**Oxford SU Student Council Minutes (Draft)**

Date: 06/06/23
Time: 17:30
Venue: 4 Worcester Street and Online

Chair: Yasmin Poole, Wadham College

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| Present | Jade Calder, VP Education and AccessAnna-Tina Jashapara, VP Charities and CommunityShreya Dua, VP GraduatesGrace Olusola, VP Welfare and Equal OpportunitiesYasmin Poole, Chairand 3 other Council Members |
| Apologies | PG Social Sciences Divisional Representative Michael-Akolade Ayodeji, President |
| Absent | Disabilities Campaign RepCRAE Campaign Rep UG Humanities Divisional RepresentativePG Humanities Division Representative |

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| --- | --- |
| In Attendance | 2 other Student Members |

# Welcome

At 17:41 the Chair began the meeting by welcoming all those present and noted apologies from Michael-Akolade Ayodeji, President, and ….., PG Social Sciences Divisional Representative

RECEIVED

# Minutes and matters arising from the last meeting

The Chair confirmed that all actions arising from the previous meeting had been completed.

Joe Bell (Merton) stated that the minutes had not been released as yet, and as such he opposed the ratification of the minutes.

Inam Teja (Blackfriars) raised a point of order, which was accepted, and proposed a procedural motion to defer the approval of the minutes to the next meeting. The Chair sought opposition to the procedural motion, there was none and the Chair permitted the motion to pass nemine contradicente.

Approved

# Elections in Council

The Chair noted the candidacy of Isaac Chase-Rahman (Corpus Christi) for Chair of Council and invited him to speak in favour of his candidacy.

Isaac Chase-Rahman (Corpus Christi) – I believe that council has something good to offer, and I like chairing meetings. I have been attending meetings for two years, and I feel that I should continue to do so as I have benefited from well-run councils and feel that I can do good by running council well. I have chairing experience so I feel I am able to do that. I want to boost engagement and would like to spend a large part of summer on this issue. That Yasmin has been in this role for a year with little improvement is testament to the fact that to this is difficult to solve. I like student council, I like solving problems, I want to help.

The Chair opened the floor to questions.

Inam Teja (Blackfriars) – What ideas do you have to support people who are introduced into student council part way through the term?

Isaac: answering – Setting realistic standards is important to allowing participating, I want to be free to help people out who come partway through term. But large training sessions are not a great use of time. I think that not only voting members should attend and this links with increasing engagement, we could help with both by taking meetings into colleges.

Danial Hussain (LMH) – There are gripes with the student council: people don’t come to council, and its general structure. What are your gripes? What would you change if you could change anything.

Isaac: answering – Work out a way to increase devolution of power: I think it should be there to support constituent organisations, it does that, but there is a disconnect – which is useful – but the gap needs to be bridged to squeeze everything that we can get out of the SU. The work SusCam has done with the VP ACAF, taking issues to the senior tutors committee, which is very difficult, and used the SU’s connections and positions extremely effectively.

Shreya (VP Graduates) – How do you intend to engage postgraduate students better? Many MCR Presidents have been informed on several occasions but attendance hasn’t increased.

Isaac: answering – Important to preface there are few people from JCRs, the Campaigns are best represented. To boost engagement with postgraduates, the motion to introduce PGT and PGR reps will help for instance, by creating links between postgraduates and the SU. Many postgraduates are not tied closely to their MCR. But we can show them that Student Council is relevant to them.

The Chair noted that there were no further questions from the floor and the election would subsequently take place online.

# Sabbatical Trustees’ Reports

The Chair noted reports and other papers could be found online.

## President

No written report had been submitted. The President was on leave and no verbal report was submitted.

## VP Education and Access

The VP was initially absent with apologies but in light of the fact that they would be able to attend later, at the Chair’s discretion the VP’s report was delayed until they arrived.

The VP noted that their report had been submitted but had not been published yet, and summarised it, noting:

* Work with Class Act on a care leavers open day
* Work with the Bodleian Libraries on the National Library Access Scheme, trying to publicise it to students
* Work on the geography departmental review panel recommending they support undergraduate access
* Work to standardise academic skills support for undergraduates and postgraduates, especially from non-UK academic backgrounds, including roadblocks to implementation by staff.
* Summarising the report of the academic survey conducted in Michaelmas for Continuing Education and digital education technologies
* A social which will be held for part-time students.
* Work with Target Schools Committee, connecting it to the College and University Outreach Staff.

