

BA Committee Meeting - Monday 3 December 2018
BA Rooms, 8pm

Minutes

Present: Josh, Annalise, Hans, Marcel, Poonch, Jake, Isabel, Parwana, Lukas

Apologies (in advance): Christoph, Thomas, Steffi, Reece, Stephen

Absent: Rebecca Brooks

Meeting opened at 8.04pm

Computing Officer presents a motion to change the agenda. Wants to add additional points.

“I would like to raise a request to amend the agenda by the following issues:

1. Circulation of the hustings minutes (preferably between (2) and (3)).
2. Google calendar (preferably after (7)).
3. Advertisements in the bulletin (preferably after (7)).
4. Digital jukebox at after-formal BOPs (no preference).”

There was confusion about the agenda being available in the google drive for two weeks; a reminder message sent within the 24 hours before agenda was to be complete was mistaken for short notice.

President suggests this is a procedural matter and asked for committee opinions.

Secretary protests against amending the agenda after the constitutional deadline – it was in the google drive for two weeks, and the items the Computing Officer proposes fall under (1) and (7) so there is no reason to amend the agenda. Computing offer argues that there is a difference between amending and editing the agenda.

Chair decides to amend the agenda – proposed solution is presented to the committee as a compromise, remainder of committee does not protest, secretary notes that any amendment remains a change to the agenda – and add Google Calendar and Advertisements in the bulletin as sub-points to (7). Digital jukebox added as (20).

1. Matters arising from the previous meeting

None.

2. Welcome to the First Year Representatives

First year representatives are welcomed to the committee formally. Computing Officer to add them to digital platforms including Google Drive.

Computing officer has assigned functional email addresses, Secretary has added to slack workspace.

3. Discussion of matters arising from Open Meeting (particularly questions raised)

President wants to clarify things after looking into them and forming an opinion. We should all understand the committee position.

- a) Election of master process clarified by email. The BA Society is not involved. The process is confidential as any other job interview would be.
- b) Divestment (motion to support 2017 letter). President's summary: Irrespective of individual opinions we cannot take political stand without a clear mandate. The BA Society does not have a clear mandate to support any kind of broader pro-divestment message. The BA Society is a signatory of a particular letter and remains a signatory to that letter in the form it was presented to the 2017 Meeting. There are two points in the old minutes that are clearly about the letter. Of course further discussion on political issues of concern can be facilitated, but for that to happen BAs need to submit motion such that it is discussed at open meeting (see constitution).

Question: What is required for a mandate?

A: Once a meeting is organised and all have the opportunity to attend, a motion passed at that meeting is valid. Along as meeting is quorate, we can vote. Motions need to be specific and clear.

Question: What is our position in relation to the 2017 Motion and particularly its temporality?

The committee unanimously agreed that the minutes of the 2017 meeting make clear to them that the mandate from the motion is discrete to the letter. The Society remains a signatory to the letter that was drafted in 2017 only. The committee does not read the mandate as ongoing in relation to broader political interests on the part of the group that proposed the letter or the divestment issue.

The Committee agrees that our constitution requires that they are ultimately a body that exists to represent the graduate body. Our opinions on political matters don't matter more than those of any other voting member, but we do have a duty to ensure that the appropriate channels are followed.

The view was also expressed that it is worth considering whether remaining apolitical as far as possible would be the fairest way to represent the diversity of views in the BA Society, but the Committee does not have control over the motions submitted to Open Meetings so it is the BA Community's decision regarding what motions are submitted.

4. Report from Liaison

President and Secretary went to Liaison meeting and submitted 6 proposals. Barbeque, student space for PhDs, cycle lockers, bike storage for BAs, matriculation dinner, green bins at graduate hostels. They reported to the committee that 4 of the 6 proposals were passed over by the College's Liaison committee. The President and Secretary will represent the concerns of the BA Society regarding representation via this channel to senior College officials and will also discuss informally with the TCSU.

Q: Is there a template for making a proposal to the Liaison committee?

A: No.

Q: Can BAs join the TCSU?

A: Yes.

5. Report from Equal Opportunities Meeting

Secretary will put representative fellow for LGBTQ+ and our officer in touch.

6. LGBTQ+ flag

The Committee agreed to survey its members on this issue, following TCSU independently conducting their own survey. This will take place in Lent term.

