

## Community Committee Meeting, 24.01.2021

Present: Serge Chapman (external trustee), Sarah Panek (VC of trustees), Jack Pearce (trustee), Saskia Wootton-Cane (president), Alfie Whillis (SRO), Ben Thomas (chair), Glenn Holmwood (external trustee), Lottie Brand (outreach chair), Kirstin McCann (student trustee)

Apologies: Emma Stephens (SWO)

Absent:

Agenda Point	Discussion	Actions and Owners
<p>1. Welcome and Minutes of Previous Meeting</p>	<p><b>SC</b> welcomes</p> <p>All present introduce themselves</p> <p><b>SC</b> introduction of what the committee is - layout of how we offer advice to the JCR in regard to student participation and the wider community</p> <p><b>SC</b> did Emma do her action, I notice she sent apologies</p> <p><b>SWC</b> Nightline numbers were low, so she has signed up as many minority reps as she could</p> <p>Minutes passed</p>	<p>Minutes Passed</p>
<p>2. Current (anything pressing that needs discussing)</p>	<p><b>SWC</b> worth discussing the Covid fund? Decided we will do something, but if anyone has any particular ideas on shape and content, would be interested to know, not super urgent, nor would the decision be made her</p> <p><b>SC</b> is everyone aware of this?</p> <p><b>SWC</b> given that this whole term is online, trying to think of ways to help</p>	

	<p>students out, particularly those who are struggling to engage in stuff online due to technical problems/not being able to afford good equipment, if you cannot take part in anything this also constitutes WSE. We have not offered a broader hardship fund before, only the participation one for S&amp;S, so not entirely clear what stuff people would apply for. The kind of things applied for may be a bit different from other years anyway, so not a massive issue that we have no precedence. Likely lots of stuff that students might need that we may not be aware of, in terms of equipment. Less likely to just send money, more likely to invest in something which can be repurposed after the pandemic. In some cases it may make sense to do money transfers, but for now this is the route we'd rather. If anyone has any ideas about what students may need it for, that would be good to hear.</p> <p><b>SC</b> as you've mentioned MW has addressed us, and good that you want this to be as broad as possible. How much is reasonable does fall outside of our remit, but would encourage student members in particular to offer feedback.</p>	
<p>3. Freshers</p>	<p><b>SC</b> meant to be standing for first term only, but included it here due to the nature of what university is at the moment. How are the first years continuing to be involved and engaged?</p> <p><b>SWC</b> a lot have come back, about 120 in college. Doing a refreshers 'give it a go' week next week to show what S&amp;S is still running to some extent, so hopefully that will drum up engagement. Would like to do weekly updates of what is happening in the coming week for S&amp;S to promote engagement. Realise that some S&amp;S are doing things we didn't know about, so being able to connect a bit more would be good. Want to create a platform for promotion. Some online formals have been planned. Since most committees have been filled now, that engagement shouldn't change. Slightly worried there will be an exec with no second years on it for next year which would be a shame, but we don't know yet.</p> <p><b>SC</b> in regard to freshers participation, how's it going?</p>	

	<p><b>BT</b> the environment rep is a fresher, they're the best bet to run for something, but unless there is a keen fresher involved with committees who we are not aware of, it doesn't look like a lot of involvement.</p> <p><b>LB</b> all the freshers on the outreach committee seem quite keen, and I've heard that they may be keen to run for outreach chair.</p> <p><b>SC</b> all we can do is promote and platform things, keep encouragement for online platforms to keep engagement, but in terms of this subcommittee, might be worth keeping an eye out for next year. There should be concern for involving first and second years next academic year.</p> <p><b>AW</b> I am in charge of running AGM's for S&amp;S, but bare's thinking about that they will face the same issues that we are facing with the incoming exec, and just wanted to flag this as a potential problem for the coming year.</p> <p><b>SC</b> what are the concerns in this area?</p> <p><b>AW</b> firstly that no one will fill the role, possibly leading to small or collapsed societies, or that people fill the roles with no experience. Might be worth encouraging S&amp;S to write handovers so the knowledge isn't lost</p> <p><b>JP</b> because societies haven't really been able to meet in person it is hard to keep even the exec engaged in societies, as a lot of things are targeted towards in person interaction. Unsure if there is a JCR rule about societies filling certain positions</p> <p><b>AW</b> yes, president and treasurer, but can be done by one person</p> <p><b>JP</b> was worried they may not be able to fill positions and then societies collapse, but if it can be a one man exec that's less of a problem. Handovers would be a very good idea.</p>	
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	<p><b>GH</b> might it be easier for S&amp;S in terms of current members being able to personally reach out and encourage involvement, and see the direct communication with the incoming members to explain how it all works. More difficult with the JCR exec due to the electoral process, especially since these roles are likely seen as more responsibility. Could you talk to people who currently hold positions in S&amp;S to encourage that and make sure it continues in that way.</p> <p><b>AW</b> not as pressing a problem admittedly, you can rebuild a society next year, a lot harder to do with the JCR due to procedure</p> <p><b>BT</b> people on execs are more likely to run in those positions again, less likely for JCR. Might be an issue to get first years to run but the positions being filled is less problematic.</p> <p><b>SWC</b> also just a bit longer away, might be worth knowing though that when we were in the tier not lockdown we might be able to do sports in some capacity with LFT, so if next term we're in the same position that would likely come back. Would be able to operate a lot more S&amp;S in a normal way if that happens.</p> <p><b>SC</b> are we then hopeful that next term there may be a little more ability for S&amp;S to organise, even though there are concerns about S&amp;S being able to organise for themselves, ensuring there is a keeping up of engagement?</p> <p>General nods.</p> <p><b>SC</b> good to be acknowledging the problem, and seeing potential solutions with the hope that the third term makes things easier.</p>	
<p>4. External Outreach Projects</p>	<p><b>SC</b> anything to report here LB about how this has gone? Particularly 12 days of Cuthsmas update</p> <p><b>LB</b> was good, raised over £700 for DASH and managed to do some online events. Good in terms of working as a committee with people from across all</p>	

