

ST. CATHARINE'S COLLEGE JCR

JCR Meeting Minutes

Date and Time: 06/03/2021 at 5pm via Zoom

Present: President (RC), VP (SS), Treasurer (KP), Accommodation (LM), BME (SO), Communications (DL), Disabilities (AA), Environment and Ethical (AD & AO), Fresher reps (DT & EG), Welfare (AM & AB), Academic (CD), Access (ES), Catering (JD & HP) Ents (AW & VM), International (AT & JK), LGBT+ (MT & IW), Sports and Societies (RM), Women's and NB (GS)

Apologies for absence: Charities (NW)

Matters arising from the minutes of last meeting

- RC (President) sent out an email and anonymous survey to all fellows and supervisors to gauge their opinions on the CamSU reading week proposal. It was generally observed that they were not as keen on the reading week as students were, but they made some useful suggestions as compromises, e.g. having a week with no deadlines, or an extended weekend of no work in the middle of term. The JCR will be passing these opinions onto the CamSU.
- AD (Ethical and Environmental) has emailed the local MP Daniel Zeichner with the JCR stance on the Uighur Muslim motion. Some resources have further been published on the JCR Instagram page linktree providing help with how to get in touch with your local MP on an individual basis.

News and Updates

CamSU Student Council Meeting 01/03/2021

- The various campaigns of the Cambridge SU are always running workshops and events which can be found on their social media or on the [Cambridge SU website](#). There are some specific crossovers between the campaigns and some other interesting events too so officers will be keeping an eye out on these and encouraging other JCR members to do so as well
- An emergency motion was made on discrimination reporting of which Catz was a named college. The motion regarded colleges not taking discrimination reporting seriously and not acting accordingly when an issue arises, as did in Catz last

March. The motion passed amongst the Student Council to push the university and the college level response is addressed further below in Issues Raised

- The new [Sabbatical Officers](#) have now been voted in! Catz had the 7th highest voter turnout.
- The reading week vote is on the 15th March. **All students can attend and vote and everyone will be voting on an individual basis, the JCR will not be voting on behalf of everybody.** If anyone has any amendments or comment they wish to make, they should be sent in as soon as possible as SS (Vice President) will be sending a document with feedback from across the college to Ben, the undergraduate president leading the idea, by Tuesday 9th of March so that he can make final changes to the motion.

General Estates Committee 02/03/2021

- Catz chose not to sign up to the Access Able scheme but there is a committee within the college which will be looking into the accessibility issues and will be coming up with ideas to address these. Most Colleges seemed to take the same approach Catz has, unfortunately.
- Safety and appearance concerns have been raised with Kings Lane and the college is looking into ways to deal with this. Currently gates, CCTV and card access options are under consideration.
- The IT department wants to make students aware that **spare laptops and screens are available to borrow out if anyone should require them.** Students should just fill out an IT ticket and the relevant staff member will get back to them.
- The college is redoing L and M blocks over the summer of which the rents will be rebanded and the JCR will be approving the criteria that goes into deciding which rent band a room should be allocated. The JCR will be working with the college to create a consistent and standardised approach to assigned rent bands to rooms for the future as well.

Accommodation Q&A - 02/03/2021 and Ballot Day 06/03

- The Q&A was well attended and ballot day has been a success.
- Wolfson court has been moved down to Band 5 and South Green Lodge is currently under consideration to be moved down to a Band 6. L and M might be moved up a band or so, as they are being refurbished, but this is not confirmed.
- The College is looking into whether it can provide rent protection to private accommodation contracts although it may not have much power in this.
- **A detailed email of further answers to questions asked previously can be**

found in LM (Accomodation) email sent on Friday 5th March.

Equality, Diverison and Inclusion Working Group

- This group holds meetings to address any EDI issues that may be susceptible to oppression and the group is made up of students, staff and fellows who work to address these issues on a college level.
- 4 members of the JCR will be a part of the college EDI group who will address any college issues raised on a monthly basis.

