

Council Minutes

3rd Week Hilary Term 2015

3rd Week Council took place at 5:30pm on Wednesday 4th February 2015, at St John's College, in the Garden Quad Reception Room.

If you have any questions about OUSU Council, please feel free to contact the Chair at chair@ousu.org.

- a. Minutes of the Previous Meeting
- b. Matters Arising from the Minutes
- c. Ratifications in Council
- d. Elections in Council
- e. Reports from the Sabbatical Officers
- f. Reports from the Executive Officers and the Divisional Board Representatives who wish to make reports
- g. Questions to Members of the Executive and the Divisional Board Representatives
- h. Passage of Motions without discussion
- i. Motions of No Confidence or Censure
- j. Emergency Motions
- k. Motions Authorising Capital Expenditure
 1. Castle Mill Action
- l. Other Motions
 2. Selecting RAG Charities
 3. Access to Oxford in the OUSU General Election Manifesto
 4. Electoral and Referendum Review Group
 5. Opposing fascism in Oxford
- n. Any Other Business

a. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

No issues were raised with the minutes.

b. Matters Arising from the Minutes

No matter arising from the minutes.

c. Ratifications in Council

None.

d. Elections in Council

Community Outreach & Charities Officer – Isaac Kang (St Peter's) nominated.

No hust requested.

Isaac – 71

RON – 0

SBV – 1

Isaac Kang was elected.

International Students' Officer – Minerva Lim (Keble) nominated.

No hust requested.

Minerva – 71

RON – 1

SBV – 0

Minerva Lim was elected.

4 Positions for Scrutiny Committee – Will Neaverson (Christ Church), Benjamin Woolf (Christ Church), Alastair Graham (St John's), and Omar Mohsen (Jesus) nominated.

Will – 14

Benji – 3

Alastair – 18

Omar – 33

RON – 3

SBV – 1

Alastair – Stated that he would like to be on Scrutiny Committee, as he would like to be more involved in OUSU and also as Scrutiny Committee is a way to promote the good things that OUSU does. Explained that he believes the most important role of OUSU is to interact with students and wants to ensure that that is functioning well. Hoped the committee could discuss any areas of concern together and therefore help with improvements to OUSU.

Omar – Explained that he would like to be more involved in OUSU, adding that as a fresher he can offer a fresh perspective. Informed council that he was involved in scrutiny within a local youth parliament and fundamentally believes that scrutiny is one of the most important parts of a democratic organisation.

Benji – Stated that he is also a fresher with no previous experience of OUSU, but wish to get involved following the annual OUSU elections. Explained that he found that many of his friends didn't understand OUSU or the work they were doing so felt that this is a way to get involved and help change that perception.

Will Obeney (Regent's) – Read out a message from Will Neaverson who was unable to attend:

“Hi Council, Sorry I can't be here tonight. I have a rescheduled class. I've written a comprehensive statement in the booklet, so just to add that I've been in OUSU for over two years and have been through six scrutiny interviews myself and committed to the pledges

made in my manifesto and believe that I would work hard to great scrutiny report this term. My major pledge is to provide a summary table, an acronym and jargon-free report to make it accessible to those who are not OUSU insiders.”

Marina Lambrakis (St John’s) – Explained that some of the Executive are from limited franchises such as graduates or women. Asked how they think they can scrutinise those people, as they are not graduates or women themselves.

Omar – Answered that they would have to use empathy. Suggested that they ask the graduates and women at their colleges about what issues they have. Added that they should have the ability to step outside of their own interests and be able to represent others.

Benji – Answered that he can ask women and graduates and hoped that he would be able to pick up on issues regardless of if there was anything problematic occurring.

Alastair – Answered that he would consider manifesto pledges and reports and attempt to correlate the two.

Nick Cooper (St John’s) – Explained that Scrutiny Committee act as the ‘teeth of council’ and asked if they are prepared to issue a negative report if necessary, and if so, what sort of things would warrant one.

Benji – Agreed that he would be willing to do this if officers were being obviously negligent in their duties.

Alastair – Responded that he would look at attendance at OUSU council and the submission of reports. Argued that there would be no point in having scrutiny if they are not willing to offer negative feedback when required.

Omar – Answered that the most important focus of scrutiny is to produce an honest report, regardless of whether this is negative.

