

# JCR Presidential Husting Minutes

Meeting on 15.11.2023 at 20:00 UK time

## List of Committee Members

Names, initials, pronouns and * to mark non-attendance	Role
Jacob Hougie, <b>JH</b> , He/him	President
Daisy O'Connor, <b>DOC</b> , she/her	Vice President
Oliver Law, <b>OL</b> , he/him	Treasurer
Luka Murphy, <b>LM</b> , he/him	Secretary
Salma Salifu, <b>SS</b> , she/her	Welfare
Julia Sinkinson, <b>JS</b> , she/her	Welfare
Luke Tyler, <b>LT</b> , he/him	Welfare
Jess Morrissey, <b>JM</b> , She/her	Academic and Access
Ryan Simpson, <b>RS</b> , they/them	Green
Ruth Chapman, <b>RC</b> , she/her	Catering, Accommodation and Facilities
Amit Ramakrishna Prasad, <b>ARP</b> , he/him	Sports and Societies
Neela Nee, <b>NN</b> , she/her	Ents
Saira Ahmed, <b>SA</b> , she/her	Ethnic Minorities
Cosma Rubben, <b>CR</b> , she/her	International Students
Harley Chidley, <b>HC</b> , they/them	LGBTQ+
Maisie Johnson, <b>MJ</b> , she/her	Gender Equalities
Malachi Gee, <b>MG</b> , he/him	Disabled Students
Eleanor Lewis, <b>EL</b> , she/her	Class Act
Lucy Robertson, <b>LR</b> , she/her	Computing (non-voting)

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### 0. Administrative Matters

Hustings begin at 20.03

**OL, JS, LT, SS, ARP, NN, CR, MG, MJ, EL, LR** are absent.

**JH** welcomes everyone to the hustings and introduces the rules.

Speeches are 5 minutes, he will knock at the 30 and 5 second marks.

Questions will be answered in the reverse order to the speeches, and must not be targeted.

**JH** takes the role of returning officer.

# 1. Presidential Candidates

## 1.1 Speech – Alex Zlatev (**AZ**)

Friends, Fellows, Corpuscles, lend me your ears. For I come to enact your will.

Despite my supposed lack of experience, I've had many opportunities to engage with complex organisations. As a new member of the Corpus family, I'd like to give back to the community in which I'll be spending the next 3 years, at least.

As a member of the Scottish Youth Parliament, I've had experience operating as a bridge between youth and administrivia. I therefore can bring to bear the necessary experience to bridge college and the student body.

The people have submitted, and I shall enact that:

I shall create a Financial Tutor role. Supplemented with comprehensive informative sessions on finance, budgeting and financial support: this will ensure a more streamlined and accessible transition; inform individuals of financial support available; and encourage them to seek it.

I shall forge a stronger connection between the JCR and the student body.

I shall abolish No Meat Monday.

I shall facilitate the creation of societies by championing a quicker, clearer and more streamlined process.

I shall broaden the range of events available in coordination with the Ents Officer to restore the beating heart of the JCR, which are our events.

I shall make the library a place that is cosy, fuzzy, quaint and dainty, fit for our college family.

Also, we get a cat!

No longer shall those trying to engage with college be faced with such a nebulous process or shackled by the lethargy of procedure.

Perhaps you have been told that seek to destroy democracy. Be wary of the cruel lie that is.

For I mean no such thing. My constitutional reform has but a singular purpose.

Efficacy.

We shall no longer wait for a crippled process to function as intended. It will not. Entrust me with the power I seek and enable me to enact your will swiftly and efficiently. Let me show you that change is possible. Now. For you called, and I answered.

I thank you all for coming here, on this fateful day, and if you take away one thing from my speech, it is that good things come in small packages. For I am resolute, courageous, and the capable candidate you may not have foreseen.

## 1.2 Speech – Daisy O'Connor (**DOC**)

Hi, I'm Daisy, my pronouns are she/her, and I would love to be your next JCR President. I am a second-year lawyer, and current JCR Vice President, though before this I was the JCR Secretary. A running theme in my speeches has been how much I love admin work, however sad that might be, and how much I love Corpus, and I believe both of these make me the right candidate to take on the role.

