



MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

The third ordinary meeting of the Union Council
 The meeting of Union Council was held on Tuesday 3rd December at 18:15 in Read Lecture
 Theatre, Sherfield Building

Present:

Name	Role
Lloyd James (LJ)	Chair
Joseph O'Connell- Danes (JOCD)	Arts and Entertainment Sector Chair
Deborah Adegoke (DA)	BME Officer
Poppy Oldroyd (PO)	CGCU Vice President (Education)
Miles Gulliford (MG)	CGCU Vice President (Wellbeing)
Jack Lee (JL)	Community and Faith Sector
Shuning Xu (SX)	Culture Sector Chair
Thomas Fernandez Debets (TFD)	Deputy President (Clubs & Societies)
Ashley Brooks (AB)	Deputy President (Education)
Fi-Fi Henry (FH)	Deputy President (Finance and Services)
Shervin Sabeghi (SS)	Deputy President (Welfare)
Hilliam Tung (HT)	Disabilities Officer
Luke Jamieson (LuJ)	Engineering (PG) Council Rep
Xiaoran Liu (XL)	Engineering (PG) Council Rep
Fatima Khan (FK)	Engineering (UG) Council Rep
Hayley Wong (HW)	Engineering (UG) Council Rep
Francesca Siracusa (FS)	Ethics and Environmental Officer
Mohit Devgan (MD)	GSU President
Raya El Laham (REL)	GSU PGR Academic and Welfare Officer
Milia Hasbani (MH)	GSU Vice President (Representation)
Jack Hall (JH)	ICSMSU Welfare Officer
Amna Ahmed (AA)	Interfaith Officer
Freya Hepworth Lloyd (FHL)	LGBT Officer
Ambika Bharadwaj (ABh)	Mental Health Officer
Aishwarya Chidambaram (AC)	Natural Sciences (UG) Council Rep

Grace Fisher (GF)	Natural Sciences (UG) Council Rep
Zhidong Zuo (ZZ)	Natural Sciences (UG) Council Rep
Alex Auyang (AAu)	RCSU President
Michaela Flegrova (MF)	RCSU Vice President (Education)
Peter Hull (PH)	RCSU Welfare Officer
Christopher Turner (CT)	Recreation Sector Chair
Christopher Carter (CC)	RSMSU President
Alexandre de Saint Germain (AdSG)	RSMU Vice President (Education)
Ross Unwin (RU)	Sports Sector Chair
Abhijay Sood (AS)	Union President
Bartosz Szyszka (BS)	Medicine (UG) Council Rep
Pylin Parkes (PP)	Medicine (UG) Council Rep
Douglas Adams (DA)	Engineering (UG) Council Rep
Amr Alwishah (AAI)	International Officer
Henry Alman (HA)	Felix Editor (official observer)

Absent:

Benjamin Russell (BR)	ICSMSU President
Arman Sarjou (ASa)	RSMSU Welfare Officer
Adrian LaMoury	Natural Sciences (PG) Council Rep
Ioannis Ioannidis-Karatsivoulis	Engineering (UG) Council Rep
Vinzenz Freigassner	Gender Equality Officer
Eoin O’Kane	Non-Faculty (PG) Council Rep
Conor Nicoll	Silwood Chair
Jaye Sahota	Medicine (PG) Council Rep

Apologies:

Igor Gawron	Engineering (PG) Council Rep
Rahul Jugnarain	Non-Faculty (PG) Council Rep
Waseem Hasan	ICSMSU Academic Chair

