

## OUSU Council Minutes: 3<sup>rd</sup> Week

### JT vacancies

- a. Minutes of the previous meeting NONE
- b. Matters arising NONE
- c. Ratifications in Council PASSED NEM CON
- d. Elections in Council: Caroline Leonard + Alana Barber
- e. Reports from sabbatical officers:

Alan Strickland: Expert rent watchdog panel to be created

Imran Khan: Talking to the Environment Panel

Jenny Hoogewerf-McComb: University teaching tutors how to teach, students how to study.

Jamie Frew: Condom findings, suggestion of moving to a new brand of condom but not recommended after large number of complaints, purchasing of lube, not buying loose condoms, free condoms for everyone, please, *come* and get some!

- f. Reports from executive officers: None
- g. Questions to members of the executive: None

### Filming Council

Alan Strickland: Shouldn't be sound recorded

Jamie Frew: It's all open to everyone so why not have it filmed?

Ben Jasper: What about the BNP?

Council to be filmed for the entire meeting except for the No Platform motion

- h. Procedural motions  
Motions to be discussed 1, 2, 4, 5, 6
- i. Motions passed nem con 3, 7

### n. Other motions

- j. Abolishing Council delegates

Garth Smith: OUSU used to be affiliated to NUS and NUS delegates used to have a vote in OUSU Council which was transferred to Council delegates. Similar motion to this one brought last Trinity term, passed by a simple majority but failed on a 2/3 majority, essentially because OUSU was in the middle of discussing the issue. JCRs and the Exec have votes. JCR 3<sup>rd</sup> votes can be used to represent the minority. Council Delegates don't reflect the minority as they reflect certain groups. OUSU Constitution itself states that it is a federation of CRs. Anyone can speak or view Council minutes. Delegates give an unrepresentative power to a small minority of groups. Students need to be given back the power.

Jenny HMC: Do NUS delegates have votes?

GS: No

Robert Barran, LMH: Would Council delegates have a vote now?

GS: Needs three readings so will not be passed until MT

Kieran Hutchinson-Dean: Something silly

GS: Needs to be addressed by that JCR

GS: Council Delegates are not mandated to have any views except their own

Emma Clossick: What if 3<sup>rd</sup> votes are fixed?

GS: They are still constitutionally mandated and represent their JCR

Speech against

Kieran HD: Getting rid of CDs won't make Council more representative. OUSU really isn't working at the moment, CDs are a symptom rather than a cause at the moment. No students are demanding that CDs be abolished. In practice CDs aren't working. It's fine to have CDs as another way of representing students. Most JCRs aren't organised on a political basis and CDs do represent political views on a cross-campus basis. A lot of JCR reps aren't mandated to vote a particular way. CDs aren't a block vote and don't usually all vote the same way. CDs have been in their current form for many years without any major problems.

Ed Mayne: PoI NUS delegates were abolished.

KHD: NUS delegates had a vote in OUSU Council so why not go back to that system. I think we should reform the system as there's a place for CDs and we need to think it through.

Jenny HMcC: The new system and old system are completely different. NUS delegates should have the power to vote in OUSU Council.

Alan Strickland: We need to change as fundamentally in practice it just doesn't work. JCR Presidents are mandated by 400 people but delegates aren't. My predecessor Emma Norris said not to because they would be replaced by NUS Delegates. The Part-Time Executive used to be elected by a list but electing them individually really increased turnout. NUS Delegates are a hangover from the old system.

Lewis Iwu: JCRs have empowered you to make decisions: Less accountability with CDs. If we're looking to represent minorities then we should look to jcrs or exec.

Ed Mayne: In 1974 the quorum was 250. This was stopped to give a collegiate view to OUSU. JCRs and MCRs' views cannot be skewed in their view by this.

Jamie Frew: CRs can come with mandates to Council but it doesn't necessarily mean a fair view as the minority in a CR may not be represented in Council. Minority views can get blocked out. This system is very open to manipulation by groups who want en masse elections. I would suggest limiting the number of delegate positions for pressure groups.

