

**CONSTITUTION
OF
THE CLARE HALL GRADUATE STUDENT BODY
2015**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

Introduction To The Amended Constitution.....	2
1. Name.....	4
2. Definitions.....	4
3. Objects Of The GSB.....	5
4. The Committee	6
5. Terms Of Reference	6
6. Election Of The Committee	7
7. Election and By-Election Procedure.....	9
8. Committee Meetings	10
9. General Meetings and Extraordinary General Meetings	10
10. Sub-Committees	12
11. Finance and Disbursal of Funds.....	12
12. Documents	14
13. Affiliation to Organisations.....	15
14. Grievances, Proposals and/or Representations	15
15. Interpretation of The Constitution.....	16

INTRODUCTION TO THE AMENDED CONSTITUTION

Clare hall is different from other colleges in terms of its size and therefore exudes a friendly atmosphere. The last and only Constitution was drafted in 2003 in line with the needs of the student body at that time. However, an efficient and democratic self-governance institution must ensure that minimum standards of fairness and transparency are adhered to. This becomes vital when the student size grows and governance through informal mechanisms may be inadequate.

Keeping these in mind, the Constitution Review Committee has sought to put in place formal mechanisms that better reflect the current reality of our practices while retaining the flexibility allowed under the previous Constitution. The intention is to increase student involvement in decision making, to foster continuity of Committee actions and to ease the transition from one GSB Committee to the next. The main changes that we have incorporated based on feedback from the student community are listed below:

- a. The definitions of the General Student Body (GSB) and the (elected) Committee have been clarified. The GSB will elect a Committee to represent its interests, govern the conduct of student activities and disbursement of funds. The GSB is supreme and voluntarily vests power in the Committee. The Committee serves at the pleasure of and to fulfil the objects of the GSB.
- b. Provisions dealing with elections have been changed to make it easier, flexible and more inclusive. The option of electronic voting is now available.
- c. Transparency and disclosure provisions have been included to ensure that all the actions taken, documents in possession of the Committee and all relevant information are mandatorily available online on the GSB website or on request.

- d. A whole new budgeting and detailed finance clause replaces the old one. This, in addition to the transparency provisions, is intended to make students take a greater interest in GSB activities and allocation of funds every term. The changing nature of the student body and their interest in various activities has been kept in mind.
- e. The continuity provisions provide for maintenance of detailed records of the Committee activities and related expenditures. The outgoing Committee will also update the Handbook – which will include the roles and responsibilities of the different positions and any advice from the outgoing Committee to the incoming Committee. To further ensure a smooth transition, the President and the Treasurer will be elected at the end of the Academic year, when they will enjoy the support of the existing Committee to get comfortable in their roles. The rest of the members will be elected at the beginning of the next year and will be provided the GSB Committee Handbook with all the relevant information to fulfil their roles.
- f. Other changes relate to the new post of IT officer to maintain the GSB website and ensure that it reflects the latest updates. Provisions to vote out a Committee or a Committee member have been strengthened to guarantee the responsible working of the Committee. Quorum requirement for General Meetings has been reformed to strike a balance between obtaining GSB approval on important matters, while not unreasonably restricting the power of the Committee to act.

The Constitution Review Committee:


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1. NAME

1.1 The Association shall be called the Clare Hall Graduate Student Body hereinafter referred to as the GSB.

2. DEFINITIONS

- a) **Associate Member:** Any person, having a close association with Clare Hall, whom the Committee shall deem to be an Associate Member.
- b) **College:** Clare Hall, Herschel Road, Cambridge, CB3 9AL, United Kingdom.
- c) **Committee Members:** The Committee shall comprise of the following Members:
 - i. President;
 - ii. Vice-President;
 - iii. Treasurer;
 - iv. Secretary;
 - v. Welfare Officer(s);
 - vi. Social Officer(s);
 - vii. Sports Officer(s);
 - viii. External Officer(s);
 - ix. Student-Fellow Interaction Officer(s);
 - x. Green Officer(s);
 - xi. Equalities Officer(s);
 - xii. Art and Music Officer(s); and
 - xiii. Information Technology Officer(s).
- d) **Council of Clare Hall:** Meetings where the President, Vice-President, Bursar and Senior Tutor of Clare Hall are in attendance.
- e) **Extraordinary General Meeting:** A meeting of importance that is called in exceptional circumstances where all Members and Associate Members are entitled to attend, however only Members can vote.
- f) **Former Member:** A Member of the GSB who has exercised his or her discretion to no longer be a Member of the GSB.
- g) **Full Term:** as defined in the Statutes and Ordinances of the University of Cambridge. Reference to specific full terms may be made as “Full Michaelmas Term”, “Full Lent Term” and “Full Easter Term”.

- h) **General Meeting:** A meeting where all Members and Associate Members are entitled to attend and only Members can vote.
- i) **Governing Body:** refers to the Governing Body, as defined in the Statutes of the College, which has been vested with governance of the College, subject to the provisions of the Clare Hall Statutes and of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge Act 1923.
- j) **Graduate Students:** Students who appear on the termly email list produced by the tutorial office.
- k) **Interim Status Reports:** Reports detailing the actual expenditure of funds allocated under the Termly Budget.
- l) **Members:** All Graduate Students of Clare Hall shall be members of the GSB.
- m) **Termly Budget:** The budget approved by the GSB at a General Meeting at the beginning of each Full Term.
- n) **University:** The University of Cambridge, The Old Schools, Trinity Lane, Cambridge CB2 1TN.