Inam Teja (Blackfriars): questioning – On the publication of the alternative prospectus, how is the VP was dealing with PPHs?

Jade Calder (VP Education and Access): answering – someone on the Target Schools Committee was formerly involved with PPHs, but unfortunately can’t work on that anymore. The VP intends to bring the issue to MCR Prescom at the next meeting, The VP added that the alternative prospectus would be included in the real prospectus, and also in college prospectuses.

Inam Teja (Blackfriars): questioning – whether the VP would consider publishing the alternative prospectus to the PPHs.

VP Education and Access: answering – agreed and suggested the inclusion of PPHs in the college picker.

Joe Bell (Merton): questioning – whether the Alternate Prospectus was out of date

VP Education and Access: answering – stated that the college pages are updated at least every year and there were many exhortations to colleges to update it, though courses were not so useful. The VP also stated their aspiration to have an access section of the SU dedicated to student outreach.

Received

## VP Charities and Community

Anna-Tina Jashapara (VP Charities and Communities) noted that the President has been working on the new post-student council roundup on SU social media, and support from Council would be helpful to drive uptake of the system.

The VP noted that their report was online and summarised it, noting:

* Their report on the University’s progress on decarbonisation, which includes several governance suggestions such as a committee directly on decarbonisation.
* A Keep Campsfield Closed exhibition on Thursday, to be held in the lead-up to refugee action week, to highlight the work of the SU with the campaign.
* The recent clothes swap, which was very successful, 1000 items swapped, and 200 students attended.

Received

## VP Graduates

Shreya Dua (VP Graduates) gave a verbal report, noting:

* Little to report as at this point their role was mostly concerned with wrapping up and handing over.
* Encouragement given to divisions to derive funding from a new central university fund
* The submission of recommendations to the research degree panel including several quick-fixes, e.g. research handbooks to include governance structures
* PG divisional reps are being doubled
* A paper for the Cost of Living fund has been submitted to the University

Received

## VP Welfare and Equal Opportunities

Grace Olusula (VP Welfare and Equal Opportunities) gave a verbal report, noting:

* That the society welfare rep training was finished and ready to be piloted
* The wrapping up of conversations with the University on Student Mental Health, including terms of reference for the next committee at the University.

Received

# Campaign Reports

## Disabilities Campaign

No written report was submitted. The Chair moved to extend the deadline by two weeks, and there was no opposition

resolved

## Campaign for Racial Awareness and Equality

No written report was submitted. The Chair moved to extend the deadline by two weeks, and there was no opposition.

resolved

# Divisional Representative Reports

## Humanities Undergraduate

No written report was submitted, and the rep was not present to give a verbal report. At the Chair’s discretion the report was deferred until the next meeting.

**Action:** Chair to add the tabling of the Humanities UG DivRep report to the agenda for the next ordinary meeting of council.

 Deferred

## Humanities Postgraduate

No written report was submitted, and the rep was not present to give a verbal report. At the Chair’s discretion the report was deferred until the next meeting.

**Action:** Chair to add the tabling of the Humanities PG DivRep report to the agenda for the next ordinary meeting of council.

Deferred

# Trustee Board Reports

# The Chair noted that the Trustee Board report was on the website

# Joe Bell (Merton) – noted that the Trustee Board Report stated that the 2023/24 Budget Report would be tabled at the next meeting of Council.

# Anna-Tina Jashapara (VP Charities and Community) – noted that this was due to the Trustee Board Meeting on the report taking place after Council.

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# Budget Reports

See item G (Trustee Board Reports) above. At the Chair’s discretion, the budget report was deferred to the next ordinary meeting of council.

**Action:** Chair to add the tabling of the budget report to the agenda for the next ordinary meeting of council.

Deferred

# Items for Resolution

## Proper Channels of Communication

Joe Bell (Merton) – proposed the motion, remarking that it was quite difficult during the controversy following the motion of 3rd week Council entitled ‘Independence from the Oxford Union’, to follow the developments of the Council’s work due to indirect communication via student papers and national media..

Inam Teja (Blackfriars): questioning – whether this would impede the Trustees’ ability to respond quickly to issues.

