

# Council Minutes

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Week Hilary Term 2016

3<sup>rd</sup> Week Council took place at 5:30pm on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016, at Magdalen College, Magdalen Auditorium.

If you have any questions about OUSU Council, please feel free to contact the Chair, Marina Lambrakis, at [chair@ousu.ox.ac.uk](mailto:chair@ousu.ox.ac.uk).

- a. Minutes of the Previous Meeting
- b. Matters Arising from the Minutes
- c. Ratifications in Council
- d. Elections in Council
- e. Reports from and questions to the Sabbatical Officers, Executive Officers, Divisional Board Representatives, Representatives of the OUSU Campaigns and RAG (*Raise and Give*)
- f. Emergency motions
  1. Holding Oriel College Accountable
- g. Passage of motions without discussion
- h. Motions of No Confidence or censure
- i. Motions to amend Bye-Laws, General Regulations or Election Regulations
- j. Motions authorising expenditure
  2. Donation towards Queer Strike Speaker Event
- k. Other motions
- l. Any other business
  1. Amendments to Governing Documents

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### a. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

N/A

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### b. Matters Arising from the Minutes

No matters arising.

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### c. Ratifications in Council

N/A

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### d. Elections in Council

**Scrutiny Committee** – Isobel Whyte (St Catherine’s) nominated.

Isobel – 87

RON – 2

Abstentions - 1

**Isobel Whyte was elected.**

**Graduate Womens' Officer** – Kirthi Bellamkonda (St Edmund's) nominated.

Hust requested.

Kirthi – Explained that she is a first year masters student in the surgical sciences, and is running for Health and Safety Council as well as Graduate Womens' Officer. Informed council that she is currently the Womens' Officer for St Edmund's Hall, and a problem she has identified is that while womens' officers tend to have powers over welfare, women are equally concerned, especially at the graduate level, with political issues surrounding gender, particularly when it comes to STEM subjects. Informed council that these students want somebody who can represent them and push for greater equality amongst fellows, academic staff etc., and push towards less workplace discrimination. Reported that women in science are often mistaken for secretaries when they are in fact masters or DPhil students. Explained that with these two roles combined, she would be in a great position to address these problems in two different ways. Noted her previous advocacy work for Peer Health Exchange, which taught health education in urban high schools.

Kirthi - 86  
RON – 0  
Abstentions - 4

**Kirthi Bellamkonda was elected.**

**Graduate Academic Affairs Officer** – Bo Zhang (Kellogg) nominated.

Hust requested.

Bo was not present at Council.

Bo - 79  
RON – 10  
Abstentions - 1

**Bo Zhang was elected.**

**Clubs and Societies Support Officer** – Eric LeGresley (St Hilda's) nominated.

Eric - 86  
RON – 3  
Abstentions – 1

**Eric LeGresley was elected.**

**Medical Sciences Undergraduate Divisional Board Representative** - Eric LeGresley (St Hilda's) nominated.

Eric - 86

RON – 3  
Abstentions - 1

**Eric LeGresley was elected.**

**Internal Affairs Committee** – Hossein Sharafi (Keble) nominated

Hossein - 87  
RON – 2  
Abstentions - 1

**Hossein Sharafi was elected.**

**JS(EC)SM (Joint Subcommittee of the Education Committee with Student Members)** – Hossein Sharafi (Keble) – nominated.

Hossein - 86  
RON – 3  
Abstentions - 1

**Hossein Sharafi was elected.**

**Consultative Committee for Health and Safety** – Kirthi Bellamkonda (St Edmund's)

Kirthi - 90  
RON – 0  
Abstentions - 0

**Kirthi Bellamkonda was elected.**

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**e. Reports from and questions to the Sabbatical Officers, Executive Officers, Divisional Board Officers, Representatives of the OUSU Campaigns and RAG (*Raise and Give*)**

Becky Howe (Pembroke) – Updated that this Friday she will be running a rent negotiation workshop with Nick and Emily, and on Saturday she will be training common room presidents. Highlighted the Oxford Students Festival on the 27<sup>th</sup> February. Informed council that the welfare survey is finally about to happen, with a pilot survey being released to Magdalen tonight. Urged presidents to push the survey in their common rooms.

Ali Lennon (St John's) – Reported that he has been working on the proctors and assessors review submission with Cat and Nick's assistance, and tomorrow and Friday night, the brand new welfare officer training course will take place.

