

Constitutional Reform Committee – Collection of Final Draft Proposals

Introduction

In Michaelmas 2014, a motion was put to the JCR by the then OUSU/NUS Rep (Danny Waldman) seconded by the then Returning Officer (Andrew Riddles) to mandate the next JCR Secretary to undertake large-scale consultation, reform and rewriting of the constitution. The Constitutional Reform Committee (henceforth referred to as CRC) was convened under the leadership of Danny Waldman upon his election as JCR Secretary, and the foundations were laid during his tenure. As of Hilary 2016, the new JCR Secretary (Alastair Graham) undertook to put a referendum to the JCR at the end of Trinity Term 2016 having finished the process.

This document represents a summary of the substantive changes to the existing Constitution which has been rewritten from scratch. Therefore, this document will not include minor wording changes and will focus on the alteration of existing procedures, the removal of clauses of note and any new additions. The CRC has looked at historical examples of where JCR procedure has failed, and corrected accordingly. There have also been measures put in place to pre-empt loopholes or ambiguities or to make the operation of the JCR more efficient or rationalise the systems that it has. The CRC cannot promise to have produced a perfect product, but it can promise to the JCR that it has been the product of countless hours of work and much serious thought meaning that it is the best that could have been achieved given human limitations. The final result is the culmination of hours of careful work by primarily six people with assistance and consultation from others along the way.

Section I: Accessibility, Navigation and Supplementary Aids

CRC was committed to making the new Constitution easier to navigate and improve the wider knowledge the JCR has of the new Constitution. The following are examples of work which has been done or will be done upon the passing of the new Constitution:

- Old procedural oddities have been removed, and clunky or dated language has been streamlined, modernised or removed altogether. The language used now should be more precise and minimise potential misunderstandings.
- The Constitution has been pruned back so that wording is as concise as possible.
- All language in the new Constitution is gender neutral in terms of pronouns used.
- The Constitution has been structured better so basic foundations are in the Articles with procedural complexities shifted to the Standing Orders. This means that someone wanting to find something quickly better knows where to find the relevant content.
- Hyperlinks for the online version will be maintained, and for printed copies there will be page numbers on the contents page introduced which previously was not the case.
- A short guide will be produced upon the passing of the new Constitution to instruct those with no prior knowledge how to find the relevant sections if they need to.
- A short guide (“mini-Constitution”) will be produced to summarise the Constitution’s key points which are most commonly needed and what each section contains to increase wider knowledge of how the JCR works.

- A laminated one page summary of how JCR meetings operate will be made. This will help Freshers (and others) understand better what's going on.

A Constitution is not designed to read all in one session, but rather to be presented in a way that lays out clearly where content is contained so that in specific instances it can be referred to. For example, there is a Standing Order on appointing a Summer Ball Committee which is only relevant every three years. A Standing Order on General Meetings is more frequently used.

Section II: Preamble Changes

Broadly speaking, the Preamble was well-written and set out our charitable objectives well. Our changes include:

- A random introduction stating every year the rules were changed in since 2004 was removed.
- Wording redundancies were removed.
- Interpretative powers were given to the Returning Officer over elections, referenda and complaints and these are no longer areas that the President can use interpretation over.
- A reference to Associated Organisations (sub-organisations run semi-autonomously of the JCR) was removed, since these the relevant Standing Order has been removed. This is because there was not a system of rules which could codify efficiently for SJCTV (1 or 2 people involved) or the St John's Caucus which in theory has more people involved. In practice, the rules were not followed (AGMs with 35 quorum etc.) and were cumbersome. Most of these organisations/societies have since ceased to exist, leaving lots of constitutional dead wood. SJCTV shall be made a rep instead, and other bodies are free to exist as societies independent of JCR jurisdiction.
- The standard open definitions of gendered terms have been stated, using the phrasing consistent with the JCR and MCR Women's Officer. The same phrase pattern has been used for 'men' and 'male'. This means that if at any point 'woman' was used, it would be interpreted using this more open and non-exclusionary interpretation.
- A definition has been added of what "full term" is for consistency. This is needed because it outlines when a General Meeting can be called, for example. This excludes arrival/going home days for obvious reasons.
- A definition of "academic year" has been added as this was necessary for other parts later on.

