

# NEW COLLEGE MIDDLE COMMON ROOM CONSTITUTION

Trinity Term 2023

## 1. Introduction

1.1 The Middle Common Room was established by resolution of the Warden and Tutors at their meeting on Wednesday, 6 March 1963.

1.2 This constitution was adopted in 1963 and contains constitutional amendments up to Trinity term 2023.

1.3 This constitution shall be reviewed and approved by the Governing Body of the College at intervals of five years. It was last approved in Trinity term 2017.

## 2. Interpretation

2.1 “The College” shall mean New College, Oxford.

2.2 “SCR” shall mean the Senior Common Room of the College; “MCR” shall mean the Middle Common Room of the College; “JCR” shall mean the Junior Common Room of the College; and “GB” shall mean the Governing Body of the College.

2.3 When the Constitution stipulates that something is to be “posted to the MCR noticeboard”, this requirement will be satisfied if the information is effectively distributed to the majority of MCR members by whatever means is ordinarily utilised by the Committee for communications with the MCR in its entirety. As of 2023, this means the official New College email list.

2.4 “The Committee” shall mean the MCR Committee, consisting of the President and other members, as defined in section 4.

2.5 “The Rew Nooner Spoom” shall mean the Common Room in the Weston Sports Pavilion.

2.6 “The roll” shall refer to the MCR membership list maintained by the Vice-President as specified in section 9.

2.7 “Voting member” is a Full Member of the MCR as defined in section 3. A voting member is entitled to vote at a General Meeting (GM).

2.8 In the event of a dispute as to the interpretation of any part of this Constitution, the ruling of the President shall be sought. In the event of a challenge to the President’s ruling, the decision of a majority of voting members voting at a GM shall be final.

## 3. Membership

### 3.1 Full membership

3.1.1 Any graduate student of the College shall be a Full Member of the MCR (“Full Member”).

3.1.2 Any student of the College who holds the status and privileges of a Senior Student as granted by the University under the University Regulations for Senior Student Status shall be a Full Member.

3.1.3 Full Members shall be entitled to stand for positions on the Committee, vote in MCR elections and GMs, sign-up for MCR Guest Night dinners, attend general MCR events, and use MCR facilities.

### 3.2 Social membership

3.2.1 Any student of the College who is in the fourth year of a four-year undergraduate degree and has completed their Part I exams shall be a Social Member of the MCR (“Social Member”).

3.2.2 Social Members shall not be entitled to stand for positions on the Committee, vote in MCR elections or GMs, nor sign-up for MCR Guest Night dinners. Social Members shall be entitled to attend general MCR events and use MCR facilities. Social Members may be appointed by the President to serve as additional helpers alongside the officially elected Committee.

### 3.3 Associate Social membership

3.3.1 Those wishing to apply for associate membership status shall fall within one of the following categories.

A Any person working at Oxford University in an academic capacity who is not already a member of a College or PPH is eligible to apply for Associate Social Membership to the MCR (“Associate Social Member”).

i Persons that have held associate social membership for more than 3 years must provide two additional MCR referees for the processing of their application.

ii Persons that have held associate social membership cannot apply if they have received it for a period of 6 years.

B A former member of the New College MCR, (either full member or social member) may apply for associate social membership immediately after the completion of their Oxford degree at New College for up to a period of 3 years, provided they are not already a member of another College or PPH. Associate social membership for such persons cannot be renewed beyond this time period unless they are eligible for another category.

i Persons that fall into the above category and are granted associate social membership shall not comprise more than 25% of the maximum associate members allowed by Section 3.3.2. In exceptional cases, an associate member may be admitted past the 25% mark at the discretion of the MCR president and the Tutor for Graduates.

3.3.2 The MCR may permit up to 20 Associate Social Members to join at any one time.

3.3.3 In addition to the above number, the College may appoint Lay Clerks and non-JCR Organ Scholars as Associate Social Members. The College will carry any fees for these members.

3.3.4 Associate Social Members shall be entitled to sign-up for MCR Guest Night dinners, attend general MCR events and use MCR facilities. Associate Social Members shall not be entitled to stand for positions on the Committee, nor vote in MCR elections and GMs. Associate Social Members may be appointed by the President to serve as additional helpers alongside the officially elected Committee.

