

a. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were distributed and accepted.

b. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

c. Ratifications in Council

Sonia Sodha (St Hilda) was ratified as co-chair of Academic Affairs Committee.

David Milliken (Merton) and Martin Sainsbury (Corpus) were proposed for ratification as editors of the Oxford Student.

Adam Killea (Balliol) objects to this ratification. He claims that the quality of the Oxford Student is too low and that the editors should not be ratified on those grounds. He says he has gathered a petition of individuals in his college who disapprove of the quality of the content typically contained in the Oxford Student.

Kirsty McNeil (President) defends the appointments of Mr. Milliken and Mr. Sainsbury. She says they are good journalists and that David Milliken has won a student journalism award.

A vote is taken on whether or not to ratify the appointments. The vote results in the ratification of Mr. Milliken and Mr. Sainsbury.

Lici Gostwick (St Hilda's) is ratified unopposed as Oxford Student editor responsible for "Columns, Features and Jezebel".

Julia Buckley (Christ Church) is ratified unopposed as editor for "News and Sport" for the Ox Stu.

Catherine Wallis (Keble) is ratified by Council as Returning Office for Trinity Term 2001.

Jane Blumer (VP-Women), Nick Clarke (Somerville), Jamie Corner (Worcester), Steph Gray (VP-Finance), Tom Mackrell (Wadham, Business Manager), Eleanor Thompson (Wadham) and Philip Thompson (St John's) are ratified as members of Elections Committee.

d. Elections in Council

An election is held in Council for OUSU Publications Board. The sole candidate is Nick Clark (Somerville).

Nick appears before Council to hust. He says he has experience in the field of publications having worked for the Cherwell and from having been on its Council of Management.

Jane Blumer (VP-Women) asks him if he has previous experience of making appointments.

Nick says he has as a result of his activities with the Cherwell.

Nick was elected to OUSU Publications Board

The next election in Council is for a council delegate to fill the place left vacant by Eleanor Thompson following her accession to exec.

There are two candidates for the vacancy – Emily Wentz and Helen Wakefield, both from Somerville.

Emily Wentz says she has been active in the Somerville Music Society. She also feels that she represents an important constituency amongst the membership of OUSU – international students. She says there are 3000 international students in Oxford and that, at the moment, they have no representation among the ranks of Council Delegates.

Helen Wakefield says she has organisational experience as charities rep in her school and in her workplace. She has succeeded in raising money in those roles and had some responsibility for publicity. She mentions that she took part in the occupation of the Divinity Schools of the Bodlean in February. She says that she intends to be committed to the duties and responsibilities entailed by the role of a Council Delegate.

Jane Blumer (VP-Women) asks the candidates for their views on diversity in the student body.

Emily says that this is a good thing.

Helen concurs and adds that she believes it is encouraging that both candidates for the position are women.

Julian Hudson (St Hugh's) asks the candidates if they are members of any political parties or political societies.

Emily says she is a member of OUCA.

Helen says she is not a member of any such groups.

Andrew Thomas (St Anne's) asks them what they see the role of a delegate as.

Emily replies that she would see her role as one of representing interests that are not adequately represented at the college level.

Helen says that many issues are university-wide – she mentions welfare – and that she would see it as her responsibility to pay attention to these.

Mark Pearson (Somerville) asks the candidates what they see the role of OUSU as an institution to be.

Both candidates say they think it is there to represent the students of Oxford University.

Ed Southerden (Somerville) asks the candidates what their views on tuition fees are.

Both candidates say they are opposed to them.

Sacha Ismail (Somerville) asks them to spell out their political views.

Emily says that she would consider herself to be conservative on most matters.

Helen says she sees herself as a left-winger.

