**Minutes for the Third JCR meeting of Michaelmas Term 2019**

*Sunday 1st December, 7:30pm, Dining Hall*

**1. The minutes of the last meeting**

These are available on the JCR Website.

**2. Matters Arising**

There are no matters arising.

**3. JCR Announcements**

Announcements from JCR Officers.

1. Announcements from Nuriya Shoro (JCR President) and Jonathan Wong (JCR Chair) on JCR Membership.  
   Nuriya mentioned that vast majority have paid for memberships, and that she has asked club captains and society presidents to share lists of members. Those who have not paid for membership will be asked nicely to leave club/society. Nuriya noted it is not too late to pay and that people can email her or contact her on the Facebook JCR President account. If you don’t want to pay, that’s fine and if there are financial constraints to let her know. If you see an email don’t ignore it.

Nuriya passed over to Jonathan Wong who started by reminding members of his speech at the start of term on the importance of the JCR. He hopes people have settled in well to college, reminds them that any events, sports clubs, WAM, and generally having an active JCR are important and if they were not in place college and its members would be very different. Says that exec are here because they care about the JCR and that is what it’s about. In a strange time with university strikes and voter registration, democracy is a “strong but quite precious thing” to make use of and not let go to waste. The reason we host these meetings is so people can bring their own ideas in to the JCR and having had time to speak to people, aware that a lot of people are enjoying what the JCR brings. Thanks people for that and notes that Jonathan, Nuriya, exec are all able to answer questions about membership.

**4. Questions of Officers**

None

**5. Motions**

1. **Motion to Ratify the St. Mary’s Poetry Society** **(Appendix A)**

Hi I’m Sunena

Hi I’m Cait

Vote for poetry soc

For recitals at 8.

Creativity and flair

All welcome to be there.

Writing poems together

Art which will last forever.

Themed events like poetry and parkour

But be careful and don’t crash into the door.

Poetry and interpretive dance

Vote for our motion - give poetry soc a chance.

Q: What events would you hold?

A: Poetry writing, reading, recitals. Some more themed events e.g. Poetry and Pineapples

Q: Favourite poem?

A: *If*

Q: How would you incorporate/relate to SMCAS?

A: Best to get an exec committee in place who would decide this afterwards.

1. **Motion to Ratify the St. Mary’s Vegan/Vegetarian Society** **(Appendix B)**

See Appendix B in place of hust

Q: Will people of non veggie/vegan persuasion be able to be members:

A: Definitely yes – super-inclusive, everyone allowed to come. Just trying to raise awareness.

Q: How will you make sure to foster positive attitudes rather than promoting toxic environment – relating to controversy around vegetarianism/veganism  
A: Mainly by keeping it very chill – not making people feel bad about eating meat, staying down-to-earth

Q: How do you plan to work with DU vegan/veggie soc?

A: Definitely collab with them e.g. fairs and events that could also be held at Mary’s. More outreach.

Q: Do you support banning red meat?

A: Not our aim as a new society to change anything at Mary’s cafeteria – this is our own society with fairs, grub crawls. This might change in the future but not yet. Staying neutral in terms of *personal* opinion on this would be best to not alienate people

**6. Elections, Hustings and Interviews**

1. **Senior Post Offer Visit Day Representative**

Sophie Woodcock

Proposed by: Will Ashton

Seconded by: Claudia Campbell

Hi, I’m Sophie, a second year studying Primary Education. I’m very proud to be at Mary’s and would absolutely love to be your next Head Post Offer Visit Day Rep.

Post Offer Visit Days are held towards the end of March for students who have been offered a place at Durham University. They can come for a day visit or stay overnight and we have a team of reps who show them just how brilliant Mary’s is.

So, what is it about Mary’s that makes it so special? For me, it’s the buzz in the dining hall, the opportunities we have and the friendly faces I see around college. It would be amazing to lead and be a part of the team that showcases what a welcoming place Mary’s is.

