

Minutes of 1st Week Council Michaelmas 2001

**OUSU 1st Week Council held on Friday 12th October at 2pm
in The Old Refectory, Wadham**

Apologies Stuart Hudson

Minutes of previous Council

No minutes were available for inspection. To be seen next Council.

Ratifications in Council

<u>OUSU Elections Committee</u>		Colin Anderson (Somerville)	Ratified
		Alex Roth (Christ Church)	Ratified
		Abigail Coates (St Hilda's)	Ratified
		Anthony Fairclough (Somerville)	Ratified
		Eleanor Thompson (Wadham)	Ratified
		Regan Early (Wadham)	Ratified
<u>Oxford Student Michaelmas 2001</u>	Editor	Julia Buckley (Christ Church)	Ratified
	Deputy	Sarah Birke (New)	Ratified
		Christina Stokes (Trinity)	Ratified
<u>Co-Chair Anti-Racism Committee</u>		Robin Sivalapan (Somerville)	Ratified

Elections in Council

There are no elections in Council.

Reports from the Sabbatical Officers

The Sabbatical Officers submitted written vacation reports. In addition to this

Ruth Hunt, St Hildas (President) announced that gold ribbons are being stapled and pinned. The colleges who have asked for them have received them.

Chair asked for any questions for the President

Andrew Thomas, St Annes commented that in her manifesto the President had proposed that OUSU rent a pub and asked whether there had been any progress on the issue.

Ruth Hunt promised a frank talk about the issue of a central student venue. She announced that several venues were currently available, each costing approximately £25,000 p.a. in rent. She observed that this money could either be raised from OUSU's reserves, or from corporate sponsorship. She suggested that OUSU wait and see how much corporate sponsorship can be raised, and then match the sum with reserves. She was reluctant to raise subscriptions from JCRs to OUSU given the current economic climate. A split central student venue, comprising of a shop, welfare centre, coffee bar etc was the most practical solution. This would require a five year business plan, and the President emphasised that she did not want to rush ahead and achieve something which isn't financially secure.

Eleanor Fletcher, Worcester (VP-Finance) announced that from next week she would be starting work on providing support for JCR and MCR treasurers. She asked that Council pass on the message to CR treasurers that she's available for support and help. She is intending to put together a resource pack, and required any ideas for useful advice to include.

James Rowlands, Pembroke (VP-Welfare) commented that he had nothing to add to written report.

Jamie Corner, Worcester congratulated the VP-Welfare on a great *Survival Guide*, given to all undergraduate freshers. As MCR President, he asked why the guide wasn't provided to graduate student freshers.

James Rowlands commented that OUSU unfortunately could not produce enough guides to distribute to all graduate freshers. He further commented that the graduate guide provided a lot of the same information, while much in the *Survival Guide* was focused at undergraduates and was not necessarily applicable to graduates. He added that any graduate fresher could pick up a copy of the *Survival Guide* from OUSU offices.

Antonia Bance, Somerville (VP-Women) did not have much to add to her written report, except to inform Council that she had been ill and was therefore not in the office full-time. She emphasised that she was available most afternoons and as many mornings as she could manage. Otherwise, she said that she had had a great summer and was really enjoying the job.

Catherine Sangster, Merton (VP-Graduate) commented that her brief vacation report reflected the relatively short time she had spent in office.

John Craig, New (CP-Academic Affairs) said that he had nothing to add to his vacation report, except to publicised the repeat launch of the new Target Schools website on Monday. The new web pages allow Oxford students to sign up online. He asked that Council publicise the website, www.targetschools.com

Reports from the Executive Officers who wish to make reports

Sonia Sodha, St Hildas (Executive Officer) publicised the Target Schools freshers lunch to be held next Thursday, 1pm , New College Long Room. Furthermore, the first Anti-Racism Committee event of the term takes place next Wednesday, 7:30pm Somerville West JCR, to include a debate on immigration and asylum laws.

No further Executive Officer wished to make a report. The Chair invited questions to Executive Officers.

Sacha Ismail, Somerville, asked the Chair to check on the attendance of the Executive Officers at Council. The Chair replied that all of the Executive Officers were in attendance, except Stuart Hudson who had offered his apologies to the President and Vivienne Raper who had resigned her position on the Executive.

