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**TREVELYAN COLLEGE JCR MINUTES**

JCR Meeting

9th June 2019 6:00pm



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**EXEC REPORTS**

**Jess:** Sign up for Trevs Day formal opens tonight!

**Giorgio**: Thanks to everyone who did the catering survey, the results were sent in and they’re still reviewing it. The full first round of the ops review has been sent around. There’s virtually no change to the original idea that was presented before Easter.

**Robyn**: FinComm has spent some money for Expeditions Committee and FinComm applications

**Nat**: What’s the most exciting thing?

**Robyn**: Sports and societies photos are going up in the Bar.

**Mary**: Do you know where?

**Robyn**: Hopefully the far wall, by the darts board.

**Tom**: If you want to submit any motions for the SU assembly, also the Vice-Chancellor is holding an audience in the town hall, I’ll share the Facebook event to the Trevelyan College group.

**Christian**: Is PresComm doing anything different in terms of the ops review?

**Giorgio**: They’ve confirmed their opinion and their stance on it. SU President has written an SU opinion, there’s nothing really to be done.

**DISCUSSION POINT: THE JCR DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

**Jacob**: We’ll move on to the discussion point, which is the Development Group. This was put together after the referendum last year, the aim was to look at various sabbatical options and a change to how the JCR works. Basically, the plan is that we have various members of the working group here, and each of them will make a short report on their topic. Afterwards we’ll have questions, but if you have some general questions that don’t refer to any specific aspect, ask them at the end.

**Mary**: Essentially, we researched four alternative options: Sabbatical Treasurer, Sabbatical Officer, Sabbatical President, and a restructure without a sabbatical role, all to make the JCR more efficient and to make the roles in the constitutional order easier. We’re going to go through each of the parts. Jacob’s sent out the document with the agenda for the meeting, so you can access it there for more information.

**Aiman**: My part of this was to research the feasibility of a Sabbatical Officer. They would be outside of the JCR chain of command and they’ll take over the menial tasks and most of the day-to-day bookkeeping that’s really time consuming for the president, treasurer, etc.. They would be responsible for ordering stash, doing ratification, be responsible for printer paper, stock welfare supplies and so on. This is so your officers can do the job of representation much better if they have the time to put into doing other things. Pros: More efficient, helps treasurer to plan the long-term (this came up in Alistair’s presentation about how the day-to-day tasks take forever), removes the anecdotal sabbatical apathy. This does affect the quality of the representation of a Sabbatical President who only is here to stay another year in Durham. This would answer the claim that the officer would be ‘too close’ to the other members of the exec. Cons: Doesn’t solve the overworked presidential issue. This won’t solve anything, the major part of their work is to represent college, attend meetings, be on committees. It might be hard to fill the position, however – this is a job to do menial tasks, so who would actually run for this? Is there enough money to merit a Sabb Officer? It’s nice to shuffle the menial tasks, but is this enough work to give them to pay them to be a sabbatical officer?

**Giorgio**: With the salary point is this the same as the Sabb Pres?

**Aiman**: The £15,000 comes from paying the minimum wage.

**Giorgio**: It’s half and half.

**Mary**: The University gives a composition fee to each common room, according to them it’s the amount that should cover the sabbatical role but it isn’t enough to cover the minimum wage.

**Giorgio**: So it won’t be coming all from the JCR dues.

**Aiman**: We might not have the ability to pay in the long-term.

**Ben**: How much money do we have? Am I right in thinking that the university pays us because we don’t have a sabb officer?

**Mary**: Trevs JCR has a massive surplus because the money they give us (10k – not enough for a sabb officer) we haven’t been spending on a sabb role, but because this issue has been relevant to execs in the past, a couple of years ago, the JCR started to save up for the implementation of this. We are currently dealing with this with the implementation of the Dream Scheme. The JCR has a mechanism to deal with it. Historical reason is that this is to deal with the sabb officer.

**Andrea**: I researched the possibility of having a Sabbatical Treasurer – they have one at Grey’s. Pros: This looks like the Sabb Officer but more focused. Main idea is that we keep the president as a student, making up for the problem of the president becoming distant as a member of staff. So that would maintain the president being a student, but at the same time the Sabb Treasurer would take up some presidential roles. They could chase up societies for payments and stuff – sometimes you just don’t have time to chase people up. Plus the Sabb Treasurer would do some things that the Treasurer currently doesn’t have time to do. More time, more energy, a bigger chance to keep the president as a student.