Imran Khan: CDs all came from the same political group and aren't representative. There is actually no way to get rid of Council Delegates.

Pete Surr: Problem is that Council is not in balance.

KHD: When have CDs overruled CRs in Council? CDs didn't swing that vote in the last Council.

Alastair Wrench: The fact it hasn't or won't happen doesn't mean the system isn't flawed, CRs could be overruled. A 55% mandate in a CR wouldn't mean a minority vote was necessarily got rid of. General opinion can be used to give a view, we do what we think is best for our college. CDs don't represent a minority.

Mark Baker: There's other options: Realgamating with NUS delegates, reducing numbers, changing the way they vote.

Neil Bowerman: Everyone here represents a point of view, but who does the represent except their political party or their own views/.

Ed Mayne: Move to recorded vote, passed nem con

Garth Smith: Giving power back to the students, CDs don't represent a minority.

KHD: CDs get more people to stand, they don't currently give any legitimacy but should be elected in a competitive election. We should reform the system to inform people.

Chair moves to strike motion 2

KHD opposes: Vote this through as a backup  
Opposition fails

### 3. NUS Funding

EM: Last year affiliated to NUS but didn't decide how to pay. Nightmare all year. Decided to allow JCRs and MCRs whether to opt in. Meant mainly JCRs were paying despite grads getting many of the benefits. Divided costs by number of members in CRs to make sure they paid a proportionate amount. Proposal to split profit of NUS Extra, only other way to use commercial services to subsidise other than raising affiliation fees.

SFQ

Nick Long: Will OUSU lose money or gain on NUS Extra cards?

EM: 220, 230 but had motion against publicity at beginning of the year. Available to buy now depending on views of CRs towards NUS Extra. Let me explain each option. A is current system, but an administrative nightmare not able to give out costs. Prefer option B but may lead to a loss for OUSU difficult in current financial situation. OUSU still has to pay even if lots of CRs disaffiliate.

IK: Estimation of how option B would affect OUSU financially.

EM: Depends on success of NUS Extra. OUSU would have incentive to promote. Money all goes into one big pot, don't know if budget would balance.

AM: Sprung question on MCRs late this year – plausible to get more to affiliate if we promote it?

EM: Quite difficult, not as engaged.

IK: On current sales of NUS cards what would the cost be to OUSU?

EM: About £10,000, would take sales of about 2,500 cards to break even.

HB: How do NUS decide fees?

EM: Similar to OUSU, includes block grant and number of students.

EC: Does option B go against policy?

EM: Yes but only because we don't agree with it. Selling NUS cards the only way.

Problem we don't get all the benefits because many colleges are not affiliated – different from big student unions.

Paolo Wyatt: Does option B mean my college will be charged even if it doesn't want to?

EM: Commercial services would subsidise but no affiliation fees from CRs.

JHM: Complicated. First option unwieldly. Second option negative ramifications. At NUS different SUs sold very different amounts. Big financial risk to take. Gamble to subsidise NUS. See if we can sell next year first.

Chair: Moved to debate

Adam Marsh: How would this affect decision to centrally affiliate?

EM: A referendum so another would be needed to overturned.

EM: Is possible to market better and sell to sixth-formers who have them already.

AS: Important for Council to make a decision. Favour option A, NUS reducing affiliation fees, but OUSU can't just add 10 grand to budget. Agreed to centrally affiliate to save college money through bulk buying. No need for OUSU to subsidise, CRs can pay and will be paying a lot less. Please vote for A.

EM: Option A means decision with CRs as to whether to buy in.

