

## Community Committee Meeting, 11.10.2020

Present: SC (external trustee), SP (VC of trustees), KM (trustee), ES (SWO), JP (trustee), SWC (president), AW (SRO), BT (chair), LB (outreach chair)

Apologies:

Absent:

Agenda Point	Discussion	Actions and Owners
1. Introductions, including JCR Volunteers	<p>Members introduce themselves, led by Serge.</p> <p>The aim of the Communities Committee -- external and internal, support to outreach/welfare/charitable projects etc.</p> <p><b>SC</b> bit of an experiment for the committee to have a better understanding of operational overview. Crucially not here to take over the running of anything, the role is very much oversight. Given all of you have been elected into your roles, you have a mandate to enact what you see fit, and our view is to make sure what you see fit is legal and can work. The idea of the standing agenda is so we can cover all areas and have an idea of direction. Volunteers who have taken up these roles with a lot of responsibility can join these meetings and offer insight.</p>	
2. Current (Anything pressing that needs discussing)	<p><b>SC</b> subcommittee about hosting internal and external communities. One of the biggest things for this term and the whole year is freshers. Anything else current and relevant to discuss? (i.e. issues of behaviour, looking to start a new outreach project, difficulty in elections/JCR meetings)</p>	
3. Freshers	<p><b>SC</b> particularly interested in how the week went, given the covid restrictions and whether you feel it was successful.</p>	

**SWC** given the circumstances I think it went ok. From a broad overview we had in person events that were meticulously scheduled until Thursday when freps tested positive. Had a couple scares during the week and prep week, but just said it was at the teams discretion. Took measures to minimise damage and allow for individual responsibility. Mainly a fine approach, until that point in freshers week where many people had been in contact and at the point the issue was a welfare officer who had been to a lot of different places and interacting with many teams, made more people uncomfortable and thought the best thing was to send people to get tests/isolate. All in person events stopped from that Thursday, continued on line events with the bars being open, but weren't on the ground as Freps. Had a skeleton team that did the most important bits e.g. delivering food, but by that point some fresher households were isolating. Did fall apart towards the end of the week and could have been better about communicating to the freshers about what was happening since freps just disappeared - was more focused on communicating with the freps than the freshers. At least we had four days and welcomed them to an extent. My concerns are we won't have provided the same level of community that we normally would, but that was impossible given the circumstances. Still think we should try to do better.

**SC** sounds like the right decisions were made in terms of prioritising the safety of freps and freshers. There will be opportunities to correct the problems of communication. The right priority was isolation etc. In terms of looking forward, are there plans to try and keep engaging freshers?

**SWC** yes, we moved a lot of positions to method 3 so that they are application not husting. We rely on people coming to the bar and getting egged on by friends which can't happen at the moment. Lots of applications have gone out for different committees. Still doing JCR meetings and some video husts. We are evaluating that on what we can do better. If we can find an alternative that would be preferable. Have some online events for those who are isolating, as well as online drop-ins. Some sport is returning to play this week, so that should help. Some societies that are able to do things online are operating.

	<p>Hopefully the library and gyms open soon, but it's not up to us if livers out can come into college. Difficult situation for the freshers who are living out - want to do a matriculation for them but want to coordinate with Elizabeth.</p> <p><b>JP</b> I know there have been claims about self-isolating students and the support they've received from the university. I know there has been problems raised on national news - have we had any issues with that?</p> <p><b>SWC</b> in terms of food, it wasn't great. All the same meal every night, and it's not very substantial. Have U-Turned on that. Had a conversation with Jeremy Cook about this, about students delivering food, adequate PPE, and the delay in hot meals being delivered. He admitted that they just went for the sector standard and didn't really look into it. Wasn't an ideal situation, but it has improved by now. Not sure what other things the university is offering, I know there are a few wellbeing opportunities.</p> <p><b>ES</b> I was copied on an email that was a complaint about the food parcels, so there have been complaints from Cuth's students. I don't know the outcome, but I think it's been rectified.</p> <p><b>JP</b> are there any complaints that we can look at/be made aware of?</p> <p><b>ES</b> I haven't had anything to me.</p> <p><b>SC</b> glad that you guys have managed to get the food boxes issue some way fixed. Just to go further on the welfare side, what's the general sense of isolating and how that has worked in terms of people's welfare? Is it something people are coping with, do you anticipate any particular issues?</p> <p><b>ES</b> I have had a lot of anxiety around mainly isolating from home. People being put straight into lockdown has caused a lot of anxiety for livers in. My other worry is freshers liver out and I have had no communication with them at all, and we want to establish that contact. I know generally in university terms fresher livers out feel very excluded. Trying to get things out to them, but the</p>	
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	<p>main thing is a lot of anxiety about being away from home/catching Covid away from home.</p> <p><b>SC</b> not unsurprising, but worrying nonetheless. Good that you are recognising how this is an anxiety promoting time, can adjust that for campaigns if needed. Sounds promising in terms of activities restarting.</p>	
<p>4. Democracy and Participation</p>	<p><b>KM</b> just wondering what the fresher engagement was with committee applications.</p> <p><b>AW</b> I wanted to ask this but was waiting until later.</p> <p><b>AW</b> I wanted to see how moving to method 3 was going to work. Obviously methods 2 and 1 wouldn't but would method 3 fix that?</p> <p><b>LB</b> Our applications are still open, but engagement hasn't been amazing, but over half so far have been freshers. Unsure why that is, maybe they pay more attention to JCR social media and since that's the only way we're getting the word out. Unsure what past application numbers have been like.</p> <p><b>BT</b> in the library they've had to shorten shifts since there are so many applicants. Freshers might just be bored and wanting something to get involved in.</p> <p><b>ES</b> our applications were down a lot, they are closed now. We still had a few, and nearly half were freshers. Most people were second years, but freshers were the biggest group behind them. In general, engagement is down a lot which was to be expected.</p> <p><b>AW</b> the concern would not have been engagement being down, but it is encouraging you're still getting applications.</p> <p><b>SWC</b> freshers are the legacy, so since freshers are involved that is less worrying.</p>	

