

MCR Meeting 7th July 2013

Present: Catherine Taylor (President), Maryam Serajiantehrani (Vice-President), Katy Hedgethorne (Treasurer), Manuela Groß (Secretary), Silja-Riin Voolma (Welfare)

Apologies: Karishma Patel (Social Secretary)

1. Summer formal

The date for our summer formal is set for Friday, 16th August 2013. Catherine is the main contact person and organiser for the event and is in contact with catering to sort out the last details.

The formal will include: Pre-drinks (Fellow's drawing room), 3-course dinner in the Dome including coffee/tea, and port in the Dome.

We will probably be able to use the rising servery in the dome during dinner, but this is subject to confirmation (Catherine). With the rising platform active, we can accommodate an absolute maximum of 240 people in the dining hall; we are aiming for 200-220 guests.

Guest Colleges will be able to claim 8 confirmed tickets in the first instance. ME MCR members will be able to buy tickets for themselves and their guests. Should there be any more tickets left, they will be offered to guests of our students and the guest Colleges.

- Catherine will meet with catering next week to confirm the incurring costs and will inform Katy about the outcome. Final ticket prices are dependent on the outcome of the meeting, but prices should be in the range of £13 for ME MCR members and £17.50 for guests.
- Once ticket prices are set, Karishma and Katy need to e-mail Guest Colleges by the end of the week (12th July).

After the Formal: At this point, we will probably not be allowed to open the bar after the formal, as a maximum of 100 people is set. We don't know yet if we can get any other room in the College which would be suitable for post-dinner entertainment, and if we'd have to pay for it. It was also suggested to open the MCR in addition to the bar, splitting people and avoiding overcrowding.

- Catherine will discuss this with catering in the meeting next week.

2. Accommodation

Several issues concerning graduate accommodation have been raised.

- College changed the notification period to 3 months, without seeking prior consensus with the MCR committee. The MCR feels that 3 months notification period are too long and will cause unnecessary stress/financial pressure for students moving out of college accommodation as the private market usually has 1 month notification periods.

- Graduate accommodation is very expensive and rents (as well as Overhead and Utilities) are raised again next academic year. There is little choice in price ranges/quality of accommodation compared to other Colleges. The MCR is aware that this puts a lot of financial pressure on the current and future graduate student body and raised this issue at several meetings with College.
At the Grad liaison meeting, College has considered opening up one floor of current undergraduate accommodation to graduate students, which would be cheaper than living in Canning & Eliza and would offer more choice to grad students. However, College requested that some rooms in C&E would be used for undergraduate accommodation in return. The MCR has strong objections against this idea.
- Many Graduate students feel troubled by the policies currently followed by College for placing newly arrived people in rooms in graduate accommodation.
Some of the issues raised in the meeting were:
 - a.) College currently does not inform the students living in the respective floors when new people are moving in, which is perceived as very irritating by many students. The MCR feels that communication from College to its students in this respect needs to be improved rapidly.
 - b.) Undergraduate students were placed into graduate rooms in the last weeks of July without informing anybody from the MCR.
 - c.) Visitors to Cambridge should only be placed in graduate accommodation during vacation times (preferably only during the long summer vacation) and the reason for their visit should be academic.
- Some of the graduate accommodation needs more effective pest control.
- There are regularly complaints about the quality of cleaning in graduate accommodation. Additionally, cleaners should be made aware that they should not take their coffee breaks in the kitchens in C&E. Cleaners should also be reminded to strictly respect the privacy of student rooms and it needs to be checked if a confidentiality clause is already in place or can be asked for (Catherine).

The committee (Maryam, Catherine) has been in touch with the accommodation office on several occasions and College is aware of our concerns. However, it seems that little consideration has been taken on these issues from the side of the College.

- As the College has not considered the views of the MCR in their decisions on several occasions, the MCR will approach our new president with our concerns.
Maryam will e-mail the PA of the president this to arrange a meeting with the MCR committee to discuss these and further particulars.

3. Report from the Finance committee

Katy attended the Finance committee meeting. There were no specific plans considering graduate students specifically in budgeting for the next academic year.

College will upgrade the library software to the same standard/system as other university libraries.

Some of the undergraduate housing will be refurbished and improved lighting and air conditioning will be installed.

4. Summer BBQ

The summer BBQ will take place on 27th July (Saturday) in the MCR and on the lawn in front of the MCR.

We will have guest colleges (Katy will be organising this) and will be catering for a maximum of 50-60 people. Our MCR will cater for the food and non-alcoholic drinks (we will ask for £2/person as a contribution towards these costs). Alcoholic drinks and additional food can be brought individually.

- Katy will create a Facebook event for the BBQ and invite our MCR and guest colleges.
- Manuela and Katy will organise the food order once numbers of people attending are known.

5. Magazine subscriptions

Katy is ordering 2 magazines for the MCR from October 2013 onwards:

- National Geographic
- The Economist

Depending on how well the magazine subscriptions are received, we might extend it to a couple of more magazines. Grad students should also be reminded that they can donate magazines/newspapers they have subscriptions for to the MCR once they have read them.

- Info about the magazine subscriptions should be included in an MCR bulletin when the freshers are here.

6. Easyfundraising – Kat

Donations to the MCR can be made very easily via Easyfundraising when linked to people's online shopping accounts such as Amazon.

Not many students are aware of this possibility, and it is only little used at the moment. We want to encourage people to use it more to donate money to our MCR.

- Katy will set up Easyfundraising for our MCR, and pass on the information how to link one's personal online shopping account to Easyfundraising.
- Manuela will advertise this way of fundraising for the MCR in the next MCR bulletin and again when the freshers have arrived.

7. A.O.B

- a.) Catherine, Katy, Maryam and Manuela will be able to sign cheques for the MCR. 2 signatures/cheque are required for the cheque to be valid.
- Katy will organise this with the bank.

b.) Planning for Fresher's week:

Graduate students are arriving during the first week of October, with Matriculation on 4th October (still awaiting final confirmation).

We agreed on the following events during fresher's week (preliminary list):

- chinese buffet
- tours (gardens, arts, college&cambridge tour) with optional pub visit afterwards
- board game night
- pizza-night
- wine & cheese
- finger buffet
- college bar crawl (organise with Fitz, Churchill, St. Edmunds)
- pub night with other colleges
- MCR Sunday brunch
- if possible: punting

The days and times for MCR-run events will be finalised once the College schedule for the freshers has been confirmed.