3.3.5 All Associate Members will abide by the College’s rules as set out in the Handbook of New College Oxford.

3.3.6 Any Associate Member who the College’s judges to be guilty of misconduct will be expelled.

### 3.4 Honorary membership

3.4.1 All members of the SCR shall be Honorary Members of the MCR (“Honorary Members”).

- 3.4.2 Honorary Members shall be entitled to attend general MCR events and use MCR facilities. Honorary Members shall not be entitled to stand for positions on the Committee, vote in MCR elections and GMs, nor sign-up for MCR Guest Night dinners.
- 3.4.3 Honorary membership may be withdrawn by a two-thirds' majority of voting members voting at a GM called for that purpose. The Honorary Member concerned shall be invited to attend the meeting.
- 3.4.4 Honorary membership so withdrawn can be reinstated by a GM convened and voting under the same conditions as those in section 3.4.3.
- 3.5 Appeals concerning membership can be made to the Warden who may allow exceptions to this section.

### 3.6 Opting Out of Membership

- 3.6.1 Members may opt out of membership of the MCR on a yearly basis by declaring their intention in writing or in person to the Bursar by Friday of First Week of their first term of each academic year.
- 3.6.2 For students who pay their own College fees, opting out will trigger a reduction in battels. (Information on the size of the rebate will be given to all junior members by the College before the beginning of the academic year.)
- 3.6.3 Opting out of the MCR will bar a student from making use of any JCR or MCR facility that is provided by the Common Room budgets and from the entitlements of MCR membership including, but not limited to, the rights to vote and hold office. (Information on the facilities available will be given to all junior members by the College before the beginning of the academic year.)

## 4. Officers and Committees

- 4.1 There shall be an elected Executive Committee, consisting of a President and at least eight other members.
- 4.2 The aims and objectives of the Committee shall include: (a) the promotion of the academic, financial, welfare, social and general interests of its members; (b) the representation of its members in regard to the College generally; and the representation of its members in regard to the affairs of the University and in other affairs of importance to students through all affiliated bodies.
- 4.3 In pursuing these objectives the Committee shall adopt and implement such policies and/or courses of action as it shall, from time to time, resolve. The Committee shall have the power to take such steps as are reasonable to ensure the efficient day-to-day running of the MCR.
- 4.4 The Committee shall not have the power to alter the Constitution.
- 4.5 Full members of the MCR shall elect officers to the posts of President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Social Secretary (two positions), House Officer and Welfare Officer, Bar Rep, and E&D Officer.
- 4.5.1 The President shall be responsible for running the Committee and for representing the MCR to the College and to the University.
- 4.5.2 The Vice-President shall be responsible for the co-ordination of Freshers' Week, correspondence, and general support of the committee. The Vice-President is also responsible for academic community within the MCR, the termly financial audit, and the MCR photograph. They hold the roll and maintain Committee IT properties, including the email list and the knowledge base.

4.5.3 The Treasurer shall be responsible for all finances and accounts of the MCR. They will also maintain subscriptions to the media (i.e. newspapers, satellite TV etc.).

4.5.4 The Social Secretaries shall be responsible for running events for MCR members, and for ensuring that these reflect the range of preferences of the MCR as a whole.

4.5.5 The Welfare Officer will be required to have undertaken full peer support training within New College by the end of Michaelmas term. To ensure these skills are fully utilized, the welfare officer is obliged to lead the MCR peer support team after their year in office until their successor as Welfare Rep is fully peer support trained. All other Welfare Rep responsibilities will be passed over at the end of Hilary term to their successor.

4.5.6 The House Officer is responsible for the upkeep of the MCR facilities. This includes the physical spaces, namely the Rew Nooner Spoom, the MCR kitchen and the MCR TV room, and their equipment. They ensure that these areas are kept tidy and usable, which includes the rotation of Committee assignments, coordinating with the Bar Rep. They also run the housing ballot.

4.5.7 The Bar Rep manages all operations of the MCR Bar. The Bar Rep is responsible for the upkeep of the MCR bar area, making orders, maintaining stocks, setting prices, training volunteers, and has responsibility for the overall condition and profitability of the bar. They coordinate the bar assignments for the committee and volunteers bar.

