JCR Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting on 29.11.2022 at 18.00 UK time

List of Committee Members

Names, initials, pronouns and * to mark non-attendance	Role
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 and President-elect
Emma Gibson, **EG**, she/they/he	LGBTQ+
Lucy Trusler, **LT**, she/her	Gender Equalities
Malachi Gee, **MG**, he/him*	Disabled Students
Dylan Mankin, **DM**, he/him*	Computing (non-voting)

Agenda

Summary of Key Points 5

Action Points.....5

0. Administrative Matters 7

1. Thank you to the outgoing 2022 Committee (**JC**) 7

2. A congratulations to our incoming 2023 Committee (**JC**).....7

3. Preparation of Formal Hall AP (**GS**).....7

4. JCR Slacks AP (**JC**) 8

5. Halfway Hall AP (**JC**).....8

6. Paper Advertising AP (**JC**).....9

7. Communal Ownership of Sports Equipment AP (**JC**) 9

8. Squash Budget AP (**JC**) 10

9. Room Ballot AP (**JC**) 10

4. Background Heating AP (**JC**) 14

5. JCR Flag Designs (**Ruth Chapman – RC)** 14

6. Any Other Business.....15

Annex 1: JCR Flag Designs.....15

FLAG 1.....15

FLAG 2.....16

FLAG 3.....17

FLAG 4.....17

FLAG 5.....18

FLAG 6.....18

FLAG 7.....19

Summary of Key Points

JC thanked the current JCR committee and congratulated the new Committee.

The JCR passed, with some amendments, the Preparation of Formal Hall, Halfway Hall, Paper advertising, Communal Ownership of Sports Equipment and Squash Budgets Active Policies.

The JCR passed an amended JCR Slacks Active Policy which ensures that one toilet in Old Court will be locked before slacks and unlocked first thing in the morning afterwards.

The JCR passed a new background heating policy that ensures heating is turned on and off based on predicted temperatures, with no extra charge if heating stays on longer.

The JCR discussed an amended Room Ballot Active Policy, but did not vote in favour of renewing it. The amendments included: changing the 4th year ballot to reflect current practice, replacing the prize room ballot algorithm with random selection, the removal a rent reduction for those who reject prize rooms and ambiguity over whether rejected prize rooms will be on the reserve list or if additional prize winners would be selected.

The JCR voted on a flag design, selecting Flag 6.

Action Points

Action Points:

1. JCR to discuss these sentiments regarding the room ballot with the Senior Tutor

2. JCR to ensure new Active Policies are implemented

0. Administrative Matters

Meeting begins at 18.17.[1]

LT is absent with apologies. **EG, GoSz and KJ** are present online.

JC thanks attendees for coming to the meeting and their excitement to participate.

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1. Thank you to the outgoing 2022 Committee (**JC**)

JC thanks the outgoing committee, including those who could not be physically present, for being an excellent group and for their hard work.[2]

GS says he will miss serving with **JC** on this JCR committee**.**

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2. A congratulations to our incoming 2023 Committee (**JC**)

JC congratulates the new JCR committee on their election of the committee and offers a commitment to attending future Open Meetings.

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3. Preparation of Formal Hall AP (**GS**)

GS explains that there is a long standing policy to ensure that there are always tables available in hall before a formal. **GS** had made some

[1] Until this point, the JCR assembles, snacking on the wide variety of snacks and broadly chatting while the secretary imbibes a glass of gin and grape juice. I also pre-emptively apologise if the quality of these minutes is affected by said glass of gin and grape jucie.

[2] **JC** announces that she is slightly emotional at the finality, an emotion matched by **GS** and, silently, **JH** (and possibly much of the rest of the people present – it truly has been a pleasure to be on this committee!

(mostly wording) tweaks to the existing policy, but these changes had not been agreed by the Catering Manager, so the original policy has been put forward for renewal.

Vote to renew the Active Policy: 29 in favour, 1 abstaining.

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4. JCR Slacks AP (**JC**)

JC explains that, originally, this policy had been amended to remove a section about the CAF officer locking Old Court toilets before a slack and unlocking them the morning after the slack because it didn't reflect current practice and they didn't realise people were using the Old Court toilets during slacks but **KS** had explained it was still necessary. Therefore the policy has been changed to ensure that porters will lock one loo, rather than the CAF officer, which ensures this policy will actually be enacted to help the residents of Old Court. **GS** thanks Simon Harding for his support.

The policy has not changed with regard to welfare zones.

Vote to pass the Active Policy: 29 in favour.

