



CONSTITUTION

OF

THE MIDDLE COMMON ROOM

OF

ST CHAD'S COLLEGE, DURHAM

AS VALIDATED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF ST CHAD'S COLLEGE, 27th June 2019

CONSTITUTION

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ARTICLE ONE: DEFINITION AND INTERPRETATION

- a) The student body referred to as the 'MCR' is the 'St Chad's College, Durham, Middle Common Room'.
- b) The body referred to as 'the University' is 'Durham University'.
- c) The body referred to as 'the College' or 'College' is St Chad's College, Durham'.
- d) The body referred to as 'the Executive' or the 'Exec.' is the St Chad's College Middle Common Room Executive Committee.
- e) 'Governing Body' shall mean the Governing Body of St Chad's College, Durham, responsible under the Companies Acts 1985 to 2006 and appointed in accordance with those Acts and the College's Articles of Association.
- f) This Constitution shall take precedence over the Standing Orders or any other governing documents of the MCR.
- g) 'Article' and 'Standing Order' shall refer to the highest organisational subdivisions of the Constitution and Standing Orders respectively. 'Clause' shall refer to the next largest subdivision, and 'Sub-clause' to the next.
- h) In references to voting:
 - i.) 'Ordinary Resolution', 'ordinary majority' or (if unqualified) 'majority' shall refer to half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the eligible votes cast, plus one further vote.
 - ii.) 'Special Resolution' or 'two-thirds majority' shall refer to two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the eligible votes cast.
 - iii.) For votes in which more than two options are available, the term 'quota' shall be taken to mean the Droop Quota.

ARTICLE TWO: OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSES

- a) The objectives and purpose of the MCR shall be:
 - i.) To enhance the education of its Members.
 - ii.) To provide, in the interests of its Members, such facilities as benefit both the intellectual and social activities of the MCR
 - iii.) To represent the Postgraduate community of St Chad's College to the University, to College Management, and to other bodies.

ARTICLE THREE: MEMBERSHIP

- a) The membership of the MCR shall be comprised of three categories, these being Full Members or Associate Members or Honorary Life Members (the 'Members').
- b) Full Membership in the MCR shall be granted to all Postgraduate members of the College, duly classified as such with the College.
 - i.) Postgraduate shall be defined as any student reading for a course at the Master's or Doctor's level, or PGCE, or having previously attained at least a Bachelor's degree or equivalent.
 - ii.) All fourth-year students on an integrated masters course shall have the opportunity to decide in which common room they want to hold full membership. Should they decide that they want to have full membership in the MCR, they must retain associate membership of the JCR. Should they choose to remain full members of the JCR, MCR associate membership is optional.
 - iii.) A student cannot be a full member of both the JCR and the MCR.
- c) Associate Membership of the MCR may be granted to any other person being otherwise deserving, at the discretion of the MCR Executive and with the approval of the College Principal. The need for the Principal's approval shall be waived for the following groups:
 - i.) Mature students of the College defined as 'mature' by the University.
 - ii.) Fourth-year members of the St Chad's College Junior Common Room (the 'JCR').
 - iii.) Members of the St Chad's College Senior Common Room (the 'SCR').
 - iv.) The President of the St Chad's College Junior Common Room.
 - v.) Students who have previously held membership of the JCR, but who are currently completing an MA, may choose to apply for associate membership of the JCR. Such associate membership shall be granted at the discretion of the JCR Executive Committee and the College Principal.
- d) The MCR may confer Honorary Life Membership upon up to three persons annually.
 - i.) The rights of Honorary Life Members shall be as those of Associate Members.
 - ii.) The candidates for nomination shall be approved by the Principal, who shall act to maintain the integrity of the membership of the Common Room.

iii.) Any Dues imposed upon members shall be waived with respect to Honorary Life Members

e) A student has the right not to be a member of a student organisation and any student who exercises this right shall not be unfairly disadvantaged with regard to the provision of services provided by the College.

i.) A student who wishes to opt out of MCR membership:

- 1) May do so during the opt-out period, which is defined as the first seven (7) days of the academic year, or at the Executive Committee's discretion.
- 2) Must inform the President and the Principal, in writing, during the opt-out period.
- 3) Must renew their opt-out status at the start of every subsequent academic year by informing the President and the Principal of their intent to remain opted out.

ii.) A student who has opted out of the MCR loses the rights of Full Members, including but not limited to:

- 1) Voting in any MCR election.
- 2) Standing for election to any MCR office.
- 3) Attending any MCR Meeting.
- 4) Attending any MCR event that is funded by membership dues ('Battels').
- 5) Using any MCR facilities that are funded by membership dues ('Battels').

iii.) The procedure for opting out must conform with College regulations as outlined in the College Handbook.

iv.) Any student who has previously opted out of membership in the MCR may opt back in at any time.

- 1) They must inform the President and Principal of their decision.
- 2) They must satisfy the payment of any outstanding membership dues ('Battels').

- 3) They shall regain the rights of Full Members.

ARTICLE FOUR: OFFICERS

- a) The business of the MCR shall be executed by the Officers of the MCR subject to this Constitution and the Standing Orders.
- b) The Executive Committee of the MCR shall, as a minimum, be comprised of the President, Secretary and Treasurer.
- c) Other Offices may be created by a Standing Order of the MCR.
- d) Members of the MCR reserve the right to ask the President to wear a hat or any other item of headwear at any official MCR function or meeting. Requests should be duly proposed and seconded in writing to the President no less than 24 hours before a function, and may only be made if the proposer is in a position to provide the requested item of headwear.