4.5.8 The E&D officer is responsible for fostering inclusion and diversity in the MCR community. They coordinate with relevant non-executive roles to further the interests of under-represented individuals, including assuming the duties of minority representative roles not currently held. They participate in organizing the mandatory and other relevant workshops related to inclusion and regularly provide the MCR with information about financial support and upcoming events of relevance to E&D.

4.6 In the event that an office bearer shall be absent from the College for a period of two weeks, the President (or in his or her absence, the Vice-President) shall be empowered to confer the office bearer's responsibilities on another Committee member, or member of the MCR, subject to that person's agreeing to assume these extra responsibilities. If no member agrees to assume these extra responsibilities, the President (or in his or her absence, the Vice-President) shall assume the office bearer's responsibilities.

#### 4.7 Non-executive members

4. 7.1: The Committee has the power to create and remove additional non-executive positions on the Committee to fulfil specific responsibilities. Such positions may be filled by election by Full Members only. Non-executive members of the Committee are entitled to participate in, but not necessarily to vote, at Committee meetings.

#### 4.8 Committee meetings

4.8.1 There shall be no fewer than two Committee meetings per term.

4.8.2 Any Full Member of the MCR of any membership type shall be entitled to attend Committee meetings or make written submissions to the Committee for consideration. However, only Executive Committee members are entitled to participate and vote at such meetings. At the invitation of the President only, members of the MCR who are not members of the Committee may make oral presentations to the Committee during Committee meetings.

4.8.3 MCR members may request permission from the Vice-President to participate in a Committee meeting.

4.8.4 The Executive Committee has the right to hold closed meetings in which only Executive Committee members may attend. The President, or three members of the Executive

Committee, shall have the power to call Committee meetings. Notice of such meetings shall be given to the members of the Executive Committee.

4.8.5 In the event that urgent business arises and an Executive Committee meeting cannot be convened then the President (or, in his or her absence, any member of the Executive Committee) may circulate a motion in writing to all members of the Executive Committee; such a motion shall be carried if four votes in favour are received by the President within two weeks.

4.8.6 Four members of the Executive Committee, one of whom shall be the President or Vice-President, shall comprise a quorum.

4.8.7 Decisions at Executive Committee meetings shall be taken by a majority vote, the President having the casting vote.

4.8.8 The Vice-President (or in his or her absence, another member of the Committee present) shall take and share minutes at all Committee meetings. These shall be retained by the Vice-President, and made available to the rest of the committee.

4.8.9 The President of the JCR (or a representative) is entitled to attend and participate in all meetings, but neither shall have the right to vote.

4.9 The Committee shall have the power to form and dissolve sub-committees which may include any members of the MCR. Any decision of the sub-committees shall be subject to ratification by the Committee. In the event of a dispute with regard to any such decisions, the ruling of a GM shall be final.

## 5. Election of President and Committee

### 5.1 Term of Office

5.1.1 The Executive Committee shall ordinarily serve for a period of one year after election, commencing on Sunday of Ninth Week in Hilary term and ending on Saturday of Eighth Week in Hilary Term the following year. Other non-executive positions may be elected at any time during the year and shall serve for no more than one year after their election date.

5.1.2 Candidates for election to the Committee must intend to serve the full term of the office. The Candidate must agree to this condition when submitting his or her nomination.

5.1.3 In the event of the resignation or removal of a Committee member, a by-election shall be held within three weeks (excluding days which are in vacation) under the conditions applicable to other Committee elections save those relating to date.

5.1.4 In the event of the resignation of a Committee member, that member must continue to carry out the responsibilities of their office until such time as a successor is elected under the terms of 5.1.5

5.1.5 If the resigning member is unable to continue to carry out the responsibilities of their office in the interim period, the President (or in his or her absence, the Vice-President) shall be empowered to confer the responsibilities of that member on another member of the MCR. If no member agrees to assume those responsibilities, the President (or in his or her absence, the Vice-President) shall assume those responsibilities.

5.1.6 In the event of the removal of a Committee member, the President (or in his or her absence, the Vice-President) shall be empowered to confer the responsibilities of that member on another member of the MCR. If no member agrees to assume those responsibilities, the President (or in his or her absence, the Vice-President) shall assume those responsibilities.

