

# **Council Minutes 1st Week Trinity Term 2002**

## **1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Eleanor Fletcher proposed speaking rights to Colin Anderson, Business Manager.

Sacha Ismail corrects the "Student Mirror" email address to "Geraint@nus..."

## **2. Ratifications in Council**

No objections to Ailsa Gibson of Keble for Environment Ctte Co-chair

## **3. Elections in Council**

Ruth Hunt: We are electing a sabbatical because Catherine Sangster resigned. Exec co-opted an individual for the Easter vacation. We now have an election in Council.

Jeff Williams, candidate: Hust- he sets out his academic status and his degree background as well as his experience in the wider world of management consultancy. He wants to raise the profile of graduates within OUSU. Graduate social activities are important. Collaboration with MCRs and reps is vital, especially over the summer.

Jack Clift, CCC: Does the candidate have any pressing work commitments?

JW: 2 exams and a thesis this term, but no foreseeable problems.

SI: Any political affiliations?

JW: No

Nick Anstead, Mansfield: How would you encourage more graduates to be involved?

JW: Social events, through provision of services.

Helena Puig-Laurrauri, Hilda's: Asks about JW's plans for the International Students' Ctte

JW: Bring OU societies together via the Ctte, revise student handbook.

Jane MacTaggart, HMC: Asks about mature students

JW: Would encourage them to come along to a resurrected Mature Students' Ctte

Andrew Thomas, Anne's: What are the most important issues facing graduates?

JW: Finances, phone provision, course details, disparities between colleges. Voting.

## **4. Reports from sabbatical officers**

RH: She and the VP(AccAff) made an address to Her Majesty

OUSU is here to support JCRs/MCRs in contesting college rent increases, with its experience and organisation.

NUS Conference - was slow and factionalised, gained surprise policy vs graduate tax, Mandy Telford won President.

Re. article in Cherwell about plans for a new VP-Charities, no rush, still at consultation stage.

JM, HMC: Was everyone in the same hotel this year?

RH: Yes

John Townsend, Univ: Why did she make the loyal address reluctantly?

RH: Not entirely appropriate.

Rachel Logan, New: Why was the Israel/Palestine poll at NUS Conference corrupt?

RH: It was never brought up on the agenda, NEC were acting out of line

EF: Launch of website has been delayed but is imminent. Advertises job opportunities in OUSU as Assistant BM. 2 Freshers' Fair organisers have been appointed.

JK, Pemb: When is the term-planner being delivered?

EF: Has been already.

Eleanor Thompson, Wadh: Will OUSUmail be resurrected soon?

EF: Yes

Peter Morton, Somerville: Will the website be publicised?

EF: Yes

JT, Univ: Is the nuclear explosion on the term-planner not a bit sick?

EF: Has been passed by Exec

Chris Hanretty, Anne's: More term-planners for colleges that didn't get enough?

EF: Yes, only Mansfield and Worcester have not yet been done.

James Rowlands: nothing to add

Antonia Bance: Doing a joint initiative with the pro-life society, becoming an election rules gimp, stayed in a bad hotel in Blackpool.

Sarah Munroe: Will the electoral reg changes be distributed in advance?

AB: Will produce shortened form as well as a booklet form for that purpose.

Chris McBride, Wadh: Is she planning more CRO training?

AB: Yes

Jeff Williams: nothing to add

John Craig: Website easy to use, urges JCCs to add stuff and contact him about it.

5. Reports from Exec Officers

Rachel Logan, New: Apologies that website is not updated yet

Phil Thompson, SJC: Similar difficulties with lack of email list, but

Environment Committee should be up and running again soon.

Chris Hanretty, Anne's: Ditto for ethics and target schools

POINT OF ORDER: to give David Mitchell observer rights in Council

RL, New: Why?

John Waters, Keble: Former NUS Rep, very informed, elected official of UJS.

NA, Mansfield: Why observer not speaker status?

John Waters: he can advise

CM, Wadh: Is this to do with the Palestine motion?

JW: Yes

SI: I don't see the harm in letting him in

VOTE - David Mitchell is given observer rights

**ET, Wadh: Moves that the motion on Palestine be not put until next Council when JCRs have had a chance to discuss it.**

**Joe Hall, CCC: this is a very current issue**

**Vote to leave motion on the agenda: For - 40**

**Vs - 29**

**Abst - 2**

**Sean Sullivan, SEH: Moves that the motion not be put. We have discussed the MidEast before - it is too controversial and emotive, it is silly for us to discuss it.**

