



the DURHAM UNION

MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 18TH FEBRUARY 2026

LOCATION: THE READING ROOM, 24 NORTH BAILEY

Item One: Welcome and Greetings

The Treasurer took the Chair.

The Treasurer opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

Item Two: Election of the Custodian

One valid nomination:

- Maria Hunt of St. Aidan's College, Proposed by Magdalena Andreou of Trevelyan College, Seconded by Harry Murgatroyd of Trevelyan College.

Maria Hunt, Candidate:

Ms Hunt began by stating that her love for 24s had drawn her into the Society, beginning on the House Committee, progressing to Assistant Custodian, and now standing for a position on the Standing Committee.

She cited her bar experience as central to her suitability for the role, alongside her work managing the 24s Instagram account. She stated that she is currently working on a drinks menu for both the website and Instagram.

Ms Hunt expressed her intention to analyse stock intake in order to improve efficiency and profitability. She proposed the introduction of a “President’s Drink” each term and emphasised her desire to enhance 24s as the home of the Union.

She outlined her wish to work more closely with other officers to improve the interconnectedness of 24s with the rest of the Society, particularly the Media Committee, the Social Committee, and the Equalities Officer.

Ms Hunt further stated that she wished to explore alternative rewards for completing door duties, arguing that accommodation points were not appealing to all members. She also committed to continuing the former Custodian’s work in displaying more speaker posters throughout the building.

She concluded by stating that she would be a loyal member of the Standing Committee and wished to give back to the Union that had given her so much.

Questions:

Tobias Gumm asked what Ms Hunt’s favourite 24s drink was.

Ms Hunt replied that it was a Long Island Iced Tea, stating it was the “best bang for buck”.

Joshua Doherty asked what she meant by alternative prizes for door duty and whether they would be paid for from the 24s budget.

Ms Hunt replied that she would liaise with the Office Manager to ensure the bar would not be out of pocket.

Adam McIntyre asked whether she would be able to put the bar above her own popularity, noting that the Standing Committee could be difficult for a Custodian.

Ms Hunt replied that she would, stating that “this role is the bar, and the bar is the role”.

Joshua Doherty asked who her favourite member of the 24s bar staff was.

Ms Hunt replied that it was Joshua Doherty, before joking, “Phil - well, we all make mistakes, don’t we!”

Joshua Doherty asked Ms Hunt about her favourite line in the Constitution.

Ms Hunt replied that it was the line stating that the Custodian is fourth in line on the Standing Committee.

Angel Ellis asked whether she had ideas for making the most of warm weather.

Ms Hunt replied that she would like to host a garden party, stating that the garden should be fully utilised.

Magdalena Andreou, Proposer:

Ms Andreou stated that Maria Hunt was “made for the role” of Custodian. She described Ms Hunt as having remarkable attention to detail and noted that she regularly stayed later than others to ensure everything was in order.

She highlighted Ms Hunt’s knowledge of 24s’ strengths and areas for improvement, and credited her commitment to the “wine chop” and her loyalty to Jimmy’s. Ms Andreou concluded by stating that Ms Hunt commanded trust and led by example.

Questions:

Francesca Greenhalgh asked Ms Andreou why she thought it was that Ms Hunt had advanced through the Society so quickly.

Ms Andreou replied that this was due to her dedication, passion, and genuine care for 24s and the Society.

Edward Tye asked how flexible Ms Hunt’s bedtime was.

Ms Andreou replied that it was “fairly flexible”.

Voting:

Maria Hunt: 30

RON: 0

2 spoiled ballots

Maria Hunt was duly elected as Custodian of the Durham Union Society.

Item Three: Election of two members of the Rules Committee

The President took the Chair.

Three valid nominations:

- Joshua Brookin of Hatfield College, Proposed by Callum Hendry of St. Chad’s College, Seconded by Molly Purcell of Stephenson College.
- William Day of Collingwood College, Proposed by David Pegler of St. Aidan’s College, Seconded by Francesca Greenhalgh of St. John’s College.
- Benjamin Huthwaite of Stephenson College, proposed by Sean Smith of South College, seconded by Theo Sanguinazzi of John Snow College.

Joshua Brookin:

Mr Brookin stated that service on the Rules Committee required a strong understanding of the Constitution and precedent. He cited his experience of four Returning Officers, four Secretaries, multiple Presidential elections, and a vote of no confidence. He also referenced his role as a regional director for an NGO, stating that he understood the application of law.

William Day:

Mr Day stated that he had been on the Secretary's Committee since coming into the Society and had seen the importance of proper application of the rules. He argued that the Rules Committee could appear intimidating and that transparency and accessibility were essential. He stated that the Committee had a responsibility to uphold trust, and promised impartiality.

Benjamin Huthwaite:

Mr Huthwaite stated that he was a fourth-year student and said, "Vote as you would like."

Questions:

Molly Purcell asked why each candidate believed they were sufficiently knowledgeable to serve on the Rules Committee.

Mr Brookin replied that he had been present for numerous constitutional events.

Mr Huthwaite stated that he had "been here for a while".

Mr Day replied that he knew the Constitution but was willing to learn from more experienced members.

Reuben Fisher asked each candidate their favourite line in the Constitution.

Mr Huthwaite replied that it was "the line stating that officers should be welcoming and inclusive".

Mr Day replied with "members of the Rules Committee should not contest elections".

Mr Brookin replied with "the one that states the Rules Committee should administer free and fair elections".

Angel Ellis asked for their views on case law.

Mr Day stated that it should be public and accessible.

Mr Brookin stated that it should be more transparent.

Mr Huthwaite declined to comment.

David Pegler asked whether the Rules Committee had become a "black box".

Mr Brookin stated that transparency was key.

Mr Huthwaite stated that it was sometimes seen as the “illuminati”.
Mr Day reiterated the need for transparency and accessibility.

Voting:

William Day and Benjamin Huthwaite are duly elected to the Rules Committee of the Durham Union Society.

Item Four: Ratification of the Deputy Social Secretary

Nomination from the Social Secretary:

- Katherine Thompson of John Snow College.

Ms Thompson stated that she was looking forward to supporting the Social Secretary, that she had enjoyed the Valentine’s Social, and that she was excited for the upcoming Ball.

Harry Murgatroyd of Trevelyan College proposed that the ratification be taken on a general aye, seconded by Oliver Cox of Trevelyan College. The ratification was taken on a general aye.

Item Five: Any Other Business

The President reminded members that the Ball would take place on Friday.

Blake Leonard of Hatfield College stated that a friend was unhappy with their table allocation for the Ball and asked whether it could be changed.

The President replied that this would not be possible.

The Returning Officer encouraged everyone to attend the Presidential election announcement in 24s at 7pm.