The election is now held. When the votes are counted, Helen Wakefield is declared elected.

e. Reports from sabbatical officers

Kirsty McNeil delivers a presidential report. She draws Council's attention to the charges hanging over people as a result of the Proctors decision to prosecute some people for involvement in the occupation of the Bod.

f. Reports from Executive officers

Viv Raper (Mansfield) asks for people involved in 'One World' issues to get in touch with her. She advertises a wine-tasting session at Oriel and an Amnesty International event on 1 May about street children's rights.

Sonia Sodha (St Hilda's) tells Council she went to Leeds and to Belfast on Target Schools business. She says an anti-racism lunch will be held to discuss what Anti-Racism Committee should be doing in the term ahead. She says invitations to this lunch will be sent to JCR Presidents and Equal Opportunities reps.

Catherine Sangster (Merton) says there will be a Queer Rights meeting on Monday of 2nd week.

g. Emergency motion

1. Minimum Wage

Sacha Ismail (Somerville) proposes this motion. He says students in Harvard have occupied administration buildings on campus in order to demonstrate their support for a living wage for employees of the University. He adds that Josh Bell, a former OUSU president, is involved in this sit-in. He says the occupiers would like to receive messages of support. He asks for OUSU to sent them one.

Mark Pearson (Somerville) says that, because the occupation is illegal, if we support or endorse it we are showing disrespect for the rule of law. He also says that the US has a minimum wage and so workers are in no need of extra action to win them higher wages.

Sacha replies by saying that the US federal minimum wage is only \$5.25, which he feels is not enough for someone to really live on.

Sean Sullivan (St Edmund Hall) says that the motion is irrelevant to OUSU. He says that it is not our role to be taking a position on what is going on in a campus thousands of miles away.

Will Straw (New) proposes an amendment to remove Council Resolves 2, which says that OUSU policy should be one of supporting a UK minimum wage equal to half median male earnings.

Sacha opposes this amendment. He says that OUSU doesn't have policy on the minimum wage other than one of opposing age differentials in it. He feels that we ought to have policy on this matter and so he put that line in the motion.

Nick Clark (Somerville) says Resolves 2 is relevant to students as most students work during the holidays and so could benefit from a minimum wage.

A move to a vote is proposed and carried.

Will sums up his position. He feels Council is not in a position to be informed enough to formulate policy on this matter.

Sacha argues that not to support the amendment would be a betrayal of the labour movement.

The amendment is defeated.

Rob Sivapalan (Somerville) says that it is good to send motions of support to others involved in a struggle we have sympathy with. He points out that people were encouraged when messages of support came in from outside during the course of the occupation of the Bod.

Dan Rumney (Christ Church) asks for the motion to be taken in parts. He wants each Resolves line voted on separately.

Rob Sivapalan opposes this.

There is a vote on whether to take the motion in parts. The procedural motion passes. Thus, each of the two Resolves lines will be voted on separately.

After a summing-up speech for and against, a vote is taken on Resolves 1. Resolves 1 passes.

Then, summing-up speeches commence for Resolves 2.

Sacha says that Resolves 2 is something that aids students and students, since they will benefit from a higher minimum wage.

Will Straw says that Council is not informed enough to be able to reach a conclusion on this issue.

The result of the vote is that Resolves 2 is defeated this time around.

The motion as a whole is passed, but without Council Resolves 2.

2. David Irving

Kirsty McNeil (President) proposes the emergency motion. She argues for OUSU to oppose the invitation extended to David Irving by the Oxford Union to address one of its debates.

In short factual questions, Kirsty is asked about relationships between Irving and far-right groups.

Kirsty says that Combat 18 stewarded his last meeting in England.

Will Straw (New) asks how many JCRs have opposed the Irving invitation.

Kirsty says that, as far as she knows, New College, Somerville and Nuffield are the ones that have.

Council moves into debate after the short factual questions sessions finishes.

Richard Coates challenges the claim that news of Irving's invitation is on Combat 18's website. He says mention of it is merely in the guest book of the site.

Kirsty says that the guest book is as much a part of a website as any other page of it is.

