

ASCR Committee Meeting
Monday 28th February, 3.00pm
Housman Room

MINUTES

Present: Bob Barber, Martin Butcher, Peter Cadley, Ruth Dar, Roger Flower, Diana Manuel, Steve Miller (Convenor), Frank Penter (Treasurer), Richard Simons (Hon. Sec.), Jane Spender (Manager)

Apologies: John Brodholt, Edward de Chazal, Julie Rolls, Talvinder Sihra

1. Welcome and apologies for absence. All were welcomed, and apologies for absence were as noted above.

2. Minutes of the last meeting. The Minutes of the last meeting were approved as a true record.

3. Quality of Housman Room catering

An e.mail had been received from an ASCR member, Corinna Riva, noting that “the quality of the food is of poor standard”, and suggesting that raising the costs of the lunches slightly might improve it. The Committee felt that unarguably the food was variable in quality – for example, fish had been excellent a few months ago but was now awful; but there was acknowledgement that serving from such a small space created problems and concern at the idea of raising prices. Frank had attended the recent Refectory Users Group meeting and reported that the new Chartwells Manager, Dee Wilkinson, was open to suggestions for improving things. It was agreed that Jane should write to Corinna along these lines, and take the matter up with Dee, indicating a connection between food quality and the new catering contract to be awarded in July 2010.

Action: Jane

4. The AGM

The AGM had been attended by 10 Committee members and 112 other ASCR members, and by Andrew Grainger and Angela Clemo, of Estates & Facilities, who had made a brief Master Plan presentation.

The Committee’s appraisal paper on 25/26 Gordon Sq. had been presented and approved unanimously. Although the ASCR might have to be positive about Gordon Sq., should the houses be the only option available, the need for and concern about a large space had been a constant throughout the AGM discussion.

The Committee and Financial Reports had been accepted and approved, the Auditor, Gordon Kenshole, reappointed, and the members of the Committee had been unanimously re-elected en bloc.

5. Update on the Master Plan

- Meeting with Master Plan team, 18th February.
Steve, Frank, Richard and Jane had met Julian Gregson (Lifschutz, Davidson Sandilands) and Angela Clemo. Julian had given the spiel about the Master Plan, working through the latest document, the Interim Consultation Summary, which had not yet been made public. There had been much discussion about staff provision and Angela and Julian had reiterated the offer of 25/26 Gordon Sq., but had indicated that they were thinking about another possible staff space – the west part of the South Wing, a suggestion made by Richard about a month previously.
- Richard reported that at an Engineering Sciences Faculty meeting on the Master Plan attended by Angela it had been mentioned that the ASCR would move to 25/26 Gordon Sq., and that Angela had said that it was more likely that the ASCR would move into the South Wing, which could provide a space comparable to the Housman Room. After the meeting Richard had asked Angela how firm this was and had been told that it was not yet on paper. He had pointed out to her that it was essential that whatever papers went to the EMC should agree with each other, so that everyone was discussing the same proposal.
- The west area of the South Wing occupied by the examination section and student admissions would be a large space, although it could not compare with the Housman Room, but ideally the whole area

from the Council Room to the Chadwick building would be available, and hopefully could be opened up. It was agreed that the group that had carried out the appraisal of 25/26 Gordon Sq. (Richard, Frank, Ruth and Peter) should carry out a similar appraisal of the South Wing as soon as the proposal became firmer. **Action: Richard, Frank, Ruth, Peter**

- It was agreed that Richard should follow up his conversation with Angela so that the paper going to the EMC should as nearly as possible reflect the ASCR needs and wishes. **Action: Richard**
- It was agreed it was essential to keep the dialogue going in a business-like and organised way.
- The Committee would identify the key points for the ASCR about the Housman Room, and what the ASCR would require if it had to move elsewhere.
- It was likely that the consultation would result in a flood of e-mails to the Provost and Estates opposing the proposal, which it might be easy for them to disregard. The Committee should prepare the ground with the membership for the all-staff consultation, thinking about the Housman Room as a formal space, so that the Committee's response would be supported with strong opposition e-mails.
- The Committee should ask the membership to copy to Jane the points made in their consultation responses, so that an ASCR compendium could be kept.
- Widening the ASCR membership base.
It was felt that the ASCR was vulnerable to the argument that it was an elitist club and that it was essential to be prepared for any charge of elitism that might be made, either by providing solid ground for retaining the status quo or by pre-empting such an accusation by opening the doors to more people. Following considerable discussion, with arguments for both sides, it was agreed that an appraisal document setting out the pros and cons should be prepared, to be used by the Committee to settle its own position and subsequently as the basis of a plebiscite of the membership. The question of contract staff on lower grades was noted, as was the difference between opening the Common Room up to all grades as paying members, and opening it up to all grades as of right. Richard, Frank and Martin agreed to conduct the appraisal. **Action: Richard, Frank, Martin**

Should these actions result in an alteration of the membership, it was agreed that an Extraordinary General Meeting would be called in advance of Council's final decision on the Master Plan.

7. Financial report

The summary accounts had been circulated in advance. Frank felt that things were going well, although the summary showed some items of income and expenditure looking lower than they actually were, as the result of slow receipt of money/information/invoices. UCL's Finance Division was introducing a considerable number of procedural changes, to make all transactions electronic, and had forgotten about the ASCR. This was now being resolved, and in the new set-up Richard and Frank would be signatories to the account. Frank was warmly thanked for his work.

8. 14th Haldane Event, spring term 2011

Negley Harte and John North had been invited to give a talk on the Senior Common Rooms at UCL. They would discuss it during the Professors' Dining Club dinner that evening and Negley had told Jane he was hopeful that they would do it. It was decided that if they agreed to give it, the talk should take place in the last week of March or the first week of April. **Action: Jane**

9. Ongoing items

Beer-tasting notes. Julie had told Jane that her imminent trip to India would be her last in the current academic year, and she hoped to produce beer notes before Easter. Richard had suggested a folder for these, so that a collection of pages on individual beers could be built up. **Action: Jane**

Additional stillion in bar cold store. Photographs and measurements in the cold store had been taken, and this was in hand.

Website. Jane had arranged for intermediate training in the content management system used by UCL,

which should enable her to manage the layout as well as the content of the website.

Damaged chairs. Although the Committee had formerly agreed that damaged chairs should be discarded, it turned out that 10 seats had protruding springs and there were 2 chairs with broken arms. This seemed too many to lose, and it was agreed to try to arrange for the seats to be re-upholstered and the arms to be repaired.

Action: Jane

10. Approval of Officers for the year.

Following the re-election of the Committee at the AGM, Steve as Convenor, Richard as Hon. Secretary and Frank as Hon. Treasurer were all unanimously re-elected.

Steve informed the Committee that he intended to stand down as Convenor at the next AGM, when he would be released from the headship of his department and would be going on 6 months' sabbatical.

He wanted to record that during the past few months all had undertaken a lot more work than normal as a Committee, and thanks were due to everyone for their willingness to put in the time and effort.

11. Date of next meeting

This could be left for a little while, and would be held in the first week of April, after the EMC's meeting on 23rd March. A doodlepoll would be set up shortly.

Action: Jane

The meeting closed at 4.15