Will Neaverson, Benjamin Woolf, Alastair Graham, and Omar Mohsen were elected.

3 Positions for Steering Committee – Matthew Collyer (New) nominated.

No hust requested.

Matthew – 71

RON - 1

SBV – 0

Matthew Collyer was elected.

3 Positions for Internal Affairs Committee – Alexander Bishop (Queen’s) nominated.

No hust requested.

Alex – 71

RON – 1

SBV - 1

Alexander Bishop was elected.

External Trustees

Will Obeney (Regent's) – Explained that as a charity OUSU has trustees, with four external trustees who serve four year terms. Added that there are three vacant positions, and three potential candidates who have been put forward to Council by the Nominations Committee.

Louis Trup – Explained that Nominations Committee reviewed all applications which had been anonymised. Added that they individually ranked them individually, then came together to review what the candidates would bring to OUSU, looking specifically for governance experience, experience of Student Unions and wider legal experience, particular in relation to employment. The three selected candidates are Richard Jackson, Tom Flynn and Harini Iyengar. Noted that their CVs were not shared online as they contain all of their personal information, but welcomed candidates to ask any him any questions which they may have about any of the candidates.

Joe Smith (Somerville) – Asked if there were any questions about the candidates or the process.

No questions or objections.

Richard Jackson, Tom Flynn and Harini Iyengar elected as external trustees of OUSU.

e. Reports from the Sabbatical Officers

Louis Trup (Brasenose) – Listed his main focuses as voter Registration and Castle Mill. Highlighted that the Student Awards had been a success the previous evening.

Ruth Meredith (Brasenose) – Announced that Wadham, Oriel and Pembroke are now living wage employers. Reminded students that this week is voter registration week and urged them to register if they haven't already.

Anna Bradshaw (Wadham) – Reported that she has been working on a couple of group projects, including Castle Mill and the Student Awards. Added that she is preparing for Anti-Violence Valentines, and is also halfway through WomCam's Reproductive Justice Week. Informed council that her biggest piece of news is that an action plan that she worked on for the strategy for the Thames Valley crime reduction for the next few years has been approved, which means that workshops, classes and training based on the work OUSU

developed around consent workshops are going to be rolled out across the entire Thames Valley region for secondary school and university aged students.

James Blythe (Brasenose) – Stated that he is preparing for Access Showcase which we take place on Friday. Encouraged people to talk to him if they haven't heard about this so they can help to publicise it. Added that he will be bringing some information on the Education Vision to council so they can act as a focus group and feed into this project.

Chris Pike (St Edmund) – Stated that he had two quick notices, firstly that he held an event on Monday called Times Representation which was to help students and common rooms introduce LGBTQ reps, BME reps and disability reps. Added that he produced a pack for the event and asked people to get in touch for copies. Secondly, noted that there will be an action about Castle Mill outside the Sheldonian prior to congregation, and students were welcomed and encouraged to attend and show their support. Concluded by informing council that he had exciting news about OUSU 's Disabled Students' Campaign, who would be merging with the Oxford University Disability Community.

James Elliott (St Edmund) – Asked Ruth what the latest figures were for voter registration were.

Ruth – Provided the figures that they currently have from the council, stating that 44% of students in halls are registered. Advised that students contact their colleges for a college by college breakdown.

- Asked for a breakdown between students that have registered here and students that have registered at home.

Ruth – Explained that we cannot tell, we only know if a student has registered in Oxford, but are advising students to register in both places as they can vote in both locations for local elections. Added that the postal vote deadline is early and it is a concern that students may forget to use their postal vote on time if they are only registered to vote at home.

John Rose, Exeter - Explained that his MCR is looking into the Accredited Campaign but the question has been raised about whether staff will be stripped of any benefits if their pay is increased.

Ruth – Responded that benefits should not be taken into account or removed.

f. Reports from the Executive Officers and the Divisional Board Representatives who wish to make Reports

Aliya Yule (Wadham) – Advertised Reproductive Justice Week and flagged an event taking

place at 7pm that evening. Encouraged people to attend.

