



Communities Committee Meeting - 09/09/22

Attendance: KM (President), TA (FCO), AB (VP), SS (SwD Rep), NH (POC Rep), EM (Local Students' Rep), SM (WCS Rep), LJ (LGBTQ+ Rep), SL (International Rep), MB (SRO)

Apologies:

Absent:

Location: Zoom

Updates

NH: I've been planning drop ins for Freshers and doing a 'paint n sip' for the POC event but booze free. I've talked with Lydia about doing online drop ins and have also been trying to get in touch about the Anti-Racism Facebook page. I've had no luck so will probably just make a new one. I also got my diving under water licence.

EM: Have been working out the general plan for the tours and what areas to go to. I've also been planning the local students coffee morning and want to do board games as I think it'll be a good icebreaker. Working on drop ins and getting in touch with students.

LJ: Trans awareness training with EDI . I've been contacting training advisors, but need numbers but I'll get that from EDI meeting.

SS: I've been waiting for disability support to get back and went to a big meeting for this yesterday. I'm starting to plan for freshers now.

SM: Spoke with Etta from the 93% club about doing a speech for freshers. I said I was interested and am waiting to hear back. I'm also finishing up the document I'm doing with OS for socials- very nearly done. I backtracked on monopoly for coffee morning as felt it was quite a capitalist game so might send the wrong message.

SL: I've been working with CZ to finalise international freshers week. Struggling a bit as I need to communicate with freshers to organise. I'm going to post about people helping for freshers week soon to gain some ideas from others.



Freshers Week

KM: I need to email college with a list of Zoom calls we want to do over the next week and prep week. When is everyone definitely free to do this?

SL - Monday 14th, 4:30

SL: Anyway to reach out to freshers' emails?

KM They haven't got their emails yet, send me anything you want to send and I'll send it to college.

NH - Thursday 15th, 4:30

LJ - Monday, 19th, 2:30

EM - Friday 16th, 4:30

SL- Wednesday 14th, 4:30

SS- TBC

SM- TBC

KM: What do you all plan to do for your event and what's the title?

EM: Doing the tour, spoke about walking it ourselves first so we know the area. For the event, I'll do board games with snacks.

KM: We have a snack budget for your events.

EM: If I have tea and coffee, will there be a kettle nearby?

TA: Welfare room will have what you need!

NH I'm going to do a paint n sip and have canvases to paint. There will be fake prosecco too or something.

LJ: I'm going to do a crafts thing, I'm thinking clay again as was popular last year when I went.

SM: I was wondering if I could do plate painting if it was in line with the budget?

KM: I'll work it out and let you know, but should be fine. Do you guys have any questions or concerns? The timetable should be out monday, and the freshers week timetable either at the start of prep week or before freshers.SL< we will have a meeting with JS about international freshers week.



SL: Budget wise- what is the budget and where can we find out?

KM: From me- get in touch and will let you know.

TA: Does international freshers budget come from the international budget or freshers?

KM: Freshers!

EM: I think the tour will be better attended if we change it from 10:30 to 11:00, is that okay?

KM: Yes, will make changes.

Cost of Living

KM: This will become a rolling agenda point for this committee as I think it is relevant. I have been on a cost of living working group for the university, and have worked on getting the durham grant top threshold to be increased to 30K instead of 24K so more people are eligible. I also got the university to agree to then increase every level up with whatever is left over. Through the university working group, we've got Cuth's on too good to go for £2 to help with the cost of living crisis but also the problem of food waste. Have also managed to get them to provide free breakfast at the Billy B. Spoke to college about opening up showers in college for those who need them because of the bill increase. I've set one a cost of living working group within Cuths too, and we're in the process of setting up a survey to put out to students to see how we can help as the financial situation is going to change drastically as maintenance loans aren't increasing in line with inflation. Next week, we are going to decide the wording of it to make sure it's appropriate and not invasive. The trustees will then review the data and see how best we can use reserves.

TA: If you have any ideas at this early stage and want to check out how financially feasible this will be- come talk to me.

Electing a Chair

KM: If anyone would like to run, please send me a private message.

Live countdown performance performed by KM and AB

KM: There are two candidates for this role, NH and RON. NH please do a 30 second hust.



NH: I think it is important that we are united in order to create bigger and better events. I also think it's important to communicate more directly, and I want to implement a newsletter.

KM: Any questions?

No Response

KM: Can we pass this election on a general aye?

