



Oxford University Labour Club General Meeting

Michaelmas Term 2017

Monday 30th October, 19:00-
Seminar East, Mansfield College

Minutes by Sec. Ray Williams

AGENDA

1. Motion on the creation of an international officer
2. Motion on the creation of an alumni officer
3. Motion on manifestos in committee elections
4. Motion 'Free Education: Tax the Rich!'
5. Motion on the real living wage at the Westgate Centre
6. Any Other Business

Prior Business

Women's Caucus Convenes.

Meeting is convened at 19:28.

Iris (co-Chair): Explains procedure.

Motion 1. On the creation of an international officer

Proposer: Keir Mather; Seconder: Theo Anton

OULC Notes:

1. That OULC, like the Labour Party nationally, is an internationalist organisation committed to international cooperation.
2. That there were numerous international student sign-ups at Freshers' Fair.
3. That OULC has many active members who are international students, who help to make the club successful and elect Labour Party candidates.

OULC Believes:

1. That international students deserve representation on the executive of the Labour Club.
2. That more should be done by OULC to liaise with Labour Club equivalents in other countries.
3. That we must recognise and support the amazing work done by our sister parties abroad.

4. That more could be done to encourage international students to join and feel welcome in OULC.

OULC Resolves:

1. To mandate **the Campaigns Officer** with the following responsibilities:

A. *To liaise with the Labour Party's sister parties and their student organisations, to organise mutual assistance and possible events.*

B. *To facilitate international students joining OULC, and to attempt to ensure that OULC is as welcoming an environment as possible for international students.*

C. *To have the power to facilitate and run events (at the discretion of the Co-Chairs) for international students.*

Proposing Speech

Kier (co-Chair-elect): Will be brief to keep interest. Motion creates an international officer. We have had lots of international members signing up. Labour's sister parties do great work to improve lives. A Int Officer to facilitate events and accommodate Int students would be positive and progressive.

Questions to the Proposer

Rida (BAME Officer): Please clarify the responsibilities of the role. Would it mean a sort of International caucus? Or would it mean making more international links? Both? These are distinct roles.

Kier: The role would be liaising with our sister parties like in Germany and creating events. Also making events to accommodate and welcome Int students. A two-part role but easily manageable.

Alex (Treasurer): What's our sister party in Germany?

Kier: I think it's the SPD.

Alex: Because some here would consider Die Linker our German sister party. People who don't support the SPD. Labour is an observer but not a member of the Socialist International so there's not clear lines of communication with other left-wing parties abroad.

Kier: I understand. I believe it's an individual discretion who to support. But Labour does have official links with international parties and some personal disagreement shouldn't be an issue for this motion.

ORDER – Rhian (Fresher's Representative): Have we started questions to the proposer?

Co-Chairs: Yes.

Adam: I heard that the university is cutting down the number of officers that student societies can have? Won't that cause an issue regarding creating new positions?

Kier: I don't believe there's a constitutional issue.

INFORMATION - Charlotte: As previous club Secretary there was a lot of issues with making new positions. We justified it by saying the people would be representing liberation caucuses. How will you convince proctors?

Kier: If we pass this tonight I'd go through whatever channels were necessary to convince the proctors. I want to at least try.

INFORMATION – Tom Z (co-chair *ex officio*): To clarify, there's a standard constitution that applies to all clubs. It says 8 members in a committee. We have 17. It is mandatory but each club can justify a change. We have 8 members + co-chairs elect + liberation officers to represent our diversity. Also, in keeping with the Royal Report we have co-chairs *ex-officio* to provide continuity. All of these have been justified verbally to the proctors. The problem arises from being able to justify a new addition such as this as being something this club specifically needs which I think would be difficult.

Opposing Speech

Hannah (co-chair *ex officio*): I think that it'll be really hard to get this role and the one in the other motion through the proctors. This role could be merged with Campaigns Officer as opposed to being a separate role. I think there's a risk of a committee going on 20 people becoming a bit of... like a JCR committee. I like the idea but I think it'll be very hard. I'll vote it down.

INFORMATION - Iris: The full title of the Campaigns Officer is 'Campaigns and External Links Officer' so at least part of this role falls with them.