Joe Reason (Wadham) – Asked council for ideas about how OUSU communicate with their common rooms, and also encouraged people to advertise the vacant roles and put any interested students in touch with him.

g. Questions to Members of the Executive and the Divisional Board Representatives

h. Passage of Motions without Discussion

2. Selecting RAG Charities

Council Notes:

1. The selection process of RAG charities is to take place next term.
2. In the past, four charities are selected annually of which one of which is student run, one is local and two national or international.
3. Nominations are open to all members of OUSU, as is voting.
4. Successful charities are supported from the start of Trinity term of the year of their election to the end of the following Hilary term.
5. That for the past three years cross-campus ballots have taken place in order to choose the RAG charities.

Council Further Notes:

1. RAG receives many nominations for the local and national/international charities.
2. Last year, only one student-run charity was nominated.
3. A shortlist of these nominations is compiled by the VP (Charities & Community), the RAG President and the RAG Selections event team from which voters may choose.
4. That the current regulations work very well to encourage campaigning and diverse nominations.
5. That the Vice-President (Charities and Community) has drawn up new regulations (Appendix 4) for shortlisting RAG's charities and that these have been agreed by RAG.
6. That the most significant proposal is to simplify the nomination categories and avoid duplication of charities, so as to elect two local charities, and two international/national.

Council believes:

1. That the changes to the regulations enable RAG to work with proactive and supportive charities whilst helping OUSU meet its obligations to the local community and promoting student leadership.

Council Resolves:

1. To hold a cross campus ballot for the 2015-16 RAG charities using the Single

Transferable Vote system.

2. To mandate the Returning Officer to administer the selection process and ballot on behalf of RAG.
3. To adopt the shortlisting criteria set out in Appendix 4.
4. To use the selection procedure set out in Appendix 5.
5. To mandate the RAG executive to adhere to the results of the cross campus ballot in selecting the 2015-16 charities.
6. To mandate the RAG executive to publicise nominations and the ballot.
7. To mandate the VP (Charities & Community) to produce an annual report upon the conclusion of the RAG charity selection process, explaining why particular charities were or were not shortlisted.
8. To apply Appendix 4, 5 and 6 to all future RAG charity selections unless and until Council resolves otherwise.

Proposed: Ruth Meredith (Brasenose College)

Seconded: Joe Smith (Somerville College)

3. Access to Oxford in the OUSU General Election Manifesto

Council Notes:

1. That it mandated the Executive to bring motions as part of the OUSU manifesto for the General Election, based on the results of the student online submissions.
2. That OUSU has a long history of proactive campaigning on access to the University.

Council Believes:

1. That university education should be available to people from all backgrounds, schools and communities.
2. That government policy should be committed to achieving this objective through investment in education, both in schools and in higher and further education.
3. That government funded student finance should be sufficient to cover the cost of living for students, ensuring that students from low income families are not deterred from applying to university.
4. That government, through policy and investment, should particularly support communities with limited history of progression to higher education.

Council Resolves:

1. To mandate the Executive Committee to include the spirit of the above beliefs, appropriately worded, in the OUSU General Election Manifesto.

Proposed: Henna Shah (Regent's Park College)

Seconded: Nikhil Venkatesh (Corpus Christi College)

i. Motions of No Confidence or Censure

j. Emergency Motions

I. Motions Authorising Capital Expenditure

1. Castle Mill Action

Council Notes:

1. Its decision in 1st Week of Hilary to oppose the resolution before Congregation on Castle Mill.

Council Believes:

1. The students of Oxford need to have their voice heard, not just in the meeting through the speeches of officers but in a broader and more powerful way.
2. OUSU has a long history of effective actions to draw the attention of senior University officials to the student view on key issues.

Council Resolves:

1. To mandate the Executive Committee to organise a peaceful but effective demonstration of the student view outside the Sheldonian Theatre on Tuesday 10th February.
2. To mandate all Executive Officers to attend the demonstration, except where they have a clear reason not to be there (e.g. they are speaking at the meeting).
3. To permit the expenditure of up to £50 from OUSU's discretionary budget on materials for the demonstration.

Proposed: James Blythe (Brasenose)

Seconded: Louis Trup (Brasenose)

James Blythe (Brasenose) – Explained that this motion aims to take forward the motion passed unanimously in first week council, in which OUSU Council opposed plans to remove the top floor of Castle Mill, a move that would cost an estimated £30 million. Continued that this is opposed as the cost of £30million will hurt students, in particular graduate students. Elaborated that there will be a loss of funding for scholarships for future graduate students as well as inevitable evictions for current graduate students, which will more than likely create a rent spike in Oxford. Informed council that the top floor is made up of student families, a particularly vulnerable group who we should aim to protect. Explained that the £50 requested would be spent on buying materials for the planned demonstration outside of the Sheldonian prior to congregation. Urged students to support the demonstration.

