

Minutes of the previous meeting:

Passed nem con

Matters arising from the minutes:

No matters arising

Ratifications in Council:

All ratified

Elections in Council:

Dan Simpson: I yield the chair to the returning officer Helen Bagshaw, Balliol.

Graduate exec:

Helen Bagshaw: Any affiliations, thrown out of Council or censured?

Maja Korica, Templeton: No

Helen Bagshaw: Why do you want to do the job?

Maja: Previous experience, committed

JCC:

Helen: Political affiliations?

Charlie Steel, Merton: OUCA

Rob Robinson, Lincoln: OULC

Helen: Thrown out of Council or censured?

Rob Robinson: No

Charlie Steel: Not yet

Helen: Why want to be on JCC?

Rob: Feel it's useful when on the executive to have access

Charlie: Want to be able to follow through on things, like my 0870 motion.

Iain – It's important, experience.

Emma (Patrick Foster) – Experienced.

Some questions [Rob Vance minuted this section]

No more hysts requested.

Reports from sabbatical officers:

Chris Allan: Have been working with spreadsheets for last month, publications so far going ok. Will deal with questions when we look at motion

Aidan: Condom machines almost done, housing bank very big success.

Ellie: Not a lot to add, please read closely

Charlyn: Please help stuffing envelopes

Questions:

Tom Packer, St Cross: How will NUS affiliation work and be financed, and will colleges will be able to opt out?

Emma: Colleges would still be able to opt out, would affiliate through OUSU, would get 13-15 delegates at conference, and these would be elected in SAEs. Have sent stuff out to NUS reps, still a long way to go before central affiliation

Thomas ?, Mansfield: Cost based on size or equal for all common rooms?

Emma: Still working it out, hopefully will be in relation to size

Emergency motion:

I – Libraries

Ollie Russell: Planning to close libraries on Monday of 0th week (Easter Monday). University believe that students would not use libraries on Monday of 0th week, despite it being term of collections, finals and prelims/mods.

SFQ

Peter Hughes, Hertford: Does university usually close its libraries on bank holidays in term time?

Ollie: No

Tom Dale, Corpus: Does SSL count as an embedded library?

Oliver: Yes

Opposition:

No opposition

Motion passed nem con

Other motions

Chris Allan: Procedural motion to put motion 1 after motion 5

Charlie Steel: Procedural motion to give business manager speaking rights

Both passed nem con

Passage of motions nem con

No motions pass nem con

Motions to amend or change the standing orders:

I. Publications

Aidan Randle-Conde: Explains motion

SFQs:

Tim Bennett, St. Peters: Is intention that it be produced at least biennially or biennially?

Aidan: Will strike resolves 2 in debate

?: Where would women's handbook go in terms of content?

Aidan: Welfare, fresher's guide etc

Kate Ferguson, Wadham: When was last women's handbook done?

Aidan: 1991 or 1992

Tom Packer, St. Cross: Says something Dan Simpson doesn't consider to be a short factual question. No one disagrees with him.

Ellie: How would it be ensured that V-P Women would make sure information is put in?

Aidan: Talk to editors

Chris Allan: V-P Finance can ensure it goes in

No more SFQs

No opposition

Passes first reading nem con

Entz manager motion:

Chris Allan: Having entz manager allows us to run more nights, but smaller ones that don't make much money. Need to keep OSSSL flexible, lowers risk that we'd be stuck with an entz manager for a year with nothing for them to do. Don't think it makes good commercial sense.

Frank Hardee, Oriel: Which nights are likely to be cut?

Chris Allan: Nights done on termly contracts, Wednesday Thursday and Friday events make the most money.

Matt Baker: Who would decide if to change mind?

Chris Allan: Business team would make decision and take something to Council.

Charlie Steel: Is this designed to reduce risk or increase profit.

Chris: Both, in most years would increase.

Tom Packer: How come talking of projections, this was done a long time ago?

Rob Vance: This was made 2 years ago, but still projected profits.

?: Entz manager been consulted?

Chris: Yes, have no opposition.

Peter Hughes, Hertford: Resolves 2 is changing standing orders

Chris: Yes, but can change schedule in one Council.

Amendment on table to strike notes 3, and replace notes 2 with “created on the basis of expectations which have not been met”

Amendment accepted as friendly, no opposition.

