CONFERENCE OF COMMON ROOMS

Oxford SU

Conference of Common Rooms

19:00-21:00, Tuesday 27th October 2026

Fitzhugh Auditorium, Cohen Quad, Exeter College

Minutes

Present: Roxana Rusu (RR), SU President for Communities and Common Rooms; David Quan (DQ), SU President for Postgraduates; Zagham Farhan (ZF), SU President for Undergraduates; Catherine Kola-Balogun (CKB), SU President for Welfare, Equity & Inclusion; Nikki Smith (NS), Oxford SU Chief Executive Officer; Rory O'Ceallaigh (ROC), Oxford SU Common Room Support Coordinator

Chair: Roxana Rusu (President for Community & Common Rooms)

Deputy Chairs:

- Isaac Gavaghan, Wadham SU (JCR President)
- Vacant (MCR President)

In attendance:

Balliol JCR	Lincoln MCR	St. Catz JCR
Blackfriars MCR	Magdalen JCR	St. Catz MCR
Christ Church JCR	Mansfield JCR	St. Cross SRC
Corpus Christi JCR	Merton JCR	St. Hilda's MCR
Green Templeton GCR	Merton MCR	St. John's JCR
Harris Manchester MCR	Nuffield JCR	Trinity JCR
Jesus MCR	Oriel MCR	Wadham SU
Keble MCR	Pembroke JCR	Wadham MCR
Linacre CR	Somerville JCR	Worcester MCR
Lincoln JCR	Somerville MCR	Wycliffe Hall CR

Apologies:

1. Introduction

- RR welcomed attendees, introduced themselves and their role, the other SU Presidents, and provided a summary of the agenda.
- ZF gave an overview of the SU democratic structures.
- RR introduced the new and continuing PTOs and Divisional Reps.

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2. Governance Matters

- MCR Deputy Chair Election
    - RR requested nominations in the room for the role of MCR Deputy Chair of CCR.
    - JCR Deputy Chair of CCR gave an overview of the workload of the role.
    - No nominations received; therefore, no MCR Deputy Chair was elected.
- Approval of CCR TT W7 Minutes
    - No objections to the minutes – they are approved.

3. Matters Arising

- Officer & Action Log Updates
    - RR introduced the item, drawing attention to the pre-circulated Action Log

Questions:

Opposition to the Unethical Uses of AI

- RR gave a further update regarding the motion opposing the unethical use of AI. The University would like to invite students to speak to them regarding this in MT W5, RR would like to offer this opportunity to CCR members. Invites would also be sent to AI Societies.
- LGBTQ+ PTO asked how the opposition to the unethical use of AI motion interacts with the announcement that the Bodleian will use their material to train AI.
- RR noted the motion focuses primarily on AI usage for military purposes, and so these are adjacent issues.

University Email Preservation Motion

- St. Catz MCR asked for further updates on the university email preservation motion.
- RR has followed up with the relevant team twice, however they are very busy. Conversations are happening and there will be further updates.
- St. Catz MCR asked why the previous alumni email address provision got closed.
- RR explained that it was too resource intensive for the University, and not viewed as fit for purpose.
- Worcester MCR drew attention to a main benefit of university email preservation – linking research papers to alumni after they have graduated. Worcester MCR believed that the forwarding address model worked well for this.
- DQ gave an overview of the Cambridge system for email preservation which we are advising Oxford mirror.

Items for Discussion

4. Equitable Funding for University Language Courses

Proposed by: Magdalen JCR President

Passed through Magdalen JCR Meeting

Decision Type: Conference Mandate

Presented by: Magdalen JCR President

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This motion is to mandate the Oxford SU sabbatical officers to lobby departmental divisions in the University of Oxford to provide at least 50% funding towards university supplementary language courses as a minimum, while advocating for additional college funding. The motion has the aim of ensuring fair equitable funding for language education across the university, reducing college divides in access to education and outcomes. Currently, each department makes its own decisions about which scenarios to offer students language funding, if it all. Funding from colleges is similarly unpredictable.