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5. Halfway Hall AP (**JC**)

JC explains that Halfway Hall is a fancy formal dinner, paid for by college, to celebrate being halfway through the degree and this policy explains that the JCR may organise awards alongside it, which will be checked by welfare offices.

NB asks who is in charge of the awards. **JC** explains that if the president is a 2nd year, they would usually do it, but otherwise anyone can do it and **GS** explains that there have previously been sub-committees to organise it.

Vote to pass the Active Policy: 30 in favour.

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6. Paper Advertising AP (**JC**)

JC explains that this policy outlines that the JCR will not pay for paper advertising unless the JCR committee vote to allow it. This is only granted to the Pelican't, but they have been inactive.

Vote to pass the Active Policy: 29 in favour[3]

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7. Communal Ownership of Sports Equipment AP (**JC**)

JC explains that in discussing the policy, it became this policy had not been enforced: sports societies were not sharing equipment and were not storing it in communal, secure lockers, which was causing problems **MW** further explained that the some teams had lost their equipment twice, once in Oxford. This policy prevents problems by ensuring shared, secure storage.

GS adds that the new Treasurer will need to ensure this is implemented at the point of budget applications.

Vote to pass the Active Policy: 30 in favour

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[3] KJ responds 'yeah sure'

8. Squash Budget AP (**JC**)

JC explains that this policy outlines that, superceding the general policy that societies cannot apply for food and drink funding, each society can 'Squash budget' of £3 per person up to £60 for food and drink. **GS** adds that there is now a footnote to better explain what 'Squash is' – the food encourages socialising.

NB questions if the policy is too vague.

Vote to pass the Active Policy: 28 in favour, 2 abstentions

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9. Room Ballot AP (**JC**)

JC notes that this policy is especially important because it is how we allocate rooms in college through the Room Ballot and also includes the prize ballot.

GS and JC explain that the policy being proposed is largely based on compromise, and the amendments are mostly to reflect the process followed in this year's ballot and changes in responsibility between the Tutorial and Accommodation Offices.[4]

First, the 4th year ballot has been done differently for a couple of years, with the Hungarian algorithm which maximises happiness with rooms[5] (**GS** says that as a 4th year, he's found it works well).

Second, changes to the prize ballot: some to reflect practice over this year - that you only have to apply after results (as opposed to early in

[4] These first changes reflect the changes discussed at the Open Meeting of 25.01.22
[5] We are not mathmos and don't really know what this means but it seems to work

Lent term) and that instead of an opaque algorithm to determine who got into the prize ballot (which caused problems due to a lack of cross-comparability between Triposes, especially because of variation in exam formats across departments even for the same examinations), there would be a random system for ordering the prize ballot amongst those eligible. Another change was proposed by the Senior Tutor, but JCR Officers explain they see both pros and cons and have some reservations about this – the removal of the termly rent reduction for those students who are allocated a prize room, but choose to take their original room (from the initial room ballot) instead (a change made because it ensures the prize is the room itself and not the money), but also there is ambiguity in this draft Active Policy over whether additional students may be offered prize rooms if a prize room is rejected, which would have consequences for the reserve list (since currently, rejected prize rooms go to the reserve list).

JC explains that the policy is a compromise. **JC** acknowledges that the current system can force people on the reserve list to take expensive prize rooms (without the rent rebate), but that by getting rid of the rent rebate for those who reject prize rooms some people on the reserve list could get financial help to afford expensive prize rooms, but that by reducing the quality of rooms on the reserve list, the reserve list becomes a more stressful and position (which it was noted students are often forced into rather than choosing, a problem which is exacerbated if the options on it are worse).

JC asks for comments and adds that passing the Active Policy now would suggest this would be the system for next year, which would make harder to negotiate, but also that having no Active Policy would be difficult.

Ollie Donaldson asks how prize rooms are allocated. **GS** explains that winners get asked for preference. There is random allocation of ranking order and allocated by preference.

JH says that reserve list is stressful and having the possibility of a prize rooms is reassuring. **MW** adds it was a silver lining amongst the stress and uncertainty of the reserve list.

BPW says he doesn't like the randomness, which undermines the sense of academic reward.

Reuben Bolton also takes issue with the randomness. He wonders if a new algorithm could be derived to reflect new circumstances. **JC** mentions that the former computing officer was unable to find out what the old algorithm was, but agrees that in theory a system for academic reward would be best, but is hard to implement.

JW says it is worth reassessing the prize rooms. **JC and GS** explain this already happens and the Vice President and President will be consulted on these. **GS** adds that the Newnham house prize rooms are not great, but yet still popular. **JC** says the committee will have to consider the lack of popularity of Old Court rooms, which used to be very popular, because the toilets are so far away and this appears to have weighed more strongly for students in recent years.

