

Balliol College

Constitution of the Middle Common Room

(Last amended at the EGM of 26 November 2007)

1. Definitions

- 1.1 College shall mean Balliol College.
- 1.2 JCR shall mean Junior Common Room of College.
- 1.3 MCR shall mean Middle Common Room of College.
- 1.4 SCR shall mean Senior Common Room of College.
- 1.5 The Governing Body shall mean the Governing Body of College.
- 1.6 The Praefectus shall mean the member of the SCR so elected by the Governing Body.
- 1.7 The University shall mean the University of Oxford.

2. The Middle Common Room (MCR)

- 2.1 The MCR is a democratic body which exists to further the interests of its members by:
 - (a) promoting and coordinating social, cultural, political and athletic activities among its members;
 - (b) providing facilities to enable its members most fully to enjoy and benefit from membership in College and the University;
 - (c) representing the opinions of its members in the JCR, to College, and to the University; and
 - (d) representing the opinions and safeguarding the interests of its members in the community, city, nation, and at large.
- 2.2 The sovereign body of the MCR is its membership as represented at a General Meeting.

3. Opting out under the Education Act 1994

- 3.1 Any full member under 5.1 may renounce their membership of the MCR within the first four weeks of Michaelmas term by sending written notice to the president of the MCR.
- 3.2 Any person who has renounced their membership will not be a full member under 5.1 until they send written notice to the president of the MCR asking to annul their renouncement and enclosing any money refunded to them for that particular academic year.
- 3.3 The MCR committee may determine a reasonable fee to be charged to a renounced person under 3.1 for any service or event the person attends.

4. The Constitution

4.1 The Constitution may be amended by a motion at a General Meeting passed by two-thirds of those members present and voting.

4.2 A draft of the full constitution highlighting the amendments shall be posted seven days before the General Meeting.

4.3 A copy of the constitution shall be displayed on the MCR noticeboard and in the college archives. The secretary of the MCR shall ensure that this copy is up to date.

5. Membership (Eligibility)

5.1 The full members of the MCR shall be members of College who have not opted out under 3 and who meet any of the following criteria:

- (a) Visiting graduate students;
- (b) Senior status students;
- (c) Those who have degrees from other universities and are currently reading for an Oxford degree;
- (d) Those reading for a graduate degree who are currently paying fees;
- (e) Those reading for a graduate degree who have fulfilled residence and fee requirements;
- (f) Post-graduate associates.

6. Committees

6.1 The MCR Committee

6.1.1 The MCR Committee is the executive body of the MCR, and shall endeavour to reflect the diversity of opinions and interests in the MCR. Its aims are:

- (a) to carry out duties for the general running of the MCR, the maintenance of its assets and property, subject to the powers reserved to a General Meeting;
- (b) to execute motions passed at MCR General Meetings;
- (c) to represent the interests of the MCR to College, the University, and external bodies;
and
- (d) to make strategic decisions regarding the long-term future of the MCR.

6.1.2 The MCR Committee shall consist of the following:

(a) The Executive Officers: the elected Executive, namely the President, the Secretary, the Treasurer and the two Social Secretaries. None of these may serve on the MCR Committee at any time in more than one capacity, subject to 7.6.1.

(b) The Non-executive Officers: the Women's Officer, the OUSU/JCR Rep, the Non-residents Rep., the Sports Rep., the Domestic Rep., the Environment Rep., the Web/Email Officer., the Welfare Rep., and the Bar Manager.

(c) General Committee Members.

(d) The procedure for the election of Officers and General Committee Members is specified in section 7 below.

6.1.3 The conduct of the MCR Committee.

(a) There shall be regular meetings of the MCR committee such as the President, or any three other committee members, shall at any time require. There shall be a minimum of four meetings during each full term.

(b) Subject to 6.1.3.i, four members shall form a quorum, one of whom must be the President or the Treasurer.

(c) An MCR Committee decision shall be a decision to which a majority of those committee members present and voting agrees, subject to (d).

(d) Each committee member has a single vote. The Chair shall not vote unless there is a tie, in which case the Chair shall have the casting vote.

(e) Minutes of the MCR meetings shall be recorded in permanent form by the Secretary for retention by the MCR Committee.

(f) In the absence of the President, the Treasurer shall undertake all the functions and responsibilities of the President.

(g) On retirement, each Officer shall submit to the Committee a written report of the discharge of his/her duties during their term of office.