Section III: Articles Changes

As mentioned above, elements of these have been moved to appropriate Standing Order locations. This will focus on features added, removed or modified rather than relocations:

- We have formally named our excepted charity ("St John's College JCR"), our principle office and location which should be done by all charities in their governing document, previously absent features.
- The Secretary, if they were to re-order, re-number or re-reference, will now have to publicise this so that it could be checked. Currently it can be done without permission or awareness.
- A section has been added to deal with how our charity can apply its income and property. This legally something the JCR should probably have included, and didn't. It outlines reimbursement criteria (i.e. prior JCR permission), how charity donation money should be kept separate from JCR funds, how JCR officers shouldn't be paid or dividends (i.e. funds should be spent on charitable objectives only).
- This section also includes a list of battels levies which the JCR and college have both agreed to being implemented since these are contingent on JCR membership. The amounts and

frequency have been specified, as well as their opt-out nature. Under the role descriptions of JCR officials, each one is overseen by a position who will advertise this.

- Honorary membership have been assigned the same rights as non-members by default except the fancy title, but a General Meeting may grant them other rights as they see fit. Essentially, it is the view of CRC and others that certain victuallers within Oxford who are honorary members should not waltz into a General Meeting and discuss a JCR motion or gate crash a BOP of individuals likely to be half their age.
- The opt-out of JCR membership feature has been clarified. Should someone now wish to opt out, they would write the Secretary and they are no longer a member for at least the rest of the full term. They can regain membership from the following Sunday if they request it, while noting the above restriction. The present Constitution allowed a hokey-cokey effect of potentially annoying proportions.
- Three new Officer positions been added upon consultation with liberation groups: LGBTQ Officer, Ethnic Minorities Officer and International Students' Officer. We have suggested that Domestic Officers, currently one or two people, have been made as a two person role similar to Entz Officers while Environment and Ethics Officer that had the same option as Domestic Officers was felt, upon consultation at our event and in other forums, to be more comparable to positions with one person occupying the role. It has been clarified that there should be two Welfare Officers, although elected with different requirements.
- A Staff Liaison Rep has been given a role description, and a SJCTV Rep has been created. The three liberation rep positions now made into an officer have been removed. The DVD and Video Rep have been changed to DVD and TV Room Rep in their title.
- Rep positions will be filled by a maximum of two individuals, since at the moment an unlimited number could hold one position such as the Person Responsible for Alcohol and Toys (PRAT) Rep which does not seem sensible. This codifies normal practice since there haven't been over two holders of rep positions for umpteen years due to the reason that it is likely to be dysfunctional and unnecessary.
- For Rep Ratification, if a rep doesn't attend the meeting and hasn't provided a written hust/apology then they can't stand as a rep, even if they just want to continue in the position and are doing well. Therefore, in these cases unless there is an objection to them continuing this tripwire has been removed. For first-time candidates, this provision remains because it ensures that they are actually committed to holding the position and there is some evidence that they are interested in standing or we may have a case where someone is made a rep without their knowledge as a prank, albeit not the funniest one.
- The title of "Senior Officer" has been defined. It basically outlines why the President is top-dog and above everyone else, including what powers this confers. In the event of there being no President or at the President's request should they be AWOL for a while, this falls to the Vice President.
- It has been made clear how someone may resign, currently something which is not present in the current Constitution surprisingly. For officers not in residence for the following year, we have standardised the fact that there is a by-election for them in 8th week Trinity Term each year. Resignation can be given effective immediately or two weeks' notice to allow for smoother by-election procedures and officer handover.
- The old rule that all officers are trustees has been included again, but including legal disqualifications (e.g. convicted of "crimes of dishonesty" or under 18). There will be a document to sign to officially acknowledge trustee status so that our charity trustees are aware of their responsibilities rather than this being a lax area which isn't taken so seriously.
- Ordinary General Meetings will now be codified according to current practice – i.e. the President decides the three/four dates and times of meetings before full term begins and these are advertised (i.e. term card). Anything other than this is an Extraordinary General Meeting for the purposes of the rules, to be called to discuss up to two items of specified business.

