



the DURHAM UNION

MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE Minutes – Wednesday 22nd January 2020

Please note: - Details relating to attendance may be found in the General Committee register, housed at the Union Office on Palace Green. Permission to access the register may be granted upon request by the Secretary, Returning Officer or the Union Society Office Manager.

The meeting began in the Debating Chamber, Palace Green at half past two o'clock

Miss Kuszynski in the Chair, Mr Wroe minuting.

The President, Miss Kuszynski, opened the meeting, thanking members of the committee for their attendance.

The President ceded the chair to the Returning Officer, Mr Perry, who read out the valid proxy votes for the meeting.

The Returning Officer opened nominations for the position of Treasurer, with the following candidates being nominated:

1. Mr Fergus Barker, of Trevelyan College, proposed by Lucy Jackson and seconded by Alannah Life
2. Re-open Nominations, of no such fixed abode

The Returning Officer invited Mr Barker to begin his hust.

Mr Barker began his hust, outlining his experience as Alumni Officer and explaining why he is best suited to the role. He believes that he has the skills to manage the Society's finances and to chair meetings. Mr Barker stated his desire for the Treasurer to work more closely with the debating side of the Union. Mr Barker referred to the success of the Social Transparency reports, stating that he wanted to bring a similar level of transparency to the role of Treasurer – he will publish reports on the website if there is demand for this. Mr Barker stated that he will encourage presidents to be financially responsible when deciding which speakers to invite.

The candidate having husted, the Returning Officer opened the floor to questions.

Miss Kuszynski referred to the costliness of travel and the expensive reimbursement of speakers who had elected to drive to Durham.

Mr Barker agreed with this sentiment and emphasised the importance of ensuring that speakers travel in standard class. He referred to the problem of eating into Union reserves and stated that this cannot continue.

Miss Kuszynski asked about collaboration with other societies for Union events.

Mr Barker stated that such collaborations are very useful and reduce the cost of events to the Union, but we must ensure that Union members retain all their normal privileges.

Miss Paton asked how Mr Barker would improve and develop Treasurer's Treats.

Mr Barker emphasised that it must be better publicised.

There being no further questions, the Returning Officer asked the candidate to leave the room, and invited Miss Jackson to propose Mr Barker.

Miss Jackson proposed Mr Barker stating that she could not think of any individual better suited to the role. She stated that Mr Barker had long experience serving House Committee and various presidential campaigns as well as his recent work as Alumni Officer. She referred to his great work in organising the Alumni Weekend and how she had worked with him to make the event a success. Miss Jackson had stated that Mr Barker had revamped the LinkedIn page for alumni and was involved in the launch of the Preservation Project. Miss Jackson concluded by stating that Mr Barker will ensure that funds are spent wisely and will carry out his role with professionalism and dedication.

The proposer having husted, the Returning Officer opened the floor to questions.

Mr De Vere asked what Mr Barker's favourite number was.

Miss Jackson replied that it was 3, the magic number.

There being no further questions, a vote was duly taken, and it was announced that Mr Barker had been elected by 42 votes to 3.

The Returning Officer then opened nominations for the position of Deputy Technologies Officer, with the following candidates being nominated:

1. Mr Benjamin Doerry, of The College of St Hild and St Bede, proposed by Helen Paton and seconded by Fergus Barker
2. Re-open Nominations, of no such fixed abode

The Returning Officer invited Mr Doerry to begin his hust.

Mr Doerry began his hust, stating that he had been a member of the Union since his first week at Durham. He stated how much he enjoys coming to events and loves the Society. Mr Doerry referred to his previous work with a software company making video conferencing solutions. He stated that he runs his own web service and has experience with Wordpress. Mr Doerry outlined problems with the Union website, YouTube and Twitter accounts and outlined ideas as to how these could be improved. He opined that not all members use Facebook and we must have an active presence on other social media sites.

The candidate having husted, the Returning Officer opened the floor to questions.

Mr Adamson asked if maintaining the Twitter account is the responsibility of the Deputy Technologies Officer or the Publicity Officer.

Mr Doerry stated that his role will be to assist the Technologies Officer, Mr Roy, and that it is his job to be in the background, facilitating events.

Miss Mitchell stated that the House Committee need assistance with the setting up of technology before events and asked if Mr Doerry will be around before events to assist.

Mr Doerry outlined that he has been to almost all events this year and that he is very happy to help.