AMENDMENT – Hannah: I suggest giving these responsibilities to the Campaigns Officer.

Kier: I take that as friendly as the alumni officer is something I'm much more concerned about.

Questions to the Opposer

Rhian: If you're merging the roles, how will international students be represented? I wouldn't think of international students as a caucus group. Such students perhaps fit into other caucuses.

Hannah: I defer to international students on this issue. I accept the amendment. It would be down to the Campaigns officer.

Simon: International students are very privileged. It is absurd to make them a caucus. And I'm an international student.

Rachel (Women's Officer): We as a Women's Caucus have just abolished the role of Women's Officer-elect. So that would make a space on committee. But we would want any new role to be reserved for women.

Andrew (Campaigns Officer): I think point A is a problem. We have a policy that says members of parties which are electorally opposed to Labour cannot be members of OULC to keep out Tories. This is a problem because there are people who'd want to get involved who'd be opposed to our sister parties. I am not proposing an amendment but we should think about this.

Rhian: I know we're moving this to the Campaigns officer. But we haven't really addressed the issue of representing international students. I see that we don't as a club think there should be an International Officer but what about merging the role with, for example, Fresher's Rep and making that a permanent position rather than just a Michaelmas one.

Kier: The amended motion means that representation will fall to the Campaigns Officer. How that will work in actuality is a separate question. A necessary question we must hammer out. If it's clear we can only create one new position then I'd prefer we passed the alumni officer motion. I do think however that it is important that international students are accommodated and made to feel part of OULC.

MOVE TO VOTE – Kier

Move to Vote passes.

The motion carries.

Motion 2. On the creation of an alumni officer

Proposer: Keir Mather; Seconder: Lizzy Diggins

Amendments made such that instead of creating an alumni officer, some responsibilities of the membership officer will be transferred to the co-chairs *ex officio*.

OULC Notes:

1. That OULC should always be looking for new ways to raise money, to fund campaigns and the general management of the Club.
2. That OULC following the General Election is severely low on funds and will require a concerted effort to bring our amount back to pre-election levels.
3. That OULC has a large pool of potential alumni, willing to help the club through funding.

OULC Believes:

1. That the Membership Officers role is too large and too important for them to be able to work as Alumni Officer simultaneously.
2. That any attempts to create a well functioning and large alumni network will take intense effort, best undertaken by one individual with no other constitutional duties.
3. That creating a well functioning and large alumni network would be beneficial for the club, our campaigns, and the members of the University we seek to serve.

OULC Resolves:

1. That the powers of the Membership and Alumni Officer, listed within the constitution under 9o, shall be divided, **with some passed onto the co-chairs ex officio.**
 2. The Membership Officer shall possess all responsibilities currently listed from clause i to iii. **The co-chairs ex officio** shall possess all responsibilities detailed in clause iv. Both shall maintain clause v as their responsibility, 'To perform other duties requested of them by the Chair and Deputy Chair.'
 3. **Including in the co-chairs ex officio's responsibilities would be facilitating and organising talks and workshops.**
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Proposing Speech

Kier: This one is super important. I took the prior amendment as friendly because we really need to get this through. Basically right now, the Membership+Alumni officer role is too large. For a club this large the task is too big and membership is rightly prioritised. We need an alumni officer to get the funds we need to what we do: the John Smith Memorial Dinner, campaigning, access. This isn't about just the immediate future. This is about 5 years down the line. It's about building a bedrock to be the best political society in Oxford. We can use the funds however OULC sees fit to take the club to the next level and make people's lives better in Oxford and beyond.

INFORMATION – Zoe (co-Chair): We're already the best political society in Oxford.

INFORMATION – Iris: We're not currently low on funds.

INFORMATION – Alex: We're doing pretty damn well with funds.

Opposing Speech

Katie: I disagree in that I think International Officer was the more important of the two new roles being proposed. I don't think the Membership Officer role is too large. The main problem was that our membership list was a disaster and this has now been fixed. The work that the TT16 co-chairs did (e.g. Setting up the Attlee Association) hasn't really got off the ground yet. There's more we can do with it. I don't think we can justify a new non-liberation role to the Proctors.