Cat Jones (Pembroke) – Informed council that the University's Education Committee have endorsed the use of lecture recording, and the next stage will be attempting to secure the funding centrally to be able to roll out the software to all departments who want it for free to the department. Informed council that she will be equipping course reps with campaign sheets to lobby their own departments to opt in. Added that the University are moving quickly, and it is expected to be in place by October.

Lucy Delaney (Wadham) – Reported that she has been running lots of First Responder training which will be continuing over the next few weeks. Highlighted that there was a very successful womens' officer training day last Friday, which went through various problems and successes, and from this she has compiled a drive to share resources.

Nick Cooper (St John's) – Updated that Education Committee do not like the rise in graduate application fees, but that it is likely to happen regardless. Added that the only positive is that it has been agreed that it will not go up again in the next three years. Highlighted the fact the International Festival is a part of the Oxford Students Festival, and encouraged people to get involved. Added that he will be getting in touch with masters students via course reps, as part of his work to review quality across courses.

Emily Silcock (New) – Reported that she has been looking at a restructure of her campaigns to make the work done more efficient. Flagged that she will be spending the weekend at OUSU as RAG Jailbreak is taking place.

Eden Tanner (St John's) – Asked Ali if the welfare training will take place on a termly basis.

Ali – Answered that it did not happen last term due to illness, but we are now running it every term at grad friendly and lab friendly times.

Adam Kellett (Herford) – Introduced himself as OUSU's Access and Admissions Officer, and updated that he has been working with Target Schools which he also co-chairs. Reported that he has been working with New College on their gender and equality report, as well as supporting work on the Alternative Prospectus.

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## **f. Emergency motions**

### 1. Holding Oriel College Accountable

This is being submitted as an emergency motion because

1. The information surrounding this motion only came to light late on 28th January.
2. Given the brevity of Oxford 'full term' (eight weeks) it seems appropriate to bring this forward as soon as possible.

### **Council Notes:**

1. On 17th December 2015, Oriel College authorities stated that "the continuing display" of the private plaque of Rhodes "is inconsistent with [its] principles", that it was a "political tribute" to Rhodes, and that therefore was beginning the process of securing local Council consent for its removal.
2. Oriel College also promised that a six-month 'listening exercise' would take place, in which it would seek "the views and ideas of students and staff of the College and the wider University, alumni, heritage bodies, Oxford City Council, residents of Oxford, and other members of the public."
3. Oriel College said that they had "a commitment to seek views in as inclusive a way as possible on how controversial associations and bequests, including that of Rhodes to Oriel, and the record of them in the built environment, can be dealt with appropriately."
4. On 28th January 2016, it was revealed that Oriel College had decided that following communications with large donors, both the statue and the plaque would remain without further consultation.
5. The 'listening exercise' therefore never started. Students and others who expected to

be given an opportunity to speak over the coming six months were not given the promised opportunity to have their voices heard.

**Council Believes:**

1. It is unacceptable for any College not to follow through a commitment made to its students, and Colleges should be held accountable for doing so.
2. It is both unfair and dishonest of Oriel College to have made a commitment to its students, and the community more widely, and not uphold its promise.
3. In particular, Oriel College have shown a callous disregard for the students and others who were promised an opportunity to be heard in their six month listening exercise.
4. Having stated that the plaque commemorating Rhodes was 'inconsistent with [its] principles' owing to its political implications and ramifications for students, it is wrong to reverse its decision to remove it purely at the request/money of alumni, without any period of consultation taking place.
5. Oriel College has a duty to support the education and wellbeing of its current students first and foremost, before honouring the wishes of alumni.

**Council Resolves:**

1. To condemn Oriel College's failure to follow through on commitments made to students which primarily affect those in already marginalised and oppressed groups.
2. To mandate the OUSU Sabbatical officers to inform Oriel College of this condemnation, and the reasons for it.