**Nat**: Essentially they become a member of staff, they don’t interact with students very much. This is quite distant if you want a Treasurer who’s approachable. There is the issue of having a concentration of power: They’d be in charge of finances in college, essentially they end up being a powerful person who may not end up accountable all the time.

**Andrea**: There would be a mechanism in place to impeach if they need.

**Nat**: Also there’s just some jobs that you can’t take away from the president. It might make the job harder, because the president goes to lots of college-level meetings, and if they’re not in everyday contact with the staff, it might cause an issue of being distant from both college staff.

**Robyn**: Greys aren’t part of the DSO? I think the NO campaign last year just said that they can’t do this.

**Mary**: There’s no precedent for having a sabbatical treasurer without having a sabbatical president.

**Nat**: If we decided that this is the best option for college, we could do this. It would help out the Buttery Chair with things that take up a lot of time while they’re actually trying to run a business.

**Mary**: It might be more difficult in a legal way with the university, but I think that the JCRs as independent bodies should have their own opinions.

**Jacob**: Any other questions?

**Ben**: What’s the opportunity for that individual to take the menial load off other members of the exec?

**Nat**: The two kind of run together a bit.

**Ben**: If you were to combine the options of having a menial Sabb Officer and the Sabb Treasurer, would that make it more attractive?

**Nat**: The student treasurer would be responsible for doing the long-term things.

**Christian**: Fourth option is not having a Sabb role, but not as a blanket never. It could be an option to look into how the inefficiencies of the current standing orders. The aim was to reduce some burden on the president and treasurer to some extent. Greys – a fair portion is to shift that along to other members of the exec, but also bringing tier 2s into it a little more, making it more explicit what their jobs are, to try to look at where workload is too much and find out where it’s sensible to spread it out. EG president – we just agreed that I would go to some meetings in Mary’s place. This would reduce the number of meetings the president has to go to, giving them more time to focus on their degree and their own life. There’s a more detailed document about it which we can make public. Pros: no added cost of paying a sabb role, student run JCR so no chance of any disconnect and remains a student focus, it would also mean that there becomes no issue of having someone in a contract – can someone vote to remove them? Cons: It does mean that there’s still the problem of students having degrees, doesn’t increase accessibility of president or treasurer for those doing degrees that have high contact hours, president who has to live in college with no salary. We’d just look at the current situation and try to understand it better. If we still have the issue further down the line, it might be important to have a look in future.

**Aiman**: It was brought up in a meeting but – a big sticking point of being the president is living in college, having to pay college fees, but not having any form of salary. If we decided on no sabb role, would it be perhaps better to see if the JCR subsidises the room in college? It would make sense that we use the surplus of the JCR’s money.

**Christian**: Yeah, it’s a possibility.

**Mary**: As much as this feeds into the decisions, I feel like this is a separate issue. The JCR does pay for the first terms living in college. The thing is that it’s about coming to an agreement with college. I know one president (Grey’s sabbatical) who lives in college without paying. All other presidents, even if they’re sabbatical, they pay for their room. I think it is a separate issue, I personally would like to contact alumni about this, but it’s something that it’s equally important to discuss. College fees are just increasing.

**Robyn**: Sort of a side note, but whether we have any kind of Sabb role or not, restructuring of the standing orders happens anyway, because there’s massive inefficiencies in there.

**Christian**: Yeah, that is also true – this would just give more availability of the president. If we’re looking more at the whole picture to see where we can drip down the workloads from overworked jobs into other roles.

**Ben**: Would it be worth seeing if around handover time are allowed to comment on the difficulties – so you annually do a restructuring?

**Jacob**: There is a constitutional review and the outgoing exec should update their job descriptions anyway.

**Mary**: There is the difficulty of everybody being elected at different times. Sometimes by the time the constitutional review happens, other positions have been elected. So even if you update their roles, they wouldn’t have technically been elected to the updated roles.

**Nat**: The jobs that are very time consuming.

**Ben:** If there’s any holes in tier 2s where we can assign roles to.

**Mary**: This plan that we came up with was in a communication when our exec at the time and some of the tier 2s with some of the more time-consuming roles (sports, music rep, tech). I think it’s a great idea to do it on a yearly basis, but a lot of the timings of this could get confusing.

