

**Cusu Council EASTER I**
Monday 13th May 2019, 6pm
Room 2, Mill Lane LEcture Theatres

Agenda

1. Objections to the order of items on the agenda
2. Matters arising from the minutes of the last Council Meeting
3. Announcements by Committees, Campaign Teams and the Executive
	1. **Returning Officers Report**
4. Ordinary Policy Motions from Previous Council
	1. **Motion to Support the Disabled Students’ Campaign Accessibility Pledge**
5. Discussion
	1. **CUSU and the GU**
6. Proposed Ordinary Action Motions
	1. **Motion to Fund the Student Attendance of Reclaim the Power Mass Action Camp 2019**
7. Proposed Ordinary Policy Motions
	1. **Motion to Support Abortion Law Reform in Northern Ireland**
	2. **Motion to approve amendments to the CUSU LGBT+ Constitution**
	3. **Support the Regent House vote on the Student Disciplinary Procedure**
8. Any other business

Emergency motion: **Motion to support a university review of safeguarding policy re: room bookings by external organisations, and to oppose the decision to allow J4MB to hold an event on departmental university premises**

**Please note**, this council under the new structure and so voting members of Council will be as follows:

* 2 votes per college (not per common room),
* 2 votes per CUSU campaign,
* schools reps,
* CUSU executive team

Supporting Information

1. Objections to the order of items on the agenda

2. Matters arising from the minutes of the last council

Minutes can be accessed via the CUSU council page at www.cusu.co.uk, email links or the folder shared on Facebook.

3. Announcements by committees, campaign teams and the executive

For updates from Sabbatical officers, please see accountability documents and videos.
Liberation Campaigns and Ethical Affairs will update at Council.

Returning Officers Report (see supporting documents)

4. Discussions

CUSU and the GU

5. Ordinary policy motions from previous council

Policy requires approval at two consecutive Councils. The approval of the ‘starred’ motion at the second Council will be deemed to be automatic unless this ‘star’ is removed by a single member at the second Council wanting to revisit the motion for further discussion.

Please find the starred policy motions that were passed at the last Council listed below:

**Motion to Support the Disabled Students’ Campaign Accessibility Pledge\***
Proposed: Rensa Gaunt (Part Time Exec for Part Time Students)

Seconded: Jess O’Brien (CUSU Disabled Students’ Officer-Elect)

CUSU Notes:

1. That disabled students often are not able to find out if events and meetings accommodate their access needs, and are therefore excluded or discouraged from attending those events;
2. That many JCR/MCRs, clubs, and societies (along with other University, College, or Cambridge-associated groups) are unaware of the access needs of their disabled members, and have no simple means of discovering what steps they can proactively take to ensure access needs are met;
3. That disabled students have frequently been unable to address access issues, as there are no clear guidelines on what is expected from JCR/MCRs, clubs, and societies;
4. That freshers in particular may not be aware of best practice regarding accessibility;
5. That the incoming CUSU Disabled Students’ Officer was elected on a manifesto that included commitment to an Accessibility Pledge;
6. That the CUSU Disabled Students’ Campaign Committee, in consultation with Campaign Members, have written such an Accessibility Pledge (see Supporting Information attached);

CUSU Believes:

1. That disabled students should be provided with the information they need to decide whether events and meetings are accessible for them;
2. That an Accessibility Pledge to establish best practice would allow JCR/MCRs, clubs, and societies to be more aware of accessibility, as well as encouraging them to make their events more accessible;
3. That the existence of an Accessibility Pledge would allow disabled students and allies to address issues relating to inaccessibility and/or lack of accessibility information;
4. That it would be beneficial to bring the attention of freshers to the issue of accessibility, so that disabled students feel immediately welcomed, and so that students develop an awareness of accessibility starting from the beginning of their time at university;
5. That the Accessibility Pledge has a strong mandate from disabled students across the university as part of the DSO-elect’s manifesto;

CUSU Resolves:

1. To officially endorse the Accessibility Pledge;
2. To encourage JCR/MCRs, clubs, and societies to sign up to the Accessibility Pledge on a continual basis, particularly focusing on encouraging signups in time for full implementation by Freshers’ Week yearly;
3. To link to or otherwise indicate the list of groups signed up to the Accessibility Pledge on the CUSU Societies Directory, thereby bringing accessibility specifically to the awareness of freshers;
4. To ensure, as an expansion upon existing CUSU policy, that all central CUSU events adhere to and/or consider the relevant points of the Accessibility Pledge.