Election passed

JCR Meetings

MB: So, a run down of our GovComm meeting. We looked at NH's motion and discussed ways we could address the issue upfront. We thought about improving online meetings and different ways of making the motion work. We felt these ideas didn't address the core underlying issue. Making communities positions method 1 doesn't solve the culture of JCR meetings. We felt uncomfortable changing it to an online meeting as it felt slapdash. I want to emphasize the ability a candidate has to run in absentia, which was made more accessible last year. From this discussion, we felt we would prioritize live streamed and online meetings and work with AF to ensure the meetings are consistently live streamed and recorded. We then want to find a better way to count all votes, including those online. We want to further emphasize the ability to run in absentia, and we want to work with you to make people more comfortable and tackle the reasons people don't attend JCR meetings.

NH: In terms of physical accessibility, the Bailey isn't the more accessible place. Most students with disabilities are in Brooks, so having it there would make the meetings more physically accessible.

KM Only thing is the Bailey has the appeal for Livers out as it's closer. We usually alternate between the two sites.

NH: Need to consider issues of having it in a bar.

SS: Is there much difference in distances for Livers out?

EM: I'd say 50/50. Easier to get a bus to the Parsons site. Depends where you live though.

MB: Alternating will ensure everyone can come at some point.

NH: My concern is the socio-cultural aspects of the meetings. Only long term changes in culture will make it accessible. Focusing on the now, pushing them



to method 1 position could increase turn out now. There's a concern though with doing things as quickly as possible as there's lots of issues we aren't aware of.

MB: I feel like online voting wouldn't encourage people to come to the meeting as it reinforced the idea that you don't need to come. I think online voting in meetings is a good middle.

EM: KM, if there's a meeting at Brooks, will livers out be able to come due to codes?

KM: The meeting will be in Brooks bar or JCR, both don't need codes to access.

NH: I think we try what MB is suggesting and see how it works.

MB: No governance issues with doing it online at the meeting.

AB: Only thing is with motion, is if we generalise it to all method 2 positions then yeah, it will encourage people to not come to meetings, and if we apply to only communities roles, then it complicates approaching running for a role which will likely discourage people from running entirely.

MB: POI, assistant representative roles are elected in 1.2 so can try online method in 1.1

NH: Main concern is who is at a JCR meeting and the demographics. We need to do things to make the audience more diverse.

AB: I think this could come from the use of social media, the elections instagram doesn't target the right audiences, so if you guys use your instagram accounts to advertise the roles then hopefully it will encourage a wider range of people to attend and run.

MB: I'm going to advertise roles alongside their descriptions to make them less of a name and a phrase and more something you can contribute towards. You'll be able to share these to your accounts so it's more likely to reach the audience it's aimed to.

LJ: We need individual reps to gage freshers to meetings and make sure we're mentioning it and that they know the impact it has.

AB: I think it's also important to encourage people to attend as an audience and as voters, not just to run. We should make sure we're communicating the meetings to those likely to attend, not just those likely to run. This would help have a more diverse audience.



NH: From here, let's push for more consistent advertisement online and tell people about JCR meetings during freshers week. We will work to making meetings more inclusive and see about the way the positions are ran. We can reassess later on and see how it is working.

AOB

Newsletter

NH: When DM was chair, he wanted to bring about a Comms Comm newsletter that discusses what Comm Comm does, events and wider uni. Want a more active instagram presence by creating a canva template on what we've each been up to and then post this on social media and in the newsletter.

SS: How would the newsletter be spread?

NH: By email as a google document that's just text to be accessible to all.

AB: We could make a highlight on instagram so when they are shared to Cuth's JCR, we can put them in one place where people can see.

NH: We don't want it to be too frequently posted or people won't have as many updates as potentially other people due to timetables.

SL: We could try and do it every 2 weeks and work it around international/religious events?

NH: Might be too messy.

KM: Maybe twice a term you do a big cool newsletter.

AP: Check calendars for Michaelmas so we can plan events in advance

AB: Separate from this, you could do an event post weekly as might get better engagement.

SS: They don't have to be evenly spaced either as they'll be more stuff in Michealmas term

NH: Do we have a list of when the current events/meetings for this term are?

KM: I'll send this list out

NH: AOB?

LJ: I was looking into changing the wording for the gender expression fund. Currently says for 'gender non-conforming' students, but I'd like to change the



wording to include trans and non-binary students who aren't necessarily gender non-conforming.

Next Meeting

NH: Should we have one in the first two weeks and then before the election of assistant reps?

AB: Might be worth waiting until after they have been elected so they feel more included in the committee?

KM: First two weeks, be active on respective instagrams to engage. Do a question box and let people ask questions. This will raise engagement for the year.

NH is murdered by an intruder.

KM: would be useful for someone to set up a spreadsheet that knocks off when people aren't free.

NH is safe and fine

AP: NH make spreadsheet/

AP: Everyone sorts out there when they are available.

End of Meeting