Amendment on table to add July 2006 to resolves 2.

Amendment accepted as friendly, no opposition.

Motion passes nem con

Staffing review motion

Emma Norris: Haven't had a staffing review for years, employment law limits what can be brought back to Council. But everything that can be brought back.

Dan Simpson: OUSU Council is not permitted to discuss the terms and conditions of our staff. So keep it general.

Tim Bennett: Would this only apply to unelected staff?

Emma Norris: Yes, whether jobs should exist and whether should be restructured.

Aidan: Would unelected staff have input?

Emma: Yes, General Manager would.

Frank Hardee: Would it cost anything to do a review?

Emma: No

Emma lists unelected staff and who's on standing committee. Describes power of standing committee and ability to make changes without Council.

Tom Packer: Do you think it's unwise to have standing committee make changes?

Emma: Seems sensible to have body which manages employment make review. This review would also be discussed with university personnel department.

Opposition from Tom Packer

Tom Packer: Think it is difficult to take this out of Council

Tom Packer withdraws opposition

Motion passes nem con

V-P Graduates motion:

Emma Norris: Seems sensible to delay election to give ourselves more flexibility.

Motion passes nem con

Publications motion:

Aidan: All publications listed here are produced in OUSU. Don't cost a great deal, but can save some money by making this available online and only printing off if they're requested. Water Gordon fund is the university welfare fund, we already approach them every time we produce the welfare guide etc.

SFQ:

Phil Davies, Magdalen: If a successful Water Gordon fund application is made, would that be in perpetuity or would we have to apply every year?

Aidan: Would have to apply every year

?, Keble: How advertise?

Aidan: Through common room officers, Student Union news, OUSU reps etc. No guaranteed way to reach every single student.

POI – Alice Wilby, St Peters: I'm bringing a motion to the next council about how this happens.

?: Why has 7 (academic affairs officers guide) been struck?

Charlyn: Already struck, emailed link to all relevant officers.

Ollie Munn: Chances of success with Water Gordon fund?

Aidan: Very good chance this year

Kate Ferguson, Wadham: Would you produce say 1 paper copy per college?

Aidan: Envisage unplanned pregnancy going out 1 per college, others online only.

Tom Dale, Corpus: The way printed and paper copies uses appears confusing, these all done in house?

Aidan: Yes, all done in house.

No further SFQs.

Amendment:

To add resolves 3, to make unplanned pregnancy guide available to every colleges women's officer, or welfare officer if none available. Strike resolves 7.

Opposition

Ellie: Unplanned pregnancy is a time sensitive issue.

Alice Wilby: Whole point of this motion is to get rid of things that are never used. No one is in reality going to ask in person for an unplanned pregnancy guide when they can get it online. Information is in welfare officers rough guide anyway.

Jennifer Hoogewerth-McCombe, Merton: Just want to make sure no ones life is screwed up because we couldn't be bothered to print it.

Chris Allan: Can print from website inside 10 minutes, can't believe it would be that time sensitive.

Kate Ferguson, Wadham: Having a paper copy makes it more accessible, very time sensitive issue.

Ellie: There is much information in the unplanned pregnancy guide which isn't in the welfare guide. Not everyone uses the OUSU website, can't believe we're having this debate because costs are so low.

Tim Bennett: I don't believe that people don't have easy access to the internet.

Jennifer Small: If people don't have a computer in their room, can only look at it in a public computer room.

Tim Bennett: You can look at stuff on university computers without everyone looking over your shoulder. Would have to go and ask for one anyway.

Jennifer H-McC: But when asking for one would be talking to a welfare guide.

MTV

Opposition

Chris Allan: Very important stuff on agenda, this is taking a long time.

Ellie: Will be long council anyway

MTV passes

Aidan Randle-Conde: This is very time sensitive, need to be able to get their hands on this very easily, going to welfare office is natural place to go.

Alice Wilby: This is silly, can print out quickly.

Amendment passes

Motion passes nem con.