(h) MCR committee meetings shall be open to attendance by full members of the MCR. MCR Committee Meetings shall be open to attendance by others by invitation of the President.

(i) The MCR budget shall only be approved at an MCR meeting at which all executive members and at least three non-executive members are present.

6.1.4 The duties of the MCR Committee shall be as follows:

a The President: Chairs MCR Committee Meetings and MCR General Meetings. Represents the MCR on any College committee on which he/she has a position and any other external bodies such as OUSU (as well as OUSU/JCR Rep.). Ensures that all Officers and representatives of the MCR Committee fulfill their constitutional and mandated duties; signs cheques for the MCR; takes ultimate responsibility for the administration of the MCR. The President shall keep the Treasurer informed about

running the Committee so that the Treasurer is fully able to run the committee in the absence of the President.

b The Treasurer: Responsible but not personally liable for all financial transactions of the MCR; maintains full up-to-date and accurate accounts of all MCR income and expenditure; signs cheques for the MCR; ensures that a provisional annual MCR budget is approved by the MCR committee by the start of the first week of full Michaelmas term and that the final budget is approved before the end of the eight week of Michaelmas term. He/she is required to present the accounts to the incoming committee, and to present an interim statement in June at an MCR Committee Meeting. Sits on any College committee discussing MCR funds.

c The Secretary: Prepares and distributes the minutes for any MCR General Meeting or MCR Committee meeting; publicises notice of such meetings via a combination of e-mail, the pigeon holes and posters in the Manor, Dellal and Martin Buildings. Provides each newly elected member of the MCR committee with a copy of the current constitution.

d The Social Secretaries: Responsibility is vested in two people (the Social Secretaries) for the overall organisation of social and cultural MCR events and the direction of the Social Committee. The Social Secretaries shall present, at the beginning of each term, a provisional Term Card and budget for MCR Committee approval. Any substantial deviation (over £200) from this programme and budget require further MCR Committee approval. The Social Secretaries shall keep the Treasurer informed of their expenditures on an ongoing basis. After each event, the Treasurer shall receive all receipts associated with that event in a single package.

e The Domestic Officer: Shall be responsible for (a) convening the food committee so as to represent the opinions of the members of the MCR to the catering staff, and (b) conducting a newspaper ballot at the end of Michaelmas term and arranging the supply of newspapers and periodicals to the Holywell Manor Common Room according to the members' wishes. All expenditures made by the Domestic Officer shall be approved by the MCR Committee and, wherever necessary, by a General Meeting.

f The Women's Officer: Shall be a woman. Shall ensure that the views of female members are represented on the Committee, and liaise with the JCR Women's Officer to ensure that all information relevant to the particular needs of female graduates is made available.

g The Graduate Non-Residents Rep.: Must not be resident in Holywell Manor, the Dellal Building or the Martin Building. It is the function of the Non-Residents Rep. to ensure that the interests of non-residents are taken into account by the MCR Committee; to obtain from Committee members and distribute to non-residents all information relating to the MCR, such as agendas and minutes from MCR General Meetings, news of social events and any kind of elections; to keep non-residents generally informed about Graduate matters.

h The Sports Rep.: Organises, motivates and facilitates organised sports activity, both intramural and inter-Collegiate.

i The OUSU/JCR Rep.: Represents the graduates at OUSU and JCR meetings and reports their developments to the MCR Committee.

j The Environment Rep.: Shall be responsible for (a) facilitating and co-ordinating recycling activities at Holywell Manor, (b) implementing and co-ordinating other projects that make Holywell Manor more friendly to the environment.

k The Welfare Rep.: Shall liaise with the relevant JCR and College officials on welfare matters. Shall represent the MCR on the College Welfare Committee. Shall maintain a list of welfare resources, and ensure that this information is made available to all MCR members. Shall act as a point of first reference for MCR members requiring assistance on welfare.

l The Bar Manager: Responsible but not personally liable for all financial transactions of the Bar; maintains full up-to-date and accurate accounts of all Bar income and expenditure. Also manages the operation of the Bar in all respects.

m General Committee Members: Shall participate actively in MCR Committee decisions; shall undertake special projects and assist Officers with their duties where necessary and desirable.

n Web/Email Officer: The Web/Email Officer shall be responsible for maintaining the Balliol College MCR web site and mailing lists. He or she shall also represent the MCR's views on the Balliol site.