Motion passed with no opposition.

m. Other Motions

Aliya Yule (Wadham) – Proposed a procedural motion to move motion 5 up the agenda and discuss it next.

Nick Cooper (St John's) – Opposed the move as motion 4 needs to be discussed at this meeting of council.

Nick – Withdrew opposition.

Content Notes: This motion contains references to Islamophobia, Anti-Semitism and Holocaust Denial.

5. Opposing fascism in Oxford

Council Notes:

1. That tomorrow (Thursday 5th February) the leader of the *Front National*, Marine le Pen, will be in Oxford to speak at the Oxford Union.
2. That Marine le Pen has compared Muslim prayer to the Nazi occupation of France during the Second World War, has implied that all French Muslims are potential terrorists, and in 2012 attended an event organised by the neo-Nazi group the Olympia Society, which bans Jews and women from its membership.
3. That the Honorary President of the *Front National*, Jean-Marie le Pen, has described the gas chambers of the Holocaust as 'a point of detail', and been convicted in France for inciting racial hatred and in Germany for Holocaust denial. He still sits for the party in the European Parliament.
4. That recent events both in France and across the world have increased the risk of racialized violence, particularly against Jews and Muslims.

Council Believes:

1. That anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are unacceptable.
2. That Marine le Pen's speaking at the Oxford Union will be upsetting to many students and others in Oxford, in particular those from marginalised groups.
3. That Marine le Pen's views are divisive, and that OUSU should seek to bring all students together, regardless of race, religion or nationality.
4. That the *Front National's* message of hate is dangerous, particularly in the light of recent events, in France and elsewhere, which have proved that racialized and politicised violence remains a real threat, and that a small number of extremists can cause horrific damage.
5. That freedom of speech includes the right of everyone to protest, but not the right of fascists to a platform for their views.

Council Resolves:

1. To unequivocally condemn the views of Marine le Pen and her party.
2. To mandate the OUSU Executive to sign an open letter (appendix 7) to the standing committee of the Oxford Union, condemning Marine le Pen's views and asking them to refrain inviting such speakers in the future.

Proposed: Nikhil Venkatesh (Corpus Christi College)

Seconded: Aliya Yule (Wadham College)

Aliya Yule (Wadham) – Informed council that Marine Le Pen is due to speak at The Oxford Union on the following evening and noted that she is going to speak, not debate. Reported that Le Pen has previously said things that are islamophobic, anti-semitic, racist and is generally known to be a fascist. Added that she has compared Muslims praying in France to the Nazi occupation of France, has said that Muslim children in schools should not be given alternative dietary requirements, and has said things which suggest that all Muslims are terrorists. Argued that her views legitimize the fear against Muslims and allows islamophobia to spread. Noted that she does not believe that this motion will stop the Union event, however argued that we need a message of solidarity, and we need to show that we will simply not tolerate fascism in Oxford.

Martine Wauben (Pembroke) – Queried how this letter would be given to The Oxford Union.

Aliya – Responded that this would be discussed but assumed by email.

Martine – Asked if she had considered putting it on the board so they have to read it out in the house during debate.

Aliya – Responded that that was a very good idea.

- Asked if all the exec have discussed this and have no issues with it, as they will be mandated to sign the letter.

Aliya – Responded that it has been discussed in a meeting of exec and has been circulated by email.

Amendment received:

To add to resolves:

4. To make “no platforming fascists” OUSU policy.

Proposed: Annie Teriba (Wadham)

Seconded: James Elliott (St Edmund)

Annie – Explained that OUSU also has a no-platforming policy against LIFE, which provides slanted advice to women. Reminded council that fascists are a danger to members of our student community and that we have an obligation towards these students to send out a clearer message. Agreed with the motion, but feels it needs to be firmer. Hoped this amendment would provide a mandate for OUSU to deal with similar cases in the future.

Chris Pike (St Edmund) – Asked for clarification on no platforming.

Annie – Envisaged it affecting all OUSU events and assumed that OUSU would also support all relevant demonstrations.