Budget

Chris Allan:

Problem is that over the last 2 years our income has stayed roughly the same, our expenditure has gone up by £70,000. Michaelmas term last year predictions were made off the back of a hugely successful term, likewise OxStu. Predictions made at Christmas last year, hence didn't really. Expenditure we've spent a lot more on staffing, now at point where we need to cut back by £70,000 or find more funding. Our funding sources are very unstable, can only rely on about half of OSSU's expected profits in a given year. So also need to change so that we stop making over optimistic estimates. Need to build reserves up, which means making more money over the next 5-10 years. Now need to convince university that we're responsible people and that we're not going to collapse. We need to make cuts, because otherwise our bank balance will go down to 0 and the university will bail us out by taking full control of us. Now need to put together a spending plan of sorts we can take to the university. Cuts we're going to make today aren't necessarily what we're going to make, but need to convince university that we're serious about suggesting cuts and have costed properly. This makes university more likely to help us. Can't present recovery plan to university relying on grants they haven't made yet though. List shows pretty much everything we can save money on. I suggest people just suggest amendments on what they want to do. I'm going to ask chair to consider big changes first. Was suggested that rather than talking about getting rid of specific sabbatical posts we talk about how many we're willing to cut.

Dan Simpson: Is anyone unclear about how this will work?

Tom Packer: Will this affect this year at all?

Chris Allan: Stuff takes different amounts of time to change, none of this will affect anything this year. We're looking at sorting out finances over 3 years or so. Amended budget will come through in 3rd or 5th week.

Dan Simpson: Amendments need to made in written form in the usual manner.

Rob Vance: Can combine with policy changes. These are not commitments but ways that Chris can be better informed.

Ed Maine: How will SFQs work?

Dan Simpson: Can ask SFQs on anything you want

Tom Packer: Why different costs for sabbaticals?

Chris: Some of the money comes from grants etc.

Tom Packer: In the very long term aren't some of these positions funded by grants that can run out in 4 years or so?

Chris Allan: Yes, but this is best I can do for now.

Into SFQ

Tom Dale: What has been left off?

Chris Allan: Insurance, heat and light. Running costs I can't see any way to cut.

Charlie Steel: How long will grants last?

Chris Allan: No idea, but no indication they'll be cut.

Kate Ferguson: Has there been any consultation with LGB soc, women's campaign etc.

Chris Allan: Haven't been explicitly consulted, only became aware of this a couple of weeks ago. Assumption is that this is the forum in which we consult students, would be great to have wider consultation and will do later but no time.

Chris Hanretti: I'm unsure what's under staff equipment, capital expenditure, election costs. Would it make sense to move to separate current and capital account.

Chris Allan: Last year structure of budget was entirely changed, very few notes. Staff equipment is things like pens and diaries. Capital expenditure is equipment, furniture; anything over about £50. No concrete definitions of headings. Election headings is how much it costs to run an election.

Peter Hughes, Hertford: How did it take till now to realise how wrong figures were, are any steps being taken to make sure this doesn't happen in future.

Chris Allan: OUSU accounting systems are about 10 years old, make it difficult to check. No indication from last year's sabbatical team that things were wrong. Review of finances happens at Christmas, without indication that something is hugely wrong doesn't check. Took me 5-10 days going through stuff to realise what had happened. University are reviewing all our finance systems to make sure this doesn't happen again.

Tom Dale: Do we need to have £90,000 of definite cuts or can £15k or so be in possible costs?

Chris Allan: None of this should be considered concrete cuts, but rather stuff we would be willing to cut if we had to. Don't want people to say things that they're not willing to do though.

Tim Bennett: Implication seems to be that 100% of blame is with budget predictions last year, do you feel that this is the case or has there been failure in this year's business team?

Chris Allan: No failure in this year's team in a business sense, have exceeded last year's figures in almost everything. Income has risen slightly.

Ed Maine: Procedural motion to look at line by line. Don't think anyone fully understands what these things are. Need to go through this bit by bit.

Dan Simpson: Would mean we'd discuss this line by line, then go into normal debate.

Rob Vance: Understand sentiment behind this, but might make it more difficult to cut groups etc. Can question in SFQs, to go through this line by line would slow things down.

Procedural motion fails

SFQs

Kate Ferguson: Are Zoo's accounts published, can we see them etc?

Chris Allan: Zoo's accounts are individual items of expenditure, to make them useful would involve going through 2 or 3 thousand transactions and grouping. I'm happy to prepare breakdown if board approve.

Tom Packer: Are you planning some way of stopping this situation reoccurring?