6.2 The Social Committee

6.2.1 Aims of the Social Committee: to co-ordinate under the direction of the Social Secretaries the organization of social events. The committee shall meet at least twice during each full term.

6.2.2 Composition: any member of the MCR who wishes to join it. The Social Secretaries shall advertise this fact during the first two weeks of full Michaelmas term.

6.3 The Bar Committee

6.3.1 Aims of the Bar Committee: to assist the Bar Manager in the smooth running of the Bar. The committee shall meet at least once during each full term.

6.3.2 Composition: any member of the MCR who wishes to join it, subject to a maximum of ten persons.

6.3.3 Electoral procedure: anyone wishing to join the Bar Committee can sign up on the list which will be on the MCR noticeboard from 6pm on Tuesday 1st week until 6pm Friday of 2nd week in Michaelmas term. If more than ten persons sign up, ten names shall be drawn at random from the list after 6 pm on Friday of 2nd week.

6.3.4 The MCR committee may dismiss any member of the bar committee for conduct detrimental to the functioning of the bar.

6.4 The Food Committee

6.4.1 Aims of the Food Committee: to convene under the Domestic Officer and present the opinions of the MCR to the catering staff. The committee shall meet at least once during each full term.

6.4.2 Composition: any member of the MCR who wishes to join it, subject to a maximum of four persons. At least one member of the committee shall be vegetarian, and at least one shall be non-vegetarian.

6.4.3 Electoral procedure: anyone wishing to join the Food Committee can sign up on the list which will be posted on the MCR noticeboard for a period of one week. If more than four persons sign up, the MCR Committee shall draw four names at random from the list, subject to the condition imposed by 6.4.2.

6.4.4 Vacancies: should a vacancy arise on the Food Committee, the MCR Committee shall draw an additional name from the list to fill the position.

7. Elections

7.1 Members of the MCR Committee shall hold tenure for one year.

7.2 The general conduct of elections shall be as follows:

(a) Elections shall be scheduled so as to end by 4pm on a Saturday in full term. This Saturday shall be designated Voting Day.

(b) The MCR Committee shall, by the Wednesday 17 days previous to Voting Day, or as soon as feasible thereafter, publicise the forthcoming elections to all resident members via the MCR noticeboards in Holywell Manor, in the Dellal and Martin Buildings, and in College, and via e-mail.

(c) The MCR Committee shall appoint a Returning Officer who will be an MCR member. The Returning Officer may be a member of the incumbent MCR Committee but will not be eligible to stand at these elections.

(d) The Returning Officer shall place a nomination list in Holywell Manor by 6pm on the Tuesday 11 days previous to Voting Day.

(e) Each nominee must have a proposer and at least one seconder; nominees, proposers and seconds must all be Full Members (defined in section 5) of the MCR.

(f) The nomination list shall remain posted in Holywell Manor until 6pm on the Monday directly previous to Voting Day.

(g) If there is more than one nomination for any post, hustings will take place on the Wednesday or Thursday evening previous to Voting Day. Candidates shall hand their manifesto (max. one A4 page) to the Returning Officer at least 48 hours in advance of hustings. The manifestos will be displayed on the MCR notice-board by the Returning Officer 48 hours in advance of hustings. No material may be posted or distributed. No electronic material shall be distributed via a mass mailing list except by the Returning Officer, who shall distribute one copy of each manifesto through the MCR mailing list. There shall be no intimidation or similar coercion, whether financial or otherwise. There will be no door-to-door canvassing.

(h) Infringement of provision (g) above shall lead to the offending candidate being disqualified from standing in that election. Infringements after the start of voting shall lead to the election being re-run. The MCR committee (excluding members who are candidates for any post in that election) shall be the final arbiter of whether an infringement has occurred.