Jack Matthews (University) – Thanked the proposers for bringing a well-worded motion that seeks to bring together as many people as possible but argued that this amendment destroys that and divides our community more. Stressed that something as significant as a blanket no platform policy requires a full debate in council.

Jamie Wells (Corpus) – Asked if we have a blanket policy on no platforming directional advice on abortion.

Anna Bradshaw (Wadham) – Explained that we have pro-choice policy but that the policy on LIFE and other directional services prevents advertising rather than platforming. Added that this was a compromise reached in council.

Annie – Responded to Jack that she is happy to alienate fascists as they have a very real impact on many students. Added that she is happy to have a blanket policy that encourages people to think about who they should invite to speak as people do not have a right to a platform. Reminded that Marine Le Pen is not being invited to debate, where her views can be challenged.

Keble student – Asked what impact this amendment would have on future events and if it would prevent discussion.

Annie – Explained that if a motion were to come again similar to this, it would be up to council to determine if they were a fascist.

Anna - Clarified that any policy that is created can be brought back and edited or removed by council at any point. Added that policy such as this would also provide guidelines for the Executive Committee if they need to act prior to a meeting of council.

Jack – Argued that this debate should be about Le Pen and not about a monumental change about OUSU policy.

John Rose (Exeter) – Recognised the good intents of everyone but stated that blanket no platforming is never a solution. Urged council to debate and challenge these issues rather than shut them down and prevent freedom of speech.

Annie – Claimed that this is not about freedom of speech which is a different issue to no platforming. Argued that by saying we need further debate on this sends a message to students of colour that their identities are up for debate which is frankly disgusting.

Benji Woolf (Christ Church) – Asked if this no platform would prevent him from being able to express his views and if OUSU would prevent other extreme speakers from attending.

Will Obeney (Regent's) – Explained that it would be up to council to make a decision on each individual.

Move to vote on amendment.

No opposition.

Annie – Stressed that OUSU need to send out a message to students who are affected by the things that Le Pen has said. Reminded council that if the speech had been a day earlier, Council would have not had time to pass this motion, which is why we need existing policy to ensure that the exec can act in the event that a council meeting will not take place in time.

Jack – Responded that procedures are already in place if this were to occur. Reiterated that this would be a radical change to OUSU policy and it therefore needs full debate so it can have absolute credibility.

Vote on amendment

For – 20

Against – 36

Abstain – 20

Amendment fell.

Amendment received:

To add to resolves:

3. To mandate OUSU President to write an email informing all students of the protests outside the Union tomorrow.

Proposed: Annie Teriba (Wadham)
Seconded: James Elliott (St Edmund)

Aliya – Argued that it is important that all students are aware of the protest taking place outside The Oxford Union tomorrow so the message that all students are standing together in solidarity is reiterated.

Anna – Asked for information on the separate groups attending.

Aliya – Answered that while the UAF will be there, this is just a grassroots protest by students. Added that the NUS Black Students Campaign will also be present.

Chris Pike (St Edmund) – Asked if the email would be advertising all protests.

Barnaby Raine (Wadham) – Answered that it would be the student protest only that is advertised as there are concerns about the UAF.

Gail Braybrook (Worcester) – Pointed out that if anyone does have opposition to this, that does not make you a fascist. Stated that she knows quite a lot about French culture and has been speaking to a number of French people and is concerned that Marine Le Pen has been able to portray herself as a victim to her supporters due to being banned from a number of events. Argued that she can use this in her favour, and that a more effective solution would be to pay no attention to her, rather than allow her to thrive off opposition.

Eden Bailey (Magdalen) – Noted that the University of Oxford holds a particular place in the minds of people both nationally and internationally and has a high level of respect. Suggested that when we stand against something people will listen.

Anna – Clarified that the idea of providing Le Pen with more media attention was discussed in the exec meeting and is taken very seriously, however the opinion was still that we need to make a stand against these type of views.

Move to vote on amendment.

For – 38
Against – 10
Abstain - 23

Amendment passed.

Jack Matthews (University) – Stated that he would have voted in favour of the last amendment if he had a vote as students have the right to know about the protests. Added that he also wanted the student protest to drown out that from the UAF. Provided a cautious warning that the only violence he was aware of at a previous demonstration against Nick Griffin was from the UAF against well-meaning protesting students. Urged people to distance themselves from the UAF.

