

Christ Church Students' Union Annual General Meeting 2014/15 Minutes

Tuesday 24th November 2015, 6.30 - 8.30pm
Augustine House 3.31, Canterbury

Chair

- Joseph Christmas Rook - Union Council Chair 2015/16

Present

- 56 (including nominated proxies) Canterbury Christ Church University students who are also members of Christ Church Students' Union

Speakers

- Students' Union President – Krum Tashev
- President (Sports) – Emily Barron
- President (Education & Wellbeing) – Nicola Ward

In Attendance

- Pro-vice Chancellor of Education & Student Experience - Professor Helen James
- Director of Student Experience - Moira Helm
- Student Trustee – Emily Carrigan
- Managing Director – Ben MacPhee
- Finance Manager & Company Secretary – Chris Hougham
- Communications & Development Manager – Helen Kirk
- Digital & Communications Coordinator – Adem Djemil
- Graduate Communications Intern – Kat Skeates
- Charlotte Gunter (Minute Taker)

Introductions

The Chair opened the meeting and presented the speakers. General information was presented and the voting process was explained.

Permissions to Speak & Attend and Declarations

The Chair asked the membership for permission for the Managing Director and the Finance Manager & Company Secretary to speak if necessary – **vote passed.**

The Chair asked the membership for permission for Professor Helen James to attend the meeting and speak if necessary – **vote passed with one abstention.**

The Chair asked the membership for permission for non-members to attend the meeting – **vote passed with one vote against and one abstention.**

The Chair asked for any declarations of conflicts of interest – **none declared.**

Matters Arising for Any Other Business

The Chair invited the room to submit any matters for any other business of which two were submitted after giving a brief summary of the matter.

Minutes and Actions of the 2013/14 AGM

The Chair invited the membership to take a look at the 2013/14 minutes and then held a vote to approve the minutes – **vote passed with one abstention.**

Union Council 2014/15 Report

The Chair introduced the report and then presented the report to the membership with special mentions to Bronwen Edwards and Daisie King for their work on the Union Council. The Chair then invited any questions of which there were none.

Christ Church Students' Union's Financial Statements & Annual Report 2014/15

Emily Barron introduced the Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements 2014/15. Emily then invited Ben MacPhee to present a financial summary. There were the following questions:

Q: Is there a breakdown of amounts of money received by sports & societies?

A: Yes, £107,830 was spent on sports and £34,071 was spent on societies and student media.

Q: Is the University grant the same as last year?

A: It's more as there are more students. The amount is worked out two years in-lieu and also allows for inflation.

Q: Why are societies and student media combined in costs?

A: They are treated separately in how they are supported but costs are put together for ease of presentation. The full figures will be published.

Q: Why is sports expenditure higher than income?

A: Additional funding is provided by commercial contracts and sports and societies are additionally subsidised by the Union. Sports clubs have been notified of the income and expenditure of their clubs in benefits statements.

Q: Why is the main contract with Club Chemistry? Doesn't this promote drinking?

A: We are in the final year of our commercial agreement with Club Chemistry. The decision was made initially due to the popularity of Club Chemistry with students. This contract is needed to help provide a variety of income for Christ Church Students' Union.

Q: Does that not create a pressure to go out drinking for students? Society members don't have facility given by Canterbury Christ Church University or Christ Church Students' Union for non-drinking events.

A: There has been a recent shift in culture to focus away from drinking. We have re-focused The Lounge with emphasis on safe socialising and have been working with NUS to promote safe drinking alongside Nicola Ward & Moira Helm.

A member of a sport society states there is no pressure to consume alcohol and feels safer at Club

Chemistry due to their link with Christ Church Students' Union.

A: The original tender for the contract was based upon safe-socialising.

Q: Why aren't we using the relationship with Club Chemistry to improve the working conditions there for our members?

Ben MacPhee hands back to the Chair: Joseph Rook to answer this question.

A: This has been discussed in the last Union Council meeting and we are hoping to put pressure on Club Chemistry to improve the working conditions.

The Chair then invited the membership to approve the Financial Statements 2014/15 – **vote passed with six abstentions.**

Review & Approval of Auditors

The Chair introduced the membership to the company Crowe Clark Whitehall who currently hold the auditing contract with CCSU and then invited the membership to speak either for or against the company. The Chair handed over to Ben MacPhee to answer any questions:

Q: Why do we use Crowe Clark Whitehall? Have you checked other companies to see if they are cheaper?

A: Crowe Clark Whitehall were selected through a comprehensive tender process at the cost of just over £8,000 per annum.

Q: Where does the money for this come from?

A: The University grant.

The Chair then invited the membership to vote whether Crowe Clark Whitehall should continue to be used by CCSU – **vote passed with three abstentions.**

Review of Affiliations

The Chair invited Ben MacPhee to briefly summarise the affiliations.

- **National Union of Students (NUS)**

The Chair asked the membership if they had any questions regarding the affiliation between CCSU & NUS:

Q: What do NUS provide for the cost of the affiliation?

