

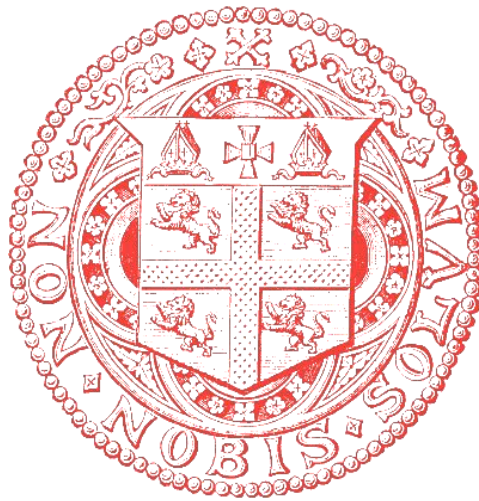
MOTION SUMMARY

FOR

REFERENDUM ON

STANDING ORDER AMENDMENTS

EPIPHANY OGM 2023



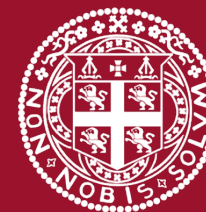
Date: Wednesday, 26th April 2023

URL: <https://apps.dur.ac.uk/vote/university/epiphany-2023-ogm-referendum>

MOTION 1: Feedback Responses

An update on Sections V. Executive & Non-Executive Officers

Proposition that the MCR Executive Committee has a duty to respond to adequate Feedback



How it **is currently** in the SO

V. EXECUTIVE & NON-EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

1. Term Limits

- a) No **MCR member shall serve more than two consecutive years** in any combination of offices, executive and non-executive, without a one-year break; however, an exception may be made in the event that no nominations for a position are received after two rounds of calls for nominations.
 - b) For this purpose, a **one-year break** is defined as a full academic year, meaning the time between Michaelmas term and Easter term.
2. Members of the MCR Executive Committee should have top priority in the sign-up system for June Ball, superseding the degree-based system.
 3. All Executive and Non-Executive Committee officers must ensure that their handover documents are kept up to date during their term on the Executive Committee so that they are ready to send to the incoming Officer as soon as they take office [...].

How it will **be changed** in the SO

V. EXECUTIVE & NON-EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Add: 4. Feedback Arrangements

The MCR Executive has a responsibility to ...

- a) Provide a method for feedback, both anonymous or named; and
- b) respond to that feedback in the newsletter, *if*
 - i) the feedback received relates to the Executive Committees work and responsibilities as laid out in these Standing Orders, *and if*
 - ii) the feedback complies with the code of conduct (III.).

Reasons for Change

The feedback form is a very valuable tool, allowing members to raise ideas, concerns, or commendations. The option of anonymity is vital in enabling less confident members (or for a myriad of other reasons) to engaging with the common room and providing an avenue for feedback in case of any contention.

There should be an onus on the MCR executive committee to respond to such feedback, either with or without the original message. This will help members to know that feedback is indeed being considered and taken seriously by the MCR executive committee, also helping to cultivate a more transparent environment. However, it is right and proper that if inappropriate feedback is submitted, it should not be distributed via the newsletter to the community.

(Benedict Johnes)

Proposer: Benedict Johnes

Seconder: Katy Hartley

MOTION 2: Charity Ball Budget Arrangements

An update on Sections VIII. FINANCES

Proposition to remove the Charity Ball Insurance Fund and donate instead 100% of the profits from the Charity Ball to the chosen charities



How it is currently in the SO

VIII.7 CHARITY BALL ARRANGEMENTS

- a) The budget, financing, and the charitable beneficiaries of the ball shall be decided by the MCR Ball Chair, the Treasurer, and President.
- b) The initial budget for the ball shall be set at a sum not exceeding 50% of the total value of ticket sales, however, once sales exceed this value, the budget for the ball may become a rolling one.
- c) At minimum 4% of total ball revenues shall be paid over in charitable donations regardless of the financial outcome of the ball.
- d) In the event ball profits exceed 4% of revenues, 80% of the total profits shall go towards the charitable donation and 20% towards a 'future MCR charity ball insurance fund' (once calculated the greater of (c) and (d) should go towards the charitable contribution).

How it will be changed in the SO

VIII.7 CHARITY BALL ARRANGEMENTS

Change wording: b) The initial budget for the ball shall be set at a sum not exceeding 50% of the total value of ticket sales. While the budget exceeds ticket sales, all spending must be approved by both the President and the Treasurer. Once sales exceed this value, the budget for the ball may become a rolling one, with spending capped at the level of actual ticket sales. At this point, the Ball Chair may spend their budget in accordance with Section VIII.5 of the Standing Orders.

