



St John's College Junior Common Room

Minutes - Extraordinary General Meeting, Trinity Term 2021
Thursday 17 June 2021, Zoom, 4pm

The meeting opened at 4:05pm.

1. Minutes from the Previous Meeting

The Chair noted that the minutes were available on the agenda.

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising.

3. Ratifications

- Facilities Rep (1 vacancy)

No one ran for Facilities Rep.

- E&D Reps
 - Disabilities (1 vacancy)

No one ran for Disabilities Rep.

4. Items for Discussion

There are no items for discussion.

5. Agenda Items

a) The "Isis Farmhouse" Censure Motion

Proposer: Emmet O'Leary, President

Seconded: Zara Hussain, Returning Officer

This JCR notes that:

- a. Under UK charity law, the activities of the JCR must “promote and further the well-being and academic, sporting and cultural interests of the undergraduate students of St John’s College”.
- b. A recent event organised by the JCR Entertainment Officers amassed a bill of £4,364 on food and drinks in a single evening.
- c. 8% of the Entertainment budget is left for Michaelmas Term 2021. Michaelmas is usually the term in which Entertainment Officers spend the most, as they run events for Freshers.
- d. The JCR Constitution says that the Trustees of the JCR “have a duty to ensure financial good order of the charity”.

This JCR believes that:

- e. This event, run as it was, was not a good use of the JCR’s funds.
- f. At JCR events, we should ensure the safety of our JCR members. At Bops we have Bop Angels; this event did not have any planned help for JCR members. The event was held far away; there was no plan for how to help JCR members home. We should do all we can to make sure that people are safe at events that we run.
- g. It is not fair to leave the incoming Entz Officers 8% of the budget for Michaelmas term.
- h. On this particular occasion, the JCR Entertainment Officers fell short of their obligations as trustees.

This JCR therefore resolves to:

- i. Express the belief that on this occasion the Entertainment Officers did not fulfil their obligations as Trustees of the JCR.
- j. Mandate the Entertainment Officers to acknowledge this motion through a formal email to all JCR members before the start of the next General Meeting, or they shall be deemed to have resigned.

Emmet O’Leary thanked everyone for coming, and said that a motion of censure was not a motion which they would ever have wanted to bring, and said that a lot of thought had gone into this. They said that this motion was specific to this event, and that the mood in college following this event had seemed uneasy and it would be good to talk about this. Emmet said that this motion was saying “we didn’t feel that this was the way we should be doing this”. They said that there was also a legal and administrative side of this, and said that Officers are also Trustees of the JCR, an excepted charity. They noted that all Trustees work together to make sure that the work which the JCR does is positive and constructive, and that our work has to support students. Emmet said that they thought that if we thought as a JCR that this was not how we want to do things, that we want to plan things differently, then it was important to have this on record. This motion seeks to express a belief that this was something wrong, and that this is a powerful belief which signals that we are looking to make changes in the future. Emmet said that the facts were laid out in the motion, and that now it was important that we look at how to move forward from this. Emmet said that they wanted to be clear that

this is a respectful motion, specific to the event on Monday night and saying that this event was not quite right.

Noam Rosenbaum had two short factual questions. They asked whether we knew the budget of the event in advance and how far in advance this event had been planned. Emmet said that the committee was not involved in the planning of the event, and that they were unable to give Noam this information. Emmet said that Noam could go and ask the Entertainment Officers. Emmet noted that this was quite telling of the situation and said that following motions would discuss how we plan events.

Noam said that it struck them as an event which was somewhat discriminatory in style and that we sometimes forget that there is a significant portion of the student body who do not drink, and noted that this event had a clear focus on alcohol consumption which might exclude people who did not drink, and that there was a correlation between students who did not drink and members of the Muslim community and members of other minority groups.

Zara Hussain said that they agreed but that they should not tabulate this, saying that we should never have a large alcoholic event without having a non-alcoholic equivalent but noted that alcohol was more expensive than non-alcoholic alternatives and, while the events should feel the same, the price would be different.

Noam acknowledged the budgetary difference between alcoholic and non-alcoholic events.

An anonymous submission noted that their night was enormously fun, and they found it entirely conducive to their welfare, and that they wanted to thank the Entertainment Officers for such a good night.

