



council minutes

3rd week Michaelmas 2003

Meeting opens 14:40

Chair: Please arrive on time to sign in and bring your own agenda.

RD: OSSL Meeting – those eligible to vote are Presidents, OUSU reps and existing trustees. One piece of business is confirmation of people nominated as Trustees.

Dan Finley, Balliol

John Blake, St Hugh's

Lindsey Cole, SJC

Louise McMullan, Wadham

Ian Caddy, St Anne's

No objections. Close of meeting.

Conor: Matters arising from minutes of 1st week: election results need to be added.

Chair: Ratifications for Elections Committee – no objections.

Do sabs have anything to add to their reports?

HP: Nothing to add.

RD: Nope.

RB: I need lots of co-chairs.

CW: No.

DP: Graduate elections were on the same night as the Tories but unlike IDS I got to stay. Highlighted the problems of graduate involvement.

LM: Nope.

JHB: Thanks for donating to Breast Cancer. Come to RAG events. Trying to get moving on Fair Trade.

No questions.

Chair: Any executive officers like to make reports?

Ros: Need co-chairs for disabilities action – it's an important campaign. One World also needs co-chairs.

Ian: Thank you to all who came on the march – please pay for coach tickets.

Greg: Have been on OUSU Exec for two weeks and missed all meetings – will work harder.

John: Queer Rights needs a co-chair.

Conor: List of colleges to name and shame who have not appointed an RO. If not done then it will fall to President.
You do need to have an RO. Please can I have phone numbers as well.

Cock up over welfare description. Will be printing something in the OxStu.

Need More people for Junior tribunal.

Need 3 more “ordinary” members of OUSU on elections committee.

Questions:

Abby Green (Wadham):

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Question for Matthew Richardson: Were comments on front page of Cherwell in line with OUSU policy?

Matt: Yes.

Ros: Does marching count as direct action?

Matt: No

Daniel Rees (Merton):

When holding sessions for college Ros?

Conor: When I have names for more than one third of them.

Ros: What's the deadline for common rooms to apply for hustings?

Conor: It was second week but that's been binned – please do it quickly if you want them.

Elections:

Elections Committee:

Declarations:

RB: No

CW: No

RF: OULC

RV: No

All other answers no for all candidates.

RF: OUSU officer for JCR also complaints board. See it as similar to Junior Tribunal.

CW: Been involved in elections all the time at Oxford. Was a candidate last year. Been an activist also Keble CRO, OUSU DRO and RO. One thing I haven't done.

RB: On Exec of JCR committee. Was CRO. Know OUSU from outside have never been involved.

RV: CRO for Wadham. Read the electoral regs. Short and sweet – vote for me.

Questions:

Ros: Will candidates endeavour to be on time?

All: Yes.

Election for Medical Sciences Divisional Board Rep:

Suwanthini Mahadevan (Somerville):

Interested in the way medical courses are run. Centralisation. Committed and dedicated.

Questions:

DP: Got an email today about it. How would you publicise it?

SM: Send out emails and ask for comments.

Louise Radnofsky (Univ):

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How do you feel about the B Mat?

SM: See it as necessary.
Need another method to distinguish.

Ros: Have any political affiliations.

SM: No

Greg: Why not?

SM: Because I'm an ignorant medic.

Nem Con:

Opposition to all motions.

RB: Short statement. Draw attention to equal opps and harassment in proctors and assessors memorandums.

Chair: I concur.

Motion 1:

Lucy Underwood (Corpus):

OUSU currently has ban.

Life offers a unique service. I'm concerned that some women aren't provided for.

Original ban is based on belief that it is directive which has not been properly proven.

Non-directive is a fluid term.

Ethics committee report did not conclude that Life was directive.

We need to determine what directive means. Need to look at what is currently advertised.

BPAS mission statement is to prevent or end unwanted pregnancy – more directive than Life.

What we decide today effects real women – tragic if any woman cannot be provided for.

Rudy K (BNC):

What is unique that others do not offer?

LU: All services are free.
Also provides accommodation if you decide to keep your baby.
Others don't offer practical help.

LM: Do Life counsellors have to be members of the organisation Life?

LU: Yes

RB: Do Life counsellors claim they are non directive?

LU: Will read a statement from Paula Flynn: "Life counselling is non-directive." They do not try to impose their own opinion. They do not refer women for abortion.

Conor: PoO – that's an opinion.

Chair: It has to be factual.

LU: There is no waiting list, no charge and it is strictly confidential.

JC: When was the last time BPAS was advertised in a publication?