- Extraordinary General Meetings can't be held within 24 hours of an Ordinary General Meeting.
- It has been made clear that all motions need to be seconded. Currently, this is rather absent for some reason. Procedural motions will only require a proposer for simplicity.
- Motions and their types have been better defined in general. Constitutional Motions now outline general cases where something is Constitutional, even though the proposer/seconded does not explicitly mention the rules. For example, a motion to set up a scheme which reimburses people for any deodorant receipts that they produce to promote better hygiene within college would be Constitutional, because there needs to be a JCR official responsible for overseeing the scheme since it involves money, reimbursements and vigilance. A second example would be creating a new duty for a JCR officer which is a permanent addition, but is not reflected in their role description because the rules weren't referenced. For example, the Domestic Officers don't have to run the camp/air bed scheme because it isn't in their role description, despite it now obviously being a core part of their role.
- Emergency Charity Motions have been clarified, because it was unclear their purpose. This has been reworded within the spirit of the current Constitution which cites the Disaster Emergency Committee appeals as being the reason money may be given from our Emergency Charity Buffer via an Emergency Charity Motion.
- Censure and No Confidence Motions have been clarified, because currently they can be sprung in a JCR meeting and cause chaos. Censure outcomes have been better defined, so that rather than a sincere apology (likely to not be perceived as sincere if they had just opposed the motion) it requires that they acknowledge the JCR's formal disapproval of their action(s) and send an email to the whole JCR expressing this. If they fail to do this, they will be considered to have resigned their role since they did not respect the will of the JCR.
- All motion types will now require a simple majority at a JCR meeting.
- Censure/No Confidence motions will always be conducted via a secret ballot.
- A loophole has also been closed such that a motion may be amended to be something which should have been submitted 48 hours in advance of the meeting to the Secretary. For example, an amendment to give £100 to buy some beer to a motion about improving JCR morale during exam season would not be allowed, because the wider JCR haven't had notice that this was being debated.
- The process for the annual budget has been clarified in terms of how the sub-budgets may be financially amended. The budget shall be treated as a financial motion in that its total proposed expenditure may not be increased, but items within it such as "the PRAT budget should be smaller" or "this liberation budget should be bigger" may be altered so long as the total expenditure figure deemed financially responsible by the Treasurer is not exceeded. This has adopted what considered as being a rule until recently, where it has been ignored due to a lack of institutional memory.
- The rules will also specify that motions should clearly say who will action the resolves clauses, where appropriate. This is to avoid a proposal being put in general terms and never being followed through.
- Motions will not be added to Standing Policy unless it specifically asks specific clauses to be added. This will avoid the current problem of deadwood rapidly accumulating across the year on our Standing Policy document.
- The JCR General Committee meetings should have quorum of half the members, because at the moment it is just 4 members which is roughly one quarter.
- The annual "Condition of the Republic Report" (i.e. a report on what the committee achieved in their year of office) is now capped at 4000 words to prevent something even more mammoth-like being created. This will be put in Hilary Term and will keep being done so until it is adequately done, but in all likelihood it will pass first time.

- Standing Policy will continue to be pruned in the first Hilary Term meeting each year by the new Secretary, but it will be made so that everything can be dropped in one go to avoid the mess we had last time of trying to drop 90 things all in succession.
- To prevent Standing Policy getting to such proportions, there would be a sunset clause so that motions naturally fall after three years. There is a check put in place so that publicity is given for these both the meeting at which the policy expires in case members want to renew it.
- The JCR will only be affiliated to OUSU as its external organisation. The current Constitution has hangovers from 20 years ago to a political NUS faction back in the days where we sent our own delegate, and Amnesty International. These should never have endured so long without a vote, and therefore are illegal in nature.
- The mechanism through which OUSU Council votes are distributed has been formalised which means the President (or Vice President in their place), OUSU Rep(s) get priority, with remaining positions ratified in the preceding JCR meeting. Failing this, a committee member can be picked for it and failing this and ordinary JCR member can go appointed by the President. This ensures that all three OUSU votes should be used to properly represent the JCR at OUSU Council.
- The Vice President has been named as the Acting Returning Officer if the Returning Officer position falls vacant. This was in line with the current Constitution, but has been made consistent across the document to recognise this possibility.
- The maintenance of JCR accounts by the Treasurer and the audit requirements are briefly outlined in the Articles, with the audit procedure following later in the Standing Orders.
- The final part of the Articles sets out the complaints procedure, referencing members to the appropriate Standing Order which will be discussed later. It adds the requirement for anything of a serious nature to go directly to the Junior Deans, for example harassment allegations.