Questions to the Opposer

Lucas: Is it true that the Club has been around a long time without this role?

Katie: Yes. We're turning 100. I think the Attlee Association and prompting the Membership Officer is the way to accomplish what this motion wants to do.

Kieran: You've talked about asking the Proctors to permit this role. How much do we have to ask the Proctors for stuff? What would be the negative ramifications if the Proctors disagreed?

Katie: This is important because we recently met with the Proctors who were unhappy with our practices as being unconstitutional. They can remove 'Oxford' from our name and a too big committee isn't great anyway.

Rachel: Who are the Proctors?

Katie: Scary people who run the university.

INFORMATION - Jack: We need the Proctor's approval to be an official Oxford society which also helps with room booking.

Kieran: Are alumni donations our only source of money? At my local CLP we were discussing bringing in OULC to help and funding from alumni.

Iris: We have several sources of funding: socials, the CLP etc.

Alex: I would question points 1, 2, 3, and 6. Donations could be a source of money for us but they are not at the moment. OUCA runs their society on that model and as such their Treasury runs into the tens of thousands. My interpretation of the role of Treasurer is not to achieve that but to make sure OULC has the money it needs to campaign and no more. Why would we sit on so much money?

Points of Debate

Rhian: I appreciate we need to keep the Proctors on side. However this is an important role and more money is always useful. We can send more people on marches, more campaigning and reducing the price of membership. I am concerned about the no. of officers on committee. Also, Katie, I feel you've contradicted yourself by saying we don't need this role but pointing out that a lot of alumni stuff hasn't been done.

AMENDMENT – Kier: The officer is also mandated to get speakers and organise workshops.

INFORMATION - Alex: The JSM Dinner makes money, it doesn't cost money.

INFORMATION – Ray (Secretary): We can make new roles which aren't official committee positions. The Proctors are fine with that.

Jack (LGBTQIA+ Officer): On the money issue, JSM is pretty expensive for people to go to even if it does make a profit. OULC taking money from Oxford grads is a good thing. The money wouldn't go to waste.

Tom T: Financially we're fine, that's why we recently reduced membership fees. I am worried that if we created the role it will not necessarily be done well by whoever's elected. My preference would be to put these responsibilities with the *ex officio* co-chairs. These people's dedication is proven and they have a lot of Labour links.

Kier: Amendment taken as unfriendly.

Questions to the Amendment Proposer

Rhian: How many co-chairs *ex officios* are there?

Tom T: It was 1, now 2.

INFORMATION - Iris: However many want to stay on committee.

Katie: Why do you think we haven't focused on alumni thus far?

Tom T: I think we will focus on it if we give the responsibility to people who's dedication is proven.

Kier: Do you think *ex officio* co-chairs would necessarily be dedicated? Do they believe in the role of alumni in the club?

Hannah: As myself and Tom Zagoria would end up in the role I'll say that I think this is a good amendment and I'll work with Kier to plan how to get this done.

Katie: When we were co-chairs we worked hard to get the Attlee Association which was new + exciting get started. But the Membership Officer at the time did basically nothing. I think the amendment is a good idea.

Amendment moves to vote.

Amendment passes.

MOVE TO VOTE - Zoe

Move to vote passes.

Motion carries.

Motion 3. On Manifestos in Committee Elections

Proposer: Ray Williams; Seconder: Rachel Collett

Amendments made to add a word limit to the proposed manifestos (first 200 words and then 150 words) and to mandate the Secretary to circulate manifestos on the day of the election.

OULC notes:

1. That as per the Constitution those standing for co-Chair "must submit a manifesto to the Secretary beforehand. Manifestos will be circulated to all members."
2. That there is currently no mechanism for manifestos to feature in elections for positions besides Chair and Deputy Chair.

OULC believes:

1. That written manifestos provide a way for candidates to set out views and proposals clearly regardless of public speaking ability.

2. That written manifestos allow members more time to consider who they would like to vote for, given the time restraints in Termly General Meetings.
3. That written manifestos make candidates for election more accountable.

OULC resolves:

1. To amend the Appendix of the Constitution such that anyone standing for a position other than co-Chair (with the exception of positions within caucuses) may if they so wish submit a manifesto **of no longer than 150 words** to the Secretary before the election which will be circulated to all members **on the day of the election**.