Max Ramsey (St John's) – Asked if it was the intention to condemn all the views of Le Pen's party.

Aliya – Answered that yes but it was particularly aimed at her islamaphobic and anti-semetic policies.

Chris Casson (St Catherine's) – Stated that he believes that we should vote against this motion despite the fact that he does not agree with anything Le Pen says. Reminded council that this is not use providing a platform, it is The Oxford Union, which is their own decision. Informed council that when he has attended speeches at The Oxford Union, there are always chances for questions at the end which can get very bolshie at times and suggested that this may be more effective than silencing her. Argued that we can be against her views without asking her to be censured.

Martine Wauben (Pembroke) – Responded directly to the previous point, and explained that often the questions at The Oxford Union are scripted, adding that in this case, as there will be an interpreter, they may also be sanitised. Flagged that there are ways of making The Oxford Union feel your presence more, for example by making suggestions of people that we do want to hear speak.

Barnaby Raine (Wadham) – Informed council that the moment at which Marine Le Pen's party became mainstream was when she was invited to speak on television. Urged council to recognise the danger of providing a platform and treating her as a respectable politician. Reiterated that our only responsibility as OUSU is to stand up for students on campus.

Move to vote.

Nick Cooper (St John's) – Argued that everyone has made up their minds at this point.

Chris – Stated that there are still people who may want to speak.

Vote on move to vote:

For – 43
Against – 14
Abstain – 5

Aliya – Summarised by reminding council that this is not about free speech, but about saying that council stands in solidarity, respects and will protect those students in this community that face violence and vernal assault on a daily basis.

Chris Casson – Argued that we need people to have a chance to come together, debate and form views. Stated that he does not recognize the difference between free speech and platforming in this instance.

For – 40
Against – 12
Abstain - 9

Motion passed as amended.

4. Electoral and Referendum Review Group

Council Notes:

1. That an Electoral and Referendum Review Group has been established to investigate concerns relating to the elections, which has sought students' views on how OUSU conducts elections and referenda.
2. That the group is mandated to report back to 5th week Council, but has areas without consensus on which it would like to consult more widely with Council attendees.
3. That the deadline for submissions is Friday 3rd week and so that there is still time to respond.

Council therefore Resolves:

1. To discuss for periods determined by the Chair of Council after the passage of this motion each of these OUSU election practices:
 - a. whether to maintain Michaelmas Term elections or move them to early Hilary Term;
 - b. whether to keep elections for Student Trustee at the same time as other elections, or to hold them separately [note: more if Michaelmas elections are maintained];
 - c. whether to maintain an elected student Returning Officer, or to have a non-student Returning Officer instead;
 - d. whether to maintain or lower the current maximum expenses limit;
 - e. whether to permit OUSU to contribute financially to campaigns, either to all campaigns or based on a candidate(s)'s financial need.

Proposed: Martine Wauben (Pembroke)

Seconded: Nick Cooper (St. John's)

Martine Wauben (Pembroke) – Explained that the Electoral and Referendum Review Group (ERRG) have met a number of times to discuss various viewpoints around the elections but have some issues that they need wider opinion on.

Chris Pike (St Edmund) – Asked if the chair will be prioritising the viewpoints of those that have not already contributed to ERRG.

Martine – Agreed that she hoped tis would be the case.

Jack – Stated that some of these issues have not yet been discussed at all by ERRG so should still be able to contribute.

Martine – Confirmed that ERRG will be meeting again so those views can be heard then.

Motion passed with no opposition.

Will Obeney (Regent's) – Informed council that the first issue to be discussed is whether to maintain Michaelmas Term elections or move them to early Hilary Term.

Martine – Explained that an argument for the change is that we need Michaelmas to engage students to try and get more candidates in, however others think that Hilary elections would be too close to exams.

James Blythe (Brasenose) – Stated that he believes that we want to recruit the type of students who will complete the civil service fast stream onto great graduate jobs, and one of the ways in which we do this is having the elections at the same time that recruitment is taking place. Expressed concern that we would lose these candidates if we held the elections in Hilary.

Ruth Meredith (Brasenose) – Provided a point of information that a further reason for the change is that operationally the OUSU team is stretched at this point with the effort of Fresher's Fair. Added that people should also consider that by the time these elections take place, some students are still unaware of what OUSU is and will not be likely to vote.