Zara responded saying that this motion was not saying that this event was not fun, but that people in the JCR did not feel that. They said that we don't strive to make events very, very fun for a few people but that we strive to have inclusive events for everyone. They said that they hoped that people would vote separate to whether they got to go, or whether they had exams at the same time and had not been able to go. They hoped that in voting, people would vote as a JCR collective and think of the people around them.

An anonymous submission said that it was not about not having fun, but that it was about not prejudicing the fun of the Freshers by blowing the budget.

Zara noted that anonymous submissions were discouraged, and that they thought that this illegitimises what you are saying a little bit. They noted that in a while when we are back in person, the Chair would not accept anonymous submissions. Zara said that while you could send an anonymous submission if you were not comfortable speaking up, they did not encourage it.

Emmet said that this motion did not say that this event was a bad one, or that this event was not really fun. This night was a great night for many people, but some people were left feeling excluded and anxious. Outside of the running, in a planning sense it felt that the entire JCR

Committee should have been more involved in the planning and that we would like to ask more questions before events, like “where does this leave us next term?” and “is this safe”. They felt that this event fell short of these questions, even though lots of people had a good time.

Maya Blanco said that there should have been a pre-planned budget in place, and asked whether the open bar had been fun enough to justify only leaving £466 for next term. They said that there should have been a limit in place.

Shaina Sangha said that they and Rónán Foley were taking on board everything that everyone else was saying, but that they had had a pre-planned budget in place. They had planned to spend £2,500 on this event, and they thought that this would leave the new Entertainment Officers enough to have a successful Michaelmas term. At the first sitting of 60, people had spent with their permission a little over £2000. They were faced with knowing that they would go over the limit and that it was definitely their fault for not setting a new upper limit or sticking to the 2,500. They said that this had really come out of a place of wanting the JCR and especially Finalists, for whom this was their last event, and Freshers, for whom this was the first, to have a really nice time.

Zara said that having run events themselves, they completely understand that it is very easy to go over budget and that running events is very tricky. The Standing Policy is hopefully going to give more support to Officers. As they hope Emmet made it quite clear, this is not about saying that “you mucked up”, but rather that this event got out of control and that you are spending the JCR’s money. Zara said “let’s just all say that we’re not going to endorse this, we’re not going to endorse this big spend”. This isn’t a black mark against you or anything, it happens and we don’t want this to ever happen again. Zara said that Maya would probably have allowed the Entertainment Officers to spend over 2,500 but that this would likely have been a pre-planned budget.

Shaina said that they had received verbal assent from Domestic and Welfare Officers to appropriate money from them, and would be receiving £500 in return for club tickets which they had purchased, and thought that this £1500 would mean that Luke and Ciara would still have enough budget for next term. They really did not intend to cause as much work for the executive committee as they have done.

Aoife Hegarty said that when the JCR holds events, we have to be really careful of the people who go. When we have BOPS, we have bop angels. They said that a really strong point that we can make for planning events more thoroughly in the future is that when we hold big events like this where we know that people will get drunk, and which are far away and something that they hoped would come out of the Standing Policy Motion is that we have people who are sober there to look after people. They said that there could have been money set aside for taxis on the way home, and a real plan there. They said that they were really glad that everyone who went had a great time but that if they didn’t and if something had gone wrong, this was really scary and they did not know what we would have done.

Rónán said that they totally understood this and that they should have sorted out some type of risk assessment. They said that Shaina had taken on some sort of responsibility and had not

drunk nearly as much as anyone else there. Shaina was practically sober the entire night and had liaised with the management of the Isis Farmhouse all evening. Rónán said that they took on board that there needed to be a reasonable person there, speaking and making sure that everyone was okay and that Shaina had done this. They absolutely took on board that there should have been transport, especially at events in locations which are further away like the Isis Farmhouse.

There were three anonymous submissions which questioned the method by which the ballot had been arranged. The Chair raised these submissions which questioned whether this had been effectively a private party.

Shaina said that they were aware of this before the event had even happened. They said that of any of the things they were being charged with in this meeting, they really thoroughly refute this. They explicitly stated in their facebook post that this would not be a random ballot, and that they had done this so that people could be with their friends and that the numbers in attendance could be maximised given the COVID regulations. A group ballot system was suggested to them on Monday night and this is something which they'd suggest Luke and Ciara (the incoming Entz Officers) look at. They said that 122 people balloted for 120 places and that 100 people balloted for the 60 spots in the second sitting. They said that they had tried to group either by year group or by friendship group. They said that lots of people dropped out over the weeked, and that they fit around 30 people in on the day.