LU: In Unplanned Pregnancy Guide.

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David Gilbey:

What was the conclusion of the ethics committee.

LU: Unable to reach a unanimous decision.

Ros Dampier (St Hilda's):

Does BPAS have link to Life website?

LU: No bit gives address of life head office.

CW: Council Further Notes II: How many complaints has OUSU received?

LU: Don't know but know that there are unhappy women.

CW: Was advertising ban passed by some officials or a huge majority in OUSU council?

LU: Council but was instigated by officials.

Move to debate (withdrawn).

Lindsey Cole (SJC):

How are counsellors trained?

LU: Not currently required to receive outside diploma but they all receive training from Life.

Daniel Rees (Merton):

If a woman decides on abortion how does Life respond?

LU: Life does not refer abortion.

J O-C (Magdalen):

Does Life has any religious affiliation or bias?

LU: No

Andrew Copson (Balliol):

Is there counselling at Life centres as well as on the phone.

LU: They are non directive over the phone and they will provide counselling over the phone.

Mike Girling (SEH):

How is Life funded?

LU: A registered charity – money comes from donations.

Louise Radnofsky (Univ):

Please could you clarify the wording of current life advertising?

LU: < shows typical advert >

SH (Pembroke):

Finding of ethics committee were that it is directive.

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FM (Trinity):

Does the ban mean that Life can't appear at Freshers Fair?

LU: Oxford Pro-Life Society was there but there were no Life publications.

Rudy K (BNC):

What is a woman told if she expresses an opinion to have an abortion. Would they discourage it?

LU: Policy is not.

Move to debate:

"no longer asking for factual info – now just making points"

"going to be a long debate and we need all the factual info we can get"

Move to debate passes.

CW: If someone wants an organisation banned the procedure is to bring it to council. Ban on Life doesn't apply to other things.

1. Believe that Life is directive.

2. Directive is not acceptable for OUSU.

I got differing emails on this; some saying it's clear that Life offers directive advice, e.g. "Abortion abuses women" and "Life knows abortion solves nothing" even rape, incest, abuse.

"Forgotten fathers" Life wants to help men whose partners are to carry through with pregnancy.

Info from Sheffield says they are trained to actively encourage women to keep baby.

Info from Cambridge says they refuse to give any info on how to get an abortion – even when directly asked.

Ex-NUS welfare officer says always directive and they lure women in with free testing. They give women a bag of baby clothes when they leave the session even if they decide to have an abortion.

There's an artificial separation of counsellors and campaigning group. All counsellors are paid up members of Life which is a campaigning group.

Misleading. Not all trained. Can't take the risk. Doesn't matter if not all are – even if some are.

Original motion to ban directive organisation – not the same as this motion.

OUSU is non-directive which means the decision is only up to one person – the pregnant woman.

If people want directive advice they are free to do that but we can't allow our students to be at risk.

Pregnancy is not an easy time.

We shouldn't put this woman under any unnecessary pressure.

Andrew Copson (Balliol):

Two years ago when there was an attempt to overturn this motion lots of people phoned Life.

I too phoned as partner of someone thinking of having an abortion and got very directive advice.

Antonia Bunce also received such an experience.

Of course it's anecdotal. But even if only ONE person gets this treatment then it's not acceptable.

The VP Women could consider putting Life in the unplanned pregnancy pack. But we shouldn't be accepting advertising – that's unethical.

Saro McKenna (Trinity):

All need to be clear on this. This motion is trying to use OUSU's pro-choice policy to give a platform.

I phoned Life this morning. I said that to keep a baby would mean leaving university. Already made a decision – a mental leap.

The specifics given for help after pregnancy – not actually available.

OUSU has pro-choice policy. Not in line – can't allow a platform.

Ros Dampier (St Hilda's):

There are two issues here:

1. Is it directive? Yes from the evidence given.

2. Campaigning vs Abortion

The physical affects of abortion.

Who is directing from the evidence given.

2. Campaigning vs Abortion

The physical affects of abortion.

Life Web compared to the NHS – they're very different.

Emotional affects of abortion.

NHS research shows that women vary greatly.

Life says that 40% of women suffer emotionally after abortion.

BPAS vs Life: the former lays out the three options but Life is just very anti-abortion.

The heart of the issue is that Life adverts don't state that they are a pro-life organisation.

How soon in contact with an individual do they make it clear that they are a pro-life organisation.

RB: This is a non-directive / directive issue.

Need to offer options based on their decisions.