(i) If there is more than one nomination for a post, election by ballot shall take place as follows:

i. Voting shall last for 2 days, from 9 am on the Friday previous to Voting Day until 4 pm on Voting Day.

ii. The Returning Officer shall, at the close of hustings, place in the Lodge in Holywell Manor, the following:

a. a list of voting instructions

b. a list of full MCR members

c. a ballot box

and shall also provide the Porters with a sufficient number of ballot papers.

iii. An elector may vote on only one ballot paper, which shall be given to them by the Porter on duty once the elector has been seen to place his/her signature against his/her name on the list of MCR members.

iv. A ballot paper shall be deemed spoilt if it is not possible to identify which candidate was preferred.

v. Advance votes may be cast after the close of nominations by direct communication with the Returning Officer.

vi. After the close of voting the Returning Officer shall eliminate any spoilt or unauthorised votes, and count the authorised votes.

vii. Votes are to be cast in a secret ballot and should be counted according to the Single Transferable Vote system, according to NUS rules.

viii. In the event of a tied vote, the President shall exercise a casting vote.

ix. An eligible candidate may nominate for up to two MCR Committee Positions in any one election as well as for a General Member position.

x. If a member nominates for more than one position in the same election, the member is required to provide the Returning Officer with a preferred order of positions.

xi. If a member wins the vote for more than one position in the same election, the Returning Officer shall elect that member to the position that is higher on their preference list. The returning officer shall then recount the votes for the remaining positions, disregarding the candidacy of the member who has been declared successful in winning their preferred position.

xii. If there is only one nomination for a non-executive position the nominee shall be declared the winner at the close of voting.

xiii. The Returning Officer shall publicise the results of the elections immediately.

7.2.1 General Committee Members shall be nominated and elected according to the following procedure:

(a) Each nominee must have a proposer and at least one seconder; nominees, proposers, and seconders must all be full members of the MCR (defined in section 5).

(b) Electors may vote for up to four General Committee Members on a single ballot.

(c) Up to four General Committee Members may serve on the Committee at any one time. In any election, the maximum number of General Members that can be elected is 4 minus the number of General Members already serving. To be elected, a nominee must have been nominated as a General Committee Member, must have received at least 20 votes as a General Committee Member, and must not simultaneously hold another committee post. In the event that more than four people meet these criteria, the General Committee Members shall be deemed to be those who receive the most votes as General Committee Members.

7.3 The election of non-Executive Officers other than the Non-residents Rep., Welfare Rep. and Bar Manager, shall proceed as specified in 7.2 above, and shall be scheduled to end by Saturday 7th week of Michaelmas term. Those so elected shall take office on Saturday 8th week of Michaelmas term.

7.4 The election of Executive Officers, the Non-residents Rep., the Welfare Rep. and Bar Manager, shall proceed as specified in 7.2 above, subject to 7.4.1, and shall be scheduled to end by Saturday 7th week of Trinity term. Successful candidates shall take office on Saturday 8th week of Trinity term.

7.4.1 If an MCR Committee Member is elected to another MCR Committee Post, then their original Committee post shall immediately be considered vacant.

7.4.2 If an existing member of the MCR Committee wishes to nominate for an Executive Committee position, Non-residents Rep., Bar Manager or Welfare Officer, that member is to notify the MCR President and the Returning Officer of his/her intention to run as soon as he/she decides to nominate.

7.4.3 Upon receipt of such notification, the Returning Officer is to post a nomination sheet for the Committee member's current position on the noticeboard and immediately advertise on the MCR notice board and the MCR email list that contingency nominations are open for the Committee member's current position.

7.4.4 Nominations for these contingency committee positions shall close in accordance with 7.2(f) unless less than 24 hours has elapsed from the advertisement of the position. In that case, nominations for the position will close when 24 hours have elapsed.

7.4.5 If the MCR Committee member is elected to another position on the MCR Committee then the votes for the newly vacated position will be tallied by the returning officer and a new Member shall be elected to the newly vacated position.

7.4.6 The term of office of a contingency position should end when the term of the person being replaced would normally have ended.

7.4.7 For each Executive Officer position there be an automatic nomination of a "Reopen Nominations" candidate. In the event that this candidate receives more votes than every other candidate for the position in question then nominations shall be reopened and elections rerun for that position.

7.4.8 In the event that nominations are reopened as mandated by 7.4.7, elections shall be held as specified in 7.6.2 below.

7.5 MCR Committee members may be recalled by the membership of the MCR according to the following procedure:

7.5.1 In order to recall an MCR Committee member, 20 Full members of the MCR must call an EGM (as specified in 8.2 below) for the exclusive purpose of debating a motion of No Confidence. The motion must specify the Committee member in question. It must receive the support of two-thirds of members present and voting at the EGM in order to pass.

7.5.2 In the event a Motion of No Confidence should pass with regard to an MCR Officer, elections shall be held for the post in question as specified in 7.2 above. Elections shall be scheduled to end by the first available Saturday in full term.

