



Governance Committee Meeting – 14.03.2021

(with correspondence for 2.2 Elections)

Attendance: BT (JCR Chair), AW (SRO), SWC (President), MP (VP), EM (Stool), JC (JRO), AJ (JRO)

Absent: MR (JRO)

Location: Zoom and later the GovComm group chat

BT Meeting to start at 8pm and will include a minute's silence at the start. AW spoke to TAF about doing elections first, should we do a procedural motion to do so as she is in Greece and the time zones make it quite late.

MP I am against this. It's not THAT late. We never do this, people can run in abstentia if needed.

EM We could run that election first though. I don't think these motions will be particularly deeply debated.

JC I agree we should keep it as normal.

Female Welfare to be the first election, but otherwise the usual running order will remain.

Motions

Participation Fund Motion

JC This decision was made deliberately – it was specifically to not allow travelling from Durham to somewhere else, like going on tour – by blanket removing travel restrictions we allow that, and (as the motion is currently written) that's not the intent of the motion. I think either believes or repeals should be amended.

SWC I think we should keep the blanket removal of restriction. The intent was sparked by travelling in, but I think we want that flexibility. We should be able to judge it on a case-by-case basis. I have no issue with us being allowed to do so if we want to.

JC That's fine, but it should be specified in the motion. Should include a bit that says it can be done outside of Durham

AW I agree with JC. Believes is inconsistent.

EM I don't see an issue with us paying for a train to Newcastle for a 10k.

SWC I'm fine with there being an amendment to the believes.

Motion is amended

No further governance issues



Memorial Motion

No governance issues

Gender representation on the Board of Trustees motion

JC Has this been reviewed by legal trustee and equalities act? I am not opposed to this but I think this is against the equalities act, as it would require a reciprocities rule.

SWC I will put this on hold and do some reading.

EM I think we should maybe have a clause where if enough time passes 3 blokes can be in. For the year I ran, I don't think it would have ever been filled. I agree it's a good way of having it, but we should have a stipulation.

SWC I'm not super against that. If we adopted that system it would come up at meeting 1.2 [assuming student trustee is always first ran at meeting 3.2 in the previous year] – on the fourth running it can be a man.

EM Neither way is perfect.

AW My concern is that it might lead to unfilled trustee boards – can be improved by substantially increasing visibility of trustees. I think the solution is not this motion it's better and different publicity.

SWC Not really a way to know without first taking action. I think this motion could play a part in changing that.

AW Yeah. I do think an unfilled trustee board is a concern.

SWC Let's put this on hold.

MP Is there a way to bring in these restrictions for the external trustees? No one could argue that male students have been dominating the conversation at this years' trustee meetings, but I think unconscious sexist bias is a major issue for the external trustees who are majority male.

SWC I think a parallel one could be introduced, but that would be a more difficult thing. Terms of service would make it difficult.

MP Another issue I have with this motion is that it requires people to out themselves to the entire JCR as non-binary or trans or to have them be under a disadvantage.

BT We could have a system where this is only revealed on the results.

SWC I think this is ultimately creating a space. I think this is ultimately beneficial.

JC I think about how they identify is key. It can be relatively private.

AW If we legally have to have a reciprocal clause it could be NB exclusionary

JC The equalities act is largely on sex

MP That could be a huge step back



JC The equalities act is not good legislation.

SWC Equalities act is about recruitment not election.

MP Has someone who doesn't identify as a man ever not won a trustee election?

AW I don't think so, but they are very rarely contested.

SWC It's about getting them to run. For female representation we've relied on a female president.

AW thinks he's read something concerning the SU elections – but we can't put our finger on what.

JC I'd be surprised if it doesn't form some sort of recruitment as we are proposing we overwrite an election on the basis of characteristics.

SWC There ARE positions like female welfare that aren't elected male

EM I like that idea, but it could make a governance issue – elections might have to be separate.

JC It could be resolved but requiring the separate election

AW that could work.

to be put on hold until we can be sure this is legally viable

Harm Reduction motion

EM How did the university take the report?

SWC Perhaps the most uninspiring meeting of my life.

AW Will drug tests be distributed by cuth's?

SWC No. Perhaps in the future I hope so.

JC points out a typo.

SWC Forgive me

MP proposes a college designer drug to match the college drink

No governance issues



Elections

LM Male Welfare

MP He calls the JCR “cuth’s JC” on his manifesto

JC I think he means me.