**JC, New: We have already voted to discuss it. Sean has given up rationality.**

**Josh Goodman, Balliol: this is an exceptionally important issue**

**Duncan Weldon, Somerville: Important to get it discussed now.**

## **6. Passage of Motions Nem Con**

**Motion 1 passed**

**Motion 3 passed**

**Motion 4 passed**

## **7. First Readings of Motions to Amend the Constitution or Standing Orders**

**Motion 1:**

**SFQs: Jane McTaggart (HMC) asked whether the motion is sound if it expresses an abstract belief in the greatness of the website. Chris McBride asks the chair if getting rid of Believes 1 is possible. EF says this cannot be done to a constitutional motion. She outlines that the website is great because it has the constitution on it, council minutes/agenda, marketing, student advice section, sexual health.**

**No objection to a Move to Vote. Motion Passes**

## **8. Motions authorising Capital Expenditure**

**Motion 1. Accounts office furniture**

**EF: his is a tedious motion, it is required because the lockable cupboard is expensive**

**No Opposition**

## **9. Other Motions**

**Motion 2, Pembroke and Admissions**

**John Craig - there was a big splash over Pembroke selling places for cash over the vacation. OUSU did its best to represent students, The key message we put out was that the corruption was terrible but not widespread and that there were many Access initiatives ongoing to promote equal access to Oxford. Also, the point was made that this must be used as a warning against the privatisation of universities. It is not an attack on Pembroke College.**

**SFQs: Ed Southerden, Somerville, asks whether we have policy on centralised admissions. JC says that the Admissions Report said that much greater cooperation between colleges was needed but that central admissions would not be an answer.**

**Ryan McGhee, Pemb: Could he be more specific on what the motion involves?**

**JC: I don't want to narrow it too far before the University report comes out.**

**Opposition Speech: JT, Univ: is proposing an amendment condemning the Sunday Times for their unfair investigative reporting.**

ET, Wadh: opposes the amendment as it would appear to be attacking the wrong thing

SFQs: is this intended to qualify the condemnation of Pembroke? JT says no. MtV on the amendment. Proposition: RL, New: everyone knows what we think already

Opposition: we haven't heard all the arguments

Passes, clear maj.

Summation: JT - Sunday Times equally to blame, has overshadowed OUSU's access drive.

JC - we are not the right body to attack the Sunday Times.

Amendment Fails, clear maj. 3 Pembroke votes against the amendment.

Debate on main motion.

MtV, Proposition: RL, New - we've all made up our minds

Opposition: Marcus Walker, Oriel - we haven't heard much opposition

2/3 maj achieved. 42-17-3

Summation

Prop - JC, New: Sets out OUSU's response to the Pembroke affair and is part of wider opposition to undue influence of private money on research and admissions.

Opp - MW, Oriel: Pembroke is poor, American Institutions are racing ahead of us in financial terms by charging their students. Pembroke did not remove a place for this fictional child, by allowing one more place, many students would have benefited from the money.

Motion passes, clear majority. 3 Pembroke votes in favour of the motion.

Motion 5 Palestine

The VP(W) warns against any intimidation in Council.

Prop: Joe Hall, CCC - this shouldn't be controversial; it outlines the same demands as the UN, it is not anti-Israeli. If this building was surrounded by tanks we'd want students in France to speak up for us. Also, there are many Palestinian students in this country. This motion specifically condemns the attacks on Israeli citizens too.

SFQs:

H P-L, Hilda's asks whether a failure to pass this motion means we oppose the aims of the motion - the answer is no.

SS, SEH asks why suicide bombings don't get the same condemnation in the motion. JH says that there is a need for a more stringent condemnation of the offensive in the West Bank.

Sacha Ismail, Somerville: makes a point of information that the motion does condemn the suicide bombings and that the title of the motion is not chosen by the proposers (the latter point is in response to an SFQ that was ruled out of order by the chair).

SI, Somerville: asks whether it is the case that 500 soldiers are refusing to serve in Palestine.

JH, CCC: thinks it might be more

John Walters, Keble: what % of the Israeli army are refuseniks?

JH: it is quite a small proportion.

**J Clift, Corpus: how do we send support to the refuseniks?**

**Point of Information: Sacha Ismail - they have a website.**

**Aron Gelbard, Jesus: when was Y Arafat last elected?**

**RL: 1994**

**Josh Kern: how many direct elections has the Palestinian Authority held?**

**JH: 1**

**SI, Somerville: Is the Palestinian Authority occupied by a foreign power?**

**JH: Yes**

**A Garlick, ChCh: Has there been any official response by the Israeli authorities to the refuseniks' action.**

**SI: 3 of them are in prison**

**Matt Selwood, New: 1000s refuse to serve in army but do other menial jobs.**

**Speech in Opposition to Motion:**

**Josh Goodman, Balliol: I only disagree with Council believes 2. This clause is shoddily written and makes motion overtly political. Without this it is a good motion.**

