

Murray Edwards JCR Open Meeting on Rent Minutes – 5/12/19

- Allison – college said no on rent cuts
 - Asked if could shift rent costs instead – try not to put too much of a burden on higher bands but lower bands more affordable
 - Before inflation – 2-3%
 - JCR fighting for it to stay 1.7%
- Becca – most room increases are on the 39-week rooms – unfair – should be equal across 39 and 33 weeks
 - Allison – price bands don't line up with categories
 - College had some explanation for this
- Asked if split-level rooms are mostly seeing increase
 - They tend to be in top bands
- Allison – is it better than what we have?
 - Good concept but not better
 - Unfair that 39-week rooms have most the increases
 - College weren't transparent about £65 increase – thought £30 something was most
 - Not enough rooms seeing big enough decrease to be helpful – only 6 people in lowest bands
 - College not being respectful
 - General consensus: no
 - 39-week rooms disproportionately affected
 - Increases not worth the cuts – cuts not big enough for enough people
 - Logic flawed
 - Only one band of 39-week getting a cut – just 4 rooms
 - Have bigger cuts – bigger changes seem more worthwhile getting the lower bands
 - Have nicest room prices go up rather than the room with the largest rent per year
 - College might not have readjusted prices based on updates
 - Have they updated based on refurbishments and quality of rooms?
 - Prices may be out-of-date
 - They didn't put category 7 on the spreadsheet
 - It is much lower than the lowest on the spreadsheet – it's around £1000
 - Much more of an impact than the cuts they suggested
- Allison: do we want reworked version or to abandon this idea?
 - Yes for reworked at least
 - Push them about inflation – working on rent cuts may not be helpful if inflation increases it again anyway
 - Students affected by one-off increase and possibly inflation
 - Double hit with increases
- Allison: college decides budget in January
 - Start of next term when broader college administration looking at rent
- Good that we have conversations about rent
- Allison: Churchill model
 - College goes to JCR and says increasing rent by e.g. 2% – up to JCR to decide which rooms see increases/decreases so long as sums to 2% increase
 - Students can decide increases based on quality as we know quality of rooms
 - People may avoid certain rooms if they're too expensive despite being the nicest room

- Room ballot – poor student may be forced to take expensive room
- Unfair to put rent redistribution onto students – fault may be put on JCR
- JCR represents students – rent is doing college’s bidding – difficult to keep up in future years with meetings also
- College should ask for our input but not give us the role of sorting it out
- JCR could do better job of some college things – not a paid job for JCR though
- JCR trusted more by students
 - More approachable by students also
- If successful could lead to improving more things in college – good
- Big increase on top rooms could result in very expensive rooms being left over to the end in room ballot – at the moment cheap rooms get left
 - Need a backup in case students who can’t afford it are forced to take those rooms
 - Richer students don’t necessarily take most expensive rooms
 - First years least aware of room options – may be affected the most
- Allison: college says changes to room ballot could help more than changes to rent
 - Incoming 4th years get priority over 2nd years at the moment
 - Can opt out of room ballot based on need? As well as religious and medical needs
 - Needs testing to see if helpful
 - Room ballot done in Lent
 - Collect data based on whether there is still demand for high-price rooms still
 - Form asking best-case and worst-case scenario
 - Maximum willing to pay
 - Also check whether people want rooms based on 39 week or because they want to spend more
 - People may not pick worse rooms because the difference in price is not worth picking the lower band room
- Ditch the model
- Is it a good idea to ask college to organise data collection or should we do it?
 - College can do it – they have the data for it
 - Make sure they don’t trick us
- JCR not in charge of getting sponsors
 - Development office deals with donations
 - Already got donations for bursaries
 - Some sponsors always donate for other causes, e.g. refurbishment
 - Could push for donations to be spent more on making rent affordable