose a single room.

Discussion went in order of the changes, though some discussions were relevant to multiple points:

1. **GS** noted that the current algorithm is very opaque and no one understands it. **GS** noted that different degrees have different rates of getting Firsts. **JC** noted that the JCR does not support the academic system, but that this change reduces the academic hostility. **KEJ** asked if the JCR's support for the change indicated that the JCR could accept the Prize Ballot, but **JC** noted that it was near impossible to end the Prize List system, so it is worth it to improve a flawed system. **IM** noted that this system makes it easier for college to limit the problems of an algorithm, but that this

system instead creates problems for academic pressure to cross the 2:1/1st boundary and that the randomness is painful. It was noted by the JCR that, by removing the financial incentive of a discount, even if you reject the Prize Rooms, this undermines some benefits. **VG** noted that covid-based disruption made the academic system less fair. **EIP** noted that this system is better. **BPW** expressed that the reward for academic success was lesser under a random system and expressed a preference for a fairer algorithm.¹¹ **LT** noted that the Prize List was a weird way to reward success, when there are other rewards. **GS** noted that he and **VG** are doing the same paper, but are being assessed differently: this highlights the lack of equality between Triposes.

Gauge of feeling: (a) Random allocation - 11 in favour, 1
abstention (b) Status quo of ranking - 9 in favour¹²

- JC** noted that the change effects the availability of discounts, which has class/equality ramifications. **KJ** noted that this makes the reserve list a worse option due to the absence of spare Prize Rooms.

Gauge of feeling: (a) Changed system - 0 in favour
(b) Status quo system - 20 in favour, 2
abstentions¹³

- GS** noted that this raised significant issues for people who were working (or as **JC** noted, people who were on holiday abroad with

¹¹ At this point, we lost quorum :(

¹² One of these votes was against either system

¹³ Due to the informality of the votes, a quorum was no longer needed

time zone issues) and may not be able to choose in time, but that College feel this proposal makes the Prize List easier to administer. **JO** asked to confirm that Prize List choices were during the long vac. **MG** checked there would be enough notice. **AM** voiced a concern that this system was not easier to administer as he believes there was an automated system to put the ranked choice together and **IM** volunteered to make a system if it was not already in existence. **MG** noted the classist assumptions behind the approval. **IM** noted that any changes to the Room Ballot Active Policy would need support of an Open Meeting.

Gauge of feeling: (a) The proposed change - 0 in favour
 (b) Status Quo - 23¹⁴

Summary: **GS** briefed the JCR on proposed changes to the Prize List, heard JCR opinions on the proposals and members were asked to express their opinions on these proposals, which **GS** and **JC** agreed to use as a guide for their discussions with College.

The gauge of feeling was somewhat in favour of the proposal to replace the algorithm for prizes with random lots from those with 1st.

The gauge of feeling was opposed to the proposal that, if someone rejects a prize room, they should no longer receive a discount and

¹⁴ In true Politburo style, these unanimous votes were conducted by a show of hands

that the spare room be given to another, randomly chosen, person who got a 1st.

The gauge of feeling was opposed to the proposal that choosing prize rooms should be done in time slots not by ranking was also rejected unanimously.

7. Any Other Business

JW¹⁵ noted that “Material Girl”.

Meeting ends at 18.14.

¹⁵ arrived and shortly after, when asked for Any other business,