I've been able to see how the JCR works from multiple levels, including through attending Executive Body and Joint Consultative Committee meetings as well as the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Forum. As JCR VP, I've chaired the Welfare meetings with the college, which has shown me how college works and how best to convey the JCR's point of view to advocate for student wellbeing. However, insight into these meetings and what goes on in the JCR is not always available, and I would like to increase the transparency of current JCR projects, and the meetings themselves, so college members feel more involved. This could be done through emails, social media, or a bulletin board, whichever students would prefer and make the best use of. I would also like to extend this to the funding, with open books and accessible information on how the JCR's money is being used. This could also facilitate students setting up new societies, or seeking additional funding for projects.

Corpus is a community, and it is only right that students get to see the decisions being made on their behalf, and be able to get stuck in. To increase involvement in the JCR, I would also like to make

the subcommittees more clearly advertised so that people can see the current opportunities and scope for improvement. I would like to introduce a Freshers Week subcommittee, as having a team of keen volunteers working alongside the JCR would help to make sure that everything runs smoothly, a larger variety of events can run, and the freshers feel even more welcome!

As VP, I have updated the 'Freshers' Guide' to include a guide to living in Cambridge itself, and I wrote the 'Beginner's Guide to the Room Ballot' to make the whole process more understandable, particularly for freshers. Perhaps the biggest thing that I have done is to run Freshers' Week, which included introducing more relaxed and varied events, such as the staircase brunches and the board games afternoon, and working with the college to make sure the all the normal events go smoothly and get approved, as well as responding to clashes with department and academic work as they happened. I also coordinated the staffing of events and facilitated officers implementing their ideas, and I believe these organisational and problem-solving skills make me well-equipped to take on the role. Already, looking at the feedback, a longer freshers' week has emerged as the main suggestion, so I would like to continue to petition the college for this change so that freshers get a chance to ease into university life before the term.

The biggest idea I would like to implement is a big Corpus survey at the beginning of Lent, which would cover issues such as accommodation, food, social events, and facilities, and give people an opportunity to have their voices heard. This would allow students to have a say in the direction that the JCR takes next

year and can lead to quantitative data that we can present to the college about larger matters. To this end, I would like to incentivise involvement in the survey through prizes such as krispy kremes or a drink in the Peli to ensure that we have a good number of responses and can go into the next year, full steam ahead.

I would also like to implement drop-in sessions with JCR officers, which could be organised very casually, but allow people to ask questions about current policies, and suggest ideas for improvements. I would also like to introduce an anonymous form to suggest Open Meeting topics, as well as issues to take to college at Welfare Meetings. These could go onto a spreadsheet that is openly accessible, which can be updated with what the JCR things about the idea, and how it will be, and is being, implemented, so that students can engage with the progression of projects. Other more structural issues that I would like to tackle are things such as putting a water fountain in the bar for when it is not open, more period supplies in the bathrooms over the weekends, more water in the library over the weekend, and the provision of surface cleaning equipment in the gyms, so that student life is that bit easier (and hygienic in some cases!).

Overall, I'd like to be your JCR President to create a welcoming and transparent Corpus, that feels like it serves the students. I already have a good relationship with college, and know how the system works from the inside, and want to make that more accessible to you. I believe that I have the experience and ideas to make the JCR serve you, and I would appreciate your support. Thank you for your time!



### 1.3 Speech – James O’Garro (**JOG**)

Hi everyone. Thanks for coming. If you don’t know me, I am James, a third-year natural scientist and a former JCR Treasurer. It’s quite the contest this year, but I hope that, through these hustings, I can again win your support.

Now, Corpus is unique in the fact that, unlike almost every other college in Cambridge, it wasn’t founded by a wealthy king or some rich and powerful landowner. This college is the product of people, just like us, coming together in the wake of a global pandemic.

And yet, this college of the people has become extremely expensive to live in. As someone from a very underprivileged background, I know how much the cost of living crisis has been hanging over our heads, like some cruel sword of Damocles. Per student, Corpus is one of the wealthiest colleges in Cambridge. Yet, I sometimes forget that amidst all these rising costs.

A huge part of my campaign, my *raison d’être*, is to fight to lower costs for us as students. I’m the only candidate here who is bold enough to want change for you. Bold enough to put change back in your pockets.

Food in Hall has reached sky-high prices whilst the portion sizes have shrunk further and further still. At the rate they’re going, a portion of pasta might contain but one pasta shell next year. Now, this might be some member of the catering team trying to hint that

I need to renew my diet — and perhaps they're right — but many students feel, many students know, Corpus Hall should be a source of affordable and delicious meals because the cooking facilities in most of the accommodation is rather lacklustre. That was the deal we made. I know we hunger for more.

