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Minutes of the DCAC Open Meeting

Sunday 09 May, 7pm

Prepared for:

JCR Committee 2004-5

Prepared by:

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JCR Communications Officer

13th May 2004

i. Approval of minutes of the last DCAC Open Meeting and matters arising

There were no amendments, and no matters arising from the last minutes.

ii. Motion to affiliate the Downing Wine Society

Graham Bates made the opening speech in favour this motion. He started the society 4 years ago, and Holly Hedgeland (proposer) has now taken it over. They propose that it is now formalized. At this stage they are not asking for any money.

Voting: 64 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions. Motion carried.

iii. Motion to form a Downing College (Mixed) Lacrosse Team

Catherine Cucknell proposed the formation of a new sports team. There are some brilliant players in college. 15 other college have teams and Catherine believes we are better than all of them.

Ellen B asked if they would be posing naked (they wouldn't.)

The question of money was raised – 'not much' would be required since most people have their own sticks.

Voting: 66 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions. Motion carried.

iv. Update from the Winter Ball President (Vicky Burgess)

The tickets officially went on-sale today. Vicky expects everyone to buy tickets at the end of the meeting. The full Ball Committee was introduced. Vicky explained that the college is really supportive and that we are actually going to have a ball this year. Tickets are only currently available to Downing students to ensure everyone can get them. This term, Downing students can purchase tickets with a 10% discount. The application for tickets can be submitted at downingball.com.

v. Approval of minutes of the last JCR Open Meeting and matters arising

There were no amendments, and no matters arising from the last minutes.

vi. Brief Senior Officers Reports

President: Barry has been putting forward the case for the Winter Ball, putting together catering proposals, looking into issues surrounding CUSU. Also has formed College Costs Enquiry.

Vice President: Richard has arranged Matt Dyson's date with help from the Newnham JCR President and their boat club. Only one person replied. Also has dealt with many issues regarding CUSU and the University Council elections.

Welfare: Parkers Piece lighting meeting next week which will also discuss the issue with APU, CUSU and the local council.

Services: continuing with college issues including windbreaker for tennis courts, and discussions about the gym.

Communications: Launched three websites, downingball.com, downingents.com and the re-launch of downingjcr.co.uk.

Treasurer: Providing simplified Treasury information on the new website. Has cancelled Sky subscription. Contacting heads of societies to inform them of procedures for claiming and spending money.

Academic Affairs: has arranged for a trial of the extended library opening hours mid-Michaelmas. There will be a long-term investigation into swipe-card access.

vii. Other Officers Reports

Sports: The sport season has finished but Amy will be organising some de-stress sporting activities. There will be Tai Kwon Do in a week. Karate and kickboxing workshops are also planned. There will be a big (mixed) touch rugby tournament. A 5-a-side football tournament is also coming up.

Target: JJ asked for any photos to go into the alternative prospectus. Also any suggestions for content are wanted.

Ents: Kat announced that this Friday, Ally Barratt-Quinn and Her Outrageously Talented Friends will be singing in the Party Room.

viii. Questions to the JCR Committee

1. Josh L asked if the Green Officer can look into providing shredding facilities in the plodge.

2. It was asked whether the college gates can actually be closed at 11pm, as announced.

3. A question regarding the status of gym soundproofing was raised. Brad R replied that it is expensive and that college has limited resources for this. However they are aware of the problem.

ix. Motion to investigate and publish information about our bedders system

The wording of this motion was changed by the proposer before the meeting. Ellie H introduced the motion, stating that the intention is to find out how much we pay, what the bedders are supposed to do and many other questions about their working practice.

Matt D: When would the JCR report?

Brad R: After exam term.

Matt M: The college has concerns with the wording of the motion?

Brad R: This is why the proposer has changed the motion.

Ian R (Against): There have been previous motions regarding IT, Catering etc. Will this be seen as criticism? The bedders may see this as offensive and divisive. Perhaps a better way of approaching problems is to contact the Head of Housekeeping.

Ellie: Some students are unhappy with their bedders, many just want more information - and so it is justified to look into the issues.

Ian R: Why is it better to pass this motion rather than addressing the problems directly?

Barry B: It is more appropriate for this message to come from the JCR collectively. If an opinion is expressed by the JCR then it is easier to take that to college.

Brad R: The idea is to look at the system generally, and not against individual bedders.

Ally BQ: Does not know exactly what bedders are expected to do in any case.