Issues Raised

Developing a standardised procedure for how the JCR engages with political matters

- As a JCR we are constitutionally bound to represent students on a national level, therefore, we require a streamlined system which enables us to do this quickly and efficiently.
- AD (Ethical and Environmental Officer) has suggested a three tier system:
 - An individual officer may involve themselves politically on behalf of the office they hold with discretion, however this must be mentioned in the JCR committee meetings, and consequently the minutes
 - The second step is to use the JCR's platforms to encourage action, this decision should be made by vote in the JCR committee meetings, this also includes an official stance on behalf of the JCR Committee
 - The third and final step is for the JCR to take action itself, on behalf of the committee and the JCR as a whole, this may be decided via a forum. We need to remain non-partisan, but also require direction in taking political action in accordance with our roles and the constitution quickly and efficiently
- This process will help to encounter the current low level of engagement and time consuming method of holding forums to vote on a motion, by which time bills may already be passed through in parliament, rendering the JCR's actions weak. This legislation will be written up in the next few weeks and potentially added to the Constitution next term, to determine how and when the JCR gets involved in political matters.

Signing the discrimination reporting open letter and making a college level response

- The CamSU held an [emergency motion](#) to address discrimination reporting and

reponses at the college level across the university. Catz was mentioned as having poor responses to discrimination reporting following an incident last year, hence why greater awareness needs to be brought to this at the college level.

- SO (BAME) will be contacting the college to get their opinions on this letter and how they have learnt from the experience that occurred last year so that it can be prevented from happening again in the future.
- The letter mentions reforms to the current discrimination report procedure, found [here](#), and can also be signed on an individual basis. During this meeting it was voted unanimously to sign it on behalf of the JCR as a whole.

Tacking transphobic behaviour

- Cambridge has seen a recent rise in transphobic behaviour via a wave of transphobic stickers which were plastered across the city as a whole. The university is firmly against any transphobic behaviour and there has been a public effort to cover up these stickers using affirming words.
- MT and IW (LGBT+) are going to be working with the college to contribute to creating a positive counter effort to this via potentially creating personalised stickers to cover them up, showing how Catz stands in solidarity with the LGBT+ community.
- There will also be further instagram posts put up informing the community of the types of discriminatory behaviour that the LGBT+ community can face that may not immediately be obvious. There will also be greater encouragement for students to communicate with the LGBT+ officers if anyone does experience discriminatory behaviour of any kind.

How can we build a stronger relationship between liberation officers and the JCR?

- SO (BAME) sent out a survey a couple of weeks ago which yielded results that students are more likely to go to their tutor or DOS than go to a liberation officer to explain their concerns.
- Although this may be encouraging to see students are comfortable with talking to staff, the liberation officers do want to show that they are available to contact as well.
- For example, AB and AM (Welfare) are currently in talks about holding a rice night with guest speakers which can help foster a better relationship between the student body and the liberation officers. Having more than one officer hold joint events as sub committees can help create this supportive environment.

Protection in person social spaces around college such as the Octagon

- College obtained planning permission to knock down the Octagon in St Chads last year but are currently working towards collecting enough funding to go through with the new build.
- LM (Accommodations) will be emailing the college on behalf of the JCR to express our concerns associated with removing a social space. We will be asking for reassurance that once it is knocked down a replacement social space will be built/made available in St Chads.
- We are looking into hosting a relaunch of the current JCR room next year after the construction works have been completed to encourage greater use of it.

Issues Not Raised

- There were some questions raised regarding noise from the building works. Expected disruption due to the Central Spaces Project was outlined in an email to all students from KS (College Communications Manager) on 08/02/21

Any Other Business

Community Spirit Awards

- The JCR currently does not have access to the names of nominees to receive the community spirit award but will be emailing to enquire about this - RC (President) may have misunderstood something! .

Virtual Access Videos

- ES (Access) is looking into creating YouTube videos to widen recognition of Catz Access work and opportunities.

Welfare Litter Picks

- AO and AD (Ethical and Environmental) are currently in talks with the college to widen this litter picking initiative to the whole of the Catz community and not just the JCR.

- University Mental Health day was 4th March and b&b introduced the 73-73 initiative where you spend 73 minutes doing an activity that you find enjoyable or relaxing. There is still time to participate and further information can be found [here](#).

If you have any suggestions or feedback you'd like to give the JCR, please get in touch by emailing [the Vice President \(SS\)](#) or using the [anonymous messaging platform](#).

DL, 2021-2022 JCR Comms Officer