Zara said that this was part of the reason that we had a Returning Officer and that if people had concerns about these types of things, the process of balloting could be overseen by the Returning Officer. Zara noted that they oversaw the Housing Ballot. In the future if people are worried about these allegations, this is why the Returning Officer is here and we can talk through it and on the next Facebook post you can say "overseen by the Returning Officer".

Shaina said that on a personal note it had been really frustrating because they were already putting a lot of effort into the event and they had heard that people were already disgruntled before the event had even begun, especially when they had been clear about how the ballot would be run on the facebook post. They said that anyone could have messaged them or Rónán about this.

Rónán said that people had messaged them and noted that a group of finalists had messaged because they had not made the second sitting, and had come to the first and had had a great time, even though this was not what was being discussed here. They said that finalists would want to be with their friends.

An anonymous submission said that this was beginning to feel like a witch-hunt, and that the reason that the budget had blown up was because people had been ordering three course meals behind the Entertainment Officers' backs.

Ozan Erder said that they thought that there should have been a limit set in place and organised with the bar staff at the beginning. They thought that a cut-off should have been organised, and that this conversation would have made things a lot easier for us down the line.

Shaina said yes, and they had done this. As an example, they said that they had said that people could order chips and then people started ordering burgers. There was a gap between students did versus what they had intended them to do. Shaina had been kept updated by the bar manager about the tab, and after the first sitting had ordered three course meals, they had said no food for the second sitting and had changed the rules. They were trying to do preventative things but that they felt it was unfair to only keep £400 for the second sitting if the first sitting got a meal and drinks as well.

Milo Mallaby said that it was unfair to say that there were no rules in place because the rules became more clear as the night went on. By the end, people at the tables couldn't order drinks and said that as soon as the Entertainment Officers realised what was going on they acted quickly to stop it.

Zara Hussain said that this was definitely not trying to be a witch hunt, and that the main thing that we are trying to say is that they didn't ask for help, they didn't ask for help to foresee the errors. This event didn't quite work- we're 19/20 years old and we need help to organise big events. All this motion does is ask them to apologise and if college sees a bill for four thousand pounds at the Isis Farmhouse then college might be pissed at us. The committee are trustees, they need to be responsible with the money. Zara said mistakes were made, let's start rectifying them in this meeting and let's clear the JCR's name and say that we don't endorse JCR spending of big unplanned amounts.

Another anonymous submission said that the ballot had not been arranged by friend group and alleged that the Entz Officers had found the groups that they liked and found to be fun and put them in the second sitting even though they balloted for the first.

Shaina said that if people wanted them to circulate the google forms that they had used. Someone had said this to them and this friend group had all actually applied for the second slot. They noted that they and Rónán were both already there for the whole slot and that it would not make any difference to them whether they saw you at 6pm or 8pm. This was ridiculous and unfounded.

Rónán said that if you could not substantiate it, you should refrain from saying it.

Zara said that if you thought you had a problem with it, you should have put it into a motion. These claims were unsubstantiated and as Returning Officer they would not accept it. We are talking about the budget, we're talking about health and safety. If you want to talk about this, bring a motion forward, bring it forward to the Returning Officer which would have a beneficial outcome. We want this to be a supportive community for everyone and this includes our Entertainment Officers.

Zara Hussain said that this is why you shouldn't put anonymous things forward, because we don't know whether this is one person saying these things or who you are. Anonymous submissions are less impactful. They said that these anonymous submissions are what makes

this feel witch-hunty because the Entertainment Officers knew what Zara was saying to them and they do not know who the anonymous submissions are.

Emmet said that these allegations about running the ballot were very different to the motion at hand, and that these allegations were an assault on the character of our Entz Officers and that this motion was saying that there are some things that we should have done better. The JCR Committee is one group and if college comes asking, we will take this mistake on together and not “sling mud at each other” or tell college that they should email a certain person.