Clear majority for option A

Motion passes

Paul Dwyer leaves, HB takes the chair,

#### 4. Repeal of No Platform Policy

Jonny Medland: Issue came up last term, Oxide radio interview with Nick Griffin. Not the issue here getting constitution like Ox Stu. Quote from Nick Griffin made me bring this motion saying only communists are against the BNP. Allowed to do this because not exposed to open debate and defeat. No platform not just illiberal an undemocratic but also bad for fight against BNP, implies support that they don't have. Repeal doesn't mean automatic access to freshers fair. Clarified with Sabs. Freshers

fair has own policy. Other publications eg Survival guide it doesn't apply, no political platform anyway. Affects Council, doesn't allow people to put forward fascist views. Reaction would prevent this anyway. Only issue is ability to stand in elections. Can't see this happening, would be defeated anyway, not many would want to do this.

AM: Can we call it censorship?

How does OUSU decide?

Renewed in 2005 only BNP and NF, others up to discretion of President.

Lewis Iwu: How many other SUs have a no platform policy?

A clear majority?

Only far right groups?

Yes

Martin Lennon: What if unopposed?

JM: Stand against them

David Ellis: Freshers fair access?

JM: Not an expert, this motion would not give them automatic access.

OB: Aware of fascist activism in other SUs that increased fascist attacks and violence.

JM: Yes, heard about Nottingham but no details. Oxford no BNP present, unlikely to have much of an effect.

EM: Sab candidate gets 500 posters, other candidates get fewer do fascists get these posters as well?

JM: Yes, but need candidates first. But Stalinists

PW: Covered by harassment policy.

Robert Baron (LMH): Is this viable in other areas?

No factual answer possible.

DE: Positive reasons?

JM: Implies positive support for BNP within Oxford.

EC: Spoken to anti-fascist campaigners?

JM: I'm British Asian, BNP opposed to me, anti-racist campaigners mixed views. Anti-fascist campaigners in favour of no platform policies.

EM: How many CRs have no platform policies?

JM: Not sure about that – some have reaffirmed in past few weeks.

EM: How would affect these?

JM: fascist posters wouldn't be allowed in some colleges.

PW: OUSU elections separate from CRs so would have no impact.

LI: Any attempt for a fascist to stand?

JHM: Loon neo-fascist.

Stefan Baskerville (Univ): How do Islamo-fascist groups fit in?

JM: Up to President.

Mark Baker: First poisoned Marxist to come out of Oriel JCR! Motion misguided and dangerous. Don't want BNP spreading hate with our resources, in our hustings, in our posters. Only example of candidate in Manchester, no way of stopping it. Bath couldn't stop Nick Griffen. These events increase racial tensions. Not an issue of free speech per se – platform raises people up, gives BNP legitimacy and resources. Dangerous as BNP gain legitimacy at Oxford and around the country. What message does normalisation of BNP by OUSU send out to the rest of the country and the campaigners fighting against them? Utterly irresponsible. Ashamed if this passes.

Ben Jasper: Open debate doesn't work with these groups. Is a risk with these groups. Where no platform policies in the past have been removed increases in racial tensions. Prey on apathy eg council delegates. Nottingham shows giving a platform is exploited. Open debate doesn't work because they lie, promote a rift in racial tensions. Can't engage in any rational debate with them and prove lies are wrong during intellectual and rational debate. Kind of groups and individuals associated with the BNP dangerous – associated with attacks and violence against students. Student at Balliol subject to intimidation. Shows we'll support them with resources and raise a flag which they might exploit.

Alan Strickland: Do you want me to spend my time engaging with the National Front. I'm not paid to engage with fascists but deal with real issues that effect students on a day-to-day basis. Do you want to see sabs pictured with Nick Griffin? Sends a ridiculous message. Can't argue with irrational. No platform not controversial - just as offensive speakers would be removed from meetings, so offensive groups should be removed. Would enforce policy against individuals with these views anyway, so codifying through no platform policy should not be controversial.

Adam Smith (Balliol): No platform flawed, only includes right-wing groups.

AS: Policy not restrictive, council could do what it wants.