Item	Actions
<p>1. Chair's welcome and Chair's business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair introduces the meeting and welcomes members • Chair apologises for the administrative difficulties being faced due to lack of staff support, and criticises decisions that led to this being the case 	
<p>2. Apologies for absence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair will include in minutes for meeting 	<p>LJ to add apologies for absence to minutes</p>
<p>3. Minutes of previous meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair presents minutes • A question was raised about a perceived opinion in the minutes in the postgraduate trustee debate – LJ clarified that this was the clerk quoting a Council member rather than offering their own opinion • Minutes accepted 	
<p>4. Action tracker</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. LJ will provide updated version of Standing Orders following subcommittee amendments by next Council 2. DPCS and Move Imperial had an away day to re-evaluate objectives for the academic year (due to staff shortage both at Move Imperial and ICU) from which an action plan was put together. Update to be given at next Council. 3. AS will make changes later in year in the context of other changes to the Governing Documents 4. As it is necessary to change roles for elections at January Council, AS and MD will give an update on PG engagement plan by next Council. 	<p>LJ to update at next Council</p> <p>TFD to update at next Council</p> <p>AS and MD to update at next Council</p>
<p>5. Ratification of external trustees</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AS summarises issues currently being faced by ICU (departure of MD, Health and Safety, closure of kitchens) and how the input of experienced external trustees is vital to work through these issues. 2. AS offers summary description of Stephen Richardson: has helpful comments to make around PG engagement and White City, and has a lot of experience being in a senior College role therefore has a unique perspective. 3. AS offers summary description of Philip Power: has shown himself to be ally of students while working in the Faculty of Engineering, and worked in the Union for 9 years before this. 4. AS strongly recommends Council accept both 5. Resolve 1: Ratify appointment of Stephen Richardson Passes: 36 accept, 0 reject, 0 abstain 6. Resolve 2: Ratify appointment of Philip Power Passes: 35 accept, 0 reject, 0 abstain 	

<p>6. President report</p> <p>1. AS summarises report as tabled and invites questions. None received.</p>	
<p>7. DPE report</p> <p>1. AB summarises report as tabled and invites questions. None received.</p>	
<p>8. DPW report</p> <p>1. SS summarises report as tabled and invites questions. None received.</p>	
<p>9. DPCS report</p> <p>1. TFD summarises report as tabled and invites questions. None received.</p>	
<p>10. DPFS report</p> <p>1. FH summarises report as tabled and invites questions.</p> <p>2. MH asks about situation in 568 kitchen. FH refers to Felix article on the matter and explains that there has been no pizza vendor in Beit Quad due to issues around guaranteeing minimum spends. AS adds that the Union is being proactive about resolving issues to reopen the kitchens for example, a H&S specialist has been hired to address these issues.</p>	
<p>BREAK – ICTV set up livestreaming equipment and begin livestreaming to Facebook at 19:05</p> <p><i>Approximately 35 observers join the meeting during the break</i></p>	
<p>11. Motion on reviewing rent prices</p> <p>1. SS welcomes observers and thanks them for coming and highlights the importance of the issue being discussed</p> <p>2. AS and SS summarises the topic through a presentation and asks members to wait with questions and comments until the end. The key points are summarised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The College have approached the Union requesting that students choose the way that rent is split in first year halls. • The accommodation portfolio will change next year as Pembridge is removed and Kemp Porter is added. • Kemp Porter is a new build in North Acton next to Woodward with very similar rooms. This increases the proportion of bed spaces in North Acton to nearly a half. • The College aim to run a ‘break-even’ model that includes running costs (on-site staff, cleaning, day-to-day maintenance, security, utilities), central accommodation staff (not previously included), long term maintenance (a pot for bigger planned maintenance e.g. refurbishments), and capital 	

costs (servicing and paying down the debt taken out to build the halls over 50 years).

- The 2020/21 model gives an average rent of £190 a week which, if equivalent rooms in Eastside and Southside, and Woodward and Kemp Porter are set at the same price, means a 12% average increase across all rooms
- The prices of Southside and Eastside rooms are currently not the same, but these have been chosen to be fixed going forward. Furthermore, Lower Ground rooms in either facing onto a wall will receive a 5% rent reduction due to complaints they have historically received. At this point, SS stopped to ask members if there was disagreement about this before moving on. A question was asked as to why Southside rooms are more expensive than Eastside, but the reason was unknown. A question was asked if the facilities of the two halls were the same, SS and AS commented that they were the same, as far as they were aware. A comment was received around Eastside students having problems accessing the common room in Southside and that this should be rectified if the prices are going to be matched.
- There is currently a 2:1 ratio between the price per sq metre of rooms in South Kensington and Woodward which, if maintained, would cause a massive disparity between the prices in South Kensington and those in North Acton, since the number of bed spaces in the latter is increasing significantly. SS expressed concerns that this could create a bifurcation of the student body along class and domicile lines, but simply rebalancing the prices isn't the solution as more students would be priced out.
- There are 3 key options within the model given by the College: maintain the current 2:1 ratio and flatly increase all prices by 12%; reduce the disparity between North Acton and South Kensington (e.g. increase the former by 20% and latter by 8%); make sure there are still affordable rooms so increase the disparity between North Acton and South Kensington rooms (increase the former by 9% and the latter by 14%).
- Council is not obliged to choose either option, and can first reject the premise of the model given by College completely to mandate the Union to