I’m kind and approachable and feel that the experiences I gained during my role as Head Girl at school, my one year course at Loughborough, gap year and my time at Mary’s so far, would provide a strong foundation to build upon if I were elected. Having spent a year at Loughborough, I know first-hand just how beneficial the collegiate system can be and this is something that really does help to sell Mary’s and Durham.

First and foremost, I would work to recruit a dynamic and diverse team of reps to ensure that the two Visit Days run as smoothly as possible and that all applicants are looked after whilst at college. The team of reps can make or break the Post Offer Visit Days and they are the people who have the biggest impact on the visitors and help them to decide whether to come to Mary’s or not.

Secondly, I would work closely with the JCR Exec to ensure that the team of reps can showcase, on their behalf, everything that is offered at Mary’s. It’s important that the diversity of the student body and their talents is celebrated. I would ensure social media platforms were updated in good time and design posts which allow prospective students to see the range of opportunities that are available at Mary’s.

Thirdly, I would organise the timetable fairly and allocate break times to the reps for when they will be most in need of a rest. The team is there to ensure all applicants are looked after whilst at college, however the reps will not be able to care for others if they’re not rested and well looked after themselves.

Being a Post Offer Visit Day Rep was a real highlight of my first year and I would highly encourage you to get involved and apply to be on the team. It’s been lovely to get to know some of the first years so far this term, but if I haven’t met you yet please do come and introduce yourself. You can find me around college if you have any questions about my campaign!

Unfortunately, I wasn’t exactly blessed with the sporting gene, but I have thrown myself into pretty much everything else on offer here at Mary’s, worked really hard and I’m involved in the wider university too. I believe my organisational skills, committed attitude and enthusiasm for all things Mary’s make me a great candidate to be your next Head Post Offer Visit Day Rep. It would be an honour to be elected and I would give the role my absolute all.

Thank you very much for listening

Erin Marks

Proposed by: Georgia Greenburgh

Seconded by: Harriet Clark

Hi everyone, my name is Erin Marks and I would really love to be your Head Post-Offer Visit Day Representative this year. The visit days are personally special to me for two main reasons; the first being that when I attended my own visit day in 2018, the atmosphere was so welcoming and this made me realise how much I wanted to become a part of the Mary’s community. In addition, repping last year really cemented how much I genuinely adore Mary’s; it was incredible being able to see all the reps passion for the college, as well as conveying this to other students. Our style of Visit days are so unique and different to other universities, which was some of the feedback I got when I spoke to the attendees last year, and this means that we can really convey the Mary’s spirit to prospective students and present an environment that they feel they could call their home and not just their place of study.

So far my time at Mary’s has been an amazing experience and I would really love to give something back to the college which I feel has already given me so much. I feel like there could be no better way to do this than through running the Post-Offer Visit Days; they are so important to future students and I would honestly cherish the opportunity to show off Mary’s to its next generation. I also feel that repping last year gave me a suitable understanding of the process behind organising the visit days, upon which I can build in order to coordinate a successful event this year.

Speaking from personal experience I know I, like many others, had a lot of anxiety surrounding coming to university before moving to Durham so in terms of my ideas for the role I would do my best to ensure that the college feels like the safe space which we know it is so that all the prospective students feel comfortable to voice any concerns or worries that they may have about moving to university. This could potentially be through a q&a session with a small group of reps and a few offer holders or through chatting more casually in the JCR like we already do but making it clear that they can ask any questions on university life that they feel they need to. I feel like people at Mary’s genuinely do care about each other and showing that we also care about potential marians is a great way to emphasises the kind and safe environment that Mary’s has, as well as simply helping to reassure anyone who may need it. On a similar note I would also try to increase publicity of the rep bios and the video as this way people will feel that they already know the reps before the arrive and will also be able to see familiar faces when they do. This should help anyone who is feeling anxious about attending as well as encourage those who are unsure to come to the Visit days and see what they’re all about! Thank you for listening and feel free to email me if you have any further questions.

Q: People get very attached to Mary’s on a POVD – what would you say to them if they came up to you and were worried?

