



the DURHAM UNION

MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE Minutes – Wednesday 4th March 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 Mr Barker.

Mr Barker invited Miss Jackson to move her amendment.

Miss Jackson introduced her amendment to abolish Assistant Social Secretary. She noted that the role is not defined and has no responsibilities at present. In the event that the Social Secretary requires a deputy, this would be better carried out by a senior member of the committee.

Miss Jackson noted that delegating work to the Assistant Social Secretary has not worked and has created more work for the Social Secretary than it has saved. The continued existence of such an officership is unfair when considering the work that other officers have to do.

Miss Ellison asked who the role could be delegated to if the Social Secretary is not present.

Miss Jackson replied that this would be better done by a senior member. She noted that no Assistant Social Secretary has ever become Social Secretary.

Miss Ellison referred to the experience of Miss Peart.

Mr Adamson asked if the 24s points of the Assistant Social Secretary could be reduced.

Miss Jackson replied that the key issue was the officership had become redundant.

Miss Ellison stated that the Assistant Social Secretary could work on sponsorship.

Miss Kuszynski stated that numerous candidates for Assistant Social Secretary had run on this platform but that it had never happened.

Miss Jackson stated that the option to appoint a senior would give far more opportunities to Social Committee members.

Mr Kendix asked if the same amendment could be brought back.

Mr Perry responded that there is nothing in the constitution that prohibits multiple votes on the same amendment in a term.

Mr Barker asked if there was any formal opposition to the amendment. No such formal opposition was forthcoming.

The motion to take the amendment on a general aye was rejected.

The committee moved to a vote on the amendment. In this vote the ayes were 33, and the noes were 16. Two thirds of the votes of the members of the committee having been in the affirmative, the amendment was approved.

Mr Barker invited Mr Wroe to move his amendment.

Mr Wroe introduced his amendment to abolish Assistant Secretary. Mr Wroe referred to the amendment that failed in the last meeting and stated that Standing Committee had met and decided that it did not want to give up on what it felt was a necessary reform. He noted that for new officerships to be created when they become necessary, we must also abolish old officerships when they become obsolete, referring to other positions that had been abolished in the past.

Mr Wroe stated that the role of Assistant Secretary has been made obsolete by the Publicity Officer and does not have a role anymore. The few roles that the Assistant Secretary has would be better preformed by other officers.

Mr Wroe stated that past attempts to share some of the role of the Secretary or Publicity Officer with the Assistant Secretary had been found to be impractical. Mr Wroe stated that Assistant Secretary does not provide a good preparation to be Secretary and that other positions are far better preparation.

Mr Enamorado referred to publicity and the Union archives in the Palace Green library.

Mr Adamson asked about delegation of roles to the senior member.

Mr Wroe stated that there is not enough work to justify an officership position.

Mr Barker asked if there was any formal opposition to the amendment. No such formal opposition was forthcoming.

The motion to take the amendment on a general aye was rejected.

The committee moved to a vote on the amendment. In this vote the ayes were 36, and the noes were 12. Two thirds of the votes of the members of the committee having been in the affirmative, the amendment was approved.

Mr Barker invited Miss Herrington to move her amendment.

Miss Herrington introduced her amendment to abolish the role of Assistant Sponsorship Secretary. Miss Herrington stated that the problems with Assistant Sponsorship Secretary were similar to that of Assistant Social Secretary in that the position has become obsolete.

Miss Herrington stated that the division in the Constitution is that the Sponsorship Secretary deals with external sponsorship and the Assistant Sponsorship Secretary deals with local sponsorship. In practice, however, external sponsorship is done when companies distribute sponsorship in the summer and local sponsorship is dealt with during the year when the university is in term. Following the division in the constitution would mean that the Sponsorship Secretary would do nothing during term time and the Assistant Sponsorship Secretary would do nothing during the summer. In practice, the Sponsorship Secretary deals with both local and external sponsorship, leaving the Assistant Sponsorship Secretary with nothing to do. Responsibility for stash has been taken over by the Outreach Officer.

Mr Barker opened the floor to questions, of which there were none.

Mr Barker asked if there was any formal opposition to the amendment. No such formal opposition was forthcoming.

The amendment passed on a general aye.

Mr Barker ceded the Chair to the Returning Officer.

The Returning Officer opened nominations for one position on Rules Committee, with the following candidates being nominated:

1. Mr James Adamson, of Trevelyan College, proposed by Frederick Green and seconded by Allanah Life
2. Miss Grace Annandale, of Stephenson College, proposed by Amy Mitchell and seconded by Elliott Boyd-Stringer

The Returning Officer invited Mr Adamson to begin his hust.

Mr Adamson husted for the position on Rules Committee, explaining that he had served on Consultative Committee and the Easter President's Committee. He has served on his college JCR committee and understands the Single Transferrable Vote system. Mr Adamson committed to upholding the rules and ensuring fair elections.

The Returning Officer invited Miss Annandale to begin her hust.

Miss Annandale began her hust, stating that elections should be run smoothly and in line with the rules and the Constitution. She emphasised the importance of common-sense reforms to the Constitution when they become necessary. Miss Annandale is aware of the responsibilities of Rules Committee members and can explain Rules Committee decisions to members.

Both candidates having husted, the Returning Officer opened the floor to questions.

Mr Barker asked if the candidates have sufficient knowledge of the Constitution.

Mr Adamson replied that he has studied the Constitution and is familiar with it.

Miss Annandale replied that she will put in the time to become familiar with the rules as a Rules Committee member.

Mr Pahl asked if the candidates are good at maths.

Both candidates responded in the affirmative.

Mr Wroe asked the candidates' favourite part of the Constitution.

Mr Adamson referred to the 'in the usual places' clause.

Mr Annandale referred to the annex relating to 24 North Bailey Club.

Miss Herrington asked about ensuring that rulings are fair.

Mr Adamson responded that ensuring the integrity of rulings is of paramount importance.

Miss Annandale stated that personal friendships can never be allowed to get in the way of fair decisions.

There being no further questions, a vote was duly taken, and it was announced that Miss Annandale had been elected by 30 votes to 17, with 1 spoilt ballot.

The Returning Officer ceded the Chair to the President.

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

Miss Jackson gave her report, outlining the transparency reports for social events which had now been published to General Committee and would soon be shared with the wider membership. She referred to some technical problems with the online system for buying ball tickets and her attempts to have these problems resolved.

Miss Jackson stated that the profit for the ball was around £400 – fairly high for such an event. Any profit for balls goes into social reserves which is spent on weeknight social events. Miss Jackson stated that she is still seeking sponsorship for the Easter Ball and wishes to pass a constitutional amendment to codify the Alumni Weekend in the Constitution.

The President asked about whether the Alumni Weekend should be bi-annual or annual.

Miss Jackson responded that it is likely to be better attended if it is bi-annual.

The President asked about an alumni meet-up outside of Durham.

Miss Jackson responded that alumni find it special to be able to return to Durham for alumni events.

The President thanked Miss Jackson for her report.

Mr Buxton-Carda referred to the karaoke night in 24s on Sunday and reminded members to do their door duty.

Mr Pahl noted his intention to do a debate on climate change during his term and outlined some potential motions.

Mr Troise stated that a poll to express interest for stash goes out on the members page later this week.

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

Secretary: **J. Wroe**

President: **S. Kuszynski**