	<p>years who don't know each other, which was a strength of continuing to put that on. Off the back of that, we took part in the DSU scheme to write christmas cards to care homes in the local Durham area - have been approached by a care home in Crossgate to potentially start a project with them, having a meeting about that this week where we could start a penpal situation with Cuth's students and alumni. Long term plan is that once we have a connection with them, we'd be able to go in once or twice a term for in person events. Nice to be establishing new links this term hopefully. No schools are open so those projects aren't running, but the correspondence with points of contact are still very positive. We talk every time there is a change of restrictions, but it's as positive as it can be.</p> <p><b>SC</b> I have some interest as to whether the schools have suggested moving things online, aware that that may not be possible</p> <p><b>LB</b> the FRAMDA project was still being run internally in the school and the kids ran it themselves, we gave them our resources and they were doing it amongst themselves until the end of last term. We haven't discussed any online version of that, unsure how it would translate virtually, and with the rugby club they seem too young to do it online, and PE in general is just any form of running around currently, which can't be done online. Might be nice to be able to innovate for next year if they have our resources for this year.</p> <p><b>SC</b> sounds good as a way to keep student volunteers certainly. Appreciate how hard the online standpoint would be, and from a safety perspective, with teachers likely needing to be involved. A nice positive with the pen pals project. Any more fundraising goals for this term?</p> <p><b>LB</b> we have not got a set fundraiser, discussed maybe doing something a little smaller but still in the idea stage. We are running the JCR pub quiz next week with suggested donations, but we do not yet have a big thing planned.</p> <p><b>SC</b> and DASH were happy?</p>	
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	<p>Nods.</p> <p>Strongly encourage all the positives to be shouted about given the circumstances, nice to get the good press and a nice way to engage more students.</p>	
5. Internal Charitable Projects	<p><b>SC</b> may have jumped the gun slightly, but this is more the internal charitable projects, so fundraising within the student body. I do want to ask about fashion show, should that be happening this term?</p> <p><b>LB</b> this is not my domain, maybe Saskia has more knowledge?</p> <p><b>SWC</b> should have been this term, last time we spoke they were thinking of doing it in June, and MW is their treasurer so we are able to keep an eye on them. Just warned them about being careful about contracts and release clauses, given the situation there isn't much that can be said to them. They may have been thinking about doing it outside in the summer, potentially could be a showcase, but unsure how much it is about fashion rather than an event to raise money. They should be brainstorming.</p> <p><b>SC</b> I'm sure we will be kept updated regardless of how the event looks to take place. Any further fundraising activities would be nice to be updated on, make sure they are well run and good reputationally for us, raise funds that go somewhere good, and students are involved in the cause.</p> <p>That all sounds good, especially to promote engagement.</p>	
6. Inclusion and Accessibility	<p><b>SC</b> the biggest concern here is how JCR activities include all members, and how they are involved in the community of Cuth's. Any updates here?</p> <p><b>SWC</b> we have a communities committee chair, our LGBT+ rep is chairing the committee. I have caught up with her, and she is aware of what her role is, and they seem to have good plans for the term. Last term we did a 'find a friend' thing, and it looks like they may do much the same for smaller communities, but</p>	