AW I will alert him to this typo.

JC It looks like he’s highlighting access to sharking through poor wording. But even then I have an issue with the word “sharking”.

AW Is sharking THAT much of a welfare issue?

BT He could just put relationships.

MP I think this could be considered legitimate campaigning

AW It is a bit tarnishing to inter year-group relationships, which aren’t all bad by any means.

MP there’s sharking and there’s *sharking*

AW I’d say he should change it to something like healthy relationships

MP We should vote on this

GovComm votes that LM has to remove the word “shaking”

JC Minor issue, but I’m uncomfortable of rape whistles being described as “sexual health”. I do not oppose the idea though.

EM I think this could be better phrased. I think it’s a good idea.

AW I fear for the abuse of the rape whistle by drunk fools.

EM I think drunk 18 year old idiots will do so.

AJ It’s just an idea. He should be allowed to say it.

AW I wouldn’t give them out to everyone personally.

BT I don’t like the implication that it is sexual health – I assumed that it would be part of the delivery service.

EM I read this as being something you get in freshers week.

AW I’d be inclined to get him to clarify exactly what he means “freshers week welfare packs”

EM Ensure people have access through the year, they technically do.

AW I think it’s allowed.

AJ And it’s access to the knowledge.

No further governance issues



During campaigning

Concerns raised about campaigning on a (60~ follower) non-personal account and in a (relatively small) group chat. AB (who runs the account and is on LM's campaign team) is not banned from campaigning for him.

JR Male Welfare

AW He's gone for an incredibly minimalist approach

JC There's research that says that is the way to go

JC minor issue on hust – the naked calendar in the background is affiliating with JCR members

AW It's femsoc this month

SWC He's not involved is that worse

MP I think it's the same as any other cuth's stash it's fine by me

this is deemed as being fine

SWC I think it's funny he's said he's a frep without mentioning being on the Exec. He talks about welfare freps – this was a long conversation over summer, I'm glad it didn't come into being – I am against this idea, and the way it's phrased. It looks like he's affiliating with JGa if it was one of her ideas

AW I don't think JGa did say that. In his hust he makes it clear it's not happened and he'd like to develop it.

SWC Not a hill I will die on.

No governance issues

ZH Librarian

JC Library stash for library enthusiasts, a very right-wing slogan.

EM Love that milk will be varied

GovComm talk milk alternatives for a while.

No governance issues



TAF Female Welfare

AW has got her to send a recording of her saying her last name so that he can pronounce it correctly in the meeting. [He initially chickens out in the meeting, but later redeems himself with a solid effort]

BT Perhaps the bit about meeting with welfare campaigns is problematic as she would already sit on the committee.

AW I think it's fine. Big meetings can be a tricky place to raise these concerns.

No governance issues

During Campaigning

Issue raised that some people are posting manifesto and poster for their Female Welfare candidate, and just manifesto for other. As this is a relatively minor offence and both sides are doing it about equally no proper action is taken. No proper judgement is reached as to what we would do if this wasn't being done by both sides equally.

HH Female welfare

MP she's spelt "and" "aand"

SWC Perhaps it's an intentional philosophical choice

JC "no issue can't be brought to welfare officers"

EM Standing orders specify they aren't counselling

SWC But that doesn't mean they can't be brought – there are ones that shouldn't perhaps, but you can bring anything and be listened/signposted. I think it's fine. I don't think this is overpromising anything.

No governance issues

During Campaigning

See above

AB SRO

AW she uses the word executive, will get her to change to senior as SRO is not on the executive committee.

EM No real issues, but she says the ch*risma in her hust, this is one of my JCR hust cliché pet peeves.

EM reminiscences of SP (SRO 2018-20)'s re-election campaign.

No further governance issues

During campaigning

GovComm Meeting

14-03-2021



Concerns raised about campaigning on a (60~ follower) non-personal account and in a (relatively small) group chat. No action taken against AB as a candidate as it is an uncontested election and not a major offense.

AOB

PG & M and Social Chair as of yet unfilled.

SWC we've done alright. I think getting engagement all things considered. Hopefully someone will run.

Sports and Socs Elections

AW Basically Boat club have already had their AGM, it followed the bulk of the election rules. I am not willing to follow the somewhat problematic document fully. Are we ok with people not following every single rule of their bizarre documents?