Joe: answering – The Trustees have the ability to ignore the policy when they have a good reason, the trustees’ response was not in the first place prompt, and the drafting or writing of an email is not itself a time-consuming matter.

Freya Jones (Oriel): questioning – asked whether there are issues of confidentiality arising from the motion, and what exactly prompted the motion.

Joe: answering – that there are no confidentiality issues, the motion was prompted by the SU’s response to the press’s handling of the motion of 3rd week council ‘Independence from the Oxford Union’ where many developments regarding the motion seemed to have been communicated to student press, or national press in an inappropriate manner which made it difficult for members of council to follow developments in the situation.

Niall Pearson-Shaul (Merton) – added that though the Pro-Vice Chancellor’s letter was published in full in the Telegraph, the article in which it was published was deliberately less publicised than the one in which the letter’s contents were not published fully and editorialised to suit the paper’s narrative.

Shreya Dua (VP Graduates): questioning – how the issue would be considered where the Sabs were alone in the building and had to come to a decision on their own.

Joe: answering – that the Sabs were not under a duty to communicate a decision if they had not made one, but if they were to make one it was not unfair or unreasonable to ask them to communicate it to Council.

Inam: in favour – the practice of press releasing is very common, having been part of other student governance organisations, it is useful. There is enough flexibility in the policy to deal with contingencies without undermining the fundamental point of the motion. I speak in favour of the motion.

VP Graduates – stated that the trustee board in the situation was not aware of and did not make the decision communicated by the Pro-Vice Chancellor, which is a very difficult decision.

Joe: responding – that this is an edge case, in such a case if there is no decision there is nothing to communicate.

Anna-Tina Jashapara (VP Charities and Community) – noted that the fundamental proposition of transparency is nothing that the Trustees would oppose.

Shreya – emphasised that in the instance previously discussed there was no agency on behalf of the SU.

The Chair sought opposition, Freya opposed the motion: stating that the instance discussed was disconnected from the policy at hand and not a good basis for the making of policy which was not well-considered, when she was working with the President to bring a well-considered policy after the summer.

The VP Education and Access proposed an amendment to the motion in general terms to remove first ‘resolves’ clause, Joe proposed a valid wording would be to strike ‘Resolves’ 1 of the Motion. VP Education and Access accepted.

The Chair sought opposition to the amendment, there was none, and the amendment was allowed to pass nemine contradicente.

At the Chair’s discretion Council moved into voting procedure on the motion, and council adjourned for 5 minutes.

During this time the VP Education and Access arrived.

Council Reconvened.

The Acting Returning Officer certified that the number of votes submitted was:

For: 9

Against: 1

Abstaining: 1

Hence, the following percentages were certified:

For: 81.8%

Against: 9.09%

Abstaining: 9.09%

As the threshold for a substantive motion to pass is 66.6%, the motion passed in the following form:

**Council Notes:**

1. Outcomes and decisions by the SU from the recent Oxford Union debacle have been announced through many channels, including (seemingly) a letter from a Pro-Vice-Chancellor to *The Telegraph[[1]](#footnote-1)*, a letter to the President of the Oxford Union, and briefings to student media[[2]](#footnote-2).
2. It was Council which initially raised these issues, and the above-mentioned outcomes are directly relevant to the Council motion passed in week 3 of this term.
3. These are issues which have been surrounded by significant confusion and a lack of clarity.
4. They are issues which concern a significant number of Student Members.

**Council Believes:**

1. The SU is (or ought to be) a democratic organisation, and no organisation is democratic without proper transparency.
2. A respect for Council and the wider body of Student Members requires the appropriate and prompt dissemination of information relevant to them, and in which they take an interest.
3. Major announcements or developments in Council-commissioned work should be briefed first to Council (or its members) by the SU before the Press or external bodies, in analogy to the requirement by the Ministerial Code that major Government policy be first announced in Parliament.
4. When Council commissions a ‘review’, this review should first be brought to Council.

**Council Resolves:**

1. To make the following policy on ‘Announcements of Policy’:

When there is a significant development in Council-mandated work, Council-made policy or matters directly relating to Council, this development should be communicated in the first instance to Council via the proper channels.