**Proposed:** Eden Bailey (Magdalen)

**Seconded:** Hilal Yazan (St. Hugh's)

Eden Bailey (Magdalen) – Explained that this motion is about holding colleges accountable when they make commitments to students, and about letting them know that if they do not follow through with promises they have made to students, that as a student union we will be strong on that, and will let them know that it is unacceptable. Informed council that in December, Oriel College promised to hold a 6-month consultation, which they referred to as a listening period regarding the statue of Cecil Rhodes, and decided that as soon as they had council approval they would remove the plaque to Cecil Rhodes, as they recognised that it was a political tribute which was inconsistent with their principles. Updated that last week it was revealed that before this listening period had even begun, it had been decided that both the statue and the plaque would remain. Urged that this is particularly problematic, as Oriel had promised to give a space to the voices of minority students who have been oppressed marginalised and by the University and the college, and specifically, to listen to them. Confirmed that this is no longer going to take place which is unfair and dishonest. Noted that the plaque they have decided to keep they have already said is inconsistent with their principles. Urged that we as students need to remind Oriel that their duty first and foremost should be to students, to their education and well-being, and not to the whims and wishes of donors. Clarified that even if the wishes of alumni do potentially affect the future of students' lives at Oxford, this can be considered as part of a consultation period in which students' voices are listened to. Asked council to consider this motion as a way of giving support to OUSU, saying that as a student voice we will support students who are being screwed over by institutional authorities, and it will not be tolerated if they are unfair and dishonest. Added that it will hopefully give the message to all colleges and university authorities that their duty is primarily to students, and it is unfair to make promises which they do not follow through on.

Opposition to motion received.

Nicholas Bennet-Jones (St Antony's) – Reminded council that according to the best piece of polling data that we have, 54% of people oppose the Rhodes Must Fall campaign, so to condemn Oriel college as representatives of these students would be absurd, and would make a mockery of OUSU. Added that it is also important to draw a distinction between Rhodes Must Fall, and whether Oriel should be condemned for their decision, as only a subset of people who supported the Rhodes Must Fall campaign would support this motion today. Noted that his college will be putting one vote on each side of this motion, to reflect both opinions in the student community.

Nikhil Venkatesh (Corpus Christi) – Argued that it is erroneous to suggest that only a subset of people who support Rhodes Must Fall support this motion. Stated that all students should be supporting this motion, regardless of their views on Rhodes Must Fall, as it is explicitly about making colleges keep their promises to students, and as a student union, that is what we're here to do.

Kate Welsh (Oriel) – Reported that Oriel had an open meeting on Monday, and she brought a very similar motion to this which condemned their governing body for failing to consult students and for breaking their promise to students. Explained that their JCR decided to not vote on that motion, because they did not yet have enough information or knowledge of the reasons behind Oriel's decision. Stated that because of that her vote will be an abstention, and asked council to consider how this vote might impact the vote that Oriel students put forward.

Richard Kendall (Magdalen) – Urged that some people have missed the point, which is not about whether we support Rhodes Must Fall, but that Oriel college made a commitment to having a six-month consultation with students, and now seemingly because of what their donors want, they are revoking that commitment. Argued that if a precedent for disregarding students like this is set, it could be very dangerous.

Move to vote.

Move to vote opposed.

Eden Tanner (St John's) – Claimed that no-one is going to change their mind now and we all have better things to do.

Jeff Martin (Somerville) – Suggested that we could make some small amendments that could allay some people's worries.

Vote on move to vote:

For – 78

Against – 9

Move to vote.

Eden Bailey – Claimed that everyone is here because they believe in the power of the Student Union across the whole University, and if this is a Student Union that cannot support other students who are being screwed over by the authorities in their college, I don't not know what else we are supposed to be doing. Argued that this is about standing together and supporting one another when other people are being let down, and not having commitments upheld to them. Stated that regardless of views on RMF (advising to not necessarily take the views in the Cherwell poll as indicative, and that a listening period is different to a poll), we need to make a

statement as a student union, otherwise we cannot expect to be taken seriously.

For – 81

Against – 5

Abstain – 11

**Motion passed.**

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### **g. Passage of motions without discussion**

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### **h. Motions of No Confidence or censure**

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### **i. Motions to amend Bye-Laws, General Regulations or Election Regulations**

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### **j. Motions authorising expenditure**

#### 2. Donation towards Queer Strike Speaker Event

#### **Council Notes:**

1. That Queer Strike is a grassroots, multi-racial, lesbian bi, trans, queer women's group campaigning for economic, legal and human rights.
2. That Queer Strike is unfunded and run entirely by volunteers, many of whom are on low incomes.
3. That OUSU's LGBTQ Campaign has organised a speaker event on Thursday the 4th of February at 7pm for members of Queer Strike to share their experiences of fighting for asylum in the UK with Oxford students.
4. That the LGBTQ Campaign has a budget of £200 per term to cover all events and expenses.

