

# St John's College Junior Common Room

## The People's Republic of St Giles

Minutes for the 1st meeting of Hilary Term 2015  
18th of January 2015, 8.30pm, JCR

**NB: Find and spot the three “deliberate mistakes” (things which didn't happen in the meeting), and email your answers for a chocolate prize at the start of the next meeting! A word of warning – entrants who fail to spot at least one of the three mistakes will face a celery forfeit instead...**

### i/ Minutes of the previous meeting

None.

### ii/ Matters arising from the minutes

None.

### iii/ Reports

No additional verbal reports made.

### iv/ An address from Our Glorious Leader

Christina opened her first meeting as President with a warm hello and an explanation of her role as Chair of the meeting, requesting members direct their points to her rather than each other to avoid mini-duels opening up everywhere. She pointed out myself, your Secretary, taking the minutes, and reminded everyone that it was our first meeting as the new committee and that we were relying on “old guard” Andrew and Isobel to help us out if we miss something (at which point Finch promptly intervened with an “oi!”, earning him recognition amongst that hallowed number).

Christina also pointed out that Alex Manby would be “tweeting the meeting” (Alex: “what's a hashtag?”), and the we got underway!

### v/ Ratifications

#### a/ OUSU Rep

Blago Gospodinov put himself forward for this highly prestigious role, unopposed. He explained that he wanted to represent John's at OUSU because of the importance it has in making decisions that affect us all, bringing a solitary tear to the Secretary's eye that became a flood when the gavel finally descended with an ear-shattering boom.

**Blago Gospodinov Ratified as OUSU Rep**

#### b/ Returning Officer

Sadly Andrew Riddles is a victim of his own success, and nobody wanted to take this position over – Andrew will be returning (ho-ho) to serve for this term once more.

**Andrew Riddles Remains Returning Officer**

#### c/ Charities Rep

Turlough announced his resignation to the Secretary as the meeting began, and so when the time came we had to find a new one. Three people stood forward – Meredith Hood, Cecilia Peker, and Harry Gray. After some awkwardly exchanged glances, it was revealed that this three-horse race could be dramatically and irrevocably altered by forming a pact – by running as a pair. The frequency of awkward glances intensified,

until finally from the raw politicking emerged a coalition forged in the heat of pure democracy – Meredith and Cecilia. Hustings then followed.

Meri started by saying she wanted to carry on the good work of Turlough (prompting general laughter, drowning the ex-Rep's protests from the door – but in fairness he has raised an awful lot for charity, even if there were some unforeseen circumstances along the way...!). Cecilia picked up by saying that we have lots of “dolla” so we should do something good with it. Harry said he wanted to make charity stash, and run events with Filmsoc.

Your Secretary asked the candidates what experience with barbecues they had, to which Cecilia answered “I can light a fire pretty much anywhere” (cue Ameen's wolf whistle from the corner).

When it came to the vote, team Mericilia won by clear majority.

### **Meredith Hood & Cecilia Peker Ratified As Charity Reps**

#### **vi/ Items for discussion**

##### **a/ JCR Accounts - Auditors' Report**

No issues were found with the report.

##### **b/ Gate Enquiries from last term**

Christina informed us that she had spoken to Tony Coote, and that opening the gate next to the President's driveway would not be a massive issue and that Domestic Committee would almost certainly agree. The park's road gate would be more problematic – Tony said that he can't have it open earlier because it's too far from the porter's lodge, and should a ruffian, brigand or other such miscreant enter college, they wouldn't be able to intercept them fast enough.

Rowers and early morning cyclists would particularly benefit from this gate being open earlier, however, and so Christina said she would take the possibility of equipping the porters with mobile segways, to be more confident in intercepting any intruders early in the morning, to the next Governing Body.

#### **vii/ Agenda Items**

##### **a/ The SJC JCR 21CC Motion**

**Proposer: Benjamin Scrace    Seconded: Max Ramsay**

Ben delivered a frankly excellent powerpoint presentation, explaining what 21CC is, its past, its aims etc. – a very well-prepared motion. Do get in touch with him and ask for the powerpoint presentation if you want to know more about the organisation – it was packed with details and pictures (which try as I might I couldn't sketch in time for the minutes).