Questions:

- Merton JCR has access to free languages funding in Merton, and finds it really valuable.
- Blackfriars MCR asked how it would be guaranteed that faculty and divisional funding doesn't absolve colleges of providing funding also.
- RR explained that it is recommended in the motion that that Faculties/Divisions cover 50% of funding, and that colleges cover the other 50%. Common Room Presidents would need to negotiate this with each of their colleges.
- MPLS PGR Divisional Rep asked why the motion does not seek 100% funding.
- Magdalen JCR explained that it would be too much money to ask for, and asking for 50% has a greater chance of success.
- St. Catz MCR asked how many Colleges already offer funding for language courses.
- Magdalen JCR led a poll of the room:
    - The College currently covers ≤50% language course fees – 9 hands up
    - The College currently provides any amount of funding for students studying certain degrees/where learning a language is necessary – 10 hands up
    - The College currently provides no funding at all for language courses – 6 hands up (tentative)
- DQ is supportive of this motion.
- CKB is supportive of this motion, however, would need to see additional support offered for students experiencing hardship. CKB raised that they sit on the Language Centre Committee, noting that this could provide another potential avenue for raising considerations relating to the motion, particularly around offering wider support to students who may be experiencing additional hardship.
- St. Catz JCR is currently doing some work on language funding in St. Catz and asked if they should wait for this motion before they continue.
- RR recommends St. Catz should carry on concurrently with this motion, noting that it could help to provide an example of best practice.
- RR invited the room to speak against motion, no countermotions received.
- RR invited members to vote in the room if they would like, and reminded members that voting is open for a week if they should wish to consult their members.

5. Staff on Student Sexual Harassment & Misconduct

Proposed by: Magdalen JCR President

Seconded by: Brasenose JCR President; Lincoln JCR President; Pembroke JCR President; St Anne's JCR President

Decision Type: Conference Mandate

Presented by: Magdalen JCR President

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This motion calls on Oxford SU to support mandating policy change in relation to employed staff accused of staff on student sexual misconduct.

Questions:

- RR began by informing the room that the University was invited to attend for this motion, but they declined.
- St. Catz MCR asked for clarification that the pledge is the four points listed in the motion.
- Magdalen JCR confirmed St. Catz MRC's query as correct.
- St. Catz MCR asked for all JCR, MCRs, and Heads of Houses to sign also for the greatest impact.
- St. Catz JCR asked why the University did not attend.
- RR explained that CCR takes place outside of working hours, and no staff were available to attend for the meeting time.
- Pembroke JCR noted that this motion has already passed through Pembroke JCR and discussions have started with their College.
- Wolfson MCR asked what accountability there would be to ensure that the actions in the motion are being followed if it were to pass.
- CKB described the Office for Students (OfS) Condition E6 which holds the University and Colleges accountable, including important measures restricting the use of Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs). The University itself is regulated by the OfS, but the Colleges are not. CKB also discussed the Athena Swan framework as an additional mechanism for accountability.
- Somerville MCR asked whether the survivor/victim would be prevented from requesting the use of an NDA to protect their own identity if this motion was successful.
- CKB explained that NDAs are not allowed to be imposed by the institution as a gag or for protecting offenders, however survivors/victims should still be free to request one from themselves.
- RR invited the room to speak against motion, no countermotions received.
- RR invited members to vote in the room if they would like, and reminded members that voting is open for a week if they should wish to consult their members.

Students' Union Items

6. NUS Referendum Timeline

- ZF presented an update on the proposed timeline for the National Union of Students (NUS) Referendum previously voted for by CCR. The referendum will take place in Hilary Term alongside our leadership elections to increase participation and turnout.
- ZF noted that the NUS is currently going through a period of turnaround, so we will be watching that.
- ZF invited room to start thinking about engaging with the referendum in a for or against capacity to drive engagement in turnout to meet quoracy.
- No questions received from the room.