While the above looks like a lot of words and changes, in reality they are all quite small in nature. The above has tried to offer a bit of context and reasoning to inform your opinion. Questions are welcomed on anything mentioned above.

Section IV: Standing Orders

Standing Order 1: General Meetings

This section outlines the procedures surrounding JCR meetings.

- Quorum rules have been altered slightly. This means there's now a way to raise this to the Chair, and the time for gathering the necessary people has been increased from 10 minutes to 15 minutes. However, at this point all remaining items fall to the next JCR meeting and the meeting can't be restarted. This could be an Extraordinary General Meeting if something necessitates discussion quickly. Should quorum rules not do this, then a meeting may be called and dwindle to an even less representative sample of the JCR and still pass very important motions. One of the most common complaints on our survey was that JCR meetings are not representative anyway, meaning that reduced quorum would be amplifying this problem that our consultation highlighted.
- "Members are at all times expected to respect the right of other members to listen to and take part in, the discussion at meetings." has been maintained and located more prominently.
- Chairing the meeting – currently Officers cannot refuse the Chair if it falls to them which is not useful. This has been lifted, although it still follows the prescribed order as before. If all Officers refuse the Chair then the Returning Officer is compelled to take the Chair, otherwise the meeting has to close.
- There are now far stricter rules on being Chair of the meeting, formally setting out their requirement to be completely impartial.

- Minutes of meetings should be published within 72 hours of the meeting.
- The Secretary's requirement to provide sufficient copies of the agenda is now waived if the Environment and Ethics Officer secures a projector for the meeting.
- The order of JCR meetings has stayed essentially the same, with minor changes. First, committee can now report should they wish along with Reps/Officers. There's no longer a distinct section for each, but instead it's altogether. Censure/No Confidence/Emergency Charity Motions take priority over all other motion types, and then termly charities shall always appear next followed by the rest of the motions. This is to ensure that the time critical motion types are discussed first.
- The process by which the agenda may be reordered during the meeting has been made clearer.
- A small change on how the agenda shows rep vacancies. It will now be shown as "Bike Rep (1 vacancy to join [Gandalf])" rather than putting names on agendas in advance or expecting applications beforehand.
- We were asked to speed up the rep re-ratifications in the final meeting of each term. We have done so, and now for reps who are continuing (presumably doing a good job) they will only have or be voted on if there is an objection to their continuation as a rep. This should cut down the time on rep ratifications considerably each term, because most will just continue.
- At the discretion of the President, Items for Discussion may continue to be brought by any member. The requirement that the President introduce it has been scrapped, because it is more sensible to let the proposer of the discussion speak first. Also, this was meant to be time limited to 10 minutes which is entirely unreasonable. This was created in 1997 as a new invention and it is clear that they didn't anticipate BOPgate or other lengthy issues. Therefore, it will now be 10 minutes, but extendable by 10 minutes twice by the President to a maximum of 30 minutes which seems fair. To ensure that the discussion flows, speech lengths of 1 minute will be made default except for the opening speech, but the meeting may overrule this limit via a procedural motion if it needs to. The default should mean about 30 people can speak if they want to, a consultative triumph.
- The Nem Con charity procedure has been clarified. This means that only charities which are objected to get discussed, and they are read out as "Motion to give £300 to Save the Children, any objections?" If there's an objection, it is discussed after the last motion has been tested for objections. It's then a debate as normal, as usual. This clarifies the existing ambiguities. There will be more money available for termly charity motions since the new Constitution would not have an Annual Charity Vote given that it receives very little attention and half of all our charity donations. This will make more money for the charity motions each term to promote the smaller, less well-known charities that JCR members wish to support.
- To prevent scraps of paper flying and a scramble to get a seconder for a move to vote, procedural motions are now verbal and only a proposer is required for simplicity. Amendments need to be written down so everyone is clear what is/was voted.
- The procedural motion to not pass opinion or discuss further a motion "not put" has been changed from two thirds to simple majority. This is on the basis that it takes a simple majority for the JCR to express an opinion, so it follows that it should take a simple majority to ask that the JCR does not express an opinion on the motion.
- The power of the members to challenge the Chair in the meeting has been clarified. Either on neutrality grounds or breaking procedure following a point of order.
- If there is an objection to a procedural motion for the Secretary to tell a joke, two jokes will be told.
- It is now far easier to adjourn a meeting for an access break, as an example. It's now proposed verbally and if there are no objections a 5 minute break starts immediately. If there's an objection, a speech in favour and against is called. This used to be a 2/3 majority.
- There have been complaints that the meetings go on too long sometimes, and the survey data we collected showed that an hour and a half is the maximum length an average member wants. Therefore, after an hour and a half, the Returning Officer or another committee

member shall put a procedural motion to close the meeting. If two thirds agree, the meeting closes.