5.1.7 In the absence of both the President and Vice-President, the Committee is empowered to confer the responsibilities of the absent or removed Committee member upon another member by means of a simple majority vote.

5.1.8 Upon the resignation or removal of a Committee member, the outgoing member must provide a comprehensive handover to the member assuming the duties of their office within two weeks of their appointment or election, in order to enable them to carry out the responsibilities of their office. This period may be altered or extended subject to the consent of the incoming officer.

5.1.9 A Committee member will not be considered to have formally resigned unless or until they have given notice of their resignation in writing to the President. In the event that the President wishes to communicate their resignation, notice must be given in writing to the Vice-President. The date when notice was given will be considered to be the date of resignation.

## 5.2 Eligibility

5.2.1 Candidates for office shall be Full Members of the MCR.

5.2.2 No MCR member is permitted to run for more than one Committee position in a single election. In the event that an MCR member nominates for more than one position, the member in question must choose one position and withdraw the additional nominations. For the purposes of this clause, the Presidential election and the Executive Committee election are considered to be separate elections.

## 5.3 Notification of the Election

5.3.1 At least 14 days prior to an election, the Electoral Officers, according to 5.6.1, shall notify all Full Members listed on the roll of the upcoming nomination and election process and post notification on the MCR noticeboard.

5.3.2 Any election not so publicised shall be considered invalid.

## 5.4 Nominations

5.4.1 Nominations for candidates for all MCR Committee offices shall be proposed and seconded by any Full Member of the MCR who is not a current member of the Committee.

5.4.2 The President-elect shall not propose or second a nomination for the election of the Committee.

5.4.3 Nominations for President shall be received from Thursday of Third Week in Hilary term until Saturday of Third Week.

5.4.4 Nominations for Executive Committee members (other than the President) shall be received from Thursday of Fourth Week in Hilary term until Saturday of Fourth Week.

5.4.5 The Committee, with the approval of the Dean, has the power to reasonably alter the timetable in section 5.4. Any such alteration shall not render the election void.

5.4.6 In the event that no nominations are received for a Committee position, the MCR President is empowered to appoint any Full MCR member to hold the position at his or her discretion, subject to the approval of the Dean of the College.

5.4.7 If the President intends to exercise the power of appointment as set out in 5.4.6, they must give notice to the MCR that no nominations have been received for the position no less than 7 days prior to appointing an officer.

5.4.8 An appointed officer will hold their position until the next regularly scheduled MCR Committee election.

## 5.5 Hustings

5.5.1 The Committee shall hold hustings for candidates for all Committee positions.

5.5.2 Voting members present at hustings, other than the candidates, shall be entitled to ask questions of the candidates. All such questions must be directed to all the candidates and must be so phrased as to be equally answerable by all candidates.

5.5.3 Minutes shall be taken at the hustings. Minutes from the hustings shall be posted on the MCR noticeboard and sent to all voting members prior to the opening of elections, or a manifesto from the candidate may be circulated.

## 5.6 Ballot

5.6.1 The Committee shall appoint two Electoral Officers, normally the Vice-President and E&D Officer, who may be members of the Committee but shall not be candidates in the election, unless no other willing member can be found. Those persons shall be responsible for the running of the ballot and publication of the results.

5.6.2 The ballot for the presidency shall open on Sunday of Fourth Week in Hilary term and close on Wednesday of Fourth Week.

5.6.3 The ballot for the other Committee members shall open on Sunday of Fifth Week in Hilary term and close on Wednesday of Fifth Week.

5.6.4 The Electoral Officers shall collect the ballots, ensure that the ballot is secret, and that no member votes more than once.

5.6.5 The election of the President shall be conducted in the following manner: Voters rank candidates in descending order of preference. The preferences expressed on the ballot paper (or electronic equivalent) begin with a first preference (marked with a '1') and continue sequentially without gaps. Voters may cease to rank their preferences at any point after their first preference. No two options may be given the same preference ranking. A candidate wins if they receive more than half of the first preference votes cast. In that case that no candidate has a majority of first preference votes, the candidate with the least first preference votes is eliminated and their first preference votes are reallocated to the voter's second preference (if expressed). This process is iteratively continued until a single candidate has a majority of votes and is elected. If there is a tie between candidates facing elimination or election in any round of the process the tie will be broken by a coin toss.

