

# Minutes of the Lent term Open Meeting of Murray Edwards College MCR

**3pm, Sunday 11th February**  
**Murray Edwards MCR**

## Agenda:

1. Motion to amend the constitution
2. Any other business

## Attendance:

19 members of the MCR were present, so quorum was not reached. The meeting was adjourned at 3.30pm.

Instead, the MCR committee hosted a discussion about the constitution and other issues, as minuted below.

## Constitutional amendment

This meeting was called to discuss the following constitutional motion:

The MCR resolves to adopt the proposed constitution as circulated subject to any drafting changes recommended by Senior Officers of College or by the MCR Committee which do not materially change the effect of any provision.

Instead, the MCR committee led a discussion about the proposed changes (see Powerpoint presentation attached).

## Next steps

Members present asked questions about the old and new constitution but no further amendments were proposed and those present agreed in principle to move forward with the proposed constitution.

It was decided that the best way to proceed was:

- To hold a short vote between the Graduate Symposium and dinner on 27<sup>th</sup> Feb (as a properly called Open Meeting)
- To use the next two weeks as a period of open consultation with MCR members, engaging with them in as many ways as we are able to.
- If there is significant resistance from members about this approach, to call off the vote and try again next term.

Hopefully the new constitution will prevent this situation occurring in future as it provides for proxies and other types of remote participation in meetings, and provides for occasions where Open Meetings do not meet quorum.

## Gendered language in the constitution

A discussion was had about the pros and cons of using female pronouns vs gender-neutral language. Those present agreed in principle to move forward with female pronouns in the constitution for now, as per the precedent set by College Statutes and the current MCR Constitution. It was suggested that a more in depth discussion about the issue be held in the next 12 months, perhaps as a second constitutional motion. It was felt that this would allow a conversation that does the issue justice.

## Engaging MCR members

It was suggested that the committee work to make members more aware of decision-making structures in college, and their rights and responsibilities as members of the MCR. This is both to ensure engagement within the MCR but also to empower students to engage with similar structures in their careers. Suggestions included: handouts, a video, Fresher Week Open Meeting, plain-language 'translation' of our governing documents, info sessions and more. It was also noted that a strong understanding of legal structures comes from participating in them, and those present resolved to make efforts to engage the wider grad student body in MCR activities.

## Other business:

- Communication within college: it was suggested that the committee explore ways to empower members to establish their own internal communication networks (eg: What's App groups for individual floors).
- Communication between students, MCR committee and college: it was noted that students often miss email and might respond better to other types of communication.
- Graduate Symposium: members asked that for the Mixed Formals, students not be seated with the same fellows they are usually seated with.