7.6 Casual vacancies

7.6.1 Where a committee member resigns voluntarily or becomes unable to carry out his/her duties less than eight weeks before the end of their term of office, the MCR committee shall nominate one of its own to act in the vacant capacity. If there is already a member-elect to the post, he/she shall take up the position for the balance of the term before continuing with the term for which they were elected.

7.6.2 Where a committee member resigns voluntarily or becomes unable to carry out his/her duties more than eight weeks before the end of their term of office, an election shall be held in accordance with the provisions of section 7, except that the term of office should end when the term of the person being replaced would normally have ended.

8. General Meetings

8.1 An Ordinary General Meeting (OGM) of the MCR shall take place twice each year, in the 7th weeks of Michaelmas and Trinity terms. The MCR Committee shall specify the exact date and time of the meetings. The order of business of an OGM is specified in Standing Orders.

8.2 An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) of the MCR may be summoned by the President when he/she considers it necessary; however, the President must summon an EGM if he/she receives the written request of at least 20 full members of the MCR.

8.2.1 An EGM shall take place as soon as possible during term, no less than 5 days after the date on which is summoned.

8.2.2 The only business to be conducted at an EGM shall be that for which it has been invoked (i.e. constitutional amendments and motions proposed no less than 5 days before the date on which it has been summoned).

8.2.3 The order of business of an EGM is specified in Standing Orders.

8.3 The OGM in 7th week of Trinity term will be the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

8.3.1 At least four days before the AGM the Treasurer shall post the accounts for the year of her/his tenure on the MCR noticeboard.

8.3.2 The AGM shall have the same format as an OGM, except that after the minutes of the previous meeting have been taken, Members may question the Treasurer concerning the accounts.

8.3.3 The questions shall be conducted according to the rules for motions below specified in Standing Orders.

8.4 All members of the MCR may attend MCR General Meetings. Only Full Members (as defined in Section 5 above) are entitled to vote.

8.5 At all meetings of the MCR 25 full members constitute a quorum. Any meeting of the MCR shall be opened as soon after the time at which it is convened as a quorum is present.

8.6 The conduct of the General Meetings is specified in Standing Orders.

8.7 Motions will be carried by simple majority of those voting.

9. Referenda

9.1 A Referendum of the MCR shall be called by the President at the written request of at least 20 members of the MCR.

9.2 A Referendum shall take place by the first available Saturday in full term, no less than 10 days after the date on which it is called.

9.3 Referenda shall take place as follows:

9.3.1 The MCR Committee shall appoint a Returning Officer.

9.3.2 The Returning Officer shall post announcements of the referendum, including a full statement of the motion to be decided, in Holywell Manor, the Martin and Dellal Buildings, and in College, as soon as the referendum is called.

9.3.3 The Saturday on which voting shall end shall be known as Voting Day.

9.3.4 Voting shall commence at 6pm on the Tuesday preceding Voting Day, and shall end at 4pm on Voting Day.

9.3.5 The Returning Officer shall, at the start of voting, place in the Lodge in Holywell Manor, the following:

- a. a list of voting instructions
- b. a copy of the motion to be decided
- c. a list of full MCR members
- d. a ballot box

9.3.6 Voting will be by secret ballot and is open only to full MCR members.

9.3.7 Any complaint relating to the conduct of the referendum shall be submitted either to the Returning Officer or to the President within 24 hours of the result being officially announced.

9.4 The result of a referendum will be binding on the MCR if more than 30 percent of levy paying members and more than 50 percent of those voting are in favour.

10. Finances of the MCR

10.1 Sources of Funds

10.1.1 The MCR will levy a subscription each term on all Full Members who pay full fees. This subscription may be varied by an MCR General Meeting.

10.1.2 The MCR will receive money from the College on a *per capita* basis.

10.1.3 Other sources of income may result from small profits on social events, etc.

10.2 Expenditures

10.2.1 Money may be withdrawn at the discretion of the MCR Committee for purposes agreed in the budget or otherwise as specifically minuted. Expenditures which exceed £500 (other than for social events) shall require the consent of a General Meeting.

10.2.2 Cheques shall be signed by either the Treasurer or the President.

10.2.3 The MCR shall maintain a Furnishings fund. This will meet repairs and replacements of furniture and equipment in the Common Room, Television Room, Bar, etc.