5.6.6 The election of all other Committee positions shall be conducted in the same manner as outlined in section 5.6.5 except that for the election of more than one winner to a multiple person post. In a multiple person-post, a candidate is elected to the role if their first preference votes exceed the Droop quota ( $((\text{total valid votes} / \text{number of seats} + 1) + 1)$ ). If a candidate exceeds the Droop quota on first preference votes, the candidate is elected to the position and first preference votes that they received in excess of the Droop quota will be reassigned to the next highest preferences if given. In the event that none of the candidates exceeds the Droop quota, the candidate with the lowest number of first preference votes is eliminated. This process is iteratively continued until the number of positions for the post has been elected.

5.6.7 The Electoral Officers shall declare the result of each election within 48 hours of the close of voting.

5.6.8 The Committee, with the approval of the Dean, has the power to reasonably alter the timetable in section 5.6. Any such alteration shall not render the election void.

## 5.7 Conduct of candidates during the election process

5.7.1 All candidates shall behave in a fair and reasonable manner throughout the election process.

5.7.2 The Committee and the Returning Officers shall devise a set of electoral rules governing conduct during the electoral process. These shall be sent to all Full Members prior to the opening of nominations.

5.7.3 If any Full Member is unhappy with the conduct of any candidate or Committee member during the electoral process they may bring the issue to the attention of the Committee.

5.7.4 The Committee shall decide on the appropriate course of action, which may be the removal of the candidate from the election.

5.7.5 If the affected candidate or any Full Member is unsatisfied with the Committee's decision, he or she may appeal the decision to the Dean whose decision shall be final.

5.7.6 Before taking a course of action, any candidate may request a decision from the Committee as to whether his or her intended behaviour is fair and reasonable.

5.8 A Committee member shall be removed from office if a motion of no-confidence succeeds by two-thirds' majority of Full Members voting at a GM called for that purpose.

## 6. General Meetings

6.1 The President shall convene at least one GM per term at a time determined by the Committee.

6.2 In addition, the Annual General Meeting ("AGM") shall be held in the Sixth Week of Hilary term after all the election results are announced. At the AGM, the Treasurer shall present full financial statements, the outgoing President shall present a report, and general business may be transacted.

6.3 An Extraordinary General Meeting ("EGM") may be called by the President at the request of at least five voting members of the MCR. In such a case the President (or other Committee member) shall issue notice of the meeting. The EGM shall be held within two weeks of the request.

6.4 Notice of every GM shall be sent to every voting member at least one week before the meeting and, in addition, shall be posted on the MCR noticeboard.

6.5 Twenty voting members shall comprise a quorum. The meeting shall be assumed to have a quorum unless explicitly questioned by a voting member.

6.6 The President or Vice-President shall request motions at least one week prior to any GM. All motions must be proposed and seconded by a voting member at least 48 hours before the GM. Notice of the proposed motions shall be sent to every voting member and posted on the MCR noticeboard at least 24 hours before the meeting.

6.7 Any motions (except an amendment to the Constitution) shall be carried by simple majority of voting members who vote at the GM. In GMs the President shall have a casting vote only. No votes shall be recorded on behalf of a voting member not present, unless they provide a written and signed statement to an Executive Committee member at least 12 hours before the GM.

6.8 Minutes shall be taken at all GMs and retained by the Vice-President. Minutes from the GM shall be posted on the MCR noticeboard and sent to all voting members within a week of the meeting and shall be presented at the next GM.

6.9 There shall be a set of Standing Orders to govern the conduct of business at GMs. The Standing Orders may be suspended for part or all of a GM by a two-thirds' majority of voting members voting at the GM.



## 7. Facilities

7.1 All members of the MCR shall have full use of the Rew Nooner Spoom.

7.2 The Rew Nooner Spoom will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, during term and vacation. Smoking is prohibited at all times within and in the environs of the Rew Nooner Spoom.