When there is a significant development in SU work or process in which a large number of Student Members are likely to be interested or concerned, this development should be communicated in the first instance via the proper channels. For the avoidance of doubt, this communication may be via any of the proper channels, including those to Council only.

In this policy, the proper channels are a paper tabled in Council, a report in Council (either as part of a Sabbatical Officer’s/Campaign’s report, or a separate item on the agenda), notice in writing to Council members, or a report or ‘press-release’ made available to Oxford Student Publications (without favouring a particular publication) and as a notice on the SU’s website. A communication via the proper channels should be clear and comprehensive and should state whether any information has been withheld and on what grounds.

**Action**: Chair to update Policy Book

RESOLVED

## Amend section 9.2 of by-laws – PG Divisional Representatives

Shreya Dua (VP Graduates) proposed the motion, remarking that she had proposed the motion at the previous meeting and needed to pass it again for procedural motions.

Joe Bell (Merton) noted that he had proposed an amendment at the last meeting of Council which was not reflected in the agenda, he proposed the amendment again.

The Chair sought opposition to the amendment, there was none and the amendment was allowed to passed nemine contradicente.

The Chair sought opposition to the motion, there was none and the motion was allowed to pass nemine contradicente in the following form.

**Council Notes:**

1. Oxford University's student population is 51% postgraduate.
2. This past year a clear issue with the workload has emerged among the PG Divisional Reps.

**Council Believes:**

1. There should be strong postgraduate representation at the Postgraduate level. Having two Divisional Representatives at each Division will cater to the distinct needs of the Postgraduate Taught (PGT) and Postgraduate Research (PGR) community.
2. Increasing the number of representatives will also help resolve the workload issues and facilitate better communication with the course / departmental representatives.
3. Postgraduate students tend to have more engagement with their departments compared to undergraduate students, who tend to take a more active part in their college communities. Hence the need for more postgraduate representatives is in line with their stronger connection to their divisions.

**Council Resolves:**

1. Consequent on pending amendments to Bye-Law 9.2 passed by Council, to amend Bye-Law 9.2(c) to read (additions underlined):
	* 1. Under Bye-Law 9.1(e), Council must appoint as Divisional Board Representatives,
			1. four Student Members who are undergraduates, and
			2. four Student Members who are Graduates to represent those enrolled in taught degrees,
			3. four Student Members who are Graduates to represent those enrolled in research degrees,
			4. a matriculated student of the Continuing Education department,
			5. a non-matriculated student of the Continuing Education department,

and provide each representative with a statement of their responsibilities.

1. And if said pending amendments are not approved,
	1. To amend bye-law 9.2(d)(ii) to read eight student Members who are Graduates.
	2. To insert 9.2(e) under bye-law 9.2(d)(ii) four members must be appointed as representatives of Taught Degrees, and four of Research Degrees.
	3. To insert 9.2(f) into the bye-laws: Council shall appoint two divisional representatives for the Continuing Education Department for both the matriculated and non-matriculated roles.
2. To change the timing of the presentation of Divisional Representative reports to Student Council to 7th week for all positions, by amending Rule 7.2 of Council, substituting ‘at the last Ordinary Meeting’ for ‘at an Ordinary Meeting designated by Steering Committee’.

**Action**: Chair to liaise with ??? to update the governing documents.

 **RESOLVED**

## Support of student led action

Alfie Davis (St Anne’s) proposed the motion, remarking that in a time of rising rent and direct student action, the SU must as a representative of students, support students taking democratic direct action.

Joe Bell (Merton): proposing an amendment – stated that some specific words were necessary to formally make policy.

The Chair sought opposition to the amendment, there was none and the amendment was allowed to pass nemine contradicente.

Anna-Tina Jashapara (VP Charities and Community): speaking against – suggested but did not propose an amendment to clarify the terms of the policy and the expectations on trustees. Further, the VP Charities and Community suggested that in rent strikes a case-by-case approval of support may be better than a general policy, they clarified their support for student action, and noted that the SU works with CRs to improve resources on and support rent negotiations. They stated that they would be happy to work with the proposer on these points.

Alfie accepted the offer, and stated that support for direct action often needs to be swift, but that CRs are often best placed to democratically decide when action should be taken, additional motions of support would be helpful.

The VP Charities and Community asked for clarification whether democratic decision making was on the CR or SC level. The proposer clarified that this was the former.