**Amendment to add a clause resolving to write to NUS Israel to support those Israeli students that are campaigning for peace and against the closure of Birzeit university in the West Bank.**

**Proposed by Antonia Bance, Somerville**

**No Opposition**

**Amendment to strike Believes 2**

**Prop: JG, Balliol: this makes the motion overtly political**

**Opp: JH, CCC: this is a political motion by its nature and we need to say how we propose to find a solution to the conflict.**

**Debate on amendment**

**JG: Balliol it is ludicrous to suggest that there is only one root cause of the conflict. There are terrorist groups who say they will continue bombing even if the occupation ends.**

**RL, New: agrees with Josh that the wording is wrong.**

**J MacTaggart, HMC: Israel is responsible for a great deal of the cause of this conflict.**

**MtV - no objections**

**Amendment passes - clear maj**

**Amendment to change Believes 1 and insert "oppose Israel's right to exist" after the word "anti-semitism".**

**Prop:**

**Sacha Ismail: clarifies motion's support for 2 state solution.**

**SFQs: JG, Balliol: does it mean "and" or "or" the extra phrase?**

**SI: accepts insertion of "and/or" instead of "and".**

**AB: would this include groups in Britain?**

**Amendment Withdrawn and picked up by John Walters, Keble**

**RL, New: does this apply to any groups who have opposed the Israeli state in the past? - the answer is no because the clause is written in the present tense.**

**JT, Univ: does the Palestinian Authority oppose Israel?**

**JW:** they agreed to amend their charter in Oslo but it is unclear whether they actually have.

**Opp:**

**ET, Wadh:** this goes against free speech, wrong to condemn those that disagree with us.

**Debate**

**Rebecca Wilkinson, SEH:** those who oppose the 2 state solution are not necessarily anti-semitic

**MtV:**

**Prop: SS, SEH** we've discussed this relatively minor point enough.

**Opp:** it is a vital point

**PASSES**

**Summation**

**Prop: JW:** if you support the right of Israel to exist, vote for it.

**Opp: Sarah Munroe, Balliol:** free speech is the issue here.

**Amendment falls - clear majority**

**Back to Debate**

**SS, SEH -** this motion is biased, we are not well placed to judge on this issue. We will offend some of our members by passing this. Arafat sees a Palestinian state along very broad lines that would be unacceptable to Israel, plus the return of those people made refugees since 1948 to their homeland. OUSU has to pay for the letters of solidarity - this is not what we should be spending our money on. Do not abstain as that will let the motion go through.

**MtV**

**Prop: JK, Pemb:** we all know our views

**Opp: AB, Some:** it's good to have further intellectual debate

**Falls, clear maj**

**RL, New:** this motion is not very controversial, every independent grouping supports a 2 state solution. The PLO have renounced terrorism. This motion is not about backing one side or the other, it is about opposing Sharon's actions in the West Bank.

**AB, Some:** OUSU is a collectivist organisation and our voice among many like us can have an influence. Other campaigns in the past such as that against the Apartheid regime have had an impact.

**MtV**

**Prop:** we have had long enough on this

**Opp: SI, Some:** people are only wasting time by proposing moves to vote

**Falls**

**A Rosenberg, Jesus:** on a personal note, this will cause distress. It is an offensive motion and OUSU should not take sides in the Middle East conflict. **Sacha Ismail, Somerville:** PLO condemns terror, this is not supporting the PLO, the motion does not call for the return of refugees. No-one would suggest that Israel's right to exist was premised upon some Palestinians being anti-semitic.

**CM, Wadh:** just because someone is Jewish does not make them Zionist or a supporter of Sharon.

**Brian McGhee, Pemb:** many international injustices similar to this deserve focusing on, but we just won't have any impact in this forum. We our out of our depth.

**MtV,** no objections.

**Summation**

**Prop:** Sarah Munroe, Balliol: AB has laid out why it is worth us taking a view on this issue. The 2 state solution is widely accepted as the correct one. It is fine to pass motions on such an injustice as this even when a minority may be offended.

**Opp:** A Gelbman, Jesus: Both sides are going through a difficult time at the moment. There is a creeping danger of anti-semitism at the moment. OUSU should show that it isn't going to take sides.

**Vote**

**For - 29**

**Against - 27**

**Abstentions - 11**

**A recount is called.**

The chair rules that Council will wait a short time until a voter can be retrieved who has left the room since voting. There is a move to overturn the chair's ruling.

**Prop:** SS, SEH if you walk out after the vote, it is wrong to wait for that person to return. The chair has ruled incorrectly according to the SOs.

--at this point the voter returns--

**Recount**

**For - 30**

**Against - 28**

**Abstentions - 10**

**MOTION PASSES**

**Election of VP(G)**

**Jeff Williams - 72**

**RON - 1**