With me, we shall lower hall prices across the board.

The bar is another victim of rampant price hikes. It's not Pelikind, it's Pelinflation. Compared to other bars, pints, wine, and cocktails are so expensive nowadays. Some will know that I enjoy a glass (or a bottle) every now and then, but the College fellows may put even me to shame. According to a Freedom of Information request, College fellows drank £52,000 of free wine in the 21/22 academic year and there are only around 60 of them. But when I tried to compete with them glass for glass, the rising costs hindered me.

The evidence is clear by my maxed out UPay. And I am not the only victim, I know that for sure. Now, I am no economics student, but as one of the leaders of the Charles Read fan club — I have all his books! — I know that the bar can make more money by lowering prices as we would then drink more. You know the saying: less is more.

As my year's biggest heavyweight, a vote for me is a vote for the sesh.

But what isn't fun is the state of the JCR Common Room itself, which still pales in comparison with the MCR Common Room. I appreciate that the elders in the MCR deserve nice things, but with the prices we pay, I know we deserve them to New furniture, a new TV, a whole new lease of life. All these things are needed, and all these things will be delivered. In my term as your President, I shall get the ball rolling on this long-term project.

With me, we shall gain parity with the pensioners.

Now, having heard all of my policies, most of you are surely wondering 'Why James?' Well, not only was I Head of House in Year 6 — a most daunting challenge! — unlike most of the other candidates, I have executive JCR experience. Moreover, I have an intimate knowledge of the various pastoral support available to us as I have had extensive use of them personally. This first-hand experience allows me to better direct you to the various resources available and gives me the means to relate feedback on them.

A few of you may be expecting chaos, but you should expect only first-class service from me. In my budget, which received universal support, I kept my promise and achieved more than thought possible with a 25% increase in funding for your societies. My heart is on my sleeve, my love for this college is self-evident. Know that I keep my promises. Things will only get better so long as we stick together.

For you knew before and you know now, the best path forward is with me, the Natural Scientist, the Natural Choice.

Once you go black, you won't ever want to go back!

Thanks!

#### 1.4 Speech – Jess Morrissey (**JM**)

I haven't met Stormzy.

But I do have plenty of JCR experience. I've spent the last year as access officer, talking to people and organising things at both a JCR and uni wide level. I've coordinated and liaised with a lot of staff and fellows and seen enough of Charles Read for the entire student body. Rachel Lawson called me her friend and Lee got me chocolate. Both within and outside my role I'm good at identifying problems and fixing them. I noticed the poor stats for northern applicants and their success, so I've planned a northern road trip with James and I will be speaking at some of the schools up there and making those links. Similarly, conversations were had where women and non-binary people in stem felt there was more that could be done by the community to support them- I'm the founder and president of the Ada Lovelace society, that aims to do just that.

I've got a strong track record in pushing to make college a better place for everyone. Jacob and co, including myself, pushed back at the slack regulations, and by next term, especially if under my presidency, the wristband nonsense will never happen again. Additionally I don't want to be charged £3 for 4 meatballs, and

whilst it would be impossible to guarantee the reduction of bar and hall prices, I can promise I'll bring the colleges financial support system into focus, so no one misses out. My background in access lends itself to focusing on college's management of finances. I can put on a good piss up- like in freshers week a parents and kids party and I genuinely have never seen the JCR as full. Pushed for revival charity subcommittee - fyi come to Leck on Sunday for sumo wrestling.

I have a few exciting ideas, the biggest one the introduction of group balloting- logistically this isn't too much of a nightmare, its a bit more admin, which is fun for no one, but allows you to live with your mates and who doesn't want to do that. The next point is another social space. College does not have enough communal spaces, especially if the JCR is booked and the bar is busy, the next best option is the Girdlers room. If you've ever had a supervision in the tutorial room, in the post room, you'll know how lovely a room it is. Just picture how much lovelier it would be with beanbags and a Wii. Next is Bene't the bear. For the freshers who don't know who Bene't is, I personally don't think you're missing much. To be fair the problems I had with Bene't were more about what people did to, specifically on, him, but for morale he needs to return. A big focus of my presidency would be about events, and the clear communication of them. We should thaw the ice with the MCR slightly and do more joint events with them.

I also think the JCR could be useful support to societies to run college wide events to more than just their members. I also promise an absolutely banging June event to make up for our lack of May Ball. Other ideas I have include an intercollegiate early

arrivals, introducing joint running for ents, more student led greenspaces.