Proposing Speech

Ray: I think the main points are covered in the motion. For those of you who don't know, currently co-chair elections involve lovely manifestos put forward by the candidates however there are no manifestos for elections to other positions. In some ways that's quite nice and freeing but in others it causes a problem for people who aren't confident public speakers or are not personally charismatic but do have good ideas. Roles like mine don't require public speaking skills. Everything hinges on that very small amount of hustings time and there isn't always time to get all your ideas out. I think short manifestos will make committee members more accountable, empower less confident people to stand for election and reinforce our belief that all committee roles are important.

Questions to the Proposer

Jack: Would people still need to hust?

AMENDMENT – Jack: To make participation in hustings optional.

Ray: Unfriendly.

Questions to Amendment Proposer

Lucas: Are husts mandatory?

Jack: I'm not sure.

Rida: Would making hustings optional include people refusing to answer questions?

Jack: I retract the amendment.

Questions to the Proposer Continued

Lucas: Is this a constitutional amendment? Because at the moment only the co-chairs can distribute campaigning material.

Ray: Yes.

INFORMATION – Kieran: I'm not sure under the general understanding of campaign material that this has to mean a manifesto. Based on JCR elections.

Rhian: Would you accept an amendment for a 200 word limit?

Ray: Accepted as friendly.

Rachel: As leader of a caucus I'd like to extend my support. People who don't have the same confidence need an opportunity. This is really important. But we should keep hustings as they are.

Katie: Elections might become quite pre-planned and hack-y.

James: You mentioned your role doesn't require public speaking skills / charisma. Then shouldn't this just be for secretary elections?

Ray: I think it makes sense for all roles. I don't think you need to be particularly charismatic to be Treasurer for example – not that our Treasurer isn't very charismatic!

Rowan: I'm worried about the encouragement of hacking culture.

Rida: The benefit of this amendment is that it would encourage people to think about their positions beforehand. Thus you wouldn't become one of those committee members who doesn't do anything with their role. But I do think it would encourage a culture of hacking where the roles feel pre-decided. When I stood for Secretary it was because no one else stood.

INFORMATION – Zoe: Rida, could you explain the term hacking for those here who don't know?

Rida: It's like messaging all your friends to get them to vote for you before an election. It makes elections feel pre-decided etc.

Luke: I can kind of understand what you mean Rida, but in your example where no one was running this isn't affected by the motion because you can still stand without a manifesto.

Iris: This motion could potentially lead to far fewer contested elections which would be bad for club democracy.

Rhian: I agree with Rachel. This is really, really important. If the only way to win an election is to stand up and give a speech in a scenario dominated by men and the privately educated is terrible. There should still be hustings for accountability. There are some minor amendments we could make to address the concerns raised. I don't think this has anything to do with the culture of hacking. Hacking is sly and underhand. This is open and fair. I completely back this motion 100%.

AMENDMENT – Rhian: 150 word manifestos and the manifestos to be released on the day of the election (not earlier, so people aren't discouraged from standing).

Ray: Taken as friendly.

MOVE TO VOTE - Jack

Move to vote passed

The motion passes.

Motion 4. 'Free Education: Tax the Rich!'

Proposer: Alex F. Kumar; Seconder: Hannah M. Taylor

Original Resolves 2 called for OULC 'To allocate £70 to assist members with the cost of transport to the demonstration'. This was amended as follows: 'To assist members with the cost of transport to the demonstration'.

OULC notes:

1. A National Demonstration for "Free Education Now - Tax The Rich" has been called on November 15th.
2. The demonstration's demands are: scrap all fees, living grants for all, stop all campus cuts
3. This demonstration has been backed by several high-profile Labour Party figures, including the leader Jeremy Corbyn, and Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell
4. It is the democratic policy of Young Labour to support this demonstration.
5. OULC passed policy in support of free education in Michaelmas 2016

OULC believes:

1. Education is a social good and not a commodity to be bought and sold.
2. Free education for all is a radical policy that will widen access and transform higher education.
3. As students, we should be at the forefront of organising for a new vision of higher education, made popular by our 2017 Manifesto and we should be fighting against the damaging marketisation policies which has burdened us and our peers with thousands of pounds of debt.