Marxist groups can't be removed. BNP a national political party arrogant not to engage, not very successful across the country. Targeted areas with social problems. Oxford don't have these, won't be targeted. Fact they lie just another thing to have against them. Students have intelligence to see what the BNP are. Should allow everyone to express views. Have confidence that they would be seen as absurd.

Adam Marsh (Trinity): Current policy based on lazy and simplistic view, just ignore. At the Oxford Union in first week a representative from Islamic group spoke and condemned liberal values. Laughed out of room.

BJ: Nick Griffen not allowed to speak?

AM: No formal policy. Can't use offensive material anyway. Have to trust students.

LI: Mandated to repeal No Platform by college. Potential threat argument works well in Dagenham but not at Oxford University where we debate and argue. Success of

BNP seems far-fetched. Would give them a grilling here. What's the harm in doing this? Room would be against them. No platform too paternalist.

Thom Greenwood (Queens): Keighley home town targeted by BNP, increased tensions. BNP biggest problem where they are legitimised. Ann Cryer MP for Keighley said most important lesson is to challenge the BNP head-on. BNP masters of deception, adopted a no-platform policy. Rev. Prichard said Repeal of OUSU policy would be very damaging message. Need to expose fascism but also show disapproval of wider society and no platform does this. Gives BNP respect they don't deserve. Consequences to actions outside Oxford bubble. Respect work of anti-fascist and vote down the motion.

GS: Move to vote, heard all the arguments.

Lee Solomon: Issues that haven't been made yet. Only take too minutes

MTV clearly fails.

JF: Person in OUSU who deals with racism policy. First thing that needs saying students are vulnerable. Large file on cults in my office – need to stop these groups exploiting students. Mustn't give BNP any advantage. Been receiving hate-mail from Nick Griffen or someone impersonating him. Griffen not a popular person within the BNP, has a popular image, most members are still hardline racists. Not a true example of what they are like. OUSU cannot censor, only governments can. OUSU can not stop you reading what you want but can stop their association with us, something they would then exploit. Don't want to give the BNP an inch. If others want to bring No Platform policies for Stalinist groups then do so. OUSU can't protect members. No Platform policy decided in Council, but can control what happens here.

Paul Dwyer retakes the Chair.

JMC: Griffen uses Cambridge to legitimise, don't let him use Oxford. Think about national and international ramifications. People listen to and respect us. No Platform says that we reject BNP as beyond the pale. Think of implications of BNP standing for SU elections. What about message to applicants. A policy shared by police, teachers. Let's keep it.

OB: Respect anti-fascist campaigners right to define best no platform policy. Policy about allowing fascists to protest outside or let them in. Naive to think BNP wouldn't exploit this. BNP getting stronger, this would legitimise them. Responsibility to respect Unite against facism.

JM: Point by Jenny ban on BNP in police and teachers. Obvious, meant to enforce the law, teach our children. Presence of fascists unacceptable here. BNP will use this as a propaganda victory but at the moment say that students are very open to their views but that No Platform policy stops them taking over the SU. Will continue to say things anyway whatever we do. Problem won't go away. Repeal gives a chance to crush them. Let them stand and then defeat them.

Caroline (St. Catz): Repeal doesn't mean promoting the BNP. Look at Oxide, not a rational debate. Louis Theroux example giving a legitimising platform but actually

ridicules them. Repeal can be used against the fascists. So difficult to define, become fascists ourselves. Evan Harris said No Platform was illegal.

Joe Ammoun (SEH): Heard a lot about what might come up if BNP allowed to stand. Violence and incitement are against the law anyway. No problem there. Legitimised after Oxide Radio banned him. Gave the opportunity to talk about the right to be heard, something liberals would agree with. Would brandish myself on Redwatch with pride. Should let them stand and defeat them.

PW: Any Oxford student can stand in elections. Can't use offensive material, would be removed immediately and go to the Proctors. Current effect of No Platform means BNP cannot be by their name.

