

MINUTES OF THE
MICHAELMAS 2016 TERMLY GENERAL MEETING OF THE
DARWIN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (DCSA)

Held in
the Common Room,
Darwin College,
Cambridge



On Tuesday 1st
November 2016
at 20:00

I. CALL TO ORDER

The DCSA President, and Chair of the meeting, Elaine Gray, called the meeting to order at 20:05. Thea Precht, the DCSA Secretary, recorded the minutes.

II. CERTIFICATION OF NOTICE AND QUORUM

The President certified that a quorum existed for the valid transaction of business, there being at least 10% of the fee-paying students (56) present at any one time. Thereupon, the President declared the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order.

III. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS GENERAL MEETING'S MINUTES

The minutes of the DCSA Easter Term General Meeting held on Monday 31st May 2016 in the Common Room were unanimously approved. Elaine (President) and Thea (Secretary) will post them in the designated bulletin board outside the Porters' Lodge, on the DCSA website, and send them to the Domestic Bursar's Secretary.

IV. MATTERS ARISING

i. Previous motions

Following up from the motions raised at the Easter Term General Meeting, Elaine (President) reported that (1) compost bins have been placed in the student kitchens on the main college site and have been successfully implemented. (2) College has changed their procedure regarding removing kitchen equipment over summer and instead provided all students donation bags in order for them to donate equipment to charity instead. The charity donation bin is located in the car park. (3) The addition of an Arts Officer was proposed at a previous GM and the DCSA has proposed changes to Committee Offices in order for non-sporting clubs to be catered for. The proposed change to the Schedule and Regulations of the DCSA Constitution is to change the title of the Sports Officer to Sports and Societies Officer. Voting on this will take place later at this meeting.

ii. Kitchen Audit

Elaine reported that following a Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting, the college will carry out a kitchen audit to check which student kitchens would be able to accommodate freezers, toasters, microwaves and kettles. This issue will be revisited at the Buildings and Grounds meeting in January.

V. ELECTION HUSTINGS

Position: International Officer

Candidate: Yangqing (Melissa) Liu (yl529)

Proposer: Regina Schlütter (rbks2)

Secunder: Aleix Gorchs Rovira (ag853)

Position: Green Officer

Candidate: Bryn Pickering (bp325)

Proposer: Philipp Bräuniger-Weime (pab96)

Secunder: João Maria Alcântara de Melo Costa (jmadmc2)

Candidate: Abdul Rahman Md Din (arb210)

Proposer: Christina Skondrogianni (cs896)

Secunder: Fuyu Zhao (fz253)

Position: Entertainment Officer

Candidate: Astrid Wendler (aw642)

Proposer: Brenda Valeiras (bv274)

Seconded: Victoria Franks (vrf22)
Position: External Officer

Candidate: Oliver Fleck (orf22)
Proposer: Stefan Winzeck (sw742)
Seconded: Marc Felske (mf596)

Position: Events Officer

Candidate: Jessica Dobrin (jd750)
Proposer: Talin Ghazarian (tg396)
Seconded: Iain Hay (imh33)

Position: Communications Officer

Candidate: Ruben Drews (rmd60)
Proposer: Victoria Franks (vrf22)
Seconded: Meltem Gürel (mg773)

VI. MOTION 1: Preservation of the Photography Darkroom

Proposer: Karoliina Pulkkinen (kjp41)
Seconded: Valentina Ausserladscheider (va284)

Text of Motion:

“The Darwin Photography Society (PhotoSoc) is a group of students focused on documenting life at Darwin and in Cambridge. The darkroom, which occupies a tiny room in the Old Granary, is the primary medium for this and, hence, it stands as the society's main asset. In fact, the society boasts this space as the only photography darkroom in the entire University.

In the last few years, the darkroom has served also as a space to support PhotoSoc's diversifying interests. At present, it stores securely an expensive telescope, tripods, and a video camera in addition to print paper, photo filters and lenses. The darkroom has also supported meetings and discussions for organising exhibitions, the most recent of which (on Immigration in Europe held in the coffee parlour) was received widely by college members and fellows.