Yes we are

AW In the meeting it passed SP said document he claimed it was due to a non-democratic presidential appointment

JC The CU have a relatively poor track record

AW I might just have a word with them

Quorum

AW Hatfield's Senior Man emailed about quorum at cuth's. Hatfield's quorum rules are ridiculous – I said we don't have a quorum, but we do have a procedural motion to all for quorum.

SWC We don't have a defined quorum.

JC We used to have a defined quorum no matter what.

SWC Quorum's seem to cause issues. I don't think we ever have issues with it. We could remove this without a motion.

AW I think the quorum may have never been intentionally removed as a motion?

SWC I don't think we could prove it anyone

MP I think there's a chance it could have been removed democratically by accident (by this I mean the entire standing order could have been rewritten without having intentionally removed it)



JC It will have been passed when it was rewritten from memory. (Minutes were recovered from website in html format, but chair and SRO didn't know how to open such a file, communication and misunderstandings)

SWC I've definitely changed it

MP I feel like if the standing order has been amended in any other way it's a tacit recognition that the rest of the standing order is valid. As a result I think we do not need a further motion to remove it.

Raffle

BT Extremely chocolatey biscuits could go again

EM We could get something vegan.

AW The Greggs promo will not be run again.

BT We could spend money on participation fund instead.

EM for £7 we could get a customised cap with a message "I won this is a jcr raffle" – for £7 you can't say no! [this later gets amended to a mug]

SWC "I love Cuth's JCR"

EM shares screen, and wow it's awful

AW & MP lock horns on whether snapbacks are an acceptable form of headwear/prize

Image of GovComm

SWC This was brought up following recent elections, I don't think we are bad, but there is an ongoing thing that our image and how we are seen in the JCR needs addressing. I've chaired govcomm. I think that decisions can be unpopular even if it's justifiable. I think it's worth saying that there is an element of this that is unresolvable. I think we have a responsibility to come across as human as possible. I think people feel a bit attacked, especially if they don't understand why they are being told to do something. It's not that I think anyone specifically is doing things wrong – it's a problem across the years. It's important that across this odd year, we focus on how we come across. But what else can we do to stop people feeling it's us vs them? We want to create an image of us helping them.

JC Not a solution but the issue is that GovComm has been very good for a long time – so people forget what it's like when rule breaks are common. It's almost to the credit of GovComm that this is the only issue.

AW I think this year there has been less egregious rule breaking – and as a result we have been a bit harsher – but I think that is fair – we shouldn't be less strict, but we should be nicer. I could have been nicer to AF (Candidate for meeting 2.2) about a decision made. I think it's hard when it's not in person, because I had many ideas on how to make them more fun.



SWC I do think that the calls we have before JCR meetings are a very good idea, it does give us better reason to blame people if we've made it so unclear. Just being as clear as possible, and encouraging people to ask if in doubt. I think that explanation is just a big one. I don't think it's a big problem, but keep it in mind. Even so I think we should properly explain our decisions in any case. People take things personally, even if it isn't personal.

AW Worth having more than just me in the group chat so it doesn't feel like it's me being the personal dictator of the group chat. That was the perception of SP.

SWC Having me around there to observe to make people feel like they know the person at the top knows what is going on.

AW It's more like they feel they can't lodge a complaint with me. I feel like it's more intimidating to message me when I'm the only one to communicate.

AJ Just going to say that if we try to ensure exec know the rules – they should know to talk to people running for the position.

BT I've had exec members ask to explain to their committee when the elections are

SWC ultimately if they don't know they need to know who to message. I definitely think communication needs to be as open as possible. People feel like they haven't been listened to, feel demonised when it's not that deep – we need to run

MP I do think we're a lot better than elections have been in the past – when I ran for a position in 2018 the election rules were very different to the version on cuths.com, and I had misleading rulings sent to me.

AW SP called you the worst possible candidate in his handover to me.

MP imagines himself as DiCaprio's character in *Catch me if you can* (2002) – a criminal genius who at the end becomes an enforcer of the law.

JC on elections we should go down the line of offering warnings instead of going in with sanctions – often things we sanctioned things that we would have warned in the past.

A pre-meeting election rules will be held at 5pm to avoid clashes with a reclaim the night event.