	<p><b>SC</b> to take a step back, are JCR meetings and that area where participation is needed, that is all happening online? While method 3 are applications? Are there any positions coming on that are in meeting hustings?</p> <p><b>AW</b> we made the decision to keep rep positions as actual husting - would be inappropriate to have a representative not elected. The next meeting has a lot of elections in it. Engagement at the last meeting with the elections was alright but not very good. Lots being carried over from meeting to meeting. A mixed bag regarding the elections. No freshers have contacted me yet about elections.</p> <p><b>SC</b> do you have any concerns about running that many elections in a meeting? How do you think this could be addressed given Covid may not go away any time soon?</p> <p><b>AW</b> been talking to BT about an in meeting voting system. Thinking about using TurningPoint and can live vote, so could do method 2 elections, and amendments etc.</p> <p><b>AW</b> turn out was good at the last meeting, about 58 participants, but probably closer to 90 when you factor in groups. Need to make the meetings more interesting, and voting should help. Not worried in the long run.</p> <p><b>KM</b> I feel like those who attended these meetings felt like they had to be there as they were position holders. They weren't engaged with the meeting and I view this as a concern.</p> <p><b>BT</b> not much we can do about that. Having voting in the meeting might help, might not improve the motion side, but if there are elections going on people might be more encouraged. That seems hard to deal with since it isn't in person.</p>	
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	<p><b>AW</b> I said this to MP, I think we need to force people to come, otherwise participation will be non-existent. Better to have 56 people there with only 10 engaging, than only 10 people there. At least there might be some subconscious gleaning.</p> <p><b>SC</b> can always hold the argument that in a public meeting space there are their own discussions etc. might just be a reflection of JCR meetings rather than the online system. Would be good to tackle, especially with voting. Gives a better idea of engagement as well. Overall it sounds promising, and trying to move a lot of things to method 3, and to have representatives elected sounds good and responsible. Will be good to see how that transpires later in the year and what we learn from that.</p>	
<p>5. External Outreach Projects</p>	<p><b>LB</b> unfortunately, I don't have anything exciting to report. Not looking like they can happen this term at least. Had a meeting recently with the university and I have all the forms and official stuff that needs to be filled in about in person volunteering, having spoken to the schools though it looks like the procedural stuff needs to be fleshed out more before we can go in. I hope to have a solid plan of action by midway through this term so I can go back to the schools with suggestions of how we can move forward.</p> <p><b>SC</b> could you tell us a little about what the projects are and who you are interacting with?</p> <p><b>LB</b> previously 2 projects, a rugby class in one school and a drama class in another. Send groups off each week to take part. Lots of uni level volunteering which takes place, and Cuth's works with university employees and exec to find the right technology to record the volunteering hours and GDPR and auditing. Useful to follow what they are doing in terms of volunteering, but uni projects are also not looking particularly active externally. Some are moving to online methods, but ours don't work as directly as an online group. Might be able to put together some resources, but wouldn't be volunteering in the same way.</p>	