EM: Have to declare affiliation. Can't be a member of BNP and stand.

PW: Oh, didn't realise. Seems silly given people with fascist views can find. Would be better to get things out into the open. Absurd that we could exclude people from election, everyone should be allowed to stand.

James MacDaide (CCC): In Northern Ireland no platform policy against Sein Fein, vote share grew more in this period than any other. No one here is a BNP supporter. People who feel disenfranchised are able to rail more against the system and claim legitimacy where people feel left out. By the end all parties supported it being stopped. No Platform doesn't work, a fact.

EM: OUSU isn't censoring, Ox Stu allows interviews. This motion is about three things OUSU Council, OUSU elections and OUSU resources. Would allow BNP to use OUSU facilities, have meetings in OUSU and do photocopying. Would use repeal as a propaganda victory. Have enough problems attracting ethnic minorities as it is this will make it worse.

Sam Gisbourne (St. Hildas): Repeal would set a precedent and they could get in to Freshers Fair.

Sarah Hutchinson (Wolfson): At Leeds, originally undecided but then in favour of No Platform. BNP used groups within the University to promote their views, took photos of people voting, made physical threats. Really important to say we have an obligation to protect fellow students.

Alistair Wrench: MTV, most people decided. MTV withdrawn.

Lee Solomon (Worcester): This policy is patronising to say that we can't rationally debate the BNP seems ridiculous. At the moment just ignoring rather than rejecting their views. Academic institution, pursue truth, advance ideas, need to listen to lies. Restrictions not OUSUs place. I want BNP to stand for election, want to know who the fascists are. Faith that there are hardly any.

Paul Fleming (Mansfield): Ultimately No Platform policy isn't working, people still participate in these things. Policy of Unite against policy isn't ours, not an argument to say they know better than we do. We shouldn't restrict the speech of people. These

people are members of the University, we need to include them and engage with them.

BJ: Lovely to have a world of rational world but that's not the case hasn't happened where other similar policies are repealed. Oxford just as apathetic as anywhere else. In Cowley and elsewhere significant ethnic groups, repeal will affect these communities. Only ever told Griffen went to Cambridge. Symbolism is important should recognise that.

Paolo: MTV heard all the views.

JF: Heard interesting new issues that should be discussed.

MTV passes.

PW: Secret vote – easier to administer.

LI: Recorded vote? People have mandates.

HB: Recorded vote would be put on website.

JMH: Former OUSU people on Redwatch.

JF: Names put out could be used for intimidations.

GS: Want to see what CR are doing, at least let them put up hands.

Move to secret ballot

JF: Issue of security, trust representatives.

Adam Smith (Balliol): Like to see what others think, shouldn't give in to intimidation.

Secret ballot move passes.

5. Said Business School

EM: Few years ago had policy to boycott Said Business School. Wrong that money was accepted from arms trade. Lots of people study there. Lots of students would benefit if we drop the boycott. Resources that could be beneficial are available.

SFQ: EC: Willing to look at alternatives to campaign against?

EM: Yes. Should only refer to it as the Business School

EC: Look into alternatives, add to resolves?

IK: Not going to make a difference, campaign should focus on new things.

Why change the name?

EM: Said an arms dealer.

EC: No ability to lobby to change name?

EM: Would still oppose new funding from unethical sources.

Adam Smith: Practical differences?

IK: None, a moral statement.

JHM: Difficult to get University to pay money back?

EM: Yes

MB: When was it built? Did we deliver the Ox Stu before the boycott?

EM: Built 4/5 years ago, not sure about Ox Stu

LI: Financial denefits?

EM: Not directly but potentially could have indirect benefits.

GS: Would receive Ox Stu, cost of this?

EM: For successor but think should be delivered to more faculties.

No opposition passes nem con.

Motion 4 fails 28 for, 33 against, 5 abstentions.

AOB: None

End of meeting