Ollie Donaldson adds that long lease is a factor in choosing prize rooms. **GS** explains that many prize rooms are long lease but that there are a few in New Court and Y, which are unlikely ever to be made long lease.

Reuben Bolton asks if a wider consultation could be taken on the JCR's opinion on the specifics of the policies. **JC and GS** explain that they'd

considered the Policy might be rejected and, if it did happen, they suggest a conversation about the room ballot with the Senior Tutor ought to occur. In the last Open Meeting on the topic,[6] students were able to give more specific opinions through some votes. However, wider surveys create expectations, but the JCR are not the only actors and consensus needs to be found. Open Meeting votes are not guarantees and so a failure to fulfil the decision of the votes might cause frustration. **NB** adds that surveys have the problem that lots of people don't 100% understand how the Room Ballot works and go on limited information, so any votes would need very clear information before hand.

MW adds that there was a lack of transparency about how reserve list room distribution actually works. **GS** says it is explained on the website, but **MW** adds that the information was contradictory in saying the ballot order may not be accurate, but **GS** explains this was only a consequence of the design of the website, which means the order needs to be manually corrected by the JCR Computing Officer, necessitating a disclaimer.

Vote on passing current policy: 0 in favour, 13 abstentions, 15 against[7]

JC discusses what to do next. **JC and GS** say the committee (most likely the incoming committee) will have to arrange to discuss the points raised with the Senior Tutor.

Vote on the proposed course of action of the JCR Committee taking forward the points raised in this meeting and the Open Meeting earlier this year in a conversation with the Senior Tutor: 30 in favour

[6] Again, Viz. Open Meeting 25.01.22
[7] This means the policy will lapse

Action Points:

3. JCR to discuss these sentiments in discussions with the Senior Tutor

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4. Background Heating AP (**JC**)

JC, GS, YZ, the Bursar and Domus Bursar worked to change the policy to ensure heating is adequate.

It now uses predicted temperature to ensure that if its going to get cold, the heating will be turned on and vice versa, rather than Open Meetings by hostel being used to keep it on. There will also no longer be charges for heating being on for longer, where this is due to objective temperature criteria.

Vote to pass the Active Policy: 28 in favour, 1 abstention

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5. JCR Flag Designs (**Ruth Chapman – RC)**

RC explains that we are getting a flag because at the last Corpus Challenge, we discovered Corpus Christi Oxford and a flag and we didn't, which was very disappointing. **RC** also emphasised that the Corpus Knitting and Crochet Circle will make it and urges the JCR to bear that fact in mind when voting as the design will need to be simple enough to be produced. [8]

Flag 1 – 1

[8] The JCR gathers around laptops to look at the flags before voting

Flag 2 – 2

Flag 3 – 3

Flag 4 – 0

Flag 5 – 1

Flag 6 – 17

Flag 7 – 3

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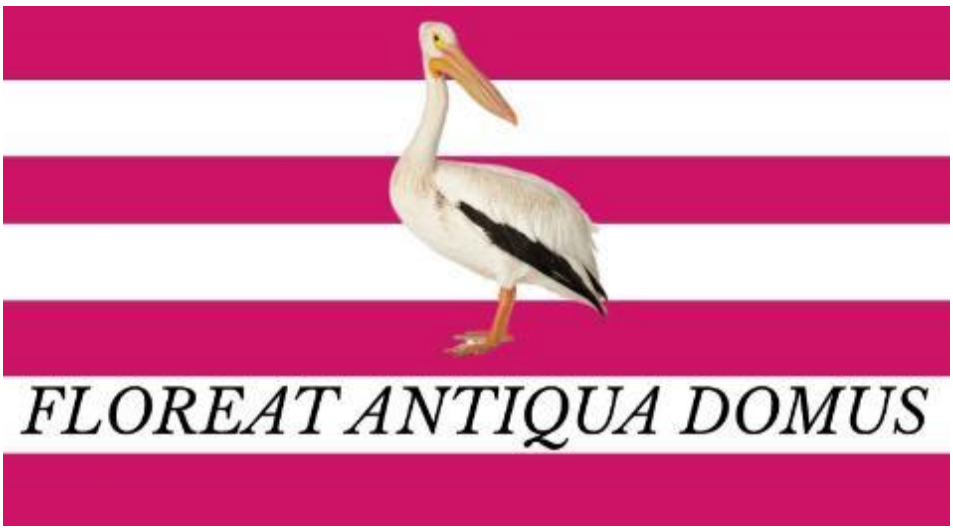
6. Any Other Business