Change wording: d) In the event ball profits exceed 4% of revenues, 100% of the total profits shall go towards the charitable donation.

e) The 'future MCR charity ball insurance fund': annual contribution shall be calculated once all associated ball revenues and operating costs have been reconciled at an amount not exceeding 20% of total ball expenses of that year; total balance may not exceed 25% of the total ball operating expenses of that year and any funds exceeding this amount shall be added to the charitable donation of that year; may not be appropriated for any other purpose than to mitigate Charity Ball financial risk.

Remove e) and add instead: e) Any spending in excess of the budget must be approved by an Executive Committee vote as specified by Section VIII.5.e) of the Standing Orders. This should only be considered in exceptional circumstances

Add: f) The MCR must set aside at least one quarter of the previous ball's expenditure in the MCR bank account that cannot be spent except in the occasion that the Ball make a financial loss.

Reasons for Change (based on Epiphany OGM 2023 Minutes):

The motivation for this change is that the Insurance Fund is unnecessary to avoid a loss given the rolling budget and additional safeguards added from the below amendments to the Standing Orders. Additionally, it is more difficult to advertise the Charity Ball when only 80% of the profits may in fact go to charity. Finally, on an ethical level, this money is much better spent by the charities for which we raise money than sitting unspent in the MCR bank account. The MCR is currently very financially secure and it seems immoral to be taking this money away from charities when we do not absolutely require it. **(John Rayner)**

Proposer: John Rayner

Secunder: Ariadne Agyros

MOTION 3: Reimbursement for unspent budget

An update on Sections V.D. Executive Officers & VIII. MCR Finances

A proposition to refund unspent budgets in excess of 1/5 of the total income to the MCR membership at the end of the academic year



How it **is currently** in the SO

V.D EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

8.C) THE TREASURER OF THE MCR:

- i) takes responsibility for the correct administration of finances, in consultation, where appropriate, with the President of the MCR;
- ii) supervises of the MCR bank account(s);
- iii) acts as co-signatory of the MCR account;
- iv) controls of payment of cheques, petty cash, quarterly V.A.T. claims and the transferring and recording of transactions in the cash books;
- v) undertakes timely preparation of the MCR accounts for audit and presentation to the MCR each term at ordinary meetings of the MCR;

How it will **be changed** in the SO

V.D EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

8.C) THE TREASURER OF THE MCR:

Add as vi): vi) at the end of each academic year, calculates the MCR's total income and expenditure for that year and communicates this to all MCR members, making arrangements for refunds where required according to Section VIII.8 of the Standing Orders;

VIII. MCR FINANCES

1. Bank accounts and signatories
2. MCR Membership Fee
3. Budgets
4. Committee Expenses and Reimbursements
5. Officer Spending/ Purchases for the MCR
6. MCR Bar Arrangements
7. Charity Ball Arrangements

VIII. MCR FINANCES

Add: 8. MCR Levy Refund

- a) If one fifth of the total income received by the MCR in one academic year (from all sources, including levies, university grants, and both MCR and non-MCR ticket sales) has not been spent, then this unspent income must be refunded to the MCR membership.
- b) As part of their duties in Section V.D.8.c of the Standing Orders, the Treasurer must calculate the total income and expenditure each academic year. This calculation should include an assessment of the magnitude of any unspent income.
- c) In making these calculations, the spending/income figures may not include gown or stash purchases, as spending and income for these often span different academic years.
- d) If one fifth of the total income received by the MCR has not been spent (i.e. the figure for total expenditure is at or below 80% of the figure for total income), then the unspent income should be divided between all MCR members and refunded accordingly. For example, if the total income is £15,000 and the total expenditure is £10,000, then 1/3 of the total income has not been spent and this £5,000 must be refunded. If we have 250 full time MCR members, then each will be refunded £20.
- e) For members who joined at a discounted rate (e.g. part-time membership and those who joined in the middle of the academic year), they should be refunded proportional to the amount they initially paid (i.e. those who paid half of a full price membership should be refunded half the amount of a full price member).

f) If the Treasurer is able to refund members without their bank account details (e.g. through Ecommerce), then the refund process should be immediate. However, if this is not possible, then the Treasurer is able to set a reasonable deadline for members to provide the information necessary for a refund.

g) If there are unspent funds that do not exceed one fifth of the total income received but are still deemed to be unacceptably high, then the Treasurer and the President can decide to refund this unspent income to the MCR membership as above.