#### **Council Believes:**

1. That low income should not prevent anyone from attending an event and sharing their experiences with others.
2. That it is the role of the LGBTQ Campaign to support political causes, such as the right to asylum of anyone who is persecuted on the grounds of their gender identity and/or sexuality.
3. That spreading information about the asylum process, and making a donation to Queer Strike would help their members to continue the important work they do.
4. That the LGBTQ Campaign's event would help to highlight the queerphobic legacy left by British imperialism, which contributes to the numbers of people from former colonies, such as members of Queer Strike, who are forced to flee their homes.

#### **Council Resolves:**

1. To donate £200 to Queer Strike, to cover the cost of travel from London to Oxford, and to contribute towards the cost of refreshments.

**Proposed:** Catherine Kelly (St Hugh's)

**Seconded:** Vivian Holmes (Wadham)

Catherine Kelly (St Hugh's) – Informed council that the LGBTQ campaign are holding an event which will discuss LGBTQ asylum issues, with four members of Queer Strike coming to speak.

Added that Queer Strike are totally unfunded so they ask for a donation when they speak, and that many of their members are on very low wages, so they ask that their travel expenses are reimbursed.

Zack (St Catherine's) – Asked if £200 is the total amount needed.

Catherine – Answered that they have also received £100 from Wadham.

Hossein Sharafi (Keble) – Asked how much is left in the discretionary budget.

Catherine – Replied that there is £1470 left.

Katherine Broke (Hertford) – Asked if the campaign are looking to expand their budget for the next year.

Catherine – Answered that they are looking into it, as they would like to hold more speaker events.

Emily Silcock (New) – Asked if the proposer could outline what the budget had been spent on so far.

Catherine – Answered that this term the LGBTQ have spent £30 reimbursing the queer womens' social group trip to see Carol.

Emily – Asked what they had spent in total so far this academic year.

Catherine – Answered that she would have to check that, as she was not involved with finances last term.

Emily – Asked how much is left in the campaign budget.

Catherine – Replied that her understanding is that they spend £200 per term, and this term they have spent £30, but would have to double check what is left for the year.

**Motion passed with no opposition.**

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## **k. Other motions**

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### **i. Any other business**

Nick Cooper (St John's) – Informed council that we are making some changes to our rules, and that the main changes are available in the agenda. Explained that these will be coming to their first reading in 5<sup>th</sup> week council. Urged council to contact him if they have any problems with the changes, and also reminded council that they are only proposals and council will have plenty of time to discuss them. Flagged a change which affects our complaints procedure, which we have not yet reached a decision on yet, however more information will come to 5<sup>th</sup> week. Noted

that the current thinking will remove the complaints committee which is currently elected in council, and replace it with a committee made up of student trustees and external trustees.

Hossein Sharafi (Keble) – Informed council that he feels he has been left out of the loop, stating that he heard that OUSU was considering minor changes back in September, but did not hear about these changes until looking at the agenda.

Nick – Apologised but explained that nothing much has happened yet so there is currently little detail to provide. Explained that it went to the trustee board before we were trustees, so he is unable to comment on that, but it will be going to a board meeting the following day. Noted that due to the way the law works, it is sensible to take it to the board and the university first.

Eden Tanner (St John's) – Informed council that this came to the board when she was still a trustee, and confirmed that the original plan was to only make minor changes, but it proved to be so unworkable that we found we really just needed to scrap it and start again.

Hossein – Agreed to an extent that the current system needs work, but also stated that he is still not happy with the proposal. Asked when to best to raise his concerns.

Nick – Suggested that he send them by email, and then if they still exist to bring them to 5<sup>th</sup> week council, particularly as the board has not yet met to discuss the changes.

Charles (Keble) – Asked if council will be able to discuss this.

Nick – Answered that yes, as the bye-law changes have to come to three meetings of council.

Hossein – Informed council that the bye-laws do not currently match up to the articles of association in terms of numbers.

Nick – Replied that these will be covered by consequential changes, which are needed following the changes made to the articles of association last term.

Hossein – Suggested that the current vacancies still be advertised on the agenda as they are still in place and vacant.

Marina Lambrakis (St John's) – Replied that it would be taken to Steering Committee.