Hopefully I'll be doing a 4<sup>th</sup> year within my undergraduate degree, so I'd be able to continue as your president. However, if not a by-election would have to happen in Easter term, and there are plenty of amazing candidates here- as well as James O'Garro- who could take my place. Ultimately I really care about the student body, and I'm good at identifying problems and fixing them, and I'd absolutely love to be your president.

## 1.5 Questions

From **JH** – What previous struggle have you had, what have you learnt from it, and how will that help you in the role?

**JM:** College takes a while to answer requests, I've been pursuing the Ada Lovelace society for a while, but I know how the college process works.

**JOG:** I've had a tough time over the last year, and had to seek help from college. This has given me an intimate knowledge of the pastoral process, which allows me to help you navigate them.

**DOC:** College wants to say no to everything, but I've worked out how to send stronger emails to them to push for what we want.

**AZ:** As part of the Scottish Youth Parliament, I've realised that officials want to help, and we created guidelines to help politicians

communicate with young people better. I will therefore ensure that college will listen better.

From **Jamie Charles**: The candidates have good ideas, but college has rejected many of them, are the candidates being realistic?

**JM**: Communication is crucial, and I have a good relationship with college and so I think most of manifesto is feasible.

**JOG**: My programme is bold, but I have a good relationship with college, especially the Domus Bursar. I want to see change for you all.

**DOC**: I've worked to ensure that my manifesto is achievable after my work with college. I would love to push college in terms of cost and facilities. I think that my manifesto is achievable, but I know how much college do say no.

**AZ**: My manifesto is achievable, for example, the financial tutor. The workshops during fresher's week show that we can expand the number of workshops to include finance. Abolishing meat free Monday is not about a hatred of the environment but because of allergies and disabilities.

From a **College Member**: What's your favourite idea that another candidate has suggested?

**JOG:** I terribly miss Bene't the bear, Oxford shouldn't have stolen him from me. I look forward to the time when College can bring him back as a student.

**DOC:** We need to liaise more with the MCR, the St Patrick's Sleek was wonderful. We can move beyond parties and communicate with college together. Decreasing food and drink costs is crucial.

**AZ:** Jess's financial commitments are my favourite, as well as her dedication to facilitating communication with college more. Financial barriers are the most serious obstacles to thriving at Cambridge. Her experience will benefit the college body most.

**JM:** Reducing bar and hall prices would be wonderful. A financial tutor would help to hold college accountable and provide a new useful role to students.

From **Kitty Joyce:** What would the name of the college cat be?

**DOC:** Something to do with Corpus, perhaps Pelicat

**AZ:** The college cat should be named in celebration of my victory, it should be Octavian, for an imperial cat, and college, and Corpuscles

**JM:** In an ideal world it would be Corpussy.

**JOG:** I have no clue, it could be named after a random fellow. I'm sorry, I'm more of a dog person.



From a **College Member**: What's your stance on getting a college cat?

**AZ**: Of course, I would get one! I'd feed it with my own funds. I'd treat it like an Ancient Egyptian. This is the first step towards making the college more corporate.

**JM**: I love Heidi, I'm her favourite. But the more the merrier.

**JOG**: I love animals, although I am more of a dog person. If college want a cat, I'm sure we can do that.

**DOC**: I'd like us to get another dog, so that when Heidi has gone home, we can still have one. Taking Heidi on walks and playing with her up at Leck was great for welfare. A cat is lower maintenance, and we could have a rota for feeding it.

From **RC**: Sometimes you have to compromise with college, what would you be willing to compromise on?

**JM**: Balloting, because that takes more admin and time.

**JOG**: Making college more affordable is non-negotiable, but redecorating the JCR can take a bit longer, even if I'd still like to see change.

**DOC**: I'd like a whole week for Fresher's week so we can be dropped off and settle in. I'd be willing to compromise on the time scale, but it is important for people to have more time to work out what it's like to live by oneself. College does need to book out rooms, and thus might push us to compromise. I'd rather make sure college are happy enough, so we can continue long term, but

would like at least 5 days. But if college are happy to continue it as a policy, I'd be willing to compromise.

**AZ:** Finance is non-negotiable, but survival is essential. There might be a debate about beanbags and so on, but those are similarly non-negotiable. There shouldn't be objections to another animal because the college already has Heidi. I would compromise on my constitutional reforms because no one likes voting in referenda.

Hustings end at 20:41