There was no other business[9]

Meeting ends at 18.59[10]

Annex 1: JCR Flag Designs

FLAG 1

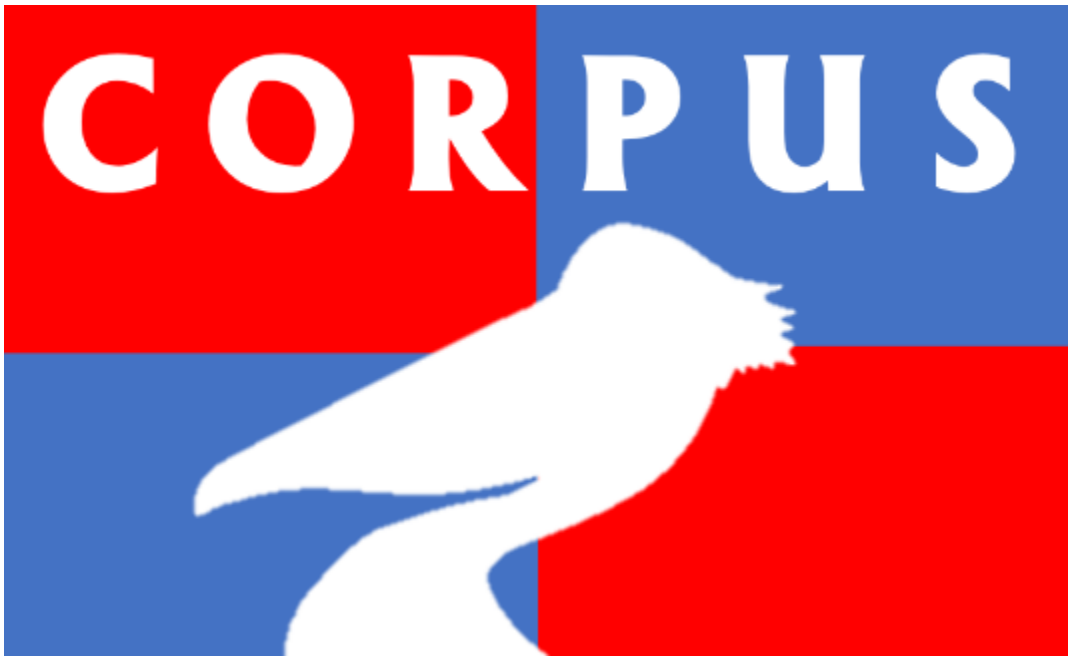


[9] There is an attempt to steal Mack, the stuffed highland cow, who themselves added “have a lovely break everyone”

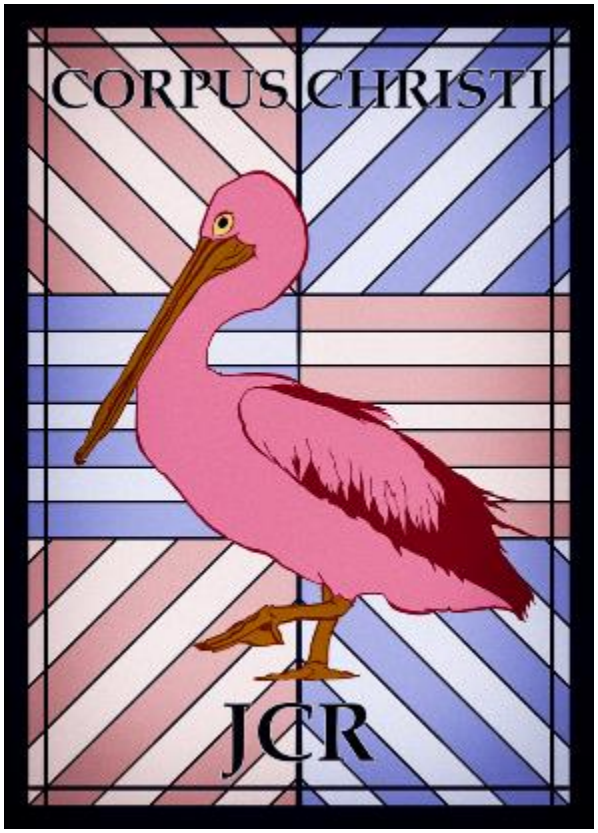
[10] And with that, I end my term as secretary – it has been a pleasure!

FLAG 2

FLAG 3



FLAG 4



FLAG 5

FLAG 6

FLAG 7