return to the College. AS encourages Council to reject the model considering that the prices become at least/above market rate despite a 'break even' budget, that the cost of living becomes higher living in halls than out with a 12% increase. SS mentions that the College have an Access and Participation Plan under which they must increase the numbers of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and that these price increases will only deter these kinds of students since bursaries and student finance are not going up.

3. Chair initiates a wider discussion from members at this point. The points/questions are summarised below:
 - Junhua Li (observer) comments that the College could potentially sell and lease back halls to reduce prices, that the price of the buildings will appreciate over 50 years which hasn't been accounted for, and that the prices of Woodward are unsustainable since Costume Store costs significantly more.
 - Josef Willsher (observer) encourages Council to reject all proposals as market level prices indicates that the College are trying to make a profit, and because capital gains and long term appreciation have not been included in the break-even budget.
 - Aameena Hassan (observer) comments how they did not live in first year halls largely due to the high prices and that meant they were unable to live in an environment where they in close contact to their fellow students. It was commented that a 12% increase would be ridiculous considering most private landlords are only allowed to increase their rents by 2% a year.
 - GF asks about the rent reduction that disabled students who need to live close to campus get, and if this will be increased as these students are unable to choose to live in cheaper North Acton halls. AS and SS comment that this isn't currently being considered, and that this reduction comes from a different pot of money, but it's something that can be taken forward.
 - Dimitrii Usynin (observer – Computing Wellbeing Departmental Representative) comments that no student in a particular year will benefit from repaying the entire capital costs, therefore the model should be rejected.

- Ansh Bhatnagar (observer – Student Trustee) comments that they are a student who has to live close to campus so doesn't have the choice to live in North Acton, and that the effect of rent increases on disabled students isn't being taken into account. They encourage the rejection of all proposals.
- An observer asks what will happen to Pembridge after being closed, how many students will benefit from living in Acton in terms of moving to White City, and how Wilson is considered in the model. AS answers these questions, respectively: that it is not yet known definitely what will happen to Pembridge, that no first year undergraduate will be studying at White City for some time, and that Wilson is considered a South Kensington hall as there needn't be a travel cost and is in close walking distance. SS clarifies that Wilson being further away than other halls was previously considered in the work done 5 years ago to set rent, and that no extra consideration has happened this year.
- Hunain Nadeem (observer – Wilson House Senior) asks if the average cost of living in Wilson is being considered the same as in South Kensington and if income from the potential sale of Pembridge is considered. AS refers to the paper when demonstrating that the Wilson prices are significantly lower than Eastside or Southside, and that the market price of the private sector is not considered in the College's model but suggests this wouldn't necessarily be useful, either. AS responds that there aren't definite short term plans for Pembridge as of yet, so any income from selling it hasn't been included.
- CC asks for clarification about how the options presented were reached and if the College have stipulated these are the only options, and if there are any assurances that the College will listen to Council if it rejects the model. SS responds that the College only insisted that the average rent should be £190, and how that is met is up to students. AS responds that there are no assurances that College will listen, but that, if the model is rejected, the Union will return to the College focusing on principles around the way financial decisions are made, rather than focusing on small details of

numbers. CC follows up by asking if the College could arbitrarily choose an option themselves if Council reject them. AS says they could, but it would be better than students putting this on other students.