Chris: Will talk to university, look at budgetary procedures. I think the big one is to separate out estimates from certain income, be more cautious and build up reserves.

Tom Packer: Procedural motion to break debate into SFQs, discussion of situation in general, then solutions.

No opposition.

Herve Hansen: Chair rules out as not SFQ

Niklas: If this is just a general guideline, how come you want us to take it into specific headings?

Chris Allan: If we're not going to follow through with this or an equivalent plan, no point in us doing. More specific we are the more we get out of this in terms of standing up to scrutiny. Up to council how accurate they want to be.

?, Corpus: Move to a system where you only spend last years surplus? How change projections?

Chris: Separate out in two ways, separate certain from uncertain. Should also have essentially two amended budgets a year, saying how previous term went etc. Helps with the idea that we should hold current people to account. Idea of spending last years surplus the year after only works if we can find £100-£150k as a long term loan. Problem is that there aren't many things you can cut at a year's notice, maybe £20k discretionary spending a year.

Tim Bennett: Do you refute any of Patrick Foster's allegations in his OxStu article? Are you considering the possibility of civil action against Dan Finley?

Chris Allan: Some of the facts I couldn't personally guarantee, but he had numerous sources. I think it was misleading in its portrayal of OSSSL.

Tim Bennett: Is the £2000 in pockets claim true?

Chris Allan: I wasn't a director then but yes, I think it was. No civil action is being considered against Dan Finley.

Tom Packer: These estimates were meant to be cautious, yet this still happened. How can we stop this happening.

Chris Allan: They merely reduced profits by 10%, we'd reduce it by about 70% to have worst case scenario figures.

Oliver Russell: Why have previous Councils not allowed V-P F to ensure higher surpluses?

Chris: Don't want to speak on behalf of previous Councils, perhaps short term nature of OUSU.

Marco: Amendment to add to resolves 3, to accept that number of sabbaticals may have to be cut to as few as 5, to remove all references to sabbatical officers in spreadsheet. Working party to determine how to reorder.

Dan Simpson: I understand this amendment would mean we'd discuss the number of sabbatical officers in principle rather than specific positions.

Procedural motion to discuss this first passes.

Marco: We know that the sab structure is a bit controversial. Shouldn't politicise a financial requirement. Therefore should think in terms of how many sabs we're willing to cut, rather than discussing how valuable individual sab positions are. Also leaves it open as to exactly what we cut, but commits ourselves to it in principle.

Tom Packer: Can't just talk about sabbatical numbers, what matters is that we have the right people doing the right things. University has very different views about different positions, shown by the fact that they subsidise some positions. At the very least we have to discuss what goes and I think people's opinions vary a lot based on what sabbaticals we decide to scrap.

Chris: If we're cutting to 5, need to rebalance all the work. Don't have time to do it now. If reducing from 7 to 5 don't just get rid of 2 and restructure, but construct sab positions from scrap. Forget depoliticising, should be done this way because it makes more sense, think in terms of overall tasks and areas of work, rather than specific sab positions.

Ellie: At the moment we have no way of measuring whether various sabbatical roles are more valuable than others, makes a lot more sense to do it this way.

MTV

Chris Allan: People just heard speeches I agree with, think we should vote.

Tom Packer: We still need to decide who this working party will consist of etc.

MTV passes

Marco: I think we shouldn't politicise this and see who's peoples favourite sabs this week are.

Tim Bennett: I don't think this can be depoliticised. We're a political body, it's right we have a say on policy issues.

Amendment passes.

New amendment:

To say that sabs will only be cut to a minimum of 5, and only if no other way of making money.

Jennifer Small: Think it's important to have sabs, shouldn't reduce them.

Rob Vance: This is just an accounting identity, we all know we'll need to make the cuts.

MTV

Iain Simpson: People's opinion is clear, I'm sure there are new arguments but I don't think they'll change the result of the vote and we've got a lot to do.

Tom Packer: I think this needs to be discussed properly.

Amendment:

That working party should consist of sabs and sabs elect, should seek submissions from current and past exec, and campaigns.

Helen Bagshaw: Need to ensure that all relevant people are involved. Sabs elect need to be on the working party.

Marco: Working party only issue if we end up having to make sab cuts, don't yet know if we'll need to after discussion with university.

Iain: I think the make up of the working party is wrong anyway, but we've got lots of time before we need to decide on this.