As far as the motion goes, Ben explains that the reason they were asking for funding was only because the profits from last year were swallowed by taxi costs after the trains flooded. Funding the motion would also grant John's students a discount on the event.

Christina expresses her praise for Ben's well put-together motion, and asks for clarification on what it is Ben's asking for - £450.

Isobel notes that this is 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the budget. Flora thinks it's a “cool motion”, Andrew asks whether we're putting our name on something potentially controversial to which Ben replies that there are “no contro

speakers". Sophie asks if anyone else is funding it – Ben tells us lots of other colleges and a partnership with PwC.

**Motion PASSES by clear majority**

**b/ JCR & MCR Physio Investigation Motion**

Proposer: Danny Waldman

Seconded: Charlie Goodman

Harry asked me if I would be able to minute and partake in discussion, before his pristine visage cracked for a moment and he made a Gollum-esque lunge for the Ring –err the minutes paper. Just as your Secretary has been experiencing OUSU Rep withdrawal, your previous Secretary desired that indescribable, transcendent, precious, even, feeling of taking minutes once again. Factual questions followed.

I was able to answer that this would cover all sport. Alex asked whether it would contain preventative physiotherapy as well as post-injury, which I also answered affirmative. Sophie asked if it would be a general physio, to which I replied probably sports-oriented. Cecilia asked if we would pay, and I answered I would try and get college to.

Turlough thought it would be unfair to let people doing sports get access to these facilities when all kinds of other everyday activities could result in similar injuries – moving heavy books, writing for extended periods of time in essays etc. were issues that had caused him and others difficulty in the past. Your Secretary agreed to look into this as well.

At discussion, Finch helpfully clarified that this is not a financial commitment, just investigative. Pete said we should also ask a general question about the hours of the nurse and counsellor and try to increase them (currently sitting on inconvenient times for those with lectures).

**Motion PASSES by clear majority**

**c/ The “Support Blood Wedding” Financial Motion**

Proposer: Amelia Cherry

Seconded: Ursula Brewer

Amelia outlined the motion, stressing how it's far more expensive to put on a production here at John's than elsewhere – hence asking for money from the JCR.

In discussion, Flora gave her support for the motion, asking who Amelia had spoken to in college. She replied that as the production is not 50% John's, she can't ask for money from college. Isobel said you can get loads from Mummies, but Amelia answered that even this wouldn't cover the venue prices.

Harry asks why they're hosting it in John's if it's so expensive, but Amelia tells us that the other venues were too competitive/already booked out, and that having it in John's enriches our life here and lets us meet other colleges.

Peter points out that if college are being unreasonable with their pricing, this is something we should look at for the future. Amelia replies that she's spoken to various people (President, Chaplain etc.) so that next term they will be able to work on this, but that it's too late for Blood Wedding.

**Motion PASSES by clear majority**

**c/ i) Motion for the Secretary to Tell a Joke**

At this point I receive a motion to tell a joke, which ran as follows:

“What's the difference between a lawyer and a sperm?”

\*deafening silence, anticipation mounting, sweat pouring down many faces as they struggle to contain their excitement\*

“They both hope to be human one day.”

What followed cannot be put to print without offending the reader’s sensibilities – suffice to say, such a raucous, uproarious display of laughter and tomfoolery is not worthy of being committed to paper. After a period of roughly fifteen minutes the meeting continued, the odd giggle escaping those less scrupulous members present who were still wiping tears from their eyes.

**Joke PASSES by absolute majority**

**d/ The Budget 2015 Motion**

Proposer: Vicky Skornia

Seconded: Blathnaid McCullugh

There was a small amendment to the budget, changing the newspaper budget from £2400 to £2200 and giving the Board Games £200. When Finch asked if this meant papers would be lost, Vicky replied that it was just spare money so no papers would be lost.