ARTICLE FIVE: MEETINGS

- a) Meetings shall be called by the Executive and shall consist of no fewer than four (4) Ordinary General Meetings per year, one of which shall be the Annual General Meeting.
- b) There shall be at least one Ordinary General Meeting per academic term.
- c) Attendance is expected of all Members of the Executive Committee; however, in the event that this is not possible, apologies should be received by the Secretary not less than twenty-four hours in advance of any Meeting.
- d) In addition to the Ordinary General Meetings, an Extraordinary General Meeting of the MCR may be called by the Executive. This may be upon their initiative, or upon receipt of a petition requesting a specific order of business be put to the membership at large.
- e) With regards to General Meetings, the Rights and Responsibilities reserved for Full Members alone, and withheld from Associate Members and Honorary Life Members, shall include:
 - i.) Proposing and seconding any motion before the MCR.
 - ii.) Voting on any motion or election of Officers.

- iii.) Proposing and seconding Members standing for election as Officers.
- iv.) Standing for election as Executive Officers. An exception to this requirement may, however, be made under the following circumstances. If MCR Standing Orders decree that elections for certain executive positions should occur in the Easter Term for the following academic year, a candidate who is not a Full Member may stand for election in this term, provided all of the following criteria are satisfied:
 - 1) The candidate is a current undergraduate student at St. Chad's College;
 - 2) The candidate will be entitled to Full Membership of the MCR at the beginning of the Michaelmas Term by virtue of:
EITHER – Having applied to read for a postgraduate degree
OR – Their being a fourth-year undergraduate student on an integrated Masters course and their intention to opt for full membership of the MCR (according to Article 3 above).
 - 3) There having been no Full Members of the MCR elected to the executive position in question in the Easter Term General Meeting.
- f) Other rights may be granted to Full Members by the Standing Orders.

ARTICLE SIX: ELECTIONS

- a) Votes shall be cast and counted using the Single Transferable Vote method.
- b) 'Re-open Nominations' shall be a candidate in all elections.
- c) Voting figures shall not be disclosed.
- d) Voting in elections shall normally be by secret ballot, with the sole exception that certain Officers may be elected on a general aye, provided:
 - i.) There is only one candidate, apart from Re-open Nominations.
 - ii.) The Returning Officer announces this option at the time of publication of the list of candidates, and receives no objections in advance of the vote taking place.
 - iii.) The election is not for a member of the Executive Committee.
- e) The Period of Office of the President and Treasurer shall last until some date following the election of their successors, and before the first General Meeting of the Academic Year.

- i.) This date shall be jointly decided between the President and President-Elect, and the Treasurer and Treasurer-Elect, for a given year, and will be announced to the membership in advance of that date.
- f) The Period of Office for all other elected Officers shall be until the close of first General Meeting of the Academic Year.
- g) In the event that no eligible candidate is nominated to fill an elected office (other than that of President or Treasurer), the MCR Executive Committee may co-opt an eligible member to carry out the duties of that role until the next General Meeting.
- h) In the event of an officer's resignation before the normal time for elections, there shall be a By-Election at the earliest opportunity. In such cases Nominations may be received up to twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the Meeting at which the election is to take place. No Resigned Officer may propose or second anyone standing for election as their successor.

ARTICLE SEVEN: FINANCE

- a) The annual rates for membership dues ('Battels') for Full Members and Associate Members shall be recommended by the Treasurer and presented for ratification at the Annual General Meeting.
- b) The authority to expend MCR monies shall rest with the Treasurer, in consultation with the Executive Committee. Expenditure shall be consistent with the Objectives and Purposes of the MCR.
- c) An account of all transactions made during the year shall be provided by the Treasurer prior to the end of their term in office. This account must be presented for ratification at the Annual General Meeting and kept as a record for the MCR.

ARTICLE EIGHT: AMENDMENTS

- a) Amendments to the Constitution or Standing Orders of the MCR shall be discussed and passed by a Special Resolution of the Full Members present and voting at a General Meeting of the MCR.
- b) The proposal of an Amendment may be submitted (properly proposed and seconded) to the Secretary by any Full Member of the MCR no fewer than three (3)

days prior to a General Meeting. The Secretary shall notify Members of the full text of any proposed Amendment.

- c) Validation of Amendments to this Constitution shall be conducted by the Governing Body. Amendments to the Standing Orders shall not require such validation.
- d) Prior contradictory Constitutional provisions shall be deemed invalid upon the approval of the Constitutional Amendment by the College Governing Body or, in the case of an Amendment to the Standing Orders, upon the closure of the Meeting at which the Amendment is passed.

ARTICLE NINE: REFERENDA

- a) Referenda can be called by:
 - i.) A General Meeting.
 - ii.) The Executive Committee at their own initiative, or upon receipt of a petition from the Members of the MCR.
- b) Referenda must be open to all Full Members of the MCR.
 - i.) The Referendum shall be run by a secret ballot according to the same rules as elections.
 - ii.) The Referendum must be open for a reasonable length of time.
 - iii.) Notice shall be given no fewer than three (3) days in advance of a Referendum, if called by the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE TEN: DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- a) The Executive shall have the prerogative to discipline any Member of the MCR who:
 - i.) Is deemed by the Executive to have brought the MCR into disrepute.
 - ii.) Removes MCR property without authorisation.

- iii.) Wilfully damages MCR property.
- iv.) Fails to pay financial debts owed to the MCR.
- b) Disciplinary action shall take the form of a fine, a reasonable restriction on the use of MCR facilities, or suspension or termination of Membership.
 - i.) The amount of any fine shall be decided by the Executive, but shall be in accordance with the University Guidelines. Fines shall not exceed £25 without the approval of the Principal.
 - ii.) Suspension or termination of Membership shall not take effect without the approval of the Principal.
- c) All MCR members have the right to appeal in a General Meeting against any disciplinary action.
- d) All MCR members have the right to appeal disciplinary action before the Principal. This should be done through the procedures set out in the College Regulations.