MTV

Amendment fails

Tom Packer:

Roughly this time last year there was a vacancy for VP-Finance, Council voted not to have one despite the constitution and I believe we are seeing the results of this now.

Procedural motion – Tom Dale – Cap this part of debate at 10 mins?

Tim Bennett- We're here because we didn't scrutinise the budget first time in exec or Council. This is quite important, we need to consider how worried ordinary students are.

Peter Hughes: Do we have an auditing system?

Chris Allen: Yes. The University sends us one in retrospect, their figures will be more accurate than mine. We can institute intermediary checks

Kate Fergusson: Since this is not binding, do we have a plan for systematic consultation?

Ruled Out

Nicholas: It's not sab salaries that have exploded, but some of our other areas. Can the VP (Finance) prepare a report on how we compare to historical spending distribution?

Chris Allan: £40k on staff, £10k extra on Alternative Perspective, Campaigning gone from £500-£4000, Nightbus has gone up

Iain Simpson: The alt prospectus is every two years

Dan Simpson: Change that later

Binya Evans: What happens if we don't make the cuts?

Chris Allan: The uni will eventually take us over

Tim Bennett: Have we considered long term future of OSSSL?

Chris Allan: It still makes profit, we can't sell it anyway. No-one's suggested any parts to sell off apart from the radio.

Debated Capped

Dan Simpson: Now discussing actual cuts.

Amendment: Chris Allan – Cuts in Staff equipment, refreshments, capital expenditure (down by £1k). Would cut so that each Alternative Prospectus would cost £6000.

Alice Wilby: What would cut mean for AP?

Chris Allan: Same distribution, would cut it to A5 black and white.

Jennifer Hoogeworth-McCombe: Is there any way that we could make it clear that this is cutting expenditure that only rose recently?

Chris Allan: Well if we go to the university and show that we're being responsible they are more likely to give us money.

Charlynn: I realise that whilst doing a budget cut it's important to look at everything we do. But given that Oxford has such a huge image problem and that we're not going to be able to get money from the university over this. A black and white A5 publication would be awful and would look ridiculous.

Rob Vance: Need to be willing to go down to the bare minimum, in the future and with university help might not need to cut it.

Chris Allan: It's more than possible to put together black and white publications which look ok. Everything on this list is important, but we can't say that because it's important we can't cut it. Very difficult to see how else we could cut the money.

Chris withdraws motion

Cuts excluding AP passed nem con.

Amendment tabled to cut numerous equal opportunity and welfare guides.

Dan Simpson: Given my feelings I'm not going to chair a debate on scrapping holocaust memorial day.

Oliver Russell takes the chair

Rob Vance: If your objection is to one part then vote in through all of it and take out later.

Marco: What is involved in staff training?

Chris Allan: Sending sabs to NUS training.

Tom Dale: I think we should talk about how far we're willing to cut after we've talked about how much affiliation fees should go up by.

Helen Bagshaw: We don't want to have to get rid of anything, but we do need to get rid of things. Can't just assume that university will bail us out.

Jo Le Mo, ChCh: Council needs to get to grips with the problem, need to get things done. Think we should move forwards.

MTV

No opposition

Helen Bagshaw: We need to do this.

Amendment passed nem con

Amendment tabled to reinsert spending for holocaust memorial day

Aidan: It's a very small amount of money, and it's something which is about all genocides, something which is very important to many people.

SFQ

Marco: When is holocaust memorial day?

27th Janaury.

Hannah: We have to make cuts, and encourage holocaust memorial to seek funding from other sources.

MTV

Chris Allan: We need to move on, this is absolutely tiny.

Luke Tryll, Magdalen: A lot of budget is on small things.

MTV passes

Holocaust memorial day reinserted 27-11

Amendment to increase affiliation fees by 40%

Tom Dale: Need to have a debate about the extent to which you're prepared to raise affiliation fees. Forget the figure of 40%, but whatever you raise that figure by is what you get to spend.

Chris Allan: I have a problem with this because we have no idea how many colleges would continue to affiliate, which might change the figure. I don't think we can claim that we're guaranteed to get £40,000.

Emma Norris: We need to raise affiliation fees by some extent, we've already saved £73k and need to find another £16k, and that's assuming worst case scenario.