Isobel asked about the Caucus, which Vicky said she would add on. Sophie asked why the Reps had different budgets, which Vicky and Ursula teamed up to explain – it’s adjusted to the expenditure of the previous year so Reps can essentially do what they want to but don’t get needlessly funded if they don’t have as many expenses.

Cameron asked if his budget could be increased just before the motion was due to be voted on, but when asked for his reasons cited “new projects” but then withdrew his objection after questions as to what these projects entailed exactly.

**Motion PASSES by clear majority**

**e/ The “Castle Mill” Motion**

Proposer: Christina St Clair    Seconded: Danny Waldman

Christina explained the situation to the JCR – the three options we have RE: Castle Mill, that being planting trees/recladding for £5mil, changing the roof for £20mil, or taking off the top floor for £30mil.

Matthew asked why this wasn’t resolved at planning stages – Christina replies that the optional planning wasn’t done.

Sophie interjects with wisdom, asking if she can explain some of the counter-view as she is knowledgeable on the subject. She explains that the top floor removal cost option includes lost rent and opportunity cost, and in actual fact is £12m (£18m lost rent etc). She also explains that the University was later required to do the Environmental Impact Survey that they chose not to originally, but they didn’t. As for whether it’s an eyesore, down to personal preference – worst issue is light pollution. Sophie urged us to vote the motion down for now until we have all the information, as the Survey came out only just before Christmas.

Jack asks if we’re being told to spend £6m just because it’s ugly, his OxStu-honed results-driven mind seeing a clear win in just leaving it as it is. However, Sophie explained that the Survey results means the University has to do something – leaving it as it is would result in the building being torn down (which Finch reiterates for clarification).

Cecilia asks if we know what “the town” want here. Christina mentions the #saveportmeadow campaign, and Sophie adds that whilst this campaign has mostly failed a second campaign to remove the top floor is gathering strength – but either way impossible to know the opinion generally.

Finch explains that the ball is in our park – we have to present an option, decided by the Congregation.

In discussion, Harry, as always a bastion of due process and accountability, was concerned that we would be seen as supporting organisations flaunting planning permission. Ella noted that it’s in our interest to have the town and gown get on well. Flora argued that the funds to take off the top floor would come out of graduate student funding which is already stretched.

Peter said that regardless of the outcome here, we should be talking to the University and expressing our disapproval for their breaking of the rules, which was met with a murmur of general agreement.

Charlie Clegg entered the fray with a barnstorming speech, the likes of which cannot be done justice in minutes. I was, however, able to extract some of his opening lines: “Imagine if you can the verdant serenity of Portmeadow... the development is a massive fart in its face.” Charlie went on to note how some of the remains of the oldest known civilisation in this part of Oxfordshire could be found there, and that the photos don’t give the full context of “those dark satanic mills”. If we support the removing the top floor, we support the beauty of England. Truly rousing stuff.

David said that while the buildings aren’t perfect, they’re not that bad. We should defend student housing first.

Tom notes that David’s opinion on the buildings are just that – an opinion. We should listen to the oft-ignored voice of the town in this issue.

Sophie wanted us to vote down now and wait, Christina pointed out that Congregation is on the 11<sup>th</sup> Feb and that this is a time-sensitive issue.

Beth questioned the very foundations of the JCR asking if our opinion will have any weight, causing the immediate hospitalisation of many staunch democracy-lovers who went into shock. Christina diplomatically replied that we can’t know what impact we will have whilst your Secretary wiped away tears of sadness.

A move to vote was received, and passed by clear majority. We then voted:

**Motion PASSES - 29 for, 9 against, 16 abstaining**

### **f/ The “Sexual Consent!” Motion**

Proposer: Flora Sheldon

Seconded: Lidia Fanzo

Christina began by reassuring members that they were perfectly free to leave if they found the motion triggering, and reminded people to respectfully monitor their language accordingly.