Eden Bailey (Magdalen) – Argued that we would have the most dedicated students running if we left the elections until Hilary, as it would be clear that this was their real aim.

Annie Teriba (Wadham) – Pointed out that it is a huge batch of students that have no idea what is happening by the time elections are happening which is a key argument to moving it later. Suggested that this would make it a contest on merit rather than who can door knock the most. Noted however a point in opposition that those running for sabbatical positions in their final year are less likely to have time to do so in Hilary.

Leonine Hoffman (Somerville) – Stated that people do not know much about what OUSU does or the commitment they are going to make and suggested there may be a wider discussion around this about making OUSU more accessible.

Straw poll – Reasonably balanced between the two view points.

Will – Moved council on to the second point - whether to maintain Michaelmas Term elections or move them to early Hilary Term.

Martine – Explained that an argument for this is that trustees are obviously a very integral part of OUSU and losing them at the end of their degree is difficult. Elaborated that if we moved their elections to Hilary, they would be less likely to run if they were in their final year. Informed council of a counter-argument that they often run on slates and would lose that support.

Louis – Added a further reason for this change, explaining that OUSU is run by a bunch of insiders. Urged that what we need from trustees is not the same as what we need from the political students from council. They should be elected on competency and relevant skills as opposed to the political viewpoints of their slate.

Annie Teriba (Wadham) – Argued that you would hope that anyone putting themselves forward would be competent enough to do the job. Added that there are different approaches to being a trustee, and that they can take political decisions.

James Blythe (Brasenose) – Agreed with Annie and added that it is a very difficult thing for the student trustees to stand up to the sabbs and externals. Explained that he strongly believes the turnout will decrease in Hilary, giving these people less legitimacy and leaving them feeling even less able to confront other members of the board on various issues.

Straw Poll –View of council to keep the elections all together.

Will - Introduced the third issue - whether to maintain an elected student Returning Officer, or to have a non-student Returning Officer instead.

Martine – Explained that in the light of the referendum, some people say it is irresponsible for us to have a student RO. Added that it is also a huge workload. Clarified that there are alternatives provided by external bodies such as the NUS, or that it could be considered that OUSU staff take this on.

Jack – Stated that this is the big issue that needs to be debated tonight as it has never been discussed by OUSU before. Informed council that he is strongly against this move as it is against the principle of a student union being run by and for students. Explained that if the RO were to be a staff member, we could not mandate them to do things or complain about them. Cautious about having the NUS with the potential of an NUS referendum. Concluded that it is a fallacy to say that staff are more trustworthy than students as we have had two major problems with members of staff over the previous seven years due to improper behaviour and incompetence.

John Rose (Exeter) – Stated that an external officer may not be fully able to see and understand what is going on but recommended a team of election monitors from outside who can compliment a student officer

Fletcher – Asked for clarification on whether alternative avenues have been explored.

Will – Answered that it is safe to assume that it has had some thought.

Ruth Meredith (Brasenose) – Raised two points, firstly that students are absolutely able to complain about staff and that there is a procedure in place. Secondly that some comments suggest that our staff do not care about students or democracy which is absolutely not the

case, and if they didn't they wouldn't work in a student union, particularly those that work in representation. Does not want that perception to cloud any of this debate.

Straw poll – Clearly against the change.

Will – Introduced the next issue on whether to maintain or lower the current maximum expenses limit.

Council decided this needed to be discussed in conjunction with the final issue on whether to permit OUSU to contribute financially to campaigns, either to all campaigns or based on a candidate(s)'s financial need.

Will Graham (Lincoln) – Asked if there is any information on how much of the money is generally spent.

Martine – Responded that it varies massively, even amongst the winning candidates. Gave example that Louis only spent £2 but some use the whole budget.

- Point that raised that the limit should be as low as possible for reasons of access.
- Argument raised that as turnout is already low we should not reduce the limit as spending the money will often help students engage.

Matthew Collyer (New) – Asked how easy it would be for the RO to assess a candidate's financial eligibility in order to decide if they should receive financial support.

Martine – Summarised that what she was taking away from this was that the less money candidates need to spend the better and the OUSU contribution should be to everyone.

Chris Pike (St Edmund) – Suggested a straw poll on whether the emphasis is on reducing the limit or providing the money.

Straw poll on whether OUSU should contribute to campaigns – very much in favour.