OULC resolves:

1. To organise a bloc with our banner to attend the Free Education now demonstration and make a Facebook event for it.
2. To assist members with the cost of transport to the demonstration.
3. To participate in a local day of action around free education on 29th November
4. To host an event with a speaker who has been involved in organising the demo on November 7th

Proposing Speech

Alex: The snap election was not called on our terms. But we fought it well on a strong social democratic manifesto which included taxing the rich and introducing free education. We cannot allow a system to emerge where there are financial barriers to education. We passed

a motion to support free education. That is not enough. Let us march in London. Let us march for all those who have been denied an education so that not one of the untold generations to come are denied the opportunities we have received.

Questions to the Proposer

Rida: Will be seeking to mobilise members for this?

Alex: Yes. There's a facebook event. Even if the motion fails I will be encouraging people to fight for free education.

Jack: What's the date?

Alex: November 29th is the local day of action. The 15th is the main event.

INFORMATION – Rida: The description is because there's generally a local day of action after the main thing involving banner drops etc.

Iris: What's happening on November 7th?

Alex: The Speaker event. The Executive have already agreed to Resolves 4.

Iris: Are we financially viable to pay the £70.

Alex: As Treasurer, we can afford it. And it's only to make the money available, we might not use all of it.

Simon: How much would £70 cover?

Alex: Does anyone know the price of bus tickets?

Tom Z: About £11 per bus ticket. A bit less if we buy in bulk.

Simon: I'm wondering how you came to the conclusion that £70 is the number we need.

Alex: In the past I have always made money available for expenses e.g. Pizza. Not a lot of people claim expenses. £70 would be more than enough.

Jack: How would one get reimbursed, do we just ask you?

Alex: Standard system for campaigns. Come to me and try and keep your receipts.

Jack: Is that really the best system? Not everyone knows you and it's hard to ask for money.

Alex: That's how we've always done it.

Zoe: How would you suggest we do it.

Jack: I don't know.

Hannah: For campaigning in London marginals we/OULC bought Oxtube cards for our campaigners to which is less awkward than asking for reimbursement.

Alex: Would you like to propose an amendment to mandate the committee to buy Oxtube cards?

Iris: An amendment isn't necessary because that's what the motion already does. It doesn't specify reimbursement so we can just use the money to buy Oxtube cards.

Lizzy (co-chair *ex officio*): Can we make an amendment to reimburse tickets up to £X ?

Iris: This is already what the motion does.

Lizzy: I thought we were donating £70?

Alex: No, it's to make available £70.

Rhian: Is this for anyone facing financial difficulties?

Alex: I don't think the Treasury should be means-testing members.

Rhian: Of course not I just think we'd like to clarify exactly what the £70 will be used for.

Zoe: To clarify how the treasury always works is that there is a pot of money available so no one is excluded to our events.

Lucas: To clarify, is Rida the speaker (Resolves 4)?

Rida: No.

Andrew: I think we should figure out what we're going to do after we know how many people want to go. The Committee should figure that out. Train tickets might end up being cheaper than Oxtube.

Iris: Currently the motion only says we're allocating money, it doesn't specify Oxtube.

Hannah: Literally last term Tom and I just made these decisions and didn't put it through all these meetings. Don't worry about it, this will be done in a constitutional way. Just pass the motion and we'll worry about the finances.

Lizzy: £70 seems pretty arbitrary.

James: What if we split the money into £50 and £20 with one pot for those who can't afford to go.

Zoe: I don't think that's something we need to debate it's a separate issue.

AMENDMENT – Lizzy: Remove the £70 cap and just say whoever needs reimbursement will get reimbursed.

Alex: Taken as friendly.

Move to vote passes.

Motion carries.

Motion 5: On the real living wage at the Westgate Centre

Proposer: Anisha Faruk; Seconder: Jake Davies

Several amendments were accepted by the proposer prior to the debate. Original Believes 1 said that workers should be paid the 'Real Living Wage'. This was changed to 'Oxford Living Wage'. Original Resolves 1 said to support the campaign for a Real Living Wage at the Westgate Centre. This was changed to support the 'Oxford City Living Wage Campaign'. Resolves 2, 3, and 4 were added. During the debate, Resolves 5 was added.