Joe stated that there is a blanket policy covering UCU strikes, so this was not entirely unprecedented.

Niall Pearson-Shaul (Merton) added that industrial disputes are legally protected, whereas rent strikes often are not.

The VP Charities and Community proposed an amendment to clarify that the SU’s work on rent negotiations is ongoing.

The Chair sought opposition to the amendment, there was none and the amendment was allowed to passed nemine contradicente.

Isaac Chase-Rahman (Corpus Christi) noted that there has not been a successful rent strike in decades, and that in many cases they are now unofficial, not passed through CRs.

The proposer answering that the motion was drafted widely enough to permit democratically to be interpreted in multiple ways not strictly through council.

Isaac responded that if ‘democratically decided’ is up for interpretation there is nothing holding future SU administrations to the commitment, especially as a strict and formalistic view of ‘democratic’ as connoting a formal motion is quite common.

The proposer answering that they would welcome any propositions, but if a future Sab viewed democracy narrowly as including only motions that would be problematic.

Samuel (University College) noted that having an exhaustive list of ‘democratic’ circumstances was likely to be unwieldy, but proposed an amendment to insert ‘democratically decided by an JCR or MCR Committee’.

The Chair sought opposition to the Amendment, Isaac Chase-Rahman opposed the motion, stating: for international students who could have their visa revoked for participating in a rent strike it was a very raw deal if they were required to do so by a CR motion.

Samuel withdrew the amendment.

Joe Bell (Merton) proposed an amendment clarifying that a JCR/MCR motion was not required to meet the democracy test.

The VP Charities and Community asked how they would tell when the democracy test is met.

Isaac Chase-Rahman (Corpus Christi) stated that it would simply be the case that more than half of the students in a college were not paying their rent.

The VP Charities and Community asked whether a majority test was necessary as rent strikes are often minorities.

Joe answering that the motion did not require a majority for any support, but only mandated support on that occasion. In any case it’s possible for Council to reword the policy later.

The Chair sought opposition to the amendment, there was none and the amendment was allowed to passed nemine contradicente

Isaac followed up what the VP Charities and Community said, stating that in many cases if there are enough students to rent strike, there would be enough student members to call an emergency meeting of council.

The VP Charities and Community questioned whether such a policy would be effective, but accepted that in many cases it would achieve the goal of emphasising support a rent strike.

Isaac proposed an amendment to the motion qualifying the support of the policy requiring a motion passed in council to enable support.

The Chair sought opposition to the amendment, Alfie opposed the amendment, stating that a general policy is often necessary for a swift response which is desirable in this case and it is not necessary to include every contingency in the first policy.

The VP Charities and Community asked whether the policy loses force in the case that the amendment passing, and in which case what the point of the amendment is.

Isaac agreed that this is the likely outcome.

The President stated that the policy was potentially defective and a Sab should be delegated to work on it.

Joe asked which Sab traditionally worked on rent matters.

The VP Charities and Community stated that it was currently her, but this may change with later Sab roles.

At the Chair’s discretion Council moved into voting procedure on the amendment and adjourned for 2 minutes.

Council reconvened.

The Acting Returning Officer certified that the tally of votes submitted was as follows:

For: 0

Against: 6

Abstaining: 4

Hence, the following percentages were certified:

For: 0%

Against: 60%

Abstaining: 40%

As the threshold for an amendment to pass is 50%+1, the amendment passed.

Danial Hussain (LMH) requested Joe Bell (Merton) to propose an amendment to implement the President’s recommendations.

The VP Education and Access agreed, suggesting that the incoming President would be a good nomination.

Joe Bell (Merton) proposed an amendment to mandate the President-elect and VP Activities and Communities-elect.

The Chair sought opposition to the amendment, there was none and the amendment was allowed to passed nemine contradicente.

At the Chair’s discretion Council moved into voting procedure.

The Chair sought opposition to the Motion, Isaac Chase-Rahman (Corpus Christi) opposed the motion on the basis of low turnout potentially invalidating the motion in the view of the University, Colleges, or Press.

Isaac Chase-Rahman (Corpus Christi) raised a point of order, which was accepted, and proposed a procedural motion to have the whole of Council vote on the motion.