The recent plans for the refurbishment of the Old Granary propose replacing the darkroom with an en-suite bathroom. When the drawings were presented to the student community last spring, the documents did not explicitly state in writing that such plans were intended for the darkroom. In my opinion, we did not consent to this choice, as the college did not ensure that we understood that this was their plan.

They did not email or contact the president or the treasurer of the society to explain their intentions.

In fact, documents suggest that the decision regarding the fate of the space was not made until the 6th of October, when the buildings and grounds meeting happened. The PhotoSoc or DCSA president was not contacted to discuss the matter on this occasion.

Apart from just raising a motion to protect the darkroom, I also propose that whenever the college and the relevant committees are planning to refurbish spaces that are used by the student societies, they ought to contact presidents and treasurers via email or phone directly. The college ought not to make assumptions on the frequency of the usage of the rooms, but check this with the student community.

I emphasise that the darkroom is essential for the survival of our society and it matters a great deal, not just for the few of us at present but for generations of upcoming students interested in archiving life at Darwin. On behalf of the members of the PhotoSoc, I request kindly for the darkroom not to be replaced as part of the upcoming Old Granary renovation.”

Discussion:

The proposer of the motion, Karoliina, explained that college had not approached any students to discuss the Dark Room and they should not just assume it is not in use. She stated her concerns regarding College taking away rooms used by students without prior communication with societies that might be affected.

Duncan Needham (Dean, not present) previously suggested contacting Kings College to use their Dark Room until a solution is found. Karoliina emphasised that this cannot be a long-term solution and college and should reconsider whether to remove the Dark Room. Elaine explained that it is not possible for the current Dark Room to remain and as it stands it breaks several health and safety regulations. The way forward would be to ask for an alternate location within Darwin.

After much discussion it was decided to split the motion into two parts, as there are two important aspects within the motion. Karoliina made the following changes, which after further discussion and questions, was agreed upon by those in attendance.

Motion 1(a)

To ask the college to provide an alternative Dark Room for the Photographic Society.

The vote was made at 20:55. All (56) in favour.

Motion 1(b)

College has to inform the DCSA and relevant student bodies about changes that directly affect them.

The vote was made at 21:02. All (56) in favour.

VII. MOTION 2: Reducing the cost of rent for short-term room contracts

Proposer: Emile Marin (eam65)

Secunder: Hannah Jongsma (hej33)

Text of Motion:

“Short-term room contracts for students, which are defined by the college as less than 26 weeks, often incur an additional cost of £21/week. We feel the college should abolish this, especially since students who take on a short-term lease often do it because they have nowhere to live. Students are normally already financially constrained and with the additional rent charges and costs involved with moving, it can be a very difficult time for some students. The additional charges also have an impact on students in the late stages of their PhD who are often unfunded and need extra support.

The College states the extra money is for cleaning and maintaining the room when people leave. However, in the case of a room change, a flat charge of £30 is levied. The argument, therefore, does not seem to hold up, as a room vacated when someone moves to another room does not require more cleaning or maintenance than someone in the room for a short period of time. This additional rent charge is seen as a revenue stream for college and it is not fair that students are charged more money than necessary because college knows students in need of accommodation will pay it.

We instead propose students who move out early (before 26 weeks) or stay less than 26 weeks pay the flat-fee of £30 instead, the equivalent of the room-change fee. Guests and non-students could continue being charged according to the current system.”

Discussion:

The proposer of the motion, Emile, explained his motivation for this motion: many students who move back into college are at the end of their PhD and the end of their funding and need somewhere cheap to live for a short period of time without having to sign a long-term contract, which can be difficult when they are uncertain when they will finish and leave Cambridge. The higher rent prices takes advantage of these students and their situations. The discussion was relatively short, due to the high agreement that this motion should pass. Some discussion was had on whether it was only for students, or anyone who moves in short-term, and it was agreed to focus on changing this only for current students. After a brief discussion about the current fee and premium models employed by college it was decided to rephrase the motion to the following and to vote:

To ask college to change the £21 per week premium for short term leases for students and replace it by a £30 flat fee.

