



# *the* DURHAM UNION

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## MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE Minutes – Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019

*Present: -*

- Mr Alastair Sledge, Esq., *President*
- Mr Freddie Hyde, Esq., *Secretary*
- Miss Helen Paton, *Treasurer*
- Mr Tristan Pahl, Esq., *Custodian*
- Miss Lucy Jackson, *Social Secretary*
- Miss Sarah Kuzsynski, *President-Elect*
- Miss Rosie Vorri, *Director of Debating*
- Miss Kristen Price, *Sponsorship Secretary*

*Meeting began in the Debating Chamber, Palace Green at 1:00 p.m.*

*Mr. Sledge in the chair, and Mr. Hyde minuting.*

Mr Sledge congratulated Miss Jackson on the success of the freshers social.

Miss Jackson noted the success of opening the social to non-members and said a date for the Christmas social needed to be finalised. She noted the upcoming Oktoberfest and stressed the need to sell ball tickets.

Mr Sledge hoped that sales would pick up after meetings of the Union Society began.

Miss Vorri noted the success of the debating launch and the high turnout, though he admitted that dropouts remain likely, with trials taking place on a Saturday. She asked Standing to attend and show their support.

The committee discussed the need to publicise debating events on the Facebook group. Miss Vorri assured the committee that she would put together such a post soon and though there were concerns about the Durham IV, she remained optimistic. Mr Sledge said the debates officers will be announcing debates in private business at ordinary meetings.

Mr Pahl discussed opening night at 24s bar and matters relating to the bar, including a meeting of Bar Committee and the 24s room ballot. He reminded the Committee that, due to supplier changes, the bar is currently down to three lagers. He said he was happy with the takings thus far.

Miss Vorri said she would encourage debaters to attend 24s bar.

Mr Sledge informed the committee of his plans for post gen comm drinks in 24s bar, which he hoped would encourage a friendly atmosphere.

Mr Pahl talked of the need to enforce stringent ID restrictions on the bar.

Miss Price said that Sponsorship has raised £3,000 over the summer and that further invoices will be chased up within the next few days. She noted an imminent meeting with Teach First and another potential sponsor. Miss Price also mentioned the need to update the local sponsorship package. Mr Sledge commended Miss Price for her hard work.

Miss Paton said she was currently finishing the annual report, having focused on Treasurer's Treats over the summer. She noted the 50% discount negotiated with Players and talked of a potential 15% discount with Anon Thai and Bills. Miss Paton regretted a deal had not been reached with Revolution. She talked of the need for Presidents to be realistic with their finance projections and talked of the potential advantages to be gained from attending freshers fairs.

Mr Hyde thanked the committee for manning the Union stall at the freshers fair. He referred to his recent work in updating the Secretary's Facebook account, organising leaflet distribution and college walkdowns, the latter of which he hoped would encourage new members to join. He talked of the need for a working mass mail system, with Miss Jackson noting that a freshers email had helped raise awareness of the Union.

Mr Hyde noted the successful membership drive, with Mr Sledge informing the committee that the Union had thus far averaged fifteen new members per day and was currently over 300, a 20% increase on last year's Michaelmas.

The committee noted the need to properly explain that online payment is feasible.

Mr Sledge proposed uploading all Union events online at once. The committee expressed reservations about this and suggested it be staggered, which Mr Sledge agreed to.

Mr Sledge said that Hotel Indigo have offered ticket giveaways and talked of ways to use this to improve Union publicity on Facebook, with students tagging the friend they would like to invite.

Miss Vorri suggested a raffle or prize giveaway for the LGBT night in the bar. Miss Price suggested raising the price of drinks by 50 pence for the night and giving the profits to an LGBT charity.

Miss Jackson said that the Durham Brewery has offered a free mini keg, which could be raffled off as a prize.

Mr Sledge agreed and suggested all potential plans be pooled and divided between them.

Mr Hyde informed the committee that a former Secretary of the Union Society had sent a framed debate poster from 1963 and offered to pay the postage. He suggested it be displayed in the office. The committee agreed to this.

Miss Kuzsynski talked of the need to find sponsors for some of her debates. She thanked Miss Paton for helping contact Bill Bryson and said potential speakers included Matthew Hedges and a former Top Gear producer, as well as Anne Widdicombe.

Mr Hyde asked about Alumni Weekend. Miss Kuzsynski said planning would continue after freshers week. She said currently twenty people had replied and hoped an Alumni Table could be organised.

Mr Sledge noted the religion debate had been finalised with a planned overflow screen in the bar. Mr Hyde suggested the Reading Room be used with the interconnecting door open, though Miss Jackson expressed concern about the logistics of combining this with the drinks reception. Mr Sledge explained

the correct projector screen was yet to be delivered, but that adverts and music would be playing in the debating chamber before the debate. Mr Sledge explained the debate would be streamed on the Union's Facebook page as a one-time gimmick. He hoped that music playing in the background would welcome freshers and that more people would be involved in the debates if the atmosphere was less reverential. Mr Sledge suggested the song 'Sweet Caroline' be played before every debate and that members clap when the speakers enter the chamber.

Mr Sledge talked about the dress code. He said he thought the President and Secretary should wear black tie but that officers on the front bench should not.

Miss Price and Miss Jackson objected to this. Miss Jackson said that House Committee should wear black tie, which Mr Sledge ultimately agreed to.

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

Secretary: ***F. Hyde, Esq***

President: ***A. Sledge, Esq.***