EM: Emphasise the wider picture of Durham as a whole and reassure that as much as we go on about Marys being the best college, reassure that everyone likes their college

SW: Met an applicant from POVD last year who was reallocated and is having an absolutely brilliant time. Make applicants aware that this can happen but that every college has its own niche and everyone ends up having fantastic experience

Q: As head POVD Rep this role will cover both the residentials in March and POVD in February

SW: In my time at Mary’s/Durham I have demonstrated that I can juggle things well, would work with staff and students to do this. I have developed positive relationships with staff and as head POVD Rep you would have a strong team around you to rely upon to help and delegate as it isn’t feasible to take it all on yourself

EM: Potentially a similar answer – I’ve been involved here and learned how to manage time. Would get team of reps in place ASAP to help organise both days

Q: What would be your best advice to a student worried about going to uni?

EM: Draw on my own experience as someone who was very nervous. Tell them it’s very normal as an unfamiliar environment, everyone’s in the same position, tell them to throw themselves into everything to stay busy/distracted from nerves but also to find their passion for something

SW: Be yourself, takes some people a lot of time to find their group but stay true to yourself and be aware of fantastic support services at Mary’s/Durham, that they are not alone.

Q: This is a unique role as you get to make such a valuable difference to someone’s experience/choice of uni – why do you feel like you’re more fit for this role than any other role on JCR exec?

SW: You can make this role your own – recruit a group of reps who will showcase Mary’s in best light. I personally did not come on a POVD but on the team last year I had a brilliant time – best thing I did in first year – immediately thought I would love to go for this role.

EM: Repping last year was so amazing, that’s my reason – it’s the next step. I enjoy working in a team and would do my best to recruit a diverse team and throw myself into leading them. I have such passion for this college and this is one of the best ways to showcase it.

Jonathan: More questions but out of time - if you have more questions, can find and ask the candidates. Also note that you really have to vote even if only one person is running – everyone still has to be voted in and first years did really well in last election.

**7. AOB**

[None]

**Appendix A: Motion to Ratify the St. Mary’s Poetry Society**

Proposer: Caitlin McLoughlin  
Seconder: Sunena Johnsen

*This JCR Notes:*

There are various university poetry societies in and around Durham. However, St Mary’s lacks its very own Poetry Society, within the college’s warm environment, whereby students of all abilities are encouraged to write and recite poetry. The society would provide a great opportunity for like-minded people to get to know each other while creating art.

*This JCR Believes:*

A St Mary’s poetry society would be a great way for interested students to work on their poetry skills. While performing their work (not compulsory) students can express themselves and clear their minds.

*This JCR Resolves:*

We plan to have workshops on even weeks, where members can work on their own poems while helping and encouraging others at the sessions to learn and improve. The society would also be a platform for students to perform and recite poetry on odd weeks. We plan for performances and workshops to take place in either the JCR or MCR. We would also be interested in running workshops and poetry recital sessions in the college bar. The executive committee will consist of a President, Vice President, Publicity Officer, Performance Coordinator and a Treasurer.

**Appendix B: Motion to Ratify the St. Mary’s Vegan/Vegetarian Society**

Proposer: Katrina Scotford  
Seconder: Fiona Schweizer

*This JCR Notes:*

Over the past few years there has been a significant increase in diet changes and overall interest in cutting meat and or dairy from our lifestyles, especially in young people. With the number of people already vegan or vegetarian at Mary’s, a new society promoting this would be relevant.

*This JCR Believes:*

That this society would be able to channel current interest in veganism or vegetarianism by allowing an open space for discussion and promotion of these diets. This would include but not be limited to the significant impact on the environment, health, and morality. The society would not be to push radical veganism or shun those who still eat meat/dairy. It will be designed to embrace all people and raise awareness of such options to cut out these products.

*This JCR Resolves:*

To create the Mary’s Vegan/Vegetarian Society. The society’s description will be as follows: To create a society that is open to all kinds of backgrounds and belief sets. The principle aim will be to promote inclusivity and openness to the subject through attending/creating events such as vegan grub crawls, cafe socials, and vegan food fairs. This society will have an exec consisting of a Treasurer, Social Secretary, Publicity Officer, and Vice President.