

TCSU Open Meeting Minutes, Monday 9th June 2014, OCR

1. Minutes of the previous meeting.

- a. Last meeting's minutes were accepted.
- b. It was established that the TCSU had agreed to spend £5,000 on JCR improvements, of which £4,700 has been spent on sofas, posters, and other various improvements.
- c. Matters raised concerning the library will be raised in due process.

2. Matters concerning the Living Wage campaign.

- a. The Junior Bursar, Dr Rod Pullen, offered to explain the college employment package for staff. On top of the basic salary, the college's staff are offered the following benefits.
 - i. Members of staff, as well as their spouse and children, are offered free private healthcare through *BUPA* and dental care through *SIGMA*.
 - ii. Free meals are offered to all daytime staff, and a free meal for part-time staff.
 - iii. It was noted that the college pension scheme is more generous than the government minima. The College pays in twice that which the member of staff pays in to a staff member's pension scheme.
 - iv. The college offers a housing allowance of £850, adjusted pro rata for part time employees, and a housing loan for up to £17,000 over the life of the employment for the purchase or significant improvement of a house within twenty miles of Trinity college. This loan is offered at below the rate of interest of that which is offered by the average high street bank.
 - v. The college participates in the Wolfson nursery, meaning that twenty places are reserved their for the children of college staff.
- b. The Junior Bursar outlined the mechanism by which the college decides its pay scale.
 - i. The college has made a conscious decision to operate independent pay scale, separate from any university pay scale, or Living Wage scale, for example.
 - ii. The College Staff Committee annually decides upon a cost-of-living adjustment on the 1 July.
 - iii. The Staff Consultation Committee meets regularly, and consists of elected representatives of the staff themselves across all departments, and is a platform through which staff can raise concerns.
 - iv. Every three years the college conducts an attitudes survey amongst its members of staff.
 1. In the most recent survey, 8 out of 10 employees were satisfied with their wage, the Junior Bursar noted.
- c. In 2014, the increase being made this year will be 1.6%.
- d. One TCSU member asked the Junior Bursar what this increase meant for Trinity's performance in its payment of the Living Wage compared to other colleges.
 - i. The Junior Bursar has confirmed that from 1 July 2014

everyone directly employed by the college is paid at a level no lower than the Living Wage.

- e. One TCSU member asked whether the college was going to publicize their payment of at least the Living Wage, to put pressure on other colleges to do the same.
 - i. The Junior Bursar expressed the college's desire not to put pressure on other colleges on how to run their own finances.
- f. When questioned by a TCSU member, the Junior Bursar confirmed that the survey does not include indirectly employed staff.
- g. When questioned by a TCSU member what the college does to ensure that its employees who are hired through external contracts are paid the Living Wage, the Junior Bursar expressed that the college makes clear to intermediary employers the college's pay scale, with the expectation that these would be met. However it was established that externally contracted employees are not, at present, paid the Living Wage.
- h. One TCSU member raised the question of the pay scale of contracted construction workers. The Junior Bursar responded that this was dealt with at a national level.

3. Matters concerning environmental issues in college.

- a. The Junior Bursar confirmed that all the waste collected at the site is collected daily through a contract with the college council.
- b. The recycling procedure was outlined by the Junior Bursar: the green bin's contents goes into a clear bag containing paper and cardboard, and glass and plastic and other waste should go into the other hand. The clear bags go into one skip, and the other bags go into a separate skip.
- c. The city council has a contract with the reprocessing center at Watergate, where the contents of the non-recycled waste are streamed for separate destinations.
- d. The Junior Bursar suggested that students who see their housekeeping staff mixing the two streams should notify their housekeeper.
- e. The Junior Bursar outlined some examples of efforts to improve energy efficiency in college. When the refurbishment of New Court is finished, for instance, it is predicted that its energy use will drop by 80%. There are also plans to install photovoltaic panels on the south-facing roof over Garrett Hostel Lane.

4. Matters concerning improvements to the college bar.

- a. The college has confirmed that it would be willing to give £30,000 towards the renovation of the bar.
- b. It was confirmed that the Vice-President, the President, and the BA Society met with the catering manager.

5. Matters concerning the college library.

- a. In the last meeting, matters concerning the library were raised, such as the possibility of water coolers being permitted, bags being allowed, or a new barcoding system being installed.
- b. The library would not like a water cooler as one has caused damage in the past.

- c. The TCSU President expressed his determination to continue negotiating these issues with the library management.

6. Matters concerning improvements to the JCR.

- a. It was confirmed that £4,700 have been spent on JCR improvements. This has included the purchase of six sofas, a footstool, various posters, a lamp, and the installation of bookshelves and a mirror.

7. Matters concerning price rises for hall and accommodation.

- a. The TCSU President communicated the college's plan to increase accommodation rent by 2.5%.
- b. The Junior Bursar expressed that Bidwells has suggested a rise over the last year of prices in Cambridge by 3-5%. The Junior Bursar confirmed that he will recommend to college a rise in rental charges by 2.5% for students and graduate students to the college council.
- c. The Junior Bursar reminded the meeting that of the sixteen city-centre colleges, nine are charging more than Trinity, and six are charging less than Trinity, placing Trinity in a good position.
- d. One member asked why the college was charging rent for college-owned property. The Junior Bursar, in response emphasized the extent to which college rent was subsidized. Students are often accommodated in Grade I listed buildings which cost 40-50% extra to maintain, and are provided a twenty-four hour porter service.
- e. One member questioned why room rent was charged for storage over the vacation period.
- f. A further member questioned why locked boxes couldn't be installed for student storage in rooms for over some of the vacations, and the Junior Bursar responded that this was under consideration by the college.
- g. The TCSU President communicated the Steward's intention to raise the KFC by 2.5%, and Served charges by 6%. The TCSU Junior Steward has checked the food inflation index, and believed it to be closer to 0.5%, and so concern has been noted, particularly of the college's use of RPI as opposed to the more common CPI.

8. Any Other Business.

- a. Some members raised a complaint about the disruption caused by building works taking place in New Court over the exam term. The members argued that they had not been warned when they selected their rooms a year ago, and suggested that they should be reimbursed for the time that they were driven out of their rooms by excessive noise levels.
 - i. The Junior Bursar responded that an email sent to the current second year when choosing their rooms only said 'it was envisaged at present' that no work would take place, and did not guarantee it.
 - ii. The Junior Bursar accepted that in the first week, the noise levels were unacceptable, however he argued that after that noise levels were reduced. He also reminded the meeting that the Senior Tutor, whose rooms overlook New Court, felt that

the noise was not excessively disruptive to the extent that reimbursement was an option.

- b. The member responded that students should be reimbursed only for the period over which noise levels exceeded acceptable levels.
 - c. The Junior Bursar reiterated his view that the noise levels were not disruptive, and that he would refuse to consider a case for reimbursement.
 - d. The Junior Bursar reiterated that he has consulted those responsible for tutorial welfare of the students, and based on their judgment of the degree of the disruption taken place the decision was made that reimbursement was not appropriate.
 - e. One member questioned why all members pay the Kitchen Fixed Charge, when they don't eat in hall, and it was explained by the TCSU President that the college wanted to incentivize communal dining in hall.
- 9. A vote of thanks was granted to Jeremy Bernstein for his last Open Meeting.**