**Jacob**: Any other questions?

**Mary**: Sabb Pres. Most colleges have a sabbatical president, which means that 13/16 colleges are paid as an ex-student or a student taking a year out to do this paid role. The University pays for this, but the JCR compensates for college salary. Pros: More time. They don’t have a degree to do, so they can focus on representing the JCR. They would have the chance to take some of the tedious parts away from the other exec members, VAT reclaims etc., which would being more money to the JCR in general. They generally take over some of the individual roles like drop-ins and the senior frep roles that are time-consuming. They can focus more on their role because they don’t have to balance it with a degree. Less stress because you have to manage less of the different things. Being sabbatical would give the president more time to do some more projects – a lot of the university-level role of the president involves being a part of PresComm, so they go to different subcommittee roles. EG when I was president, I was part of the communities committee which was things about how sports clubs and things work with the Durham structures. Cons: Having a non-sabb promotes a different kind of relationship with the college and the JCR. As much as ex-students have already been students and are understanding, it is true that they are paid members of the university, they create a different relationships with the college officers. Sabb Pres means that a president might run for the role for the wrong reasons – to take a year out with their friends. It isn’t the same thing – nons-abb actually have to sacrifice a lot of their time to do this role, there’s an element of certainty that the person running is very invested in representing the JCR in the right way. This would be a contractual role, and if there’s a health reason or any other kind of reason that the Sabb Pres might become incapable to continue it’s very difficult to replace them. As a result the role would have to be diffused over different exec members. It comes with a risk of how to manage a potential vacancy.

**Jacob**: Any questions? Any questions on the process?

**Giorgio**: Can it be noted to have a vote/referendum on all of those options, that someone has to prepare a motion to be proposed in a JCR meeting.

**Ben**: What’s the outcome if we decide more than one is necessary?

**Jacob**: With this, it’s such a big issue that I don’t want to force a particular direction. This would be the end of anything that I do in terms of starting things – I organise the discussion point, it’s important to get this out. But it’s for the JCR to decide which option, and for someone to come up with a motion.

**Robyn**: What’s the timescale from here on out? About any plan?

**Mary**: this is a collection of information that anybody in the JCR may use to submit a motion, to trigger a referendum. This group was meant to gather the information so there’s actual research done – which it was what missing from last year’s referendum.

**Ben**: So if we proposed a motion before the end of term?

**Jacob**: I had a look at the timescales – basically if someone proposed a motion before the end of term – there’s one more JCR meeting this term – we’d be able to have a referendum next term. If it didn’t happen then, we’d have to look at longer timescales, if we don’t do it by second term, we’d have to wait anther year. If we want it done quickly, we’d have to do it this term.

**Grover**: If someone is going to propose a referendum, we’ve got to consider what the collegiate review is going to do – bearing in mind that a lot of college staff won’t be here. In reality, a lot of the committees may or may not not exist, and we can’t predict this. I think it’s important that we bear in mind that we’re going through an entirely separate transition.

**Nat**: On the counter to that, the fact that we’re going through a messy transition may be the best opportunity we have to reform the JCR? If it takes two years to get over the shockwaves of the entire college structure, it’ll take another two years to sort out JCR politics and all of this. If we do these things in tandem, then setting these things up might make those things run better. You can work out what jobs would go to who. Working on how you can create a sabbatical officer or some structure in the exec.

**Giorgio**: Just that in general, for any motion to work as to a referendum, treasurer and president elections are in first term next year.

**Jacob**: Even if we were to have a referendum, it would be unlikely to effect the next year of exec, because even if we agree, even then we’d still have to talk to college.

**Mary**: What do you mean by that?

**Jacob**: Unless we’re talking about the restructuring option, we’d still have to set up the role under college

**Mary**: The JCR is under the DSO framework, we’re not under college. It is actually more accommodating for a Sabb Pres or non-sabb Pres. Any treasurer option, you can consult with them and talk to them, but because the roles in themselves wouldn’t really change, you don’t have to get permission from college whether you can or can’t do something.

**Jacob**: Then in that case, there’s potential to get it done quicker.

**Giorgio**: College are very aware of this. If it was done before the next president/treasurer is elected, that would be fine, just so long as you do it before the deadline.

**Aiman**: Was this agreed upon in bonding?

**Giorgio**: No, it would need to happen just because of timing. If we wanted to, that’s just something we need to be aware of.