	<p>could be a high pressure situation. This Covid fund is also meant to help with that.</p> <p><b>SC</b> trying to create space virtually sounds very positive, and towards that aim. Has anyone come forwards to say that they do not feel particularly included or do not feel like things are accessible with it being online.</p> <p><b>SWC</b> have not had anything directly, but I'm sure it is harder, they need to look harder to find the communities themselves. A lot of things are advertised on platforms that people may not know exist, like instagram pages, but there seems to be some hesitation for advertising more centrally given Zoom bombings across the university both this and last term. It's why we hold our JCR meetings and welfare drop ins on teams. It is more complicated though, so that could be why people aren't using it, but it makes central advertising a little harder.</p> <p><b>SC</b> sounds difficult given you have limited feedback as well, in part due to a lot of students not being in Durham to be able to access things. Those Zoom bombings - good that you have switched to teams to keep things more virtually inclusive.</p> <p><b>BT</b> AW and I also had a meeting with the communities committee this week, and they are reporting similar things - a lot of people don't know they exist, and we did promote more central advertising, even just to make them aware that the positions exist. The elections are next term, but to do a showcase that these roles exist could be a useful thing to do. All the committees are quite autonomous, so it's hard given how disparate the different committees are.</p> <p><b>AW</b> what struck me from that meeting was that they don't have a great deal of contact with people in the same position in other colleges. For example, with music all the college reps are on a committee and they talk and get support from the university, there is a support network university wide. Despite there being associations for all minority groups, there doesn't seem to be contact with college reps of the minority groups. That seems to be a way to expose</p>	
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	<p>themselves more, but it is a big task. This has changed the way college music is organised, and has had an impact on the effort put into it.</p> <p><b>SC</b> in a positive way?</p> <p><b>AW</b> yes.</p> <p><b>SC</b> any thoughts or questions about that? In respect to social media stuff, I wonder in terms of engagement if there is any way to check what does well in terms of views or comments on the central social media challenges, and so broadly how many people things reach?</p> <p><b>SWC</b> not really. I know facebook does, but instagram doesn't seem to and it is our biggest platform. It gets good engagement when it's a good post, but it is dependent on things.</p> <p><b>SC</b> I don't know if there is any way, especially given online life, if there is any investment that could be made towards that. The idea of these groups have different social media challenges to communicate seems like a good idea on the face of it, but handing that over needs to be smooth so that the next group isn't starting from scratch, might be good to include in handovers. Cross college work is interesting, not sure what to suggest, but could be something to suggest to try and connect with people who share an interest outside of Cuth's as well as within. Unsure if that is the role of the SU to fulfill, or not.</p> <p><b>SWC</b> I know that the president of DPOCA is a Cuth's student and he has created college rep roles, and he has a stronger focus on cross college unity, not just through the SU. Yes, there is room for the SU to help, but depends on who is in the roles - we are fortunate that DT was so involved with Cuth's and then felt that that would be a good step, but we can't be sure if they would want permanent structural change across the SU.</p> <p><b>SC</b> yes, would be a minority rep decision to see if they should be speaking to Durham wide associations.</p>	
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<p>7. Democracy and Participation</p>	<p><b>SC</b> I mean this within the JCR itself. Any update around how the JCR is doing with meetings and filling positions?</p> <p><b>BT</b> since we last had a meeting I think there has only been 2 JCR meetings, a lot of the positions have been filled, and the only outstanding method 1 is international rep, but we have an assistant who is filling that role. Attendance has been consistent, but it is mainly people who hold positions or are representing a sport or society. With the presidential and FCO elections coming up next, we are hoping this will promote engagement as it impacts more people. We need to think about how we will promote that meeting though.</p> <p><b>AW</b> we are doing an event on Wednesday for a drop in/info session for promoting exec roles, which so far doesn't have a lot of engagement, but we are hoping that will improve. I'd like to see more enthusiasm from committee chairs to get their committees excited about JCR meetings, and if we can do that it will help a lot</p> <p><b>BT</b> LB did do a good job to promote this, based on her minutes from her committee.</p> <p><b>SC</b> I do appreciate that not everyone shares the passion for JCR meetings, but the presidential meeting should be a good point for garnering interest for attending. Is there a sense that this term is important for filling next year's exec, and have people approached you to ask about this, do people seem like they want to run?</p> <p><b>AW</b> I have only had two emails about people being interested in running (and only one was exec), and I would hope that what is happening with outreach is</p>	

	<p>happening across other committees and the committee members are keen to take up the roles. I am becoming increasingly less worried.</p> <p><b>SC</b> any more thoughts in this area?</p>	
8. AOB	<p><b>SC</b> general thanks Good to have an awareness of what is going on, nice to hear across the board what is going on and how you are doing lots to keep things going. Hopefully the summer will be more positive with people being able to meet physically.</p> <p>End of meeting.</p>	