Motion passes [Contact jcr-secretary@sjc.ox.ac.uk for the full result]

b) The “ENTZ Budget Reallocation” Motion

Proposer: Maya Blanco, Treasurer

Seconded: Tara Daemi, Vice President

This JCR notes that:

- a. The Treasurer has the responsibility of ensuring that the Budget is spent efficiently and with the aim of maximising the overall benefit of this money for the members of the JCR.
- b. The Treasurer is mandated to bring Budget Reallocation Motions to prevent overspending in particular Budget Areas, whilst ensuring that the overall expenditure remains constant.
- c. There is currently £466 in the Entz budget. Historically, Michaelmas term has incurred a cost of ~£3,000 to the JCR Budget by the Entz Officers.
- d. With no spending during an online Hilary term, PRAT would have over £1865.7 to spend in Michaelmas, which is much larger than has historically been spent in a single term.
- e. At Rents and Charges, the JCR has secured funds for a renovation of the JCR. TWe can reduce the budget of the Facilities Rep and can reassign the budget set aside for JCR repairs.
- f. The JCR will also deplete their own social spaces budget by £750 to further fund the Entz budget.
- g. Due to Covid, expenditure from the Financial Motions budget has been lower than was expected.

This JCR believes that:

- h. The Budget should appropriately account for all expected expenditure.

This JCR therefore resolves to:

- i. Decrease PRAT by £400, leaving £1465.7 remaining
- j. Decrease Facilities Rep budget by £250, leaving £250 remaining
- k. Decrease the Repairs budget by £850, leaving £0 remaining

- l. Decrease the Social Space Improvements by £750, leaving £4,764.62 remaining
- m. Decrease Financial motions by £500, leaving £2670 remaining
- n. Increase ENTZ budget by £2750, leaving £3,215.95 remaining

Maya Blanco said that there was no need to worry and that we have managed to get funds for next year's Entz Officers. Maya said that there were two main reasons why we could draw this money. The first is that spending had been lower in Michaelmas and Hillary because of coronavirus and the second is that the Executive had negotiated money from college to refurbish the JCR. Maya ran through the 'resolves' clauses of this motion. Maya said that this was a lot of money for the new Entz Reps and asked that they take on board everything that has been said today.

Ozan Erder asked whether the money taken from the Social Spaces Improvement budget would have a negative effect on the JCR refurbishment. Maya said this was unlikely to be the case, and that Officers would likely have funds remaining at the end of next term which could be rearranged.

Alex Foster said that Maya has exams next week and has been working pretty tirelessly this week to get this done. Alex said that they did not know how to raise it but wanted to thank Maya. Maya said that it had not just been them, but that the whole Executive Committee had been working hard on to get this done. Rónán wanted to add to this and thanked everyone for making this work and coming to the best possible solution for this. Maya said that we can make sure that this doesn't happen again in the future and move forward.

Aoife said that although no one had asked the question, they thought it would be good to explain why the money had not been taken from the DomSecs or Welfare budget. They said that although the Officers had agreed to move this money, the reason is that this was a ENTz event and the JCR had voted to have this money be spent on Welfare or Domestic Events. It's not that JCR Officers don't have the power to spend their money, but rather that when the JCR collectively vote that money should be spent on a certain area then it should be spent on this area.

An anonymous question asked whether the Entz Officers could do to contribute to the restoration of the budget. The Chair noted that while they encouraged involvement, they would encourage people to speak up.

Maya Blanco said that this was clearly completely wrong. People went to the event thinking that this was an open bar and although they had heard people suggesting that everyone who went could contribute £10, they thought this was immoral given that we have the funds available.

The Chair briefly summarised the motion.

Motion passes [68 in favour, 1 against, 3 abstain]

c) The “This should not happen again” Standing Policy Motion

Proposer: Aoife Hegarty, Secretary

Seconded: Maya Blanco, Treasurer

This JCR notes that:

- a. This week the Entertainment Officers spent £4,364 on an Entz event at the Isis Farmhouse.
- b. Every Officer, with the exception of the Returning Officer, is a trustee of the JCR and they have responsibility to make sure that the JCR is well-run.
- c. College have guidelines in place for JCR spending; we should have guidelines in place for our own spending too to make sure that this cannot happen again.

This JCR believes that:

- d. We should make sure that we have procedures in place to protect JCR finances.
- e. Events which cost more than £750 should be discussed by the JCR Committee.
- f. When Officers make purchases on the JCR card, they should know exactly how much they are planning to spend and should clear this amount with the JCR Treasurer.
- g. Mandating all JCR Officers to secure committee approval before they spend over £750 from their budgets would lead to better planned JCR events.