Supporting Information: Disabled Students’ Campaign Accessibility Pledge

Text of the Accessibility Pledge:

* We will aim to hold events where possible in rooms that are accessible - step-free access, comfy seating, etc.
* All our events will include detailed access statements on publication, made available everywhere the event is advertised.
* All event publicity will include a designated point of contact who can be consulted for further access information.
* We will aim to hold a range of events that cater to different access needs.
* We will consider access needs relating to food and drink, by e.g. providing non-alcoholic, sugar-free, gluten-free etc. options and by keeping allergen information/packaging available.
* We will attempt to make meetings accessible to those who can’t attend in person, e.g. via remote attendance or minutes.
* We will consider access needs when creating and distributing resources, e.g. via text-selectable digital versions, image descriptions, offering large print/other formats on request, etc.
* We will consider access needs when structuring our events, e.g. by including short access breaks, providing a separate quiet space, making it easy for attendees to leave at any time, etc.

-> Groups in Cambridge, affiliated with the university or not (e.g. J/MCRs, clubs and societies, campaigns, social and discussion groups) can sign the Pledge by filling out this form: <https://forms.gle/aW9mWNC5PBPyt9Yk8>

-> There will be a list of groups who have signed up to the pledge on the DSC website: <https://www.disabled.cusu.cam.ac.uk/accessibility-pledge/>

-> The DSC generator is available here for anyone to make an event access statement: <https://www.disabled.cusu.cam.ac.uk/resources/access-statements/>

6. Proposed ordinary ACTION motions

**Motion to fund student attendance of Reclaim the Power Mass Action Camp 2019**

**Proposer:** Sophia Georgescu

**Seconder:** Ewan Hawkins

**CUSU Notes**

1. That climate change is one of the biggest issues facing our generation. According to the 2018 IPCC report, we only have 12 years to mitigate devastating global warming;
2. That climate change disproportionately affects those already living precarious lives, and vulnerable populations;
3. That a number of organisations in the UK and beyond are working to prevent further extraction of fossil fuels, and its damaging effects to local communities.
4. That a number of university students have taken an interest in the Reclaim the Power Mass Action Camp (26th-31st July 2019) in the South East of England.
5. That a public information evening about the Mass Action Camp was held in Cambridge on Thursday 9th June and advertised widely to Cambridge students.
6. That not all students who want to are able to take action to mitigate climate change due to financial constraints.

**CUSU Believes**

1. That the Reclaim the Power Mass Action Camp would be beneficial to students in terms of outreach to wider communities.
2. That CUSU should be encouraging students who want to take direct action over climate change.
3. That students at the university who want to take direct action over climate change and extraction should be able to regardless of financial situation.

**CUSU Resolves**

1. To use a proportion of the Council Free Budget amounting to £400 at £80 per person for five people. This will cover estimated costs of tickets (£20), travel (£30) and food (£30) for the duration of the Camp (26-31st July 2019).

7. Proposed ORDINARY POLICY MOTIONS

**Motion to Support Abortion Law Reform in Northern Ireland**

**Submitted by:**

Amanda-Rose O’Halloran (aro25@cam.ac.uk)

**Seconded by:**

Michelle Woods (mcw63@cam.ac.uk)

**CUSU Notes:**

1. That Northern Ireland is currently the only country in the United Kingdom where abortion is still illegal and that Northern Ireland has the harshest criminal penalty for abortion anywhere in Europe under laws dating back to the Offences against the Person Act 1861, passed at a time when women did not even have the vote yet. The maximum sentence for those who have an abortion in Northern Ireland is life in prison. As a result, abortion is only permitted when there is a risk to the life of the pregnant person, or a serious risk to the pregnant person’s physical or mental health exists but these cases are very rare;
2. That in 2015, the High Court in Belfast ruled that Northern Ireland’s law on abortion was not compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights - specifically as it lacks provision for cases of fatal foetal abnormality, or where the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest. In June 2018, the UK Supreme Court found the law to breach the European Convention on Human Rights. Moreover, in February 2018, officials from a UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women concluded from a confidential inquiry that “the situation in Northern Ireland constitutes violence against women that may amount to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.” They noted that the “denial of abortion and criminalisation of abortion amounts to discrimination against women because it is a denial of a service that only women need. And it puts women in horrific situations.”;
3. That the law does not prevent abortion, but only makes it unsafe and more difficult to access. The majority of women and pregnant people seeking an abortion travel to other parts of the UK and now the Republic of Ireland, which overturned its ban on abortion in May 2018. Every week, an average of 28 pregnant people travel abroad to access what should simply be considered basic healthcare;
4. That there have also been growing calls across Ireland and the UK for a change in the law, particularly after a referendum in the Republic of Ireland. A YouGov poll carried out in October 2018 found that 75 per cent of people in Northern Ireland want the abortion law to change, with 65 per cent agreeing that abortion should not be a crime;
5. That in the absence of a Northern Ireland Assembly the UK government must act. 66 per cent of people thought that Westminster should legislate to reform the law. The NUS-USI (National Union of Students – Union of Students in Ireland) have also launched their campaign Trust Us, which calls on Westminster to legislate for free, safe, legal and local abortion services in Northern Ireland immediately. They are campaigning for the decriminalisation of abortion in the North of Ireland and not the extension of the 1967 Abortion Act. Also, just in February of 2019, Amnesty International handed in a petition with over 62,000 names to the UK government calling for urgent action on Northern Ireland’s ban on abortion.
6. This Motion is supported by MPhil students Chloe Sariego, Roberto Zedillo-Ortega, Vera Chapiro, Sarah Troedsson, and academic staff Professor Sarah Franklin, Dr Lucy van de Weil, Dr Katie Dow, Dr Marcin Smientas, and Dr Robert Pralat. Alliance for Choice, an activist organisation that campaigns for abortion rights in Northern Ireland, and the London-Irish Abortion Rights Campaign, a London-based group that campaigns for access to free, safe, legal abortion across the island of Ireland, also both support our motion.