Nick P: Individual bedders would get offended at 8 individual complaints rather than a non-specific motion.

Ben W: If the JCR Committee are in favour of this why did you not just do it?

Barry B: It looks better if we are not interfering in College issues for the sake of it.

Brad R: This motion also sets our JCR priority, if the motion is well-supported.

Voting: 42 for, 18 against, 12 abstentions. Motion carried.

x. Motion to support the Yearbook with £200

Matt “Badger Badger” Mayer introduced the motion. A group of 5 or 6 finalists have created the yearbook in two months. This was created online using a Wiki website which allows everyone to add comments and memories. The yearbook was locked a week ago, and the effort put into it by everyone has been impressive. Group collaboration has meant it has been very successful.

The costs of printing are fairly high. At 75 copies this works out as £25 per copy, reducing to £21/copy with a print-run of 125. Matt is asking the committee to subsidise the yearbook. Research shows that for every £1 knocked off the price, 10-15 more people will buy one. The yearbook committee will only print exactly the number required.

Ed C: Are there any badgers in it?

Matt M: No.

Nick P: Did you raise any sponsorship for the yearbook?

Matt M: This was too much effort to raise a mere £100.

Emile A: Why did you choose to ask for £200 and not more?

Matt M: Felt this was a fair amount to ask from the JCR.

What size will the yearbook be?

Matt M: A5 hardback, with one page per person.

Henry R: It is outside the responsibility of the JCR to pay for third years. The money is surely for the benefit of the existing JCR student body.

Matt M: This will help to establish a yearbook tradition in Downing which will benefit everyone.

Voting: 75 for, 2 against, 1 abstention. Motion carried.

xi. Interval

Tom Ash (Mens) led a high-entertaining Battle of the Sexes. It was noted that some of the female contestants were in fact men in drag.

xii. Motion to combat political tendencies at CUSU

Richard opened by explaining that this motion was to mandate him and Barry, and their successors to oppose "overtly political" motions at CUSU Council. We do believe that fighting racism is important, but don't believe that the Student Union should have political viewpoints.

Matt D (Against): It is difficult to draw the fine line of what affects students and what is political.

Ed C: In favour of motion because its intention is to counter the overt and extreme political motions. Access to information may affect the democratic process, and political viewpoints are a job for political parties, not Student Unions.

James: Is this apolitical sentiment not already covered by the Charities Act?

Richard H: CUSU have demonstrated that they completely ignore it (since the recent motion was seconded by Ben Brinded). So JCRs much respond to fight this precedent.

Concern was raised that the motion was not specific enough.

Richard H amended the motion to include "that are not directly relevant to students as students" in resolves point #2.

Nick P: A case-by-case JCR opinion is not possible because of the infrequency of Open Meetings.

Voting: 82 for, 2 against, 5 abstentions. Motion carried.

xiii. Motion to fully investigate the benefits of affiliation to, and disaffiliation from CUSU.

Barry B reminded everyone that this is not a debate about disaffiliation.

Nick Price explained that the reason this has come about is because there have been many criticism expressed about what CUSU does, how it does it etc. The operation of CUSU could be changed, by a student body like us. This motion will help identify all the things CUSU doesn't currently do well, and how they can be changed. Magdalene MCR have already disaffiliated, and it is important that CUSU do change.

Ed C: Since referendum is not mentioned in the text of the motion, it should not be mentioned in the title of the motion.

A procedural motion from Matt D was accepted by the proposer to strike out 'as a preliminary to a referendum later this term' from the title.

James Br.: What more is required than the reports already published by the JCR Committee?

Nick P: Individual Senior Officers reports are needed on each area as it affects them.

Kat B: Can Magdalene MCR be invited to talk about how it has affected them?

Ed C: Should this be another amendment?

Barry B: There is no need to amend the motion to invite people to a JCR meeting.

Richard H: Some committee members have strong reservations about a referendum this term. However, we fully welcome the motion to provide a more detailed investigation.

Voting: 43 for, 5 against, 8 abstentions. Motion carried.

Full Text of Motions

Motion to affiliate the Downing Wine Society

The DCAC notes that:

1. The Downing Wine Society has existed informally for at least 3 years;
2. The Society encourages all members of both the JCR & MCR to develop an interest in wine, primarily by holding regular tastings accessible to all in College.