Matt Taylor (St Bennet's Hall) says it is dishonest to condemn the invitation to Irving on student safety grounds. He says there is not a threat to the safety of Oxford students as a result of the mere presence of David Irving in the Union. He claims the police have said that the ANL and other anti-Irving protestors are the "biggest risk" to students.

Kirsty takes issue with Matt's argument. She says if something is described as the 'biggest risk' there must be other risks too. She doesn't feel that students should be put in a situation where they face any unnecessary risk of attack or assault at all.

Jin-yu Cheong (LMH) says that the police have told the Union president that anti-Irving protestors have been making a mountain out of a molehill. He doesn't feel there is actually a threat to student safety. He says Oxford is famous for inviting controversial speakers. This is part of the attraction of the Union, he adds. He says that the implication of the motion is that OUSU should have veto power over who the Union invites. He sees this as unacceptable. He says that South-East Asian students do not mind if Irving comes.

Sacha Ismail (Somerville) says that Somerville JCR's Ethnic Minority Caucus has condemned the Irving invitation.

Rob Sivapalan (Somerville) says that people are paying too much attention to what the police say. He doesn't feel the police are actually that well-informed. He says they did not know about an NF march in South London 3 days before it actually took place. Rob adds that he thinks Irving doesn't believe in free speech and so is the wrong speaker to invite to a debate on the free speech of extremists. He points out that Irving initiated the libel trial against Deborah Lipstadt and so actually acted in such a way as to try and gag her and remove her right of free speech.

Sean Sullivan (St Edmund Hall) says that the man can speak elsewhere. Sean says that asking someone not to be invited to speak in one place is not taking away his right to speak somewhere else. He says he feels the risk to student safety is the paramount issue and thus he will support the motion.

A proposal is made to move to a vote. Richard Coates opposes this. He says that Council is not in possession of the full facts and might make an incorrect decision unless it heard some more points of view.

The move to a vote is carried.

Summing-up speeches follow. Kirsty speaks for the proposition. She says the police have been under-informed as to the risk of far-right activists travelling to Oxford as a result of the invitation to Irving. She says that a police officer she spoke to wasn't even aware that there was going to be an anti-Irving protest outside the Union until she told him on Thursday (26 April).

Matthew Taylor sums up for the opponents of the motion. He denies the claim made that the organised far-right will turn up to Oxford.

The vote is then held on the motion. The motion passes.

A quorum count is then called for. It is ascertained that Council is still quorate.

h. Passage of motions nem con

Ordinary motions 1 (Acceptance of the RO's Report) and 3 (OUSU security) are passed nem con.

Motion 4 (Campsfield) is withdrawn by Pedro Wrobel (St Anne's), the proposer.

The only ordinary motion which will be discussed will be Motion 2 (Election Regulations).

i. First Readings of Motions to amend the Constitution or Standing Orders

Steph Gray (VP-Finance) speaks in favour of this motion. It will change references to OUSU publications in Article F3(a) and F3(b) of the OUSU Constitution and Schedule 3.1(b) of the Standing Orders.

There is no opposition to this motion and no short factual questions were asked of Steph. The motion passes.

m. Other motions

Kirsty McNeil speaks as the proponent of the motion. She says that the substantive content of the motion is in the amendment which was issued on the green amendment sheet made available to attendees at Council.

Adam Killea (Balliol) asks her why copies of the Election Regulations have not been sent out with the Council mailings.

Kirsty said she felt this was unnecessary as the regulations pertained to a VP-Graduates by-election and so it would be wasteful to send lots of copies to undergraduates.

Cat Wallis (Keble) speaks to propose the amendment to the Regulations. She says the amendments makes the necessary changes in the Regulations for Statutory Annual Elections to make them relevant for a VP-Graduates by-election when the number of voters and candidates will be fewer.

The motion is passed without any objections.

n. Any other business

There is no other business.

Council thus ends.