**Andrea**: If we decided to do a restructuring of the standing orders, do we need a referendum?

**Jacob**: It depends on the changes, but in theory it could be done by a motion.

**Ben**: 1) From head frep perspective to throw a referendum will either really engage the freshers, or they might be driven away. They might be completely disengaged for their whole time at college.

**Robyn**: But the people who are interested will be interested, that’s always the case. You can’t force people to engage.

**Ben**: Engagement with the JCR has been going downhill. I think throwing a referendum in first term is not the way to do that. The people considering running for the sabbatical options – you can’t plan your year as a sabb role and a non-sabb role simultaneously. Then you have a problem of nobody running to fill that role.

**Andrea**: Engagement is a complex issue though, if you have to have a referendum it likely wouldn’t be early in term.

**Ben**: You’d then have to educate the new freshers about this issue.

**Andrea**: we could do this kind of meeting again. It could engage poeple more if they see that the JCR is actually doing something. I think that might be an issue anyway.

**Giorgio**: In terms of a sabb role in general, for them to be on the banking in time, you’d need to do that before Christmas so they can do things that they have to do straightaway. If you throw that in, that could be a problem with it.

**Ben**: Could we not have a campaign running first term, then a referendum second term?

**Jacob**: Just conscious of time here – if a motion comes up we can discuss that, but we should probably move on.

**Mary**: Those are really valid concerns and something that Jacob brought up when he met with us. A lot of the freshers don’t know exactly what the JCR is about by that early in first term. Sabb roles usually begin in summer, so you’d have to have an intermediate issue. It would be different sorts of questions but I do think that this meeting was just to iron out any issues rather than actually making any decisions.

**Christian**: Is the intention for the next JCR meeting to have the possibility of the next motion to propose? Would it not be more logical to hold back a little, have the next meeting as a way to discuss it further instead of pushing for something too fast.

**Jacob**: The exec aren’t pushing this any further than anybody else. We can have our own personal opinions, but as an exec we won’t have an official opinion.

**Christian**: It seems a little rushed.

**Jacob**: If there was a motion proposed, it would only cover one option. Doing this now opens it up for whenever people think that the timescale is right. This is the end of having an official timescale.

**Ben**: Is the development group remaining a group for the next academic year?

**Mary**: The aim was to end it now.

**Ben**: Will the group exist?

**Mary**: No, but the report exists. The working group has ended. We wouldn’t propose a job description for each role. This is the document you need to propose any sort of change and the details would come later on.

**MOTION: SUSTAINABILITY**

**Andrea**: So basically, we put together this group that was born from the meeting of all the environment reps. The group dismantled and we tried to stay in contact, and we put together a report on where the university stands on sustainability. They aren’t doing very much, one of the main problems is that they had a set of targets, which they haven’t been meeting. The kind of targets that they’re using are not up-to-date with the international ideas now, such as the Paris Agreement. The document said that these are the targets that should be being met and anything less is not enough, because climate change is a problem for everybody. Following from that, we looked at the development plan – they have some environmental guarantees in terms of the new buildings being built at the moment. The university has received at least two offers by external firms. The student community needs to say something, we’re trying to create a document that we can propose to the University and say these are the things you aren’t doing.

**Nikhil**: One of the things we’ve proposed is that there are positions and jobs for sustainable management of the university, so there’s a bunch of different jobs that aren’t being filled, and that’s one of the reasons that nothing is happening because nobody is doing what their jobs are supposed to do. It’s a complicated system and there’s no central framework to support this.

**Christian**: How does this relate to the JCR?

**Andrea**: The JCR is the body where we decide how the representatives could represent us. If they don’t think about sustainability, we can do it. We resolve to use the document as the basis for environmental decisions in college, as a reference point, to publicly endorse the document and its findings by email. In practical terms – to demand inclusion of the assessment of environmental issues. It would also mandate an environment committee member to sit on SoccComm and BallComm. We would also discuss the net emissions in JCO meetings.

**Jacob**: Qs of clarity? If there’s none, we’ll move onto substance.

**Giorgio**: With the first point of your motion of this JCR resolves, as a college we can’t do anything, we can’t force it on college. As a JCR we can do that, but not as college.

**Grover**: Having taken a read through, 90% of the things proposing operate on a level that we can’t operate on. They’re not responsible for taking charge of their own greenspaces.