**CUSU Believes:**

1. That the law in Northern Ireland must change. It is outdated, ineffective, and inhumane in line with the High Court, the UK Supreme Court, the UN, the European convention on Human Rights, the NUS and USI, and should be changed to reflect the reality of pregnant people’s lives;
2. That forcing anyone to continue their pregnancy against their will amounts to unjustified state-sanctioned violence.
3. That given the absence of government in Stormont since January 2017, it is the UK’s responsibility to take urgent action by introducing abortion reform legislation without further delay. The UK government must ensure that laws are in line with the state’s international human rights obligations. We must add our voices to growing pressure on Westminster to act, we need greater public understanding and support for the decriminalisation of abortion;
4. That we must end the treatment of British and Irish women living in the North of Ireland as second-class citizens, who do not enjoy the same access to healthcare as their counterparts across the UK and the Republic of Ireland;
5. That we must fight for free, safe, legal and local abortion access in Northern Ireland now.;

**CUSU Resolves:**

1. To mandate our Welfare and Rights Campaigns Officer(s) and President to launch a campaign calling for the decriminalisation of abortion throughout the UK, with particular attention to the inaccessibility of abortion in Northern Ireland;
2. To support the Abortion Support Network (ASN) and other organisations providing financial, emotional and logistical support to individuals who cannot access abortion services in their local area. This support should include promoting fundraisers in aid of the Abortion Support Network and Alliance for Choice;
3. To support the NUS-USI ‘Trust Us’ campaign for the decriminalisation of abortion in Northern Ireland and actively engage with NUS-USI to ensure our solidarity is as effective as possible;

**Motion to approve amendments to the CUSU LGBT+ Constitution**

See supporting documents for more detail.

**CUSU notes:**

1. The positive outcome of last week's referendum to amend the CUSU LGBT+ Constitution.

**CUSU resolves:**

1. To ratify the amendments to the CUSU LGBT+ Constitution, approved by CUSU LGBT+ constituents.

**Support the Regent House vote on the Student Disciplinary Procedure**

**Proposed by** Claire Sosienski Smith, CUSU Women’s Officer

**Seconded by** Matt Kite, CUSU Education Officer

**CUSU Notes:**

1. That there will be a ballot open to all members of Regent House on the revised student disciplinary procedure, voting on whether to approve the revisions to the disciplinary procedure and whether to adopt the balance of probabilities as the standard of proof
2. That there will be Discussion in the Senate-House on Tuesday 21st May at 2pm which can be attended by members of the Regent House, graduates of the university, faculty staff and current students
3. That in the most recent consultation of the Student Disciplinary Procedure open to the university in February 2019, 86% of respondents were in favour of supporting the balance of probabilities as the standard of proof

**CUSU Believes:**

1. That reforms to the student disciplinary procedure have been called for by the student body and student union since the 2014 report, ‘Cambridge Speaks Out’, written by the CUSU Women’s Officer
2. That to substantiate the claims of no tolerance of sexual harassment and assault in the university made by the university during the 2017 Breaking the Silence campaign, the university must have a transparent and consistent student disciplinary procedure in line with OIA best practice
3. That we need to encourage the 5,670 members of Regent House to turn out to vote, to ensure that the decision on the student disciplinary procedure is democratic and reflects the opinion of the university

**CUSU Resolves:**

1. To encourage members of Regent House to vote in favour of approving the revisions to the disciplinary procedure and to adopt the balance of probabilities as the standard of proof in all student disciplinary cases
2. To mandate the CUSU Women’s Officer to facilitate student participation in the Senate-House Discussion by providing materials and advice for those who wish to contribute to the Discussion and those who want to show their support by attending
3. To allocate up to £500 of Council Free Budget to the campaigning work of the student body to encourage Regent House to Reform the Student Disciplinary Procedure, which will enable the purchase of flyers, materials and banner making supplies to raise the profile of the campaign