7. Emails - refining policy

The BA Committee refined its email policy and sought to resolve confusion regarding what had been meant by “reminder emails”. The way that we propose going forwards is to produce a “sample week” for a couple of weeks. The committee agreed to remove the second bulletin and replace with smaller emails distributed throughout the week, which is what some members had taken the original proposal for “reminders” to mean. There will never be more than one email on the same day, except in emergencies. Having a very clear subject line is important.

The committee praised the computing officer’s design.

Q: Is maximising the number of attendees the best way to achieve our aims? If people don’t come, it might be because they don’t want to.

A: But when there is money involved, it is incumbent on us to advertise our events in such a way that reasonably communicates opportunities/

Vote on dropping second bulletin, and having more reminder emails passed unanimously.

a) Google calendar

The Committee discussed that there exists a simple google calendar, not currently in use. Could include link to the calendar on the bulletin, once it’s populated. Organiser of event responsible for maintaining it. Completeness and consistency important.

However, this does add more work and could create more confusion. Reminders might be enough.

Vote to have a calendar: 5 against, 4 for. There will be no calendar at this time.

b) Advertisements

The committee revisited the question of advertisements. Decided to allow Trinity BAs only to request adverts in the bulletin. Computing officer would say we only accept adverts from within

the Trinity MCR. This is an obstacle for spam. Advertisements endorsed by a member of the MCR – in a section of the Bulletin – names will be attached. Passed unanimously.

Trinity Forum to, in future, fall under this category.

8. Suggestion to conduct an “Academic Welfare and Gender Gap Survey”

Equal opportunities committee discussed that females tend to underperform in Tripos. But, they also seem to show the greatest improvements. Want to understand what is causing this. TCSU is planning on conducting a survey on perceptions of college and factors affecting academic performance. Would have to be our own survey if we did one. To be discussed at a future meeting and likely framed as survey on academic welfare in general.

9. BA Charity/Volunteering Events

The committee discussed interest that had been expressed in having organised volunteering opportunities. President and Women’s Officer will look into it. Some concern about the time commitment required and representation of the College – we will examine feasibility and report back at next meeting.

10. Screens around College

College will advertise things for the Committee on the screens. Committee discussed method for submitting events and agreed to check via internal channels with the rest of the committee before submitting any advertisement.

11. BA room cleaning / restocking: Definition of tasks / to-do-list

The committee will produce and circulate a fixed list of things to be done when by committee member in charge of cleaning the BA Rooms.

POI: BA Cupboards need cleaning. There was a spring cleaning, but there was a moth incident last year and some items had to be disposed of, so we do not have a current inventory.

President will contact housekeeping to check politely on tea towels being cleaned.

12. Lent events

The ents officers held a pre-meeting. They have also organised swaps Next term: Jesus, Pembroke, Queens. Proposal is to subsidise all swap tickets down. Ents officers discussed their analysis of events organised in Michaelmas. Document summarises the events. Ents will discuss dates going forwards, and the budget will be set before Christmas. Term card drafting can then begin. In principle, the committee approved of the Ents Events. Budgets to be discussed separately with Treasurer.

The Secretary cautioned that sub-meetings are problematic. Welfare has been unintentionally excluded here, and the effect is that the welfare team have been left with the last choice of dates in an already-busy term card. Secretary suggests that, in future, if anyone is organising a sub-meeting, this be advertised to the entire committee so that those who are interested at least know it is happening even if they are not able to attend.

The Ents officers preparation efforts were praised. It was also noted that they could be approached by Welfare to change dates if any of the proposed dates were problematic. The timetable presented was just a preliminary structure; they are not yet fixed events.

13. Winter break events

Committee agreed to create a Whatsapp group so people who are staying can get in touch informally, to be circulated in next bulletin. First year rep to be responsible.

14. BA events: release of guest list before events

First year rep candidate raised this point at hustings. At the moment we bcc people into confirmation emails, so they don't know who else is going. Sometimes people would like to know who is going to the event before going. Committee discussed including on the sign-up form with a tick for their presence to be shared with others on confirmation email. Easy to implement, then we're on the safe side. This would stop people dropping out if they don't know if their friends are coming. However, it wouldn't let people know who is planning to go before signing up.

Committee agrees Facebook events would be a bad idea as an opt-in guest list. Problem with confusion when we use a google form for sign-ups.