This JCR therefore resolves to:

- h. Mandate the all JCR Officers to secure committee approval on spending of over £750 from their budgets.
- i. Mandate the JCR Secretary and JCR Treasurer to review in Michaelmas how this process of committee approval might be more permanently incorporated into the Constitution.
- j. Add items (h) and (i) to Standing Policy as implementing resolutions

Nick asked if anyone objected to Aoife taking the minutes and proposing the motion. They said that if anyone thought that they were unable to do this, or would deliberately misconstrue the minutes or something, then you could object or message them.

Aoife said that they would try to keep this short because this has been a long meeting. They said that while this has happened, we should stop this from happening. They said that a really good way to do this would be for the committee to agree on events which cost over £750. They said that this would mean that events don't have to come to JCR meetings, but rather that the 18 person JCR committee might have to thumbs up a message, or agree to an idea. The £750 figure is one which college gives us for purchasing JCR property already, and this is the reason for the £750 figure.

Alex Foster said that while they appreciated Aoife and Maya doing this, they were a bit worried about the formality that would come in Michaelmas. They organised the college marriages and this had been really difficult because of the slow response of college senior management and that if there were only 4 times a term to organise events.

Aoife said that they agreed, and that this is why this approval would not be at General JCR meetings and would not be a motion. They said that they had been thinking that JCR Officers would be able to message into the committee group chat, saying “hey planning to spend about this much, thinking of this event, thumbs up if you agree” and that people could thumbs up the message. They said that the second clause mandated us to think about how this might be implemented, rather than binding us to implement this approval in any specific form and that we could have another discussion about the specifics next term.

Alex said yes, that that checked out.

Maya said that this was specifically for events over £750, and noted that college marriages had cost £300 and bops tend to cost £400/£500 .

The Chair asked to clarify that they had interpreted this correctly and that it would just be a message to the committee, and that this would not be at General Ordinary Meetings. It would just be a message to the other elected committee meetings.

Noam repeated their early view that an event of this nature was inherently somewhat exclusionary and that many students would not want to attend an event with such a focus on alcohol. Noam thinks that events of this nature merit committee approval so that there are more voices.

Nick Rix Perez stepped down from Chair.

Nick asked exactly what committee approval means. If one committee member says no, what would happen? Nick asked if this was worth mechanising.

Aoife replied that this was definitely worth mechanising, and that this is why we would look at specific details next term. They noted that events of this type were unlikely to happen before the next JCR meeting next term, but that they thought that implementing a process now was important. They were considering approval as simple majority, but said that there were questions to consider like how to make sure that everyone voted.

Zara wanted to return to Noam’s point. They said that they had been thinking of this for a while and thought that we should look into getting a Non-Alcoholic Entz Rep. They thought that we should discuss this at another meeting in the future.

Maya said that this was a fair point but that they did not think that it was necessary to have a whole rep for this and that the Entz Officers should represent everyone, including students who did not drink.

Zara said that we could return to this point in another meeting.

Tara Daemi said that they were Entz Rep last term and that it was already a requirement for the Entz Officers to hold a non-alcoholic event and that they thought the Entertainment Officers

had already done this by holding the [maybe the quiz?]. They said that organising non-alcoholic events were difficult because of coronavirus. (I couldn't hear the rest of what Tara said, because of the background noise - if I've made a mistake here, please get in touch!)

The Chair said again that this was not what this motion was about, and that this motion was specifically about whether events of over £750 should require committee approval.

Emmet said that they thought that some of the points which had been raised would need to be raised at a later point but that this motion would be a good way to make sure that events are run by the whole committee and that people could say "oh have you thought of this?". Emmet said that hopefully the committee would then volunteer to help out, and that although this motion is just a financial process, it would mean that the committee members would have the best support possible to run events like this. This helps create more conversations within the committee for doing things together.

Aoife said that because this motion is standing policy, the implementing resolutions would only have an impact for one year. They said that we would have to vote again on this issue, because the motion mandates us to raise this issue at another time.

Nick vacated the Chair, and asked whether it was possible to reword the motion to specify what approval meant. Nick reclaimed the Chair.

Aoife said yes, but that it would be best if someone other than the Chair proposed the amendment.

Noam proposed an amendment, changing "committee approval" to "informal assent by simple majority of the Committee".

Accepted as friendly

Emmet said that this feels like this should be in the Constitution if it is as formal as "simple majority".

Noam said that they had left this specifically vague and that this is why they had said "informal assent".

Emmet agreed.

The Chair summarised the motion.

Motion passes [61 in favour, 6 against, 5 abstain]

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The meeting closed.