The Chair sought opposition to the procedural motion, there was none, and the procedural motion passed nemine contradicente. The motion will be put to a vote of the whole council in the following form.

**Council Notes:**

1. Some Colleges charge some students in excess of £7,500.00 per year for rent for just 27 weeks of housing. This housing is frequently of poor quality, with some students at Exeter College complaining of cockroach infestations.

2. Students in the University of Manchester successfully used rent strikes and occupations to secure a 30% cut in their rent. In addition, in recent years there have been successful rent strikes at UCL, Cambridge, Sheffield and elsewhere.

3. Following a student occupation, Cambridge University renamed their BP institute to the Institute for Energy and Environmental Flows.

4. The SU has several extant policies that directly or indirectly urge the university and colleges to perform actions they have not currently performed. This includes, but is not limited to: preventing the use of NDAs against victims in sexual violence cases; the abolition of continuation fees and the severance of ties between the university and the arms trade.

**Council Believes:**

1. Rent strikes, boycotts, occupations and other forms of direct action are historically successful ways of getting universities to accept student demands.

2. When students take direct action it is often without the full backing of the Students Union.

3. Statements of support from the Students Union would allow the actions to reach more students. It would break the stigma that only radical and politically engaged students can partake in these actions and will make actions more accessible. Support from the Students Union will encourage more students to get involved, ultimately resulting in a higher chance of winning the action taken by students.

4. Furthermore, universities often respond unfairly to legitimate actions taken by students, the official support of the Students Union can reduce the chances of this happening.

5. Additionally, support for actions like these will allow the student body, in turn, to better support our sabbatical officers going into negotiations with the university.

**Council Resolves:**

To make the following policy: ‘Any rent strike action, boycott of university or college services, demonstration, occupation/sit-in action, or other similar action taken by students to encourage the University or any of its constituent Colleges to better the state of housing, or a campaign the Students Union has signed a letter in favour of, required sabbatical officers to advocate for, has a policy in support of or otherwise democratically decided (which need not involve a formal vote or motion to that effect) to be in favour of, shall be supported by the Students Union.

This should come in the form of, but would not be limited to, supporting students through the action with kind words and advice, publicly stating that the Student Union supports the action by advertising it, releasing official statements of support and providing any students who face disciplinary action for their involvement in such actions with support to the best of their ability- including public support if the students in question wish for this - during that disciplinary process.’

The SU should continue to provide rent negotiation support to all JCRs and MCRs, and provide public support to renters unions.

To mandate the President-elect and VP-elect (Activities and Community) to further consider this policy, its implementation and any appropriate future amendments.

**Action:** Chair to liaise with Student Engagement to organise whole council voting.

The results of the online vote are as below:

| **Choice** | **Vote** |
| --- | --- |
| For | 11 |
| Against | 1 |
| Abstain | 1 |

The motion was deemed to be carried.

## To mandate VP PG Education and Access and the president to co-chair MCR PresCom

Shreya Dua (VP Graduates) proposed the motion remarking that usually VP Graduates chairs MCR PresCom, and in the future the MCR Presidents wanted the VP PG Education and Access to attend, though the purpose of the role change was to increase postgraduate representation and hence the President should also attend.

Inam Teja (Blackfriars) stated that the MCR Presidents very much wanted this.

Joe Bell (Merton) proposed an amendment to clarify that the mandate lasted for 3 years, the maximum.

The Chair sought opposition to the amendment, there was none, and the amendment passed nemine contradicente.

The Chair sought opposition to the motion, there was none, and the motion passed in the following form nemine contradicente:

**Council Notes:**

1. The Chair till now has been V.P Graduates who convenes the MCR PresCom.

**Council Believes:**

1. The Council believes that a postgraduate understands the problems, workings, and dynamics of the community best. With the change in posts it is also necessary that the President takes an active interest in understanding and being a part of the processes that represent PGs adequately.

**Council Resolves:**

1. To mandate VP PG Education and Access and the President to co-chair MCR PresCom for 3 years.

2. Any sabbatical officer is encouraged to take an interest in and engage with MCR PresCom (if they are a postgraduate student) in collaboration with the co-chairs.