	<p><b>SC</b> volunteering roles have changed massively, must be hard to keep engagement where these roles have changed so much given the circumstances.</p> <p><b>LB</b> a new challenge, which will provide creative solutions.</p> <p><b>SC</b> you said you discussed with schools?</p> <p><b>LB</b> was brief, and over summer. Have not reached back out since the restrictions have got more intense, will get back in contact and hopefully can work something out with them that will interest Cuth's students. My main focus right now is getting my committee sorted so we can have more people thinking of solutions.</p> <p><b>SC</b> will be able to crowdsource ideas, and there will be ways to deliver remotely. Was there any particular thing in terms of engaging with other organisations/communities outside of internal charitable projects? Anything new?</p> <p><b>LB</b> not currently looking for anything new, a bit optimistic. If anyone approaches me with people they would like to work with, be happy to look into it, but not on the cards at the moment.</p> <p><b>KM</b> in regards to FRAMDA, I know Sammy opened it up to any DST members. I think that if engagement is low in Cuth's you could reach out there again, gave us more volunteers in second term.</p> <p><b>LB</b> spoke to Marlo briefly the other day, and DST want to push volunteering and FRAMDA more, so that should be mutually beneficial.</p> <p><b>SC</b> that sounds promising, and seems like you have an idea of what to do once you have this committee, and have a better understanding of lockdown protocol.</p>	
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<p>6. Internal Charitable Projects</p>	<p><b>SC</b> appreciates this may not be that long a topic, but this includes raising money, filling volunteer roles, fashion show etc. Are there any other internal charitable projects that we should be aware of?</p> <p><b>LB</b> on my side, outreach committee will be putting on fundraisers throughout the year, not on the scale of fashion show. They haven't been booked or dated or planned so far. We have ideas flying around, but I will tell Saskia as and when we have more solid plans.</p>	
<p>7. Inclusion and Accessibility</p>	<p><b>SC</b> this is broad in scope, but particularly interested in how these will involve all members of the JCR and all the representatives yet to be elected.</p> <p><b>SWC</b> most reps are elected.</p> <p><b>BT</b> all but SwD reps have been elected, and the next meeting elects all the assistants.</p> <p><b>SC</b> that sounds promising. In this area are there any particular issues that are a concern or should be celebrated?</p> <p><b>SWC</b> our communities chair resigned during freshers week, so we have an exec position going up for election in the next JCR meeting. I will chair the committee until then. In future we should think about the appropriateness of this, but given the nature of the role it is about facilitating the reps. I don't see an issue with the president chairing, but in this particular committee people might have bigger issues since the president may not represent any group that is being represented. There isn't an issue for the moment, and we haven't had a meeting yet but there is one imminently. They have all been doing good work so far with anti-racism workshops in freshers week and an LGBTQ event/chill coffee morning. Would be great to get a SwD rep as a lot of it is practical information about applications and going through the system etc. If we don't get any interest I will do my best to put out information, but that rep would be very useful.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep communities chair on the agenda to keep monitoring and discussing.</li> </ul>



**AW** there are a number of good candidates for communities officer. I was discussing it with Lara and between us we listed off a huge list of people who are qualified - might be a matter of prodding.

**SC** yes that sounds true

**SP** heard the issue of representing minorities if no person can represent one minority in its entirety let alone all of them.

**SWC** that problem has been universal while it was under welfare committee as well, except the SWO was even more overwhelmed and was less likely to potentially fit into any of those groups. I understand that perspective and criticism, but it is largely a facilitation role, and that should be fairly easy to achieve regardless of where you fit into the groups. More about management and working with people. I'm not opposed to changing it, but the people over the summer were wanting to change it without a democratic process. Questions over the legitimacy of the voting since those who are not minorities were voting. It is controversial, but I'm loath to give up on it before it has had a chance. We are unlucky with resignations, but it could work really well and certainly isn't worse than what we had before.

**SC** did the communities chair feel like they couldn't deal with the controversial nature of it or was it a practical reason for the resignation?

**SWC** a bit too sensitive to discuss here.

**SC** that's fine, you are filling the role. It sounds controversial in nature, and that is in part what it is designed to be? If there was no disagreements over people's treatment we wouldn't need these representatives. Do be aware that the perception of not being a rep of all people in this role and it not being about facilitating those discussions might lead to a small engagement. Previously it was a much narrower appeal element since it was being siphoned into welfare, whereas now they would have a bigger voice, is that correct?

**SWC** yes that is true. The biggest issue was the SWO was overwhelmed by the job - face to face welfare, campaigns, and communities. It wasn't separate but they did their own campaigns etc. The other criticism was that the needs of different communities goes beyond welfare. This was an attempt to recognise that. I'm not saying it's perfect, or flawless, but there is nothing to stop people from showing up to a meeting asking for change but they don't they just message me. The sooner it is up and running and able to see the practical flaws not the perceived ones will allow for adjustments and make things smoother.

**AW** the role's controversy is both about the actual idea of the committee itself, and so having had two people resign from the position and this late in the game in a difficult year in and of itself, it needs someone who is going to do it in a top quality way. Just as much about the controversy of the role as the resignations, and people not wanting to take on that role anymore.

**SC** am I right in thinking that of the trustee board, we have someone who has just been recruited who specialises in recruitment issues? After seeing how elections go, Chiedza may be a good trustee to offer mentoring/support to an elected volunteer in that communities roles. Might be something that we can approach Chiedza about.

**SWC** I don't view this as an issue as long as it is a facilitator relationship. Sounds like a positive idea.

**KM** from her interview and CV she may be a good reference for guidance at the least.

**SC** sounds like you have identified a key issue with the perception of the committee as well, which will come under whoever takes on this chair. Good for us to be mindful of. The structure is not necessarily being bought into by everyone and assuming this will still be the case, then this is something we should try and advise and support as best as we can. Good to see the benefits of those in the role rather than the existence of the committee itself. Sounds

	like a possible area of concern, worth keeping an eye on that, and move it up the agenda for future meetings.	
8. AOB	Nothing raised.  Thank yous for participation, reiterating the relative novelty of this committee, and any feedback would be welcomed.	