- MH comments that: the increases are unreasonable, that the average rent proposed would take up 2/3 to 90% of the maximum maintenance loan offered to students, that the College are not recognising the benefit of halls (in a welfare and community building sense), that halls should be cheaper than the private sector, that halls are the only option for under 18s, that the bursary is only available to a small number of students, that the disability bursary should be increased, that the allocation system doesn't necessarily mean students get a cheaper option as they desire, and that hall seniors used to get a rent subsidy. MH proposes an amendment to the paper to resolve to endorse reduced rent for hall seniors across the board to be included in the model which received support from members in the room. SS comments that this can be voted on later.
- Balazs Striker (observer – Wilson House Senior) comments that, as a hall senior, they would pay more than non-hall seniors in other halls but, due to their role, would have less free time to spend on a part time job. Also comments that there is already the need to re-open applications for hall seniors in Woodward and that the price increases would mean fewer students (both prospective seniors and first years) would apply to halls.
- Zahra Deji-Abiola (observer – Beit Hall Chair) comments that: the rent increases are a spit in the face to phone callers who seek donations from alumni to support disadvantaged students (and to those who donate too), that students with disabilities will struggle to afford the rooms they have to live in, that parents will lose the comfort they feel of students living in halls when they're priced out, that they have friends who live on Queens Gate and Exhibition Road who pay cheaper rent than they do in Beit, that students shouldn't have to pick between the community building of living in halls and worrying about money, and that it's questionable if the College are really keeping

up a first year accommodation guarantee if students are unable to afford the rent.

- Tawfik Ramses (observer – Gabor Hall Chair) comments that, from their experience living in halls for the duration of their course, that, despite rent increasing above inflation, there is no additional funding for social events, that they were forced to leave halls on the day they had a viva before the end of term due to the Exhibition Road festival which emphasises the College do not care about halls and had to fight hard against this to stay for half a week longer. They also commented that hall supervisors are unprofessional at times and disregard safety rules.
- Joseph Davidson (observer – Gabor Hall Treasurer) recommends Council to reject the model, comments that the social fund has not increased over the years, and that halls are beneficial to students and pricing some students out would deny them to opportunity to benefit. Furthermore, a comment was made that hall supervision is declining in quality demonstrated by the difficulty to get defects sorted.
- MD comments that they don't think the model should be accepted, that there are a large number of Imperial students at GradPad paying a large amount of rent and that, including this profit in the model, could reduce rent prices. Also asks what other universities have done about halls rent prices, and what the next steps would be if the model was rejected.
- ZZ comments that international students pay significantly higher tuition fees than home students, and that, due to the allocation system, they can't choose necessarily to have cheaper rent. They also raise the worry that, if rent is subsidised, funding could be cut from research. AS responds that most funding for research is earmarked for that specifically.

4. AS concludes discussions by commenting that the College is not an amorphous entity and that there are those within who will work constructively and share the concerns of students. AS also comments that, as Imperial is a highly-prestigious university, it should be sending out the message that the brightest and best should come here and not worry about financial matters and instead focus on getting the most out of their degrees. Finally, AS

<p>responds to MD’s previous question about next steps by commenting that the more students can get the word out and make a noise about this issue the more leverage the Union will have to make a change.</p> <p>5. Chair moves on to voting for resolves in order. For resolves 1 and 2, clarifications are sought as to if the facilities in the relevant halls are the same, AS responds that the rooms are the same and the facilities are likely similar. For resolves 3, Chair clarifies that this is just endorsing a general principle, and not voting on any specific arrangement. A clarification is given that these votes are only for voting Council members.</p> <p><u>Resolves 1: Fixing prices between equivalent rooms in Eastside and Southside</u> Passes: 29 accept, 4 reject, 3 abstain</p> <p><u>Resolves 2: Fixing prices between equivalent rooms in Woodward and Kemp Porter</u> Passes: 31 accept, 1 reject, 4 abstain</p> <p><u>Resolves 3: Endorsing reduced Hall Senior rent</u> Passes: 24 accept, 6 reject, 7 abstain</p> <p><u>Resolves 4: To accept or reject the College’s model</u> Reject the model: 1 accept, 35 reject, 0 abstain</p> <p><u>Resolves 5: To endorse an option – not voted on due to the result in resolves 4</u></p> <p>6. AS and SS thank everyone who came and that points raised were interesting and helpful.</p>	
<p>12. AOB None</p>	