 **RESOLVED**

# Items for Discussion

## The recent UCU motion on Ukraine

Ivan Larin (Exeter) introduced the item, remarking that the UCU had recently passed a motion describing Ukraine as a ‘battleground of US and Russian Imperialism’ and stating that Volodymyr Zelensky sought to turn Ukraine into ‘a big Israel’. They noted that many countries in eastern Europe and Central Asia had faced invasion at the hands of Russia. That the motion described Israel as an ‘illiberal outpost of US Imperialism’. They noted that many academics had withdrawn from the UCU following the motion, and that the SU’s policy was to support the UCU’s strikes and encourage postgraduate students to join the UCU. They asked whether in light of the motion the SU is reconsidering its relationship with the UCU.

The VP Charities and Community stated that they thought that the SU’s work with the UCU does not need to change, they could go so far as to criticise the UCU on this but this need not reflect on their relationship.

The VP Education and Access stated that the motion was not brought by the Oxford UCU branch, and that almost anything could be done in response.

The President stated that in their view the motion was quite serious, and the SU takes allegations of antisemitism very seriously. They stated that the SU works with UCU Oxford not the Congress and given that only an item for discussion was on the agenda, it would be beneficial for the Sabs to gather information and respond in good time and subsequently potentially bring an item for resolution. They further stated that their work prioritised Oxford postgraduate students to support their working conditions.

The VP Charities and Community stated that they would be willing to contact the Oxford Branch and communicate the findings to Ivan.

Joe Bell (Merton) noted that the motion was very well publicised on twitter, and that in light of the regular contact between the SU and Oxford branch of UCU, it was legitimate to ask Sabs to contact the Oxford Branch to determine what their stance was.

The VP Charities and Community stated that their work thus far had been primarily relating to the Marking and Assessment Boycott, but they could become involved in the motions.

Isaac Chase-Rahman (Corpus Christi) asked whether any sabs had contact with their counterparts at the SUs of the institutions the UCU branches of which authored the motion.

Ivan clarified that it was certainly not necessary to end the SU’s relationship with the UCU, but it was definitely within the scope of the relationship to request an explanation or publish a statement.

There were no further comments and the item was closed.

**Action:** VP Charities and Community to contact Oxford UCU Branch regarding its views on the motion and report back to Council and Ivan Larin (Exeter).

## Oxford SU Sustainability Commitments

Anna-Tina Jashapara (VP Charities and Communities) introduced the item, remarking that they were not sure how the governance of the Commitments should be handled and ask council to contribute and otherwise be aware of what the Oxford SU’s commitments are. The SU’s commitments are in most part captured by the University’s since it is a university building, but that in many cases they aren’t entirely captured, so the agenda reflected the SU’s commitments.

The Chair opened the floor for comments, there were none and the item was closed.

# Any Other Business

Shreya Dua (VP Graduates) raised that she was paying for MCR Presidents’ Prescom formal seats as some MCR budgets weren’t enough to cover it and they wanted to ensure equality between them and asked whether this was problematic.

The President suggested that there needed to be some assurance of parity for JCR Presidents.

Isaac Chase-Rahman stated that the JCRs usually pay for it, and Corpus Christi JCR had a very small budget and was often able to cover it.

The VP Education and Access thanked all those present for attending, democracy being important.

The Chair further noted that this was their last meeting as Chair of Council, and thanked those present for coming and

The Chair brought the meeting to a close at 19:50.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Action Note** | **Responsibility** |
| Add the tabling of the Humanities UG DivRep report to the agenda for the next ordinary meeting of council. | Chair |
| Add the tabling of the Humanities PG DivRep report to the agenda for the next ordinary meeting of council. | Chair |
| Add the tabling of the budget report to the agenda for the next ordinary meeting of council. | Chair |
| Add the approved text of I1 to the Policy Book | Chair |
| Liaise with Steering Committee to update the governing documents according to I2. | Chair |
| Liaise with Student Engagement to organise whole council voting.  | Chair |
| Contact Oxford UCU Branch regarding its views on the motion and report back to Council and Ivan Larin (Exeter). | VP Charities and Community |

1. Martin Williams, ‘Letters: Britain’s great universities must resist chilling attacks on free speech’, *The Telegaph*, ‘Letters to the Editor’, 19 May ‘23. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Bintia Dennog, ‘University prevents Union freshers’ fair ban by treating them as a student society’, *Cherwell*, 19 May ’23. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)