**Andrea**: There are ways in which JCR officers interact with the university.

**Nikhil**: Bearing in mind that the document does deal with university level things.

**Grover**: We don’t have the power to push a decision to the university.

**Mary**: Having looked at the motion, it gives background to the document. I think that’s something important and relevant, I think what we need to change is to look at the resolves section and look at things like how college should act – take out the things that we don’t have control over.

**Grover**: At the end of the day, a lot of the parts resolving should really be the JCR president has to bring things to PresComm. EG asking the university to respect the document – President should submit the document to college and university officers.

**Andrea**: Sending a document can be easily forgotten. I’m saying maybe that this should be more of a focus. It might be a start in the beginning of a dialogue.

**Nikhil**: A lot of this is to bring it to the focus of the JCR where people can take it to higher-level meetings.

**Manon**: Environment committee is an open committee, but both BallComm and SocComm are elected committees? SoccComm you’re elected and you’re expected to turn up to each of them. BallComm is slightly different, but the Ball Chair still chooses them. Would you be sending the same person to each meeting each time?

**Jess**: We’re not that environmentally unfriendly, we are aware of lots of things.

**Jacob**: There’s nothing that would stop them, we’d have to change the standing orders however. They wouldn’t necessarily have the same - they’d sit as ex-officio on the panel, so they’d have input but not a full member.

**Christian**: Why not change it so that the environment officer can be mandated to go? I’d propose an amendment.

**Mary**: I think it’s a good approach to try to get SocComm and BallComm closer, but this is something that would be organised between tier 2s. You have to make the decision now to mandate someone to have a role on the committee or just standing by the fact that it’s something we’d expect the environment rep to do? It should be a requirement to communicate with the tier 1s and 2s rather than necessarily being a part of the committee.

**Andrea**: My thinking is that sometimes you don’t really have much time to think about the events. We have an overlap between the committees.

**Jacob**: Are all these questions about the amendment? Can we go to a vote about the amendment?

**Christian**: The amendment is to change the point about sending someone from the environment committee to SocComm and BallComm meetings to sending the environment rep to the meetings instead as an ex-officio member.

**Nat**: Is there any way we can include what Mary was saying – so add it into the job description? Add to the job description of the environment officer about being an ex-officio member but not one that has to take part.

**Mary**: Mandating them to be on these committees is so that you communicate with people to take part in these events. We should agree on something whether this comes to a committee membership or the requirement to actively engage.

**Andrea**: If we mandate the environment officer to go, could they ask someone from the committee to go in their place?

**Manon**: Probably not, SocComm and BallComm all sign confidentiality agreements.

**Jacob**: Having a member sit on the committee would solve that.

**Jess**: You probably wouldn’t have to go to each meeting.

**Christian**: I’ll propose my amendment then.

*Motion amended.*

**Giorgio**: Is this proposed as a part of SU assembly? If so, apart from the bit about committees – aren’t most of them made redundant if the SU is working on the same problem? There is more weight.

*Procedural motion proposed to extend the meeting by 5 minutes. Vote: Overwhelming majority. Procedural motion passes.*

**Christian**: Could we amend something about it being to do with only Trevs?

**Manon**: I think that this usually comes in the form of sending an email.

**Giorgio**: The rest of the things are things that the Su will do far more powerfully than I will.

**Nat**: Priorities of the SU are different to the priorities of the JCR.

**Andrea**: We need to ask the JCR to find a consensus about this. What this is saying is that JCR officers should be doing these things.

**Giorgio**: It isn’t something college decides to do.

**Christian**: All of that is either implied heavily or stated in the first resolves point.

**Manon**: Can we combine it all into one?

*Procedural motion proposed to extend the meeting by 5 minutes.Vote: Overwhelming majority. Procedural motion passes.*

**Nat**: Can I propose an amendment to add between points one and two that these are the ways in which we can do this and to indent everything else.

*Amendment passes.*

**Jarren**: Is this just an expectation of us being aware around college?

**Nikhil**: There’s no explicit requirement.

**Andrea**: We can add a point to do with this.

*Vote: Overwhelming majority. Motion passes.*

**VOTES**

*Procedural motion proposed to extend the meeting by 5 minutes. Vote: Overwhelming majority. Procedural motion passes.*

*Procedural motion proposed to extend the meeting by 5 minutes. Vote: Overwhelming majority. Procedural motion passes.*

*Vote: Overwhelming majority. Motion passes.*

\*Meeting adjourned\*