- The surveys showed that members are not comfortable speaking or voting in meetings, and that there is a request for secret ballots to be held where one person feels uncomfortable voting in public and requests it. A secret ballot only takes a few minutes of time, and this committee believes JCR meetings should be accessible and pressure should not be applied to force votes in a particular way for friendship reasons or other factors. Therefore, we have included this in the new version.
- Procedural motions can't be put on procedural motions, except a secret ballot on "not put" procedural motions (i.e. JCR shouldn't express a view) or when the Chair is being challenged because both of these may be sensitive in a way that a speech limit or an adjournment for 5 minutes isn't.

Most of the above are just procedural tweaks to make things flow better or to alter checks and balances which are not currently functioning especially well.

Standing Order 2: Role Descriptions

See the second attachment on this email for a full read through. There are many alterations here because the role descriptions have not been updated for many years. This represents a minimum expectation, and of course officials may exceed this and show their full potential.

Standing Order 3a: Elections

- LGBTQ and Ethnic Minorities Officers should identify as being part of these groups to be eligible to stand for election. This adds the same expectation to them as the Disabilities Officer.
- Domestic Officers should run in pairs.
- The Returning Officer and the Returning Officer Assistant can't run for election. Currently they can do so!
- There shall be a Returning Officer Assistant ratified at the meeting before each election to oversee the Returning Officer to ensure fair proceedings with online voting etc.
- Candidates can't run for more than one position at once. Remarkably this is allowed.
- The nominations schedule has been updated to reflect current practice and each candidate is required to submit a manifesto in a format prescribed by the Returning Officer.
- Proposers and seconders are no longer needed to become a candidate.
- Better procedures are in place for online ballots vs. paper ballots if things go wrong with technology. The Returning Officer is limited in the number of voting codes which may be produced to 10% above the JCR member count to reduce the potential for election fraud while maintaining enough spare codes for technical errors etc.
- The Notice of Poll requirements have been updated and the timings adjusted to run smoother and give better information about the election procedures when they take place.
- Candidates can withdraw from being candidates within 24 hours of the manifesto being published as long as the Returning Officer is satisfied that they weren't bullied out of it or other electoral malpractice did not result in that decision. After this, only exceptional circumstances would lead to the withdrawal of a candidate with the Returning Officer's permission.
- Hustings should take place in an accessible location and candidates are obliged to attend hustings or provide a reasonable excuse to the Returning Officer. If the excuse is reasonable, which normally they will be, then they don't have to attend and can submit a written speech to be read out by the Returning Officer. If not, their manifesto is read out instead. The members at hustings may overrule the Returning Officer on what is reasonable, so the Returning Officer shall always be sensitive in dealing with matters. Questions may be asked

in someone's absence and while it isn't in the rules, it is expected that they would be relayed to the candidate to be answered at a later point.