A: NUS are currently looking at membership prices and are expecting the fees to fall. We receive training for our full & part time officers. Membership also allows us to sell NUS Extra cards which generates approximately £26,000 income per annum. They also represent the national voice of students through campaigns such as the Cut the Costs campaign.

The Chair then invited the membership to vote to approve the affiliation with NUS – **vote passed with three votes against and one abstention.**

- **British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS)**

The Chair handed over to Emily Barron and asked the membership if they had any questions regarding the affiliation between CCSU & BUCS:

Q: What is it and what do they do?

A: BUCS arrange all the leagues and games for the sports teams as well as providing training.

Q: How does BUCS affect referees and the campaigns for fairness for referees and officials that are currently taking place?

Emily handed over to a member who is a referee who gave an overview of a referee's responsibilities.

The Chair then invited the membership to vote to approve the affiliation with BUCS – **vote passed with one vote against and two abstentions.**

- **British American Football Association (BAFA)**

The Chair handed over to Krum Tashev and asked the membership if they had any questions regarding the affiliation between CCSU & BAFA:

Q: Why is this separate from BUCS?

A: These sports are relatively new and are still building and developing therefore they have special requirements so they have their own affiliations.

The Chair then invited the membership to vote to approve the affiliation with BAFA – **vote passed with one vote against and five abstentions.**

- **Kent Cricket Academy (KCA)**

The Chair handed back to Emily Barron and asked the membership if they had any questions regarding the affiliation between CCSU & KCA:

Q: What is this affiliation for?

A: It may be due to the varsity arrangements.

Q: Is this affiliation separate to the team's personal affiliations?

A: I am not sure, it would be similar though.

Q: Why do you not pay for Boxing affiliations then?

A: All affiliations are paid for by the membership fees.

The Chair then invited the membership to vote to approve the affiliation with KCA – **vote not passed with twenty-seven votes in favour, eleven votes against and sixteen abstentions.**

- **British Lacrosse Association (BLA)**

The chair asked the membership if they had any questions regarding the affiliation between CCSU & BLA:

Q: What do they give us?

A: It is similar to American Football. If the Lacrosse teams are not affiliated then they can't play. All affiliation costs are paid for by membership fees.

The Chair then invited the membership to vote to approve the affiliation with BLA – **vote passed with two votes against and seven abstentions.**

Several members discussed the lack of information available to them about the affiliation to Kent Cricket Academy, the following question was asked:

Q: Can we add a clause to the result of the Kent Cricket Academy vote as I do not want to prevent them from playing if they need this affiliation to play. If not then the original result can stand.

A: The AGM can vote to defer the vote and pass the issue to the Board of Trustees for further discussion.

The Chair then invited the membership to vote on whether to defer the vote regarding KCA and transfer the issue to the Board of Trustees – **vote passed with three votes against and seven abstentions.**

Special Resolution to Adopt and Approve the proposed Articles of Association of Christ Church Students' Union

The Chair handed over to Ben MacPhee who gave information on what the Articles of Association are and why new ones have been proposed. Ben gave a brief overview of the main changes including the fact that students are no longer company law members of Christ Church Students' Union and some minor changes to Union Council. The Chair then asked the membership if they had any questions about the new Articles of Association:

Q: I have concerns about points 30.7 and 30.9 in particular the powers of the Board of Trustees and the validity of their actions.

A: These points haven't changed, they are already the case.

Q: But is this right?

A: All of the points in the Articles of Association have been recommended and endorsed by NUS and then tailored specifically to CCSU by the solicitors.

Q: Well is everyone in this room aware that trustees who have not been elected have the power to overrule decisions made by the student body?

A: CCCU students will always hold the majority over the non-elected trustees.

Q: Are the trustees both elected and non-elected welcome at the AGM?

A: Yes.

Q: How can point 30.9 be legitimate? How is it ok that just anyone can make a decision even if they haven't been properly appointed, disqualified or not entitled to vote?

A: This is a standard clause for any Articles of Association. This clause exists due to the acceptance that at the time of a vote no reason of illegitimacy was known.

Q: This looks like a colander with lots of holes in it to me and I have a lot of experience writing legal documentation.

A: The Articles of Association was written by solicitors who specialise in charity law and also under the guidance of the NUS.

Q: How much respect is placed for the decisions and votes taken at the AGM by the Board of Trustees?

A: Trustees can attend the Union Council meetings. Student trustees still hold the majority and hold their positions democratically.

R: (*given by Emily Bak-Olesen, Student Trustee 2015/15*) Not a single student-made decision was overlooked by the Board of Trustees last year unless it broke the law or didn't make financial sense.

Q: If any decisions were overridden by trustees are you obliged to inform us?

A: All Board of Trustee minutes are published online.

Q: What provision do students have to comment on overturned decisions?

A: Union Council is in place to ensure that student views are respected, heard and adhered to.

Q: Why is the overruling of decisions not highlighted?

A: Any overturned decisions must be based on legal, financial or reputational grounds. This is due to the trustees having overall responsibility for charities under charity law.

Q: How are overridden decisions advertised and what is the percentage of non-student trustees?

A: We have five non-student trustees and six student trustees. We are also looking to appoint two more selected student trustees.