Flora outlined the motion, and specifically targeted the counter-argument by stating that you don’t have to sit through the session if you find it triggering – when people split off into groups it’s perfectly easy and acceptable to peel off if you feel uncomfortable. The facilitators are trained to make sure people feel they can leave if they want to – whether because they feel uncomfortable, they want to do some work, whatever – nobody would think anything of it. The positives of running the sessions vastly outweigh the negatives, and 20 common rooms have already made it compulsory.

Lidia echoed Flora's statements, reiterating the difficulty surrounding the complex issue of consent. Siwan very positively agreed via internet also.

For factual questions, Ella asked if the documents are available online – Flora replied that you can email Anna (OUSU VP Women) and she'll send it straight over. Finch asked about this year's voluntary workshop turnout, which Christina explained was low – 40%, but partially because there was a time-lag in the sessions running. Sophie asked if the sessions were heteronormative, which Flora positively rejected – she said they were general consent workshops, and pointed out that there would be Queer consent workshops running this term in addition. Ella asked about college's objection to having them as compulsory – Christina explained they wanted it to be from the "ground up", which meant passing a JCR motion – hence the motion.

Cecilia asked whether we can make the sessions tailored if there are heteronormative concerns, but Flora again stated that they are not at all heteronormative. Amelia asked if 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> years could go, but Flora answered sadly not – freshers only for the week, but she would be happy to run more (which Lidia enthusiastically reiterated). Ella asked if the legal definitions of consent were discussed, and Christina answered that what is more explored is the understanding of consent. Ameen chimed in that he was told to brush up on the legal definition in preparation for facilitating a workshop, but that it wasn't specifically mandated – Anna had advised them to brush up.

In discussion, Ella was concerned that during freshers' week there is already huge pressure to drink, and even have sex, and that having compulsory consent workshops is only going to solidify this pressure. Cecilia saw the point as valid, but countered that the JCR does much more damage by not running them than running them. She asked whether the Deans could perhaps reinforce that drinking and having sex etc. were not at all expected or necessary in freshers' week, but that they do wholeheartedly endorse consent.

It was also raised that the workshops are very careful to frame it as a discussion, and the facilitators are trained not to force one view on people – they don't encourage sex.

Tom argued that many people think they know what sexual consent but actually don't, and that it should be compulsory as a result. Finch supported the motion but recommended that members read the most recent VERSA article on the issues of consent.

Angus contended that even the way you frame a discussion can influence people, and that inevitably the facilitators' opinion will be reflected and be an influence. He agreed that it was important that we said sexual harassment/violence etc. is not something we stand for here, but questioned whether mandatory workshops was necessarily the way to achieve this.

Lidia made members aware that consent is not taught in school, and that the difference made by having these sessions is huge – the difference between ruining somebody's life and not. She also reiterated that people could leave if they wanted to.

Ameen told us how he knows friends of his with awful understandings of consent because sex education just wasn't taught at his school – awful views that could be solved in an hour. Charlie Clegg said that these workshops could even reduce pressure to have sex in freshers' week and wholeheartedly endorsed the motion.

Ella worried that without the legal definition in mind, we could cause damage to people who both accuse on their non-legal understanding of consent and those accused, when it comes to court.

A move to vote passed by clear majority. Final vote:

**Motion PASSES by clear majority**

#### viii/ Any other business

Rose raised a point regarding Housing Ballot, and that it's unfair for those returning from a year abroad to be given an average score for the room ballot irrespective of where they actually stayed beforehand. This will be brought as a motion to the next meeting.

Beth made everyone aware of the testimonial event happening on Thursday of 6<sup>th</sup> week as part of the Mental Health Awareness Week, asking anybody to contact them if they want to get involved – no matter how big/small their testimony, all will be accepted. Goodman added that they'll send round an email, and reiterated that you can say anything you want.

Matthew asked that if anybody had any views on how Reps work to please email him as part of the Constitutional Reform Committee consultation. Your Secretary also made everyone aware that the drafting is on-going but underway and that consultation will be rolling out as we draft.

Ben informed everyone that the 21CC discount would be live tomorrow.

Amelia thanked the new committee for a job well done (so far!).

Meeting closed.

Danny Waldman  
JCR Secretary  
19/1/2015