The DCAC believes that:

1. Affiliation to the DCAC will raise the profile of Downing Wine Society within College, particularly promoting awareness of its existence amongst members of the JCR.

The DCAC resolves to:

1. Recognise the Downing Wine Society as an official society by affiliation to the DCAC.

Proposed by: Holly Hedgeland

Seconded by: Graham Bates

Motion to form a Downing College (Mixed) Lacrosse Team

The DCAC notes

1. Lacrosse is a popular but relatively unknown sport in Downing. This year three people played at University level and in Varsity matches.
2. There is an intercollegiate league and cuppers tournament of which there are at least 15 colleges that take part. At the moment Downing members wanting to play in the league have to play for another college.

The DCAC believes

1. Lacrosse is a fantastic game that several people have played before at school and had to give up due to lack of time to play at university level. Several newcomers to the sport express an ongoing interest in trying it out. A Downing team would allow these people to have a throw around every week and give everyone a chance to play a challenging yet fun game.
2. And as we have lots of good sportsmen and women in college, we would have good chance of doing well in the league and in cuppers so raising another side of Downing's sporting achievements.

The DCAC resolves

1. Affiliate the Downing College (Mixed) Lacrosse Team to the DCAC.

Proposed by: Catherine Cucknell

Seconded by: Jennifer Carter

Motion to investigate and publish information about our bedders system.

The JCR notes that: bedders provide a valuable services, but students would appreciate more information about, and more input into, the bedders system.

The JCR Resolves to: mandate the JCR to investigate the bedders system, provide information on their working practice, and make it possible for students to air suggestions.

Proposed by: Ellie Hargreaves

Seconded by: Adil Kazmi

Motion to support the Yearbook with £200

The JCR notes that

1. Downing has not had a student yearbook for the past two years.
2. Current third years and fourth years have been working collaboratively to create the contents for a yearbook online
3. The costs of printing a yearbook for a small community like Downing are high. (detailed costs will be provided at the meeting)

The JCR believes that

1. An annual yearbook is a resource that will benefit everyone and provide lasting memories of their time here.
2. A successful yearbook this year would make it far easier for future years to have a successful yearbook.
3. We should support a project which has been contributed to by over 150 of our undergraduates.

The JCR resolves to

1. Give £200 to the Yearbook Committee from the JCR Initiatives Fund to help with printing costs.
2. Endeavour to support yearbooks for future years with funding from the JCR Grant.

Proposed by: Matthew Mayer

Seconded by: Alex Johnson

Motion to Combat Political Tendencies at CUSU

The JCR Notes that:

1. The Cambridge University Students Union (CUSU) President Ben Brinded this week proposed a motion to CUSU Council to “mandate the CUSU Executive to produce literature encouraging Cambridge students to vote in the June elections, and to raise awareness of the adverse consequences that a BNP victory would have in general, and for the welfare of Cambridge students.”
2. This motion was amended, and Downing was instrumental in neutralising its political intentions.

The JCR Believes that:

1. Racism is a crucial and relevant issue that is important to Downing Students
2. Downing JCR should fight racism and promote equality
3. Our elected representatives in CUSU should not take on overtly political stance
4. CUSU should not campaign for or against any political party
5. CUSU should not tell Downing students how to vote in elections
6. CUSU can promote anti-racism initiatives without becoming political

The JCR resolves to:

1. Support anti-racism initiatives by CUSU that are not deemed overtly political
2. Mandate the JCR Committee to combat overtly political motions **that are not directly relevant to students as students** in CUSU with the full support of the student body

Proposed by: Richard Hardymont (JCR Vice-President)

Seconded by: Amber Mun (JCR GEEMA Officer)

Motion to Fully Investigate the Benefits of Affiliation to and Disaffiliation from CUSU, as ~~a preliminary to a Referendum later this term~~

The JCR notes:

1. There has been serious dissatisfaction expressed by JCR members concerning CUSU

The JCR believes that

1. A Cambridge University Student Union is an important leading body for the students of Cambridge
2. CUSU does not sufficiently justify its spending, policies or benefits directly to the members of Downing JCR

The JCR resolves to

1. Request a cost-benefit analysis from CUSU of Downing JCR’s continued affiliation and to request more open and accountable leadership
2. Mandate full investigation by the Downing JCR into the benefits and consequences of disaffiliation and continued affiliation, including reports from each Senior Officer.

Proposed by: Nicholas Price

Seconded by: Edward Cumming