Reasons for Change and discussion points (based on Epiphany OGM 2023 Minutes):

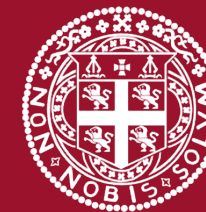
The levy is a substantial amount of money to spend and there is no guarantee that the Executive Committee will spend it. But if this money is not spent, then it seems unfair that this money be kept by the MCR. Additionally, this will hopefully reassure potential future members that if they do not receive the perks they paid to receive, they can be reimbursed – this is a common worry given by those considering membership, so adding this to the Standing Orders could possibly increase membership (as well as being obviously the fair thing to do). (**John Rayner**). However, e-commerce does not do automatic refunds, so they would have to be done by Suzanne and there are also issues about people who do not longer have UK accounts (**Dana Allan**).

Proposer: John Rayner

Secunder: Ariadne Argyros

MOTION 4: Publishing Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Standing Orders amendment which shall require the MCR Vice-President (to publish Executive Committee meeting minutes.



How it **is currently** in the SO

VI. MEETINGS OF THE MCR

A. TYPES OF MCR MEETINGS

B. MOTIONS

How it **will be changed** in the SO

VI. MEETINGS OF THE MCR

Add as B: B. MINUTES

1. The MCR Vice-President, or a nominated delegate, shall take the minutes of all MCR Executive Committee Meetings.
2. The MCR Vice-President and/or nominated delegates will collaborate with Executive Committee Officers in redacting the minutes so they do not contain confidential and/or sensitive information.
3. The redacted and ratified minutes shall be published on the Castle MCR website and made accessible to Castle MCR Members.
4. Minutes shall be published no later than two months following the date of the respective Executive Committee Meeting and minutes can be published in the first week of each academic term, in preparation for the upcoming Ordinary General Meeting.

Reasons for Change

Publishing minutes is a common practice across the common rooms, clubs and societies. Publishing minutes helps to provide members with an insight into current affairs within the common room and college. Minutes indicate where the focus and efforts of the Executive Committee officers are being directed. Minutes are vital for transparency and can only provide a net benefit to the community. (Sophie Draper)

Note (Dominik Mitterer): The Internal Affairs Officer acts as independent observer, the fairness of the redaction procedure is already ensured by the following:

a) THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICER:

- iii) independently observes, ensuring fairness and validity under these standing orders, all MCR meetings [...];

Proposer: Sophie Draper

Seconder: Charlotte Thompson

MOTION 5: Recognising Thorp Society as the official Alumni Association of Castle MCR

An update on Section IV. MEMBERS AND PRIVILEGES



How it **is currently** in the SO

IV. MEMBERS AND PRIVILEGES

1. **Ordinary Members [...]**
2. **Membership Privileges and Fees [...]**
3. **Opting-In to Membership [...]**

How it will **be changed** in the SO

IV. MEMBERS, PRIVILEGES, **AND ALUMNI**

Add: 4. Thorp Society (MCR Alumni Association)

Thorp Society is an alumni association catered to Castle MCR and University College Postgraduate alumni, operating alongside Durham Castle Society.

The organising committee of Thorp Society is known as 'Thorp Committee' which manages the functioning of the society and the events that take place. Thorp Committee must not contain current Executive Officers of the Castle MCR Executive Committee (roles listed in section V. D).

Thorp Society is predominantly funded by Durham Castle Society, with the option to accept funding from Castle MCR at the discretion of the Castle MCR Executive Committee. Financial matters between Thorp Society and Castle MCR, such as collaboration on initiatives and special events, will be overseen and managed by the Castle MCR Treasurer.

Castle MCR Members may raise concerns regarding the management of Thorp Society to the Castle MCR Internal Affairs Officer and/or directly to the University College Alumni and Development Manager, or in absence of these roles, the Castle MCR Convenor (University College Principal).

Reasons for Change (based on Michaelmas OGM 2022 Minutes):

Thorp Society will act as an active Alumni association specifically for Castle MCR Members, representing the MCR community after their graduation and organise events for future re-unions. The current castle alumni association Castle Society, does not full fill the needs of the MCR alumni community sufficiently. Thorp will therefore fill in the gap, providing a functioning alumni body. However, it is not ruled out that Thorp will be merged with Castle Society to a unified alumni association in the future, given that the structure of the latter improves. [Sophie Draper]

Proposer: Dean Slack

Seconder: Sophie Draper