



the DURHAM UNION

MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE Minutes – Wednesday 16th January

Present: - **Rahul Prakash**, *President* (RP)
Sarina Rivlin-Sanders, *Treasurer* (SRS)
Ben Cooper, *Custodian* (BC)
Martha Muir, *Director of Debating* (MM)
Sarah Kuszynski, *Social Secretary* (SK)
Connor Forster, *Sponsorship Secretary* (CF)
Dan Egglestone, *President-Elect* (DE)
Freddie Hyde, *Assistant (Acting) Secretary* (FH)

Apologies: - **Jack Perry**, *Secretary*

Meeting began in The Debating Chamber at 12:30.

RP in the Chair and FH minuting.

RP opened the meeting, discussing upcoming events. He told the committee that the debate on Friday 18th January would be composed of four speakers following recent dropouts.

The need for an active Union presence on social media and a comprehensive Presidential handover document was discussed.

RP spoke about a constitutional amendment to codify the responsibilities of General Committee members to check the IDs of patrons of 24 North Bailey Club.

RP discussed the need for a formalised procedure to deal with allegations of misconduct. **RP** explained to the committee that, with cooperation from the President-Elect **DE**, he had decided an ordinary member might be appointed annually to investigate complaints as and when they might arise.

BC asked whether such an appointee would have any rights on General Committee or be accountable to the Standing Committee.

RP replied that the individual would be something of a 'fact finder' and that similar provisions exist in the Oxford and Cambridge Unions.

The benefits of investigations in General Committee was discussed and whether the duties of such an appointee ought to lie with the Returning Officer.

SRS suggested a panel might be a better idea and asked whether complaints would be made anonymously.

MM suggested the best system would be one which provided anonymity but does not necessitate anonymity.

The members of such a panel was discussed, with one member of General Committee, one ordinary member and the Returning Officer being agreed upon as an ideal composition. The general consensus was that it was important to establish a process for investigating and addressing complaints and grievances to maintain the professional image of the Union.

The mechanism for complaints was discussed and a Google Form was proposed. It was also suggested that protocols exist for dealing with complaints found to be malicious.

RP said he would draft a proposal of a panel consisting of three members

RP then discussed the possibility of hosting a debate on the subject of homelessness and the wider idea of hosting a debate to support a local charity each term. He suggested changes be made to Sponsorship Committee to facilitate this.

CF agreed with this but made it clear there was no need for additional members of the Sponsorship Committee.

BC asked whether this would be put to an amendment in a meeting of General Committee. **RP** said this would indeed be the case.

BC told the Standing Committee of the programme for events at 24 North Bailey Club, which he planned would repeat those of Michaelmas Term. On the subject of collecting campus cards, **BC** said that he was yet to be convinced of the benefits of this but agreed that a policy should be formalised.

MM told the committee of current updates concerning Durham Schools.

SK discussed the upcoming socials. She confirmed the Epiphany dinner will be held on 25th February and that profits may be expected at over £400 if enough tickets are sold, with prices at £53 for members and £65 for non-members.

RP discussed Union 'stash'. **SRS** told the Standing Committee that she has a contact for such a development.

CF talked about the new format for Sponsorship correspondence.

DE discussed Easter Term, explaining he planned to host three debates of six speakers and a panel discussion as well as a farewell debate.

RP discussed the possibility of an emergency debate on the subject of Brexit.

There being no further business, **RP** closed the meeting.

Assistant (Acting) Secretary: ***F.W. Hyde***

President: ***R. Prakash***