Emergency Motions

No emergency motions submitted to Council by deadline

Passage of Motions *Nem Con*

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| 1. <u>Mind</u> | Passed |
| 2. <u>NPC</u> | Passed |
| 3. <u>Diversity Week</u> | Passed |
| 4. <u>Terrorism</u> | Objections |
| 5. <u>World Trade Centre</u> | Objections |

Other Motions

Matthew Taylor, St Benets, moved a procedural motion that Motion Five (World Trade Centre) not be put. In proposition, he argued that Motion Four already covered the necessary action a student union should take while Motion Five encompassed a political agenda which was not appropriate.

The Chair reminded Council that the procedural motion required a two-thirds majority to be carried and invited a speech in opposition to the motion.

Robin Sivapalan, Somerville asked that Council discuss the motion, and if they should disagree to vote against it.

The procedural motion did not receive the necessary two-third majority and so failed. Motion Five would be put to Council.

4. Terrorism

James Rowlands, Pembroke, in proposition said that the motion was self-explanatory. It rightly condemned the attacks on the World Trade Centre, recognised that the student body is ethnically and internationally diverse and that tensions have already resulted in attacks, including some incidents in Cowley. In response, the motion reasserted OUSU's commitment to its equal opportunities policy and condemned racial and religious discrimination.

Chris Hanricky, St Annes, moved a procedural motion that the motion not put, so that it could discussed by JCRs and put to the next Council.

The Chair ruled that since the motion had already been proposed, the procedural motion could not be put. Instead, following short factual questions, the speaker could request that the motion be put on the table for discussion at the next Council.

Josh Kern, Pembroke asked the proposer how he defined terrorism in this instance.

James Rowlands replied that he considered terrorism to be indiscriminate attacks on civilian populations.

Peter Orlov, New asked whether that definition would apply to attacks taking place anywhere in the world?

James Rowlands replied that discussion of that issue was better suited to the debate.

Matthew Taylor, St Benets asked whether the two minute silence was to be held in today's Council? James Rowlands replied, yes.

No further short factual questions.

Chris Hanricky, St Annes asked that the motion be put on table to discuss next Council, observing that Motion Five also deals with same subject matter.

Speaking in opposition, James Rowlands recognised that while debate was important on Motion Five, Motion Four simply reiterated existing OUSU standing policy and he believed was acceptable to most JCRs.

The procedural motion, requiring two-thirds majority, failed, and Council moved into debate on the main motion.

Edward Swann, Balliol commented on the ambiguity of Council Resolves I and its lack of definition of the word “terrorism” and therefore would therefore oppose the motion as it stands at the moment.

Nick Clark, Somerville asked whether it was not tasteless to question definitions, given that the motion was fairly simple and self-explanatory and people had died in an act of terrorism.

Edward Swann, Balliol, emphasised that he was raising the concerns of Balliol JCR. Furthermore, he added that some members had considered the Pentagon to be a legitimate military target.

Matthew Taylor, St Benets, commented that innocent civilians had died in the plane crashed into the Pentagon. Furthermore, he claimed that there had been no declaration of war, and therefore the events represented an act of terrorism under international law. He considered the objection tasteless and immoral in the context of the deaths of six thousand people.

Sacha Ismail, Somerville registered his disagreement with Balliol JCR if they think this is anti-imperialist heroics as many people died. Nonetheless, he considered that world terrorism had not been sufficiently well defined. He commented that in the context of James Rowlands’ definition of terrorism as an indiscriminate attack on a civilian population, that a terrorist attack may be carried out by a state. He argued that the definition had been left vague specifically so that it may be supported by all sides of the room.

Chris McBride, Wadham commented that the Pentagon was not specifically mentioned in the motion, so that avoids the question of whether or not it was a legitimate military target.

James Rowlands commented that the motion was condemning terrorism in so far as it is an attack on a civilian population, but recognised that the definition of a terrorist act could be broader and that it may be conducted by a state. Nonetheless, he emphasised that the motion was designed to comment on the specific events in America and its particular relevance to Oxford students, and that any further issues should be brought to Council in a separate motion in order to open a wider debate.