7.3 The Committee may from time to time make such regulations as are necessary to permit and regulate the use of the Rew Nooner Spoom for “open” functions held by MCR members.

7.4 Any guests not exceeding a reasonable limit may be entertained in the Rew Nooner Spoom provided that they are accompanied by at least one member of the MCR. The latter requirement does not apply on those “open” occasions, specifically organised by the Committee for purposes connected with the welfare of the MCR in general. MCR members are responsible for their guests.

7.5 Any person staying in College as a guest of a member shall be granted full use of the facilities of the MCR within reason. The member entertaining such a guest shall be responsible for any expenses incurred by his or her guest.

7.6 A member who has failed to pay the required College dues or who has failed to pay amounts owing to the MCR may be denied use of any or all of the MCR facilities until such debts are paid. Such a decision may be made by the Committee on the advice of the President or Treasurer, and there shall be a right of appeal to the Bursar. New College

## 8. Finance

8.1 MCR funds shall only be used for purposes pertaining to interests of the MCR.

8.2 The incoming Treasurer and President shall, after consultation with the outgoing Committee, submit a budget for the forthcoming year for the approval of voting members at a GM in Trinity term.

8.3 The Committee shall not approve any expenditure over £150 not accounted for in the budget as outlined in section 8.2 without the approval of voting members at a GM, excluding those expenditures which are recovered directly by the MCR via battels or cash payments and those expenditures going to the repair of MCR facilities and property.

8.4 The Treasurer shall keep account of the financial affairs of the MCR and these accounts will be verified termly by the Vice-President. The accounts shall include a copy of the budget outlined in section 8.2 as well as a list of all donations that have been made to outside organisations, groups and/or clubs (including, but not limited to, charities). The Treasurer shall provide the College accountant with a financial report for his or her period of office including but not limited to receipts, expenditures, and a balance sheet to reflect the position of the MCR accounts by the end of Hilary term. The accounts shall be made available to both the GB via the JCR/MCR Finances SubCommittee of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, and to all MCR members via the AGM and the MCR noticeboard. The original accounts and financial report shall be retained in the files of the Treasurer.

8.5 Individual members shall always be allowed to examine those accounts on application to the Treasurer. The Treasurer must present the accounts to the member within 7 days of their request.

8.6 Allocation of MCR resources within College

8.6.1 The Committee may approve reasonable amounts of money to be used to assist events organised by MCR members that are open to all MCR members.

8.6.2 Except as set out in section 8.6.1, MCR resources shall only be allocated to organisations, groups and/or clubs (including, but not limited to, charities), whether within or outside the College, by a majority of voting members who vote at a GM.

8.6.3 Motions to allocate MCR resources to organisations, groups and/or clubs must fulfil the procedure outlined in section 6.

8.6.4 Such motions shall be in accordance with the spirit of section 8.1.

8.6.5 A list of the outside organisations, groups and/or clubs (including, but not limited to, charities) to which the MCR donates money shall be posted on the MCR noticeboard at the beginning of Michaelmas term. The list shall include details of any fees, donations, or subscriptions paid in the past year and a copy shall be sent to the Dean for report to the GB in accordance with the Code of Practice governing the relationship between College and the JCR and MCR.

8.6.6 The current list of these affiliations, including subscriptions, shall be submitted to voting members for approval at the AGM.

8.6.7 The question of continued affiliation to an organisation may be resolved at any other time by secret ballot of voting members, provided a request is made by at least 10 percent of the voting members of the MCR.

8.6.8 If it is decided at a GM to embark on a new affiliation, then the name of the organisation and the details of any fee, donation or subscription shall be posted on the MCR noticeboard and a copy sent to the Dean for report to the GB in accordance with the Code of Practice.

## 9. Roll

9.1 The Vice-President shall maintain a roll of MCR members.

9.2 The roll shall be compiled from information supplied by the College at the start of Michaelmas term and shall include any corrections reported by the College.

9.3 The roll shall be deemed to be the complete list of members to whom notification of GMs and elections shall be sent.

## 10. Amendments to the Constitution

10.1 Amendments to this Constitution may be made only with the approval of at least two-thirds of Full Members voting at a GM. Any such changes must otherwise fulfil the requirements of section 6.7 above.