Q: Hypothetically, what would happen if the Articles of Association did not pass today?

A: (*Ben MacPhee summarised the process of how the new Articles of Association were arrived at*) The Articles of Association have been approved by the Board of Trustees and Canterbury Christ Church University's Board of Governors. Trustees would need to decide on further action if it didn't pass, but the probable cause of action would be to re-draft and propose to an Extraordinary General Meeting later on in the year, which would have to be called by writing to all students again, at a further cost in excess of £22,000.

The Chair called an end to the question and answer session and then invited the membership to vote on adopting the new Articles of Association – **vote passed with two votes against and two abstentions.**

Other Resolutions

No other resolutions were submitted by the deadline at 6.30pm on Sunday 22nd November.

Leadership Team Reports

The Chair introduced the topic and then handed over to Emily Barron to give her report.

President (Sports)

Emily gave an overview of what she had achieved so far with a brief discussion of topics such as Presidents & Captains Day and the decisions made with regards to sports kit. Emily also highlighted some of her upcoming projects and aims including her plans for transport.

The Chair asked the membership if there were any questions of which there were none.

President (Student Activities)

The Chair apologised for Sophie Dudley's absence and gave the membership the opportunity to read the presentation slide highlighting Sophie's achievements so far and her plans for the future.

The Chair asked the membership if there were any questions of which there were none.

Students' Union President

Krum gave an overview of what he had achieved so far with a brief discussion of topics including his plans to improve the strategic plan of CCSU's Budget, greater equality between sports clubs & societies and gender equality.

The Chair asked the membership if there were any questions:

Q: What are you doing about storage space for societies?

A: Krum asked the member to email him directly regarding this issue.

President (Education & Wellbeing)

Nicola gave an overview of projects she has been working on so far including 1st year lecture shout outs, the introduction of First Aid training as well as the success of her Student Rep training. She also highlighted upcoming projects such as the Housing Campaign.

The Chair asked the membership if there were any questions of which there were none.

Further Questions for the Trustees of Christ Church Students' Union

The Chair asked the membership if they had any further questions for the Trustees of which there were none.

Any Other Business

The Chair invited Oliver Bryant (Disabled Students' Officer) to raise his matter for Any Other Business that he submitted earlier in the meeting.

Oliver stated that he felt, along with some of the students he represents, that Learning Support Plans (LSPs) are not being implemented appropriately and that there is a lack of awareness from lecturers. He gave an example of a student with a hearing impairment having to watch a video in a lecture with no subtitles. When the student brought this up with their lecturer at the end, the lecturer stated that they were not aware that there was a student with a hearing impairment in their class. Oliver asked if anything was being done by the Union to raise awareness of LSPs as he felt there was some confusion on behalf of the teaching staff in identifying specific student needs.

There then followed some examples from disabled students present at the AGM both in support and against Oliver's point.

Professor Helen James responded to Oliver's point by stating that there was currently an ongoing review of access to student support which is looking at a range of different processes and systems that are in place. She stated that even though she couldn't comment on individual cases

she was happy to take Oliver's point away from the meeting and investigate what happens 'on the ground' and establish how competent all staff are with the systems that are currently in place.

There then followed several comments regarding the availability of lecture slides being online prior to the lectures and how beneficial it is for disabled students to have the slides in advance. One student stated that it was believed amongst the students that the publication of slides early online was at the discretion of the lecturer. A member then stated that this was because many lecturers believed that if they published the slides early the level of attendance at lectures would fall. The member then asked if there was a policy allowing for students to be penalised for lack of attendance.

Professor Helen James replied stating that a capped mark based on a student's attendance is not a university policy but may appear as a module-specific requirement for some courses. The Professor stated that she was happy to establish whether there was a policy on the early publication of lecture material.

Oliver, returning the topic of conversation back to LSPs stated that they currently get emailed from Student Support to the Programme Directors but they are then not necessarily passed on to the lecturers of the student in question. He said this is due to data protection issues in that only two members of staff can be nominated by the student to hold the LSP. Professor Helen James asked Oliver to leave the issue with her and suggested that they meet at a later date after further investigation into the issue. The Professor also emphasised the importance of students raising any issues or concerns they have with their Student & Course Reps.

Ben MacPhee then reiterated Professor Helen James' statement encouraging the membership to confront any issues they may be having and reminding them that Christ Church Students' Union's Sabbatical Officers and Staff are always there to help and support students.

The Chair then invited the other member who submitted a matter for Any Other Business to speak who replied that his matter had been covered previously in the meeting.

The Chair then asked the membership if they had any other questions or comments:

Q: I feel it would be beneficial to have department wide Student Rep meetings as well as just course meetings as some of these issues may spread across departments as well as just being course-specific issues.

A: Ben MacPhee responded stating that the Union's appointment of a Student Voice Coordinator would soon be in post and this would be one of their focuses.

Q: What power do lecturers have over disruptive students as this is an issue in many of my lectures and nothing concrete seems to be in place to help the lecturers deal with this?

A: Follow the Student Rep and Complaints procedures as these are there to help solve issues.

The Chair thanked everyone for coming and closed the AGM.