- The Chair may veto any irrelevant or unduly offensive questions because we clearly do not want these at our hustings.
- There is always a minimum level of campaigning that's allowed (posters, facebook pages etc.) but the Returning Officer should offer guidance of other campaigning rules such as spending limits if they feel the need to. This prevents money deciding elections and allows the flexibility to prevent an election being marred by dishonourable practices quickly. Any Returning Officer decision is subject to challenge at a meeting or complaints can be lodged against them if they go rogue.
- Conscience clauses are added for LGBTQ and Ethnic Minorities Officer elections, in line with Disabilities Officer practices.
- Proxy votes are allowed for paper elections with checks within the system present. This has been modelled on what used to happen before we began using the online systems.
- For unopposed elections, one must beat Re-Open Nominations by two thirds majority to reflect the inability for RON to pose any challenges to candidates who are unopposed, often resulting in no formal campaigns at all. This was discussed at a JCR meeting and a majority were in favour when polled and has been consulted on widely, including extensive talks to look at liberation group implications which we were satisfied were not going to be harmed at all, and if anything would be helped as the voting strength of liberation groups is more significant in unopposed elections.
- The decision of tied elections by the drawing of straws has been kept, because this is quite fun. The Returning Officer Assistant shall select the straw in case RON is tied with a candidate.
- Electoral malpractice has been updated to close some loopholes:
 - Interference with the online voting system (previously just the ballot box) or deliberately hindering someone from casting their vote is now malpractice.
 - Canvassing in the poll room or loitering outside it for the same purpose – in case of a paper ballot election, this was not actually forbidden although it was enforced.
 - Endorsing a candidate while being themselves a candidate has been added to malpractice to prevent the formation of insider filled slates like the Union of OUSU. This is in response to the complaints we have heard about the JCR being too insider focussed. This is also not strictly allowed in the rules as they stand, since candidates cannot canvass before nominations are closed, but makes it more explicit for greater clarity.
 - Adding the Returning Officer Assistant to people who cannot canvass for anyone.
 - Advising particular potential candidates to run or not or to misrepresent a role to potential candidate(s) to affect their decision to nominate by incumbent members of the JCR General Committee, the President-elect or the Vice-President elect would become malpractice. This is in response to comments that from individuals on the committee along these lines in previous elections. Especially in by-election situations where the committee wants to fill a role, it would be improper to encourage friends to run which may reinforce the insider perception of the JCR. This also reduces the power of the committee members to appoint successors and dissuade people from running since they should be entirely neutral and fair in advertising their roles.
 - Deliberate and/or malicious contraventions of the provisions of the Constitution as they apply to elections. This means that the Returning Officer can be convicted of malpractice if they are not correct in their handling of the election for improper reasons.

- The way that election malpractice is dealt with has been standardised along with the normal complaints procedure (to be outlined later) because currently it is very unclear how an election tribunal should operate and this should be something very simple.

Standing Order 3b: By-Elections

- This section has been rewritten to outline clearly the routes which end up with a by-election being called, and then clearly give a time window as to when they should be held.
- There is now an added feature of a recall mechanism which can be triggered by 50 members signing a petition to see a by-election for a given position. This means that there is extra accountability to JCR members of the committee, because it would not require a JCR meeting with a No Confidence motion which may get tense. This No Confidence option remains, but the recall mechanism is designed to be a simple way for someone who feels they require a refreshed mandate to try to achieve this without saying they have no confidence at all in the person, which may not be their belief. The incumbents would continue to occupy their role until the result is announced.
- The by-election timetable has been made to resemble the normal Michaelmas elections as much as possible, because it reduces confusion and keeps it operating smoothly. Technical things such as timings etc. have been changed to achieve this.

Standing Order 4: Referendum Procedures

- A referendum could now be called via a JCR meeting motion to add greater flexibility for a JCR member in trying to put forward their ideas. This also means that the meeting is able to refer the most controversial of issues to a referendum should it see fit, whereas this option is presently not possible.
- The timelines for each route to a referendum have been standardised, because presently it is rather difficult to interpret. The same building blocks have been used and there aren't major changes.
- Instead of an Extraordinary General Meeting being called, a Referendum Hustings will be used which is more flexible for the Returning Officer and separates it from EGM procedures. This also eliminates the need for quorum, because no decisions are being made and people have opted to come to hear because they are interested. Members shouldn't be forced to come along to make up numbers where no decisions are made.
- Along with the referendum question will be a short summary of what the referendum means for the JCR (its "implications") which are expressed in neutral terms written by the Returning Officer and approved by the President. This means that people who are not engaged with the JCR news can quickly refer to an impartial account of what the referendum is about. For example, a referendum on: "The JCR doesn't have a cat at present. Should the JCR seek to adopt a cat? Yes, No, Abstain" would have a blurb talking about how a certain committee person would then speak to a given person in college to persuade them of the merits of said feline being adopted by the JCR etc.
- Everything else is essentially the same, but wordings have been changed to flow better etc.

Standing Order 5: Complaints Procedure

- The Complaints Procedure has been entirely changed, because the current system is not effective in reaching an impartial and satisfactory conclusion.
- The new proposal is that individuals email the Returning Officer with their complaint about any official or committee outlining all the relevant details. The Returning Officer will then consider their position to see whether they are impartial and appropriate to act as the Complaints Chair. If not, they go down the list of Officers in order until a new Chair can be found who is suitable.