The vote was made at 21:15. All (56) in favour.

VIII. BUDGET

Stefan (Treasurer) opened the discussion about the 2016-2017 budget by reminding representatives of the clubs and societies that there are new rules for the funding of clubs and societies. The rules can be found on the DCSA website and are in accordance with the DCSA Constitution, which is also available online.

For existing clubs and societies, the allocation is partly based on what was used in last year's budget as well as a focus on training rather than equipment, where applicable.

Aerial Arts overspent last year's budget due the pole shipment. Therefore, an additional £20 has been allocated to the new budget.

Boat Club: The boathouse rent was raised last year, which is reflected in the budget. The allocated budget for race fees has stated that last year the lower race fees were lower due to low recruitment numbers. This year recruitment is almost 50% higher, so the number of boats that can enter the races will be higher and so the current allocation is not high enough. Race fees are only paid for races on the Cam. Stefan agreed to revise the allocation at the end of the meeting. The allocation for river conservation is based on five boats, but since the fifth boat will be off the Cam, Ben (Boat Club Treasurer) suggested £30 could be reallocated from river conservation fee to race fees.

Cheese and Wine Society: The requested budget incorporated how much they required from the DCSA and how much they will charge people. Therefore, the lower budget allocated should be sufficient when ticket prices are taken into account.

The Croquet Society has been allocated money to buy new equipment since most of the old set went missing.

Cuban Salsa is satisfied with the allocated budget, but raised issues about the speakers. It was agreed at a previous DCSA Regular Meeting that Cuban Salsa could borrow the DCSA speakers on the basis they were returned to the cellar by 21.00. Cuban Salsa raised some issues about this and it will again be discussed at the next Regular Meeting, if need be.

Families Society: There was no money allocated for the purchase of toys or DVDs. A question was raised regarding why the Families Society has been allocated £300 for social events. According to an unwritten rule, no more than £100 is to be allocated for socials. The current DCSA committee is not aware of such a rule, but will discuss it at the next Regular Meeting.

Film Club accepted their budget allocation. Beanbags are already in the TV room, so there is no need to buy new ones. Blankets for the outdoor cinema could be available from the DCSA if needed.

Women's Football: The allocation is based on the number of Darwin members (four) in this joint society (with Wolfson).

The Kickboxing Society has been allocated a £900 fee subsidy for months 1-6 and again for 7-12. The subsidy is only paid if an individual takes out a binding contract with the kickboxing studio (binding for at least 6 months). Furthermore, the funding for equipment is £100. Elaine pointed out that a few items of abandoned kickboxing equipment had been found in the sports cupboard. If it is suitable it can be used by the society. The DCSA and College Council need to approve the society before they can receive any funds.

Pool Club: The allocation for the Pool Club matches their request, but the club needs to nominate a Treasurer to release the budget.

Science Society: The allocations for printing and advertisement have been reduced. Advertisement should mainly happen via digital media. Andrew (Science Society President) requested an additional £20 for printing costs, which will be revisited.

Tequila Society: The budget request lacks any specification on how the money will be spent. The DCSA and College Council need to approve the society before they can receive any funds.

Water Polo: The society is joint with Queens' College. The number of Darwin and Queens' members is equal. The allocation is intended to cover the pool hire.

IX. SCHEDULE AND REGULATION AMENDMENTS

Elaine presented the suggested amendments to the Schedule and Regulations of the DCSA Constitution. The change is to the title and role the Sports Officers have. The title will be changed to Sports and Societies Officers and their role will reflect their involvement with the Darwin sports clubs and societies, as well as the non-sporting clubs and societies.

Some discussion was had on how this would change the current role. Elaine explained that it would not be a dramatic change, but the main point is that non-sporting clubs and societies will have a point of contact on the DCSA Committee, should they need any help or advice.

Elaine asked if anyone objected to the changes – there were none – therefore, the changes will be presented to College Council.

X. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to discuss.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned by the President at 21:55.

The foregoing minutes were approved by the DCSA General Meeting on _____.

Elaine Gray
DCSA President

Thea Precht
DCSA Secretary

Not yet approved