

Minutes of Termly Council Trinity Term 2001

OUSU Termly Council held on Friday 8th June at 2pm in the Harris Lecture Theatre Oriel

i. Election of Chair of Council

One position available, one nomination received.

Daniel Johnson (Corpus Christi)

Daniel appeared before Council to hust. He outlined his experience as a Returning Officer at the Union and an OUSU Deputy Returning Officer. He further has experience of OUSU Council having been a Council Delegate and a regular attendee of Council. He also said that he knows how Council works and he knows the majority of people who attend. Furthermore, he claimed to be good at rules. He concluded, saying that he was keeping his hust short, due to an essay crisis

Nick Clark (Somerville) asked whether the essay crisis was likely to endure into next term and thereby impede on his responsibilities as Chair of Council?

Daniel Johnson (Corpus Christi) replied that it was exceptional, due to being up all night

Andrew Thomas (St Annes) asked what the candidate doing up all night?

Daniel Johnson (Corpus Christi) replied that he was watching a fine party lose in the General Election

Sacha Ismail (Somerville) asked whether he was worried about Council being short?

Daniel Johnson (Corpus Christi) agreed that all motions should be thoroughly discussed. He added, however, that he was not sure what Chair of Council can do about the use of procedural motions to curtail debate, or if Council members are unwilling to debate

Dan Paskins (Magdalen) noted the intimidating atmosphere in Council and asked how the Chair of Council could make it more welcoming for those outside the OUSU clique?

Daniel Johnson (Corpus Christi) replied that the existing form of stating name and college before speaking already made Council more open. He supported the stance of Council in ensuring no intimidation of any views. He believed that it would encourage students to attend if they could rely upon their views being listened to with respect

ii. Termly Reports of the President and Vice-Presidents

The Chair asked whether any Sabbatical or Executive Officer had anything to add to written reports?

There being no additions, the Chair further asked whether anybody had any questions to ask of the Sabbaticals?

Sacha Ismail (Somerville) noted that many of the political commentaries on the recent General Election bemoaned the relative absence of political activity. As such, why is the President pleased to see a reduction in the activity of Council and motions?

Kirsty McNeil (Balliol) replied that it was not the job of OUSU to solicit motions. She added that she was pleased that Council was finally becoming relevant to students as students.

Sacha Ismail (Somerville) further asked the President whether she considered OUSU Council to have become depoliticised and whether she was pleased about such a trend?

Kirsty McNeil (Balliol) admitted to being confused about the questioner's definition of "*political*", and asked whether "*depoliticised*" meant relevant to students? She commented that OUSU was politicised in regards to its activities surrounding the Campaign for Free Education etc. Otherwise, she commented that she was pleased that OUSU was not taking stances on international government. She concluded that the question had abused the word political

Dan Paskins (Magdalen) commented that he could not remember a time when OUSU Council had discussed world government

Kirsty McNeil (Balliol) reminded him of the days when OUSU Council took stances on internal matters in Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Middle East. She commented that Common Room officers had not enjoyed attending, and had been unable to take relevant issues back to their Common Rooms. She added that whilst some members of Council may be upset at this constraint, feedback from College Rooms endorsed the view that Council is here to represent and help students

Sacha Ismail (Somerville) asked the President whether it was wrong that the student movement campaigned against Apartheid during the 1980s?

Kirsty McNeil (Balliol) replied that in democracy people make stances, sometimes accepted and sometimes otherwise. If the Student Union passed motions, then it would be supported. As such motions are no longer passed, then they are no longer the responsibility of President. If that is not the kind of union that students want, then that is a shame

The Chair asked that questions be of direct relevance to the Sabbaticals' termly reports

Sacha Ismail (Somerville) said that he had not asked whether the President would carry out a mandate if given it, but whether she thought that student campaigns on Apartheid are relevant?

The Chair reminded Kirsty McNeil that she was not under any obligation to answer question, as it was not directly relevant to the report

Kirsty McNeil (Balliol) replied that Oxford during the 1980s had disinvested in South Africa, an action which was entirely appropriate, and highlighted OUSU's continued campaign for ethical investment. She commented that such an action was relevant to students as it addressed how the University spent students' money. She added that the President's role is not to impose a political role on anybody, but to implement the will of Council. She concluded that anybody disagreed with the direction of OUSU, they should stand for election and submit motions until they receive a majority and may implement their plans

The Chair asked for further questions. None were asked

iii. Termly Reports of the Executive and Committee Chairs

No questions asked of the termly reports of the Executive Officers and Committee Chairs

iv. Constitutional Business (Second and Final Readings of Motions to Change the Constitution and Standing Orders)

The Chair reminded Council that amendments to standing orders have to be put forward two days in advance and not in debate, therefore Council may only debate the constitutional motions put before them. Each motion required a two-thirds majority to pass

Publications – constitutional housekeeping – SECOND READING

Steph Gray (Pembroke) in proposition, announced that the motion was intended to tidy up some parts of standing orders, there being a few areas to change after the last couple of years.

There being no short factual questions, the Chair asked for a speech in opposition.

There being no opposition, the motion passed *nem con*

Definition of "woman" in the OUSU Constitution – SECOND READING

Catherine Sangster (Merton) in proposition said that the purpose of the motion was to set right the existing definition of women the OUSU Constitution which currently discriminates against transgendered women

There being no short factual questions, nor any speeches in opposition, the motion passed *nem con*