- The first stage is informal resolution, because ideally formal procedures would be avoided. This will have the Returning Officer act as the middleman between the complainant and the person being complained about to facilitate a discussion that may resolve the issue.
- If the person complaining feels the informal dialogue isn't working, despite their best efforts, they may ask for more formal hearings. Election complaints are always handled formally.
- The Chair of the procedure will appoint two fellow panellists following a criteria that ranks past experience on a complaints panel highly and then it falls to ex-officers and then committee officers followed by reps in this order to fill the panel of three. Efforts will be made to have a reserve panel on standby in case of an appeal.
- The three person panel will then consider both sides, take submissions from each and should come to a resolution on whether it is partially justified, wholly justified or unjustified within a week. Any proportionate and effective resolution may be suggested, even a motion of censure or no confidence if they believe this warranted. This means that the stigma of bringing such motions is avoided because it is their duty to do so if the complaint warrants it. An anonymised report is written once the panel has finished its business.
- One appeal may be lodged only where the integrity or propriety of the original panel is in doubt, leading to an unfair judgement. This means the appeal can't just be on grounds of dissatisfaction. The reserve panel reevaluates the evidence collected by the original panel and then decides whether the appeal is wholly justified, partially justified or unjustified.

This procedure is written in a simple to understand way in the main Constitution, even if the above sounds a bit dense. If anyone has any questions on the details, please do get in touch.

Standing Order 6: Room Ballot

This is essentially the same as present, but has been written in a far clearer manner.

- A clause has been added to address where suspended students return on the ballots and this will be down to the Vice President's discretion after talking to them, and the rules on finalist ballot priority being used only once is waived if someone didn't fully occupy their room for the whole academic year and suspended.
- The timeline has been modernised to reflect current practices and some antiquated steps have been removed.
- There has been a clarification on room perks for President, Secretary and Vice President in that this cannot be deferred to a later year, unless they are not in residence next year or are on the housing ballot instead.
- The rule about hostility and other forms of unpleasantness being forbidden has been extended to all ballots, not just the housing ballot.

Standing Order 7: Audit Procedure

- Due to the audit complications last term and at the recommendation of the auditors, the audit process will now be done termly meaning it will take far less time and should mean problems don't accumulate. It will take very little time to appoint two auditors each term at JCR meetings and the report itself being presented is normally that everything is fine, so that should take very little time too.
- The audit procedure essentially uses the last audit report as a template for future ones, and it specifies the different checks which are needed to prove that there was no embezzlement and everything is above board. The independence of auditors has been made clear, but they also have a responsibility to work with the Treasurer to answer any queries.

If anyone wants to view the whole procedure and look at all the details, let me know and I will send it over. This is more efficient than making this document any longer than it already is.

Standing Order 8: Appointing the Summer Ball Committee

This would happen every 3 years and has been modelled on what happened this year, which has been modified from the process of previous years only slightly. Including this in the new Constitution means that there is a clear process to work off, rather than scratching together old records which is our current problem due to insufficient institutional memory.

Section V: Appendix Items

Appendix 1 – A list of all JCR committees and their aims with membership details.

Appendix 2 – A summary of college committees and which JCR representatives should attend each.

Appendix 3 – Honorary member lists.

Appendix 4 – Room Grade Scores

Appendix 5 – a document to sign for officers to acknowledge their legal trustee status.

Appendix 6 – an empty list of JCR sound and lighting equipment.

Conclusion

As the above shows, a lot of time, thought and effort has gone into the work of the Constitutional Reform Committee. Consultation has been sought via JCR meetings, our consultative event, talking to people across the last two terms and more to gauge opinions on ideas and of course survey questions to assess opinion. The above changes we are confident are in line with the wishes majority of JCR members and we hope to put this referendum to the JCR by Thursday 8th week of this term, alongside the JCR elections.

Please note that the above proposals are likely to feature in the final referendum draft, but there may be minor adjustments over the next few days in response to questions or concerns. Clarifications may be added to this document and where they are, this will be made clear above. Any adjustments will be noted below for complete transparency and to make it easy to see.

Alastair Graham
Chair of CRC
JCR Secretary
06/06/16

Amendments since Publication:

None.