A vote was taken on a trial of retrospective guest list being circulated. Passed with one abstention. An opt-in for having the name on the list of participants will be added to the sign-up form so that people know who else is attending the event.

15. Update on BA Club Nights

President is trying to combine TCSU club nights so BAs can also purchase tickets. Probably Tuesday, Wednesday, or Sunday. However, if the BA Society ties to use TCSU's current system, it would create an additional step for bar staff, which is not acceptable.

Committee considered whether an easy solution would be estimating our numbers and then joining with TCSU. However, an alternative is to try to find a club for Friday. Committee decided that dedicated BA arrangements would be preferable to our members, so President will explore Friday night options. If that is not successful, the question of whether collaboration with TCSU club nights is possible will be revisited.

16. Subsidising BA Dinner Swaps

Some swaps are more expensive than our dinners. Committee questioned whether this created a problem with financial equality of access to opportunities to meet members of other colleges. While there was not consensus, a vote was taken.

Vote on subsidising swaps in principle: 2 against, remainder for.

Vote on a subsidy cap of £10 per ticket – 1 against, remainder for.

Vote on subsidising swap ticket prices down to a) the same price as BA Student price – 2 for or b) the same price as BA guest price – 6 for. Abstaining: 1.

This will be for our committee's Lent and Easter budgeting. However, drop outs after the deadline will be charged the full price for the swap ticket.

In a return to Agenda Point 12 the discussion was broadened to discussing event drop out rules for all charged Ents events as these rules will be advertised and then applied consistently to all events and not only to swaps.

17. Coffee Machine proposal

Postponed to next meeting.

18. BA Movie Nights

Some BAs have expressed that they would be keen on more regular low-key movie nights. The committee considered adding it to our timetable as a regular event. Reservations were raised about having too many events on the calendar.

Note was raised that casual varied Welfare events have significantly reduced in number this term, and that having the same casual event repeatedly is not the same thing. Note was also raised that more formal welfare events (that recur) have taken their place. There is a difference between a positive space for welfare and interventions in welfare.

Vote on creating BA movie nights: 2 against, 7 for. Logistics to be investigated.

19. AOB

- a) Vote on whether we will charge full price for everyone who drops out of any event after a deadline if a replacement is not found.

Proviso that after the deadline, it becomes students' responsibility to find a replacement (discretion to remain for exceptional circumstances) – Passed, no votes against, 1 abstention.

Committee notes that it should be very clear on this in the next term card email.

- b) Minutes for the Hustings came out late – criticism received by Committee (raised by computing officer). Should have gone out at midnight with email from Computing Officer.

The committee will try to avoid future delays. We regret that this took place; it was because of a delay with the Open Meeting minutes. No further action required at this time.

- c) Concern was expressed that if the library closes early out of term, there is no wifi in BA Rooms, and the Bar closes, then there is limited workspace available to graduate students.

This is already on the committee's radar – it was on the proposal drafted by the Secretary and taken to the Liaison committee (this was passed over by college, the executive is following up) regarding workspace for PhD students with no alternative. We can explain

that these limitations on resource access also have broader consequences within the BA Community.

- d) Can we look for constitutional change to alter the requirement to upload our minute notes publicly? If we can't add raven authentication, our minutes are publicly accessible, and this raises privacy concerns.

The suggestion was made that we ask College to host the minutes on mytrin so that the minutes continue to be available to BAs but via Raven authentication. This might be an alternative to previous requests for adding Raven authentication to the minutes on our own website, which have gone unanswered.

Vote on this course of action passed unanimously.

- e) Facebook page.

Committee are moderators, but we don't have a clear policy on what is approved.

Computing officer asks if we should be consistent with our bulletin decision – everything proposed by a BA Society member should be accepted. If in doubt, committee can discuss. A disclaimer should be added that views expressed on the page belong to the individual who posts and should not be taken to represent the views of the BA Society or its membership.

Committee agrees with this suggestion.

- f) We should increase the amount of internal feedback

Committee will add this to the agenda for the next meeting and discuss how to take account of what we know about how people interact with the Society and its events. The committee will also trial a two week gap between January and February meetings to see if this allows for better management of meeting time.

- g) Request for a more prescriptive agenda (rather than just discussion items).

Committee agreed to explore options for managing its meeting time and agenda.

20. Digital Jukebox (added to agenda as amendment at Computing Officers' request)

Postponed to next meeting.

Meeting closed at 11.00pm