This motion doesn't prevent me in my professional capacity from pointing people towards Life if they know that they are keeping the baby.

If a woman is unsure – will they give them all of the options?

Direct to non-directive agencies.

The most important thing is HER DECISION.

This is about an advertising ban.

Life will be able to advertise itself as non-directive in our publications. We need to make sure we have options.

Move to vote.

Luciel (Magdalen):

Life is bidirectional. Look at the name!

Life probably twigged this morning when lots of people phoned them up so some circumstantial evidence may be misleading.

If people are pro-life then they are likely to know that Life exists.

Move to vote.

Bex Wilkinson (SEH):

Heard everything and people have mandates.

A N Other: More points to be made.

Move to vote fails.

F Cody (Hertford):

Phoned life and looked at the web. The website doesn't look like it's directional.

Helena Puig Larrauri (St Hilda's):

A rang Life a few years ago when I was JCR president. I would not want students to phone – I found it most upsetting and I wasn't even pregnant! Would not want to put anyone else through that.

John Blake (St Hugh's):

I didn't ring Life. Ethics committee was not conclusive – they were evenly divided. This ban will not be denying access to these services and the information will still be available.

Don't believe that Life is non-directional.

Lucy Underwood (Corpus):

Maintain that this is highly relevant to consider services that OUSU approves of. There is a lot of evidence of acceptable counselling. Life does not fall within standards of directional advice. Is the BPAS directional?

CW: No policy on BPAS so no opinion.

LU: No interest in other organisations.

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Laura West (St Catherine's):

Pol – not up to OUSU to determine the focus of its ban it is up to its members.

LU: Problem of anecdotal evidence on which so much of this is based.

May not hand out baby clothes.

Evidence should be given equal weighting.

Sarah Taylor:

Catherine showed directive leaflets from Life.

But it is useful that Life is a pro-life organisation.

It is not necessarily a campaigning organisation.

These people are concerned with pregnancy care.

No client who approached the pregnancy care service would ever be shown any of these leaflets.

They are not available in pregnancy care centres.

Implication is that it must be directive. We are talking about the counselling service. They bring up what they want to talk about. Giving out baby clothes is a service which they provide – and they provide it as and when it is asked for.

The pro-life platform is not relevant to the counselling service they provide.

It's not right to have this attitude of no platform for pro-life. Excluding a minority which OUSU shouldn't be doing.

A lot of women in the university wouldn't feel comfortable in using the services which are currently advertised.

You can get conflicting information on websites.

Move to vote.

Greg Stafford (SPC):

We all know how we're going to vote.

Omar Salem (St Hugh's):

I've got an amendment to add.

Summation speeches:

LU: Main problem is that the burden of proof is being thrown on life.

It should be on those who claim it was directive and need to prove that we most definitely should not advertise – that evidence has not been forthcoming today.

By refusing to allow Life to advertise we are limiting peoples welfare options.

Please bare in mind that Life's services make a huge difference to some women.

A Copson: I felt the debate was clarifying.

Debate remains about whether we want commercial space given to an organisation which is at least sometimes directive.

Recorded vote:

FOR: 9 AGAINST: 89 ABSTENTIONS: 3

Second motion – opposition withdrawn. PASSES.

Third motion – Photocopying.

J O-C: Costs students more.

Time consuming.

Expensive for Bod because twice as much toner, paper, etc..

Environmental issues.

Spine of books often damaged anyway.

Inconsistent across libraries.

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Short factual questions:

Greg Stafford (SPC):

Where is the Bod?

A. Stanard: Is this to do with copy right agreements?

J O-C: Don't think so.

Omar: Has this been discussed with library officials?

J O-C: Motion mandates VP AcAff to discuss it.

<opposition speech>

Andrew Copson:

The books in the bod have to be there for ever!
This will increase the damage to them – there is a reason that these rules are here.

Move to vote – withdrawn.

Pete Morton (Somerville):

You have to show books before you copy them so they won't let you damage and old or valuable books.

Helen McCabe (St Hilda's):

The books already get damaged. This is time consuming.

Move to vote – passes.

J O-C: Easier for us all.
Books get damaged anyway.

Rudy: Motion is incorrect.

Greg: Can we have a recorded vote because it's funny.

HPL: Let's not because it takes too long.

Motion passes.

Any other business?

Angela Kail (DRO):

Everyone got elected.

Daniel Rees (Merton):

This room is crap.

Louise Radnofsky (Univ):

Can we return to a policy whereby the Chair of Council encourages alternate speeches from either side of a debate because at the moment it is not well represented.