7. Articles of Association proposed update

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- ZF presented a proposed change to the Students' Union Articles of Association and bye-laws for discussion. Changes were circulated prior to CCR, and also available on the Oxford SU website.
- ZF explained that the binding vote on these changes will be held in MT W7.
- St. Catz MCR queried whether we would need a referendum to change the bye-laws.
- ZF explained that it was at the discretion of CCR to decide whether this was a CCR vote, or important enough to warrant a referendum.
- Merton JCR asked what the voting majority needed to hold a referendum is.
- ZF explained that, to hold a referendum, currently 2/3 majority from a quorate CCR would need to be achieved, then the referendum itself would require simple majority to pass. The change being proposed would introduce a special provision for future changes to the Articles which would only require a simple majority to take it to referendum.
- St. Catz JCR asked what scale of importance would require the motion to go through a referendum compared to a decision by CCR.
- ZF explained that that decision is at the discretion of CCR to decide.
- Trinity JCR asked what the turnout rate of previous Oxford SU referendums has been.
- ZF noted that the previous Oxford SU referendum had 5% turnout with 1500 total voters.
- DQ voiced that he believed this change to be a good move to fit with the flat SU President structure.
- Wadham SU stated that they felt it was a good idea, however noted that, while this CCR had a good in person turnout, they have historically not which could allow controversial changes to pass without due scrutiny if attendance drops again.
- St. Catz JCR suggested that we could add a quoracy to a CCR vote.
- ZF explained that there is already a quoracy for CCR of 30% Common Room attendance, and 40% Common Room voting turnout.
- Worcester MCR asked why the rule to change the Articles is not covered by same level of protection as the process to change Articles, noting that it could mean rules could simply be changed to pass Article changes undemocratically.
- ZF explained that the Articles dictate there has to be a student democratic process in order to change them, which is a good safeguard.
- ZF invited the room to engage with this period of consultation as much as possible as we prepare to bring the motion to CCR MT W7.

8. Appoint CCR representative to sit on Oxford SU Nominations Committee for new external trustee

- Following from item 7, RR called for volunteers from the room to stand as the CCR representative on the Oxford SU Nominations Committee. The person who the committee is recruiting will hold post for 6-9 months.
- LGBTQ+ PTO asked whether PTOs can put themselves forward.
- ZF explained that it must be voting member of CCR.
- RR noted that the Nominations Committee will be entirely online.
- Pembroke JCR SU Rep nominates themselves
- RR asked for objections in the room, no objections received.
- Pembroke JCR SU Rep is successfully nominated to the Oxford SU Nominations Committee as the CCR Representative.

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9. Strategic Plan Update

- NS presented an update on the Oxford SU Strategic Plan.
- NS invited room to come to the SU with requests for targeted areas of training needs.

10. Common Room Support Working Group KPI polling

- ROC presented an interactive Mentimeter poll to set baseline KPIs to compare against for the Oxford SU Common Room Support Strategic Theme.
- ROC would like to thank all common room leaders for engaging.

Below the Line (final approval – not for discussion unless requested)

11. AOB:

- St. Catz MCR requested discussion regarding the Reform Society inviting Nathan Cofnass to Oriel College to discuss DEI. St. Catz MCR explained that this invitation has caused upset among black and ethnic minority students and others. St. Catz MCR requested an extraordinary meeting of CCR be held to bring this motion forward for proper discussion, and requested that Oxford SU condemns this invitation due to matters of race discrimination.
- RR explained the process by which an extraordinary meeting of CCR can be called – five Common Room Leaders must request the meeting, and members are invited to speak to each other to bring forward the motion.
- RR explained that the SU Presidents had been speaking with students throughout the day who are affected by this, and noted that we will have the strongest voice as Oxford SU when we bring Common Room Leaders together on issues such as this.
- Queer Society President noted that there was a meeting happening the following day with the EDU where the intention was to raise the strength of feeling about this issue.
- CKB encouraged all students to attend BME RepCom the following week (2nd November 2026) to discuss at that forum.
- Green Templeton GCR backed this approach and appreciated this being raised today at short notice, drawing attention to an open letter addressed to Oriel College regarding this event.
- St. Catz JCR President has signed the open letter and has asked members of their JCR to do so also.
- Oriel MCR explains that the Oriel College community has received a response from the Provost, but that does not mean the work is done.
- Linacre CR asked for clarification whether the BME RepCom is a space for discussion among students, or if stakeholder groups will be invited giving us the opportunity to lobby them to sign the letter also.
- CKB explained that the RepCom is for student members of Oxford University, and that we can invite other groups, such as the EDU, however noted that we need to be careful with this to ensure these continue to be safe spaces for students.
- NS explained that we have invited the University already to the RepCom, and asked whether there are any specific groups and figures CCR would like to see invited.
- St. Catz JCR requested that someone from Oriel that can speak to this is invited to the BME RepCom.

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- RR noted no further business, and thanked everyone for attending and engaging, reminding everyone to vote.

Date of next meeting: Michaelmas Term Week 7 - Tuesday 24th November, 18:00-20:00, Fitzhugh Auditorium, Cohen Quad, Exeter College

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