MTV

Marco: Other smaller amounts on the table, need to get rid of this.

Motion fails

Motion to add a motion calling for an increase in affiliation fees of half the amount which is saved from central NUS affiliation, which we estimate to be about £20,000.

Marco: If centralised affiliation happens and the £40k gets saved, then that pot could be split equally between JCRs and OUSU. Not committing ourselves to anything, but demonstrating that if a major efficiency saving can be made by the student movement as a whole in Oxford that could be split.

Luke Tryll: Would the colleges not affiliated to NUS pay more then?

Marco: Can sort that out later.

?, St Hildas: So to clarify OUSU would be making JCR savings then taking half of that back.

Niklas Albien-Svenson, University: Have you any idea what would happen to JCRs who get their affiliation fees paid direct by colleges?

Emma Norris: Would have to discuss matters with them.

MTV

Peter Hughes, Hertford: Should move on

Niklas: Still arguments to come, not everyone is sure which way they'll vote.
Motion clearly fails

Dan Simpson: This is not at all funny, people should stop taking piss. [tears a motion in half].

Motion to raise affiliation fees by 20%

Luke Tryll, Magdalen: I think colleges would disaffiliate if went up by 20%, OUSU not well regarded in common rooms at the moment.

Ellie Cumbo: I'd like remind the chair that he has previously criticised people for using bad language. We have to look at income as well as expenditure

Ollie Russell: Council raised staff costs, now needs to pay for it.

Tom Dale: No point having a discussion unless we're willing to look at both sides of a problem.

Phillip Davies, Magdalen: 20% is too high, and would plunge OUSU into a public legitimacy crisis. Colleges would disaffiliate.

Alan Strickland: I agree, we need to realise that we can't raise affiliation fees.

MTV

?: Need to move on, we all know how we feel.

Charlynn: Need to have a debate

MTV fails

Helen Bagshaw: Common rooms haven't been consulted, can't have this sort of discussion.

James Lang, Merton: JCRs aim to balance budget, JCRs will have to make cuts if affiliation fees go up.

Frank Hardee, Oriel: For the first time in 6 years Oriel is considering reaffiliating, this won't happen if this goes through.

MTV

Chris: Doesn't really matter whether this goes through or not, will still be saying to university that problem is political cost of disaffiliation.

?: I don't think views of JCRs have been taken into account.

MTV passes

Marco: This is non-binding

James Lang, Merton: When press finds this out will be huge reaction, lets just talk about things we can do and are prepared to do when we go to the university.

Motion clearly falls.

Move to vote on motion as a whole

Emma Norris: Cutting £90k is worst case scenario, we can go to the university and say we just can't cut any more.

Ed Maine: Shouldn't just let this run dry

MTV passes

Chris Allen: We've done enough, will look credible.

Motion passes nem con

Procedural motion to put sub-fusc motion first.

Passed nem con

Ollie Russell: At the moment we have policy that sub-fusc should be voluntary, but have not consulted student opinion on this matter recently, policy dates to 2002. This is merely a motion saying that students should be asked what their opinions are. Will be easy to administer, could probably do it online.

SFQ:

?: What was turnout in last indicative poll?

Ollie Russell: About 3000

Tom Dale: University stance on abolishing sub fusc for matriculation?

Ollie Russell: Keep it

Imran Khan: If this doesn't get passed will policy still be against sub fusc?

Ollie: Yes

?, Oriel: Problems with online polls?

Chris Allan: Can make it secure enough.

Frank Hardee, Oriel: I'm worried that an indicative poll online would not reflect views of students as a whole, important to have proper indication of student feeling.

Marco: Other colleges found turnout more than doubled when they switched to online voting.

MTV

Rob Vance: Motions left, should move on

Ellie Cumbo: More arguments left to come

MTV passes

Motion passes.

Quorum count: 37

Editors Payments motion

Aidan: Can now have stuff done during term time as have enough computers, so don't need to pay them enough to cover rent.

Imran Khan: Do we have enough computers now?

Aidan: Yes, and are a lot more efficient.

Move to debate

Move to vote

Dan Simpson: I'm not an anal retentive.

Iain Simpson: I'm hungry

Hannah Stoddard: Sponsorship isn't taken account of.

MTV passes

Motion passes

Election of bar

Mitre duly elected