8. Any other business

Emergency Policy Motion- see supporting documents for full document

**Motion to support a university review of safeguarding policy re: room bookings by external organisations, and to oppose the decision to allow J4MB to hold an event on departmental university premises**

**CUSU Notes:**

1. That the men’s rights activist/anti-feminist group Justice For Men And Boys (J4MB) have booked to host an event on University premises (specifically in an unknown room within the Alison Richard Building) on Friday May 24th;
2. That an open letter addressed to Stephen Toope calling for the event to be cancelled or moved to a non-departmental venue so that students could be present in their department without having to be in the vicinity of the event received over 300 signatures;
3. That there have occurred various incidents of individual harassment directly targeting Cambridge students undertaken by vocal supporters of J4MB on social media;
4. That both individual students and CUSU officers have sent evidence of the aforementioned incidents of individual targeted harassment to the Vice-Chancellor and to the University Proctors in the past weeks;
5. That neither the open letter nor this evidence of individual targeted harassment, where it has been acknowledged, has prompted the cancellation of the event, which to our latest knowledge is still scheduled to go ahead.

**CUSU Further Notes:**

1. That current University guidance on room bookings makes provision for event organisers to appeal decisions made by the Referral Group (where an event has been flagged as needing a risk assessment by “the authority responsible for considering and approving the booking”), but does not make equivalent provision for University members or any other party to appeal those same decisions;
2. That the identity of the aforementioned “authority responsible” and the details of any risk assessment carried out have not been made clear in this case;
3. That the aforementioned Referral Group is the same group responsible for handling cases reported to the University’s Prevent lead;
4. That the only existing University guidance is signposted similarly via the Prevent guidance page;
5. That the Code of Practice (see footnote 4) makes reference to the Referral Group **only** in the case that an event might require consideration “because of the duty to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”;
6. That the University Statement on Freedom of Speech (see footnote 4) by contrast states that:
 “Reasonable grounds for refusal would include, but are not limited to, the fact
that the event is likely to:
 - include the expression of views that risk drawing people into terrorism or are the

views of proscribed groups;

- incite others to commit a violent or illegal act;

- pose a genuine risk to the welfare, health, or safety of members of the

University or the general public, or give rise to a breach of the peace”;

1. That it is therefore unclear in existing University guidance and policy whether the Referral Group is responsible for decision-making in the case that an event might require consideration because of any issues **not** related to terrorism or the Prevent legislation.

**CUSU Believes:**

1. That due to
 a) actions carried out by J4MB, including but not limited to the generally misogynistic content of their material and message, their tactic of directly harassing individual feminists, and their publishing of posts targeting specific academics including some who teach and work in the Alison Richard Building,
   and
 b) the targeted harassment experienced by multiple Cambridge students and staff members from the supporters of J4MB, many of whom have expressed their intent to attend the event on May 24th,

   the aforementioned event, and any event organised by J4MB held on departmental University premises, does in fact “pose a genuine risk to the welfare, health, or safety of members of the University” [see Statement on Freedom of Speech above];

1. That the University’s decision to allow the aforementioned event to go ahead therefore contravenes its own existing guidance, and that in making this decision, the University is failing in its duty to its students and staff - particularly those who teach, learn, and work in the Alison Richard Building and on the Sidgwick Site - to prioritise their welfare, health, and safety over and above the right of an external organisation to hold an event on departmental University grounds.

**CUSU Further Believes:**

1. That the existing University guidance and policy on room bookings and on meetings and events held on University premises is unclear, in terms of a lack of transparency re: the chain of responsibility for decision making (especially in reference to events which may “pose a genuine risk to the welfare, health, or safety of members of the University or the general public, or give rise to a breach of the peace” but which may not “include the expression of views that risk drawing people into terrorism,” in which case the role of the Prevent Referral Group is unclear);
2. That the aforementioned guidance and policy is, moreover, insufficient, and that the University has a responsibility for the welfare, health, and safety of its students and staff that goes beyond, and should be considered separately from, its legal duties re: Prevent and re: explicit incitement to violence;
3. That the relationship between Prevent legislation and University policy on this issue must be critically examined, and that action taken to improve or extend University policy on this issue must not strengthen the hold of the Prevent duty, which itself threatens student and staff welfare;
4. That the current provision whereby event organisers, but not University members, may explicitly lodge complaints and request appeals in reference to decisions made about the holding of external organisations’ events, is unjust, and that students and staff deserve a say in the process of making these decisions.

**CUSU Resolves:**

1. To offer support for student and staff actions in protest of the J4MB event, in the event that it or any other event organised by J4MB goes ahead on May 24th or on any other future date;
2. To mandate its elected officers to lobby the University to undertake a review - with student input - of its external events policy, guidance, and oversight process, with particular critical attention paid to the current degree of interaction and elision between this issue as it relates to student and staff welfare, health, and safety on the one hand, and legislative requirements including and especially the Prevent duty on the other hand.