Mr Enamorado asked if there was anything specific that Mr Doerry needed to do his job and asked if a committee would be helpful

Mr Doerry stated that a committee could be useful.

Miss Kuszynski noted that the Technologies Officer has been absent from almost all events since his election. She asked how work would be split between the Technologies Officer and Deputy Technologies Officer if Mr Roy neglected to do any work.

Mr Doerry stated that if he is elected, he will contact Mr Roy as soon as possible. He proposed that a rota could be set up to divide the work.

Miss Kuszynski asked if the details of the Standing Committee on the website could be updated as they still show the details from Michaelmas term.

Mr Doerry stated that he will examine this issue and referred to his experience with Wordpress websites.

Miss Herrington stated that it had been difficult to get hold of the Technologies Officer for recent events and referred to his absence at the hustings for Easter President. She asked if Mr Doerry will be reliable for such events.

Mr Doerry stated that he would be reliable for such events and referred to his answer to Miss Kuszynski's question.

Miss Kuszynski asked if Mr Doerry could film events and referred to her plans for an overflow room for the Bill Bryson address.

Mr Doerry responded that he was willing to help in the filming of events.

There being no further questions, the Returning Officer asked the candidate to leave the room, and invited Miss Paton to propose Mr Doerry.

Miss Paton proposed Mr Doerry stating that he is enthusiastic and passionate and will be an excellent Deputy Technologies Officer. She praised his commitment to hust once again and stated that he will put in the hours to serve the Society. Miss Paton referred to his experience with a large tech company and building websites. She stated that he knows many programming languages and will help in the running of 24s events.

The proposer having husted, the Returning Officer opened the floor to questions, of which there were none.

There being no questions, a vote was duly taken, and it was announced that Mr Doerry had been elected by 45 votes to 0.

The Returning Officer ceded the Chair to the President.

The President informed members of the choice of the Standing Committee of Mr Jack Perry and Mr Yago Llenoart Mateu to form the Complaints Panel. This was taken on a general aye.

Mr Perry noted that nominations for the election to be Michaelmas President had now opened.

The President ceded the Chair to Mr Barker.

Mr Barker invited Miss Kuszynski to give her report.

Miss Kuszynski gave her report, outlining the events of the term. She emphasised the importance of the term card for publicity and the good price that the Society had negotiated. Miss Kuszynski stated that she hoped to break 700 members for the year by the end of the term. She urged members to come to events and stated that there would be more events than in Michaelmas. Miss Kuszynski stated that next week will be very busy and outlined the events.

Miss Kuszynski stated that the Bill Bryson event will be very busy and urged members to come early. She stated that the logistics operation of the event will be very considerable. She urged members not to

engage with Durfess posts about the Union and referred to a recent incident of a member who was banned for gross misconduct. She urged members to sign up for 24s door duty.

Mr Pahl explained how to sign up for door duty.

Miss Kuszynski stated that Miss Herrington had worked extremely hard to create the term card and presented her with flowers to thank her for her hard work.

Mr Barker thanked Miss Kuszynski for her report.

Mr Barker invited Mr Wroe to move his amendment.

Mr Wroe moved his amendment, explaining that General Committee meetings were too long, and that the amendment would shorten them by abolishing proposal speeches for most officerships. He explained the distinction between different officerships in the Constitution and how the election for each type of officer should be different. He explained that the number of officerships had risen dramatically in recent years and that when the current procedure for elections was written there were far fewer positions to elect.

Mr Wroe explained that Full Officers of the Society, Technologies Officer, Publicity Officer and Returning Officer would retain a proposal speech. He also explained that the amendment encourages short questions and short responses to questions, reducing the length of General Committee meetings.

Mr Barker opened the floor to questions.

Mr Adamson asked why the Deputy Technologies Officer did not retain a proposal speech.

Mr Wroe stated that the Deputy Technologies Officer was a deputy and that such a speech was unnecessary.

Miss Kuszynski expressed her report for the amendment and stated that people rarely listen to proposal speeches for most officerships.

Mr Wroe concurred and noted that such proposal speeches add little value to deciding who should be elected to officerships in the Society.

The amendment was taken on a general aye.

Mr Barker ceded the Chair to the President.

The President stated that the reports of the Social Secretary and Sponsorship Secretary would be moved to the next meeting.

The President proposed a Vote of Thanks for Miss Paton for her work as Treasurer, seconded by Mr Pahl. This was taken on a general aye.

There being no further business, the President closed the meeting.

Secretary: **J. Wroe**

President: **S. Kuszynski**