



# *the* DURHAM UNION

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## MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE Minutes – Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February 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 Technologies Officer, with the following candidates being nominated:

1. Mr Benjamin Doerry, of The College of St Hild and St Bede, proposed by Kristen Price and seconded by Tamara Celeste Herrington
2. Re-open Nominations, of no such fixed abode

The Returning Officer invited Mr Doerry to begin his hust.

Mr Doerry began his hust, noting that he had husted before the Committee only two weeks ago. Since his election, Mr Doerry has been working on updating the YouTube channel and becoming familiar with the technology problems of the Society. He is keen to update the Standing Committee on the website and upload the term card onto the website.

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

Miss Kuszynski asked how Mr Doerry had found the role so far.

Mr Doerry replied that he had enjoyed it but had found the last week very busy.

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

Miss Price proposed Mr Doerry commending him for his helpfulness and experience. Miss Price outlined his experience with various technology companies and stated that he is simply a lovely person to work with. He is willing to deal with personal technology problems and is extremely qualified to satisfy the Union's technology needs.

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 48 votes to 1.

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

1. Miss Amy Mitchell, of The College of St Hild and St Bede, proposed by Tamara Celeste Herrington and seconded by Harry Troise
2. Re-open Nominations, of no such fixed abode

The Returning Officer invited Miss Mitchell to begin her hust.

Miss Mitchell began her hust, introducing herself and stating that she wants the opportunity to contribute more to the Union. She noted that she had shown her commitment through her work on House Committee and has developed skills that she can carry over. Miss Mitchell outlined her experience working for a local MP and her ideas to take the position of Alumni Officer forward. Miss Mitchell expressed her desire to resolve the difficulties with contacting alumni, target alumni more effectively through a database and make the Alumni weekend a regular fixture in the Union calendar.

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

Mr Doerry asked about the feasibility of an alumni database.

Miss Mitchell responded that she envisaged the database as more of a spreadsheet of alumni.

Miss Kuszynski asked how the Preservation Project should be pitched to alumni.

Miss Mitchell stated that alumni must feel that they are getting something in return.

Mr Burman noted that the Oxford and Cambridge Union advertise the perks of being a member for life more effectively.

Miss Mitchell concurred and stated that this must be advertised more effectively.

There being no further questions, a vote was duly taken, and it was announced that Miss Mitchell had been elected by 39 votes to 10.

The Returning Officer ceded the Chair to the President.

The President invited Mr Perry to move his amendment.

Mr Perry proposed his amendment, altering the way that debating officers are elected. The amendment would allow the positions of Director of Debating, Debates Training Secretary and Debates Competitions Secretary to be elected at Debate Training Practices, rather than by the General Committee. The individuals elected would, however, have to be ratified by the General Committee. The amendment also creates an annex governing debating election regulation that can be amended independently of the General Committee. Any appeals from debating elections would be dealt with by the Rules Committee.

Mr Filippopoulos noted that the policy can be changed by the Debates Selection Committee and then ratified by the Rules Committee to ensure compatibility with the rest of the Constitution. An Election Committee is appointed for the sole purpose of running an election and anyone who has attended 3 or more practices in the academic year is entitled to vote in debating elections. Anyone who has attended 3 or more practices in any stream is entitled to run for Debates Training Secretary or Debates Competitions Secretary but candidates for Director of Debating must have served as either Debates Training Secretary or Debates Competitions Secretary to be eligible.

Mr Kilcoyne asked how attendance at practices is measured.

Mr Filippopoulos replied that strict attendance registers are kept at all debating practices. He also noted that the policy includes a provision for those on a year abroad to be able to vote.

The amendment passed on a general aye.

The President ceded the Chair to the Returning Officer.

The Returning Officer proposed Mr George Filippopoulos, of Collingwood College, for ratification as Director of Debating.

The Returning Officer invited Mr Filippopoulos to begin his hust.