Josh Kern, Pembroke, offered an amendment in which Council Resolves I would contain a definition of terrorism as “*an indiscriminate attack on a civilian population*”.

Speech in proposition waived

No short factual questions

Antonio Orlando, University believed that this was a bad amendment, and believed that the definition of terrorism should be framed according to international law. He commented that an indiscriminate attack on civilians may occur within the context of war.

Adam Killeya, Balliol considered that whether or not an attack occurred inside or outside of war was not at issue, but whether it deliberately attacked civilians. Even if war had not been declared, it would not necessarily be an act of terrorism.

Edward Swann, Balliol commented that the IRA had actually declared war on Britain, and yet its acts continued to be described as ones of terrorism.

Sean Sullivan, St Edmund Hall, called a move to a vote, rather than listen to each individual’s personal definition of terrorism, Council should vote on the one in question.

The move to a vote was opposed by Sacha Ismail, Somerville, saying that people still have issues to raise and that Council had not been in debate for more than three minutes.

The move to a vote was passed, and Council moved to a vote on the amendment to the main motion. The amendment was incorporated and so Council moved back into debate on the main motion.

Will Straw, New requested a move to a vote, commenting that the debate so far had surrounded the definition of terrorism and now that it had been resolved a vote could take place.

Laura Santana, St Hildas opposed the move to a vote, believing that the date referring to the events in America quoted in the motion required amendment.

The procedural motion passed, and Council moved to a vote on the main motion.

Peter Orlov, New opposed the motion, believing that the definition of terrorism was not a particularly good one as it covered a whole variety of acts taking place in the last few months to the present day.

James Rowlands summed up in favour of the motion, commenting that the motion clearly condemned a very specific act of terrorism.

The motion passed

5. World Trade Centre

Catherine Finney, New College asked that the motion be put on the table, as JCR Presidents would wish to discuss it with their members before being asked to vote upon it.

Nick Clark, Somerville argued that JCR Presidents had had quite enough time to gauge views of students, commenting that many JCRs will have had meetings already. On the other hand the next Council is in 3rd Week, by which point the motion will be commenting on events which occurred over two months ago. He asked that any individual not sure of their mandate should simply abstain.

Antonia Bance asked whether the motion would automatically appear on the next Council agenda. The Chair replied that it would.

The procedural motion passed, to be brought back to Council in 3rd Week

Ruth Hunt requested that those attending make sure that the motion was discussed in JCRs.

6. Any Other Business

Peter Orlov, New, promoted the Queer Rights meeting, Tuesdays at 1-2pm in New College. He commented that the room had been booked in New College for several terms and that the change in time and venue would be permanent.

Catherine Sangster promoted the Post-Graduate Assembly taking place on Tuesday at 8pm in St Anthonys and said that all graduate students were welcome to attend, although only MCR Presidents and OUSU-NUS representatives would have votes.

Will Straw, New, announced that gold ribbons were available to JCRs whose freshers wished to take part in the anti-tuition fees demonstration at Matriculation. He announced that he already had gold ribbons to distribute to LMH and St Johns. Any other colleges requiring ribbons should contact him, and he would ensure they had them by the end of the day.

Edward Swann, Balliol, promoted the OUSU-NUS representatives committee meetings on Monday at 7pm.

Ruth Hunt asked that Council be aware of the number of appointments and elections to positions in OUSU, all vacancies advertised in the *OxStu*.

Eleanor Fletcher asked that any individual interested in becoming a trustee for the OUSU shop contact her. It required only two meetings a term and being a trustee of a limited company would look good on a CV. Candidates must be current or former CR Presidents or OUSU-NUS representatives.

Robin Sivapalan promoted the Anti-Racism Committee events taking place on Wednesdays at 1pm, Keble Lodge in odd weeks, whilst debates were taking place on even weeks on Wednesdays at 7:30pm in Somerville West JCR. He also reminded Council of the forthcoming Diversity Week.

Peter Orlov, New, advertised the position of female Queer Rights co-chair and asked that anyone interested should come along to a meeting.

Catherine Sangster announced that International Students Committee would have a further meeting on Friday of 3rd Week at 1pm, with venue still to be announced.

Council then held a two minute silence in memory of those who died in the terrorist attacks on America on September 11th 2001.