OULC notes:

1. That many shops in the westgate centre do not pay their staff the Real Living Wage.
2. That there is a campaign currently going on fighting for a Real Living Wage for shops at the westgate centre

OULC Believes:

1. All workers should be paid the **Oxford** Living Wage

OULC Resolves:

1. To support the **Oxford City Living Wage Campaign**
2. To mandate future campaigns officers to run or take part in events and campaigning to raise awareness among workers and students.
3. To support strikes for the living wage.
4. To disseminate information about which colleges are Oxford Living Wage certified and encourage attempts to push for the Living Wage throughout the university.
5. To mandate the the campaigns officer to organise OULC's presence at the pro-Living Wage rally on the 6th of November and to bring the OULC banner.

Proposing Speech

Anisha: As you know the Westgate centre recently opened and I believe it was the local council which asked all its shops to pay the living wage. Some are, some aren't. There's a campaign to support the living wage which we should support. Some amendments were proposed prior to the meeting which I took as friendly.

AMENDMENT – Charlotte: A slight amendment. Could we mandate the campaigns officer to organise our presence at the big rally on the 6th of November and to bring the banner.

Anisha: Taken as friendly.

Lucas: If I were interested in fighting for an Oxford Living Wage how would I go about that?

Tom Z: Well we have some leaflets you can hand out in your colleges etc. Also there is leafleting going on at Westgate so go to that. And there's the Oxford SU's Living Wage campaign.

Rhian: In the notes you talk about the Westgate Centre but don't address it in the resolves?

Anisha: In the amended motion we are looking to support a general Oxford living wage campaign?

Rhian: Is there something specific targeting the Westgate Centre?

Tom Z: The Westgate is a big part of the campaign and that's why there's leafleting going on tomorrow morning.

Lucas: If you want to get involved in the Westgate campaign specifically please contact me or Dan Iley-Williamson directly

AMENDMENT – Rhian: Then I'd like to propose an amendment to specifically support the Westgate campaign to catch the public's attention to the cause. Can we mandate the campaigns officer to do stuff in that area?

Lucas: We're working out what we need to do and when we do we'll inform the club.

Anisha: We could say we're also supporting the Westgate centre campaign.

Iris: Rhian, do you support the amendment to the amendment?

Rhian: No. I want an amendment on capitalising on the publicity around Westgate. Is there actually a specific campaign, I'm confused?

Lucas: There is and it has big meetings - most recently last week.

INFORMATION – Tom Z: The Oxford Living Wage Campaign is intent on capitalising on Westgate.

Rhian: I withdraw the amendment.

MOVE TO VOTE - Kier

Move to vote passes.

Motion passes.

Any Other Business

Tom Z: I have plenty of Living Wage leaflets. Especially useful if your college doesn't pay the living wage (the Oxford one is a bit higher than the national one). I'll leave these for people to take away. There's also leaflets regarding the campaign to close the Campsfield Detention centre in Kidlington.

Rida: In light of the fact we unanimously passed a motion to support the free education motion then there's some posters about it here with my details as a point of contact. If people from as many colleges as possible could take a few posters each that would be great.

Rachel: In women's caucus we abolished the role of women's officer elect. As the new roles didn't pass can we debate and vote on reserving more positions for women?

Iris: You can propose that at the TGM.

Anisha: Please pitch your ideas for *Look Left*.

Tom T: Labour students political weekend is coming up, if you're going please say hello so I'm not the only one from Oxford again.

Jack: Nicola Field, one of the founders of 'Lesbian and Gays Support the Miners' is coming along for a talk at Wadham College in two weeks so come to that.

Rhian: I'm the Fresher's Rep, if there was anything today you didn't understand speak to me at the end of the meeting.

Adam: We've got city council elections coming up next May. We'll be starting campaigning soon. I'm the candidate in Wolvercote. Be aware so we can campaign.

Alex: I was just going to say that so Adam didn't have to say it himself.

21:07 meeting closes.