Mr Filippopoulos began his hust, noting that he had served as Debates Training Secretary or on Debates Committee for over a year as well as serving on Rules Committee. He is one of the trainers at Intermediate Debate Practice and has been working as Interim Director of Debating. Mr Filippopoulos outlined his personal achievements in debating and noted that Durham is a very successful debating university. Mr Filippopoulos outlined his pledges if elected including better organisation of train tickets for competitions and a Re-freshers event for Epiphany term. Mr Filippopoulos stated he had good relationships with the rest of the Standing Committee and would work well with them as Director of Debating.

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

The Returning Officer proposed the election of Mr Filippopoulos as Director of Debating. This was taken on a general aye.

The Returning Officer ceded the Chair to the President.

The President invited the Secretary, Mr Wroe, to give his report.

Mr Wroe gave his report referring to the success of the Consultative Committee meeting at the beginning of term and the college walk-downs for the Re-fresher's debate. Mr Wroe noted that the weekly email system is now fixed and that the email is going out every Monday morning. He stated that it was his intention to make the email a bit more like a newsletter and somewhat less serious than has previously been the case. Mr Wroe stated that he wants to include images in the email, but this has not proven possible as of yet.

Mr Wroe stated that the website had now been fixed and minutes had been updated after many months of being incomplete. Mr Wroe outlined some plans to better utilise the DUS Secretary Facebook account and how to improve publicity of events. He thanked Miss Herrington for her work on the term card and urged General Committee members to come to more events. Mr Wroe noted the possibility of production videos for the Freshers Drive in Michaelmas and stated that he will bring forward reforms of Consultative Committee before the end of the year.

The President opened the floor to questions, of which there were none.

The President thanked Mr Wroe for his report.

The President invited the Social Secretary, Miss Jackson, to give her report.

Miss Jackson gave her report, noting that many people have not yet submitted dietary requirements for the gala. She urged members of the General Committee to submit their dietary requirements as soon as possible. Miss Jackson also referred to a technical problem with the booking of gala tickets on the website which had now been resolved. Miss Jackson described the Neon Social on Thursday and urged members of the General Committee to come.

The President opened the floor to questions, of which there were none.

The President thanked Miss Jackson for her report.

The President invited the Sponsorship Secretary, Miss Price, to give her report.

Miss Price gave her report stating that a sponsorship event is coming up with Womble Bond Dickinson. Miss Price noted that some companies had been splitting sponsorship between societies, something she would prefer the Union would avoid. Miss Price noted that she was elected one week from the end of term last year and this made it difficult given that most sponsorship work is done over the summer. For this reason, Miss Price stated that she would resign so that her position could come up in good time for the sponsorship drive over the summer. Miss Price thanked the members of the General Committee for their help and friendship; particularly thanking Miss Jackson, Mr Pahl and Mr Perry. Miss Price referred to the Brooklyn Nine-Nine quiz on Sunday and urged General Committee members to come.

The President opened the floor to questions, of which there were none.

The President thanked Miss Price for her report.

The President proposed a Vote of Thanks to Miss Price, seconded by Mr Perry. This was taken on a general aye.

The President invited the Returning Officer, Mr Perry, to give his report.

Mr Perry gave his report, referring to the recent presidential election. Mr Perry stated that the 227 votes cast represented a good turnout for a Michaelmas election and that almost all problems with voting had been resolved. Mr Perry thanked the candidates and their campaign teams for a civil campaign. He stated that there had been some problems with campaigning on group chats which is forbidden under the electoral regulations, but that this had been countered by allowing the other campaign to post a message on the same group chat. Some fake Facebook pages had appeared, but this had had little impact on the election. Mr Perry noted that Rules Committee had changed the procedure for the hustings; allowing directed questions and requiring campaign team members to disclose that they were on a campaign team when they ask a question during the hustings. Mr Perry also updated the General Committee on the Rules Committee rulings since his last report.

The President opened the floor to questions, of which there were none.

The President thanked Mr Perry for his report.

Mr Barker noted that the Palace Green library is doing an exhibition of Union history on the Saturday of the Alumni weekend and urged members of the committee to come to the exhibition.

Mr Troise noted that the Society had raised £73 for the Blurred Lines mental health charity after the collection at the Bill Bryson event.

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

Secretary: ***J. Wroe***

President: ***S. Kuszynski***