3. OBJECTS OF THE GSB

3.1 The objects of the GSB shall include:

- a) promoting the well-being of the Members and Associate Members and fostering a sense of fraternity amongst them;
- b) ensuring equality of status, opportunity and treatment of Members and Associate Members in all their interactions concerning the GSB, the Committee, the College administration, Fellows, the Governing Body, other colleges and the University;
- c) serving as a platform to collaborate with other Members and Associate Members and promoting group activities within the College; and
- d) achieving self-regulation by electing a Committee, which will coordinate and oversee the affairs of the GSB, including the proper disbursement of funds in accordance with the changing nature of the Members and their diverse interests.

4. THE COMMITTEE

4.1 The objects of the Committee shall include:

- a) fostering and making provision for cultural, recreational, social, and sporting activities of the Members and Associate Members;
- b) promoting the well-being of Members and Associate Members;
- c) making provision for the representation of the opinions of Members and Associate Members to the appropriate bodies both within and outside College; and
- d) doing all such other things incidental or conducive to the previously mentioned objects of the GSB.

4.2 The Committee shall comprise of the Committee Members as defined under section 2(c).

4.3 Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the duties and responsibilities of the Committee Members are:

- a) as detailed in the GSB Committee Handbook; and
- b) from time to time, determined by the Committee in order to further the objects of the GSB.

4.4 Committee Members may occupy more than one position on the Committee, with the exception of the President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, who may only hold one position on the Committee.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE

5.1 The Committee, empowered by the GSB, shall, collectively, and through its individual Committee Members, do all such things so as to advance the objects of the GSB and the Committee referred to in clauses 3.1 and 4.1 respectively.

5.2 The Committee shall, inter alia, subject to the laws of the United Kingdom:

- a) represent the interests of the GSB at Council and Governing Body Meetings;

- b) seek to be involved in the decision making process of any body where the decision(s) to be made may affect Members and/or Associate Members;
- c) administer and dispose of the funds of the GSB in accordance with section 11 herein;
- d) call for elections in accordance with section 7 herein;
- e) form sub-committees, in accordance with section 10 herein;
and
- f) call General Meetings and Extraordinary General Meetings in accordance with section 9 herein.

5.3 The Committee shall meet at least twice per term. The meetings shall be called by the President or at least two members of the Committee.

5.4 The President and Vice-President shall attend Council meetings and Governing Body meetings. In their absence, any other two Committee Members may be nominated by the Committee through a simple majority.

5.5 The President and Vice-President shall attend Graduate Union meetings and Cambridge University Student Union meetings. In their absence, any other two Committee Members may be nominated by the Committee through a simple majority.

6. ELECTION OF THE COMMITTEE

6.1 The Committee, as referred to in clause 4.2 herein, shall be elected by the Members of the GSB.

6.2 The President and Treasurer must be elected annually at the end of the Full Easter Term.

6.3 It shall be the responsibility of the President and/or the Treasurer to call for and ensure that the election to elect the remaining Committee Members is held in Michaelmas Term, in accordance with section 7 herein.

6.4 In the event that the positions of President and Treasurer are vacant, the Senior Tutor, or College Secretary shall call for the election in Michaelmas Term to elect a Committee.

6.5 Once nominations are received for the posts of Vice-President and Secretary, and clause 6.4 does not apply, nominations may be accepted for the remaining Committee Member posts.

6.6 The terms of office for the President and Treasurer shall run from the time when their election results are announced until the announcement of their successors the following year. However, if the positions of President and/or Treasurer do not have a successor, their term of office will terminate at the beginning of the next Full Michaelmas Term. For all other positions, the term of office shall run from the time when their election results are announced until the beginning of the next Michaelmas Term.

6.7(a) Where a Committee position becomes vacant, a by-election following the procedure outlined in section 7 herein is to occur. In the event that no nomination(s) are received and the vacancy remains, the Committee at its discretion may allow an existing Committee Member to hold two officer positions.

6.7(b) Any action(s) and/or decision(s) of the Committee shall remain valid, if taken within twenty-eight (28) days from the date upon which vacancies arise in any, or all of the following positions:

- i. President;
- ii. Vice-President;
- iii. Treasurer; or
- iv. Secretary.

6.7(c) If within twenty-eight (28) days, the positions outlined in clause 6.7(b) herein remain vacant, then the decisions of the Committee on all other matters except those that are necessary to continue with the by-elections referred to in clause 6.7(a) herein will be considered invalid and unconstitutional.

6.7(d) In any event, the action(s) and/or decision(s) of the Committee cannot be considered invalid merely due to vacancies arising other than those mentioned in clause 6.7(b) herein.

6.8 All Committee Members shall have the right to resign. Resigning members of the Committee must give two weeks notice, by email, to the Secretary, President or Vice-President.

6.9 If the President, Vice-President, Treasurer or Secretary resign without complying with clause 6.8 herein, they shall be precluded from nominating

themselves for the same position in the future, unless exceptional circumstances exist.

7. ELECTION AND BY-ELECTION PROCEDURE

7.1 All Members of the GSB are entitled to stand for election or re-election to the Committee.

7.2 Elections held in Michaelmas Term are to be called in accordance with clauses 6.3 or 6.4 herein. All other elections or by-elections shall be called by the Committee with the exception of those outlined in clause 9.11 herein.

7.3 Candidates shall self-nominate. Call for nominations shall remain open for two (2) weeks, closing two (2) days prior to the elections taking place.

7.4 Manifestoes of nominees must be made available to all Members once the call for nominations closes.

7.5 Where there is only one nominee for a Committee position, a vote to reopen nominations may occur. If a simple majority votes to reopen nominations, then the election is to proceed by way of by-election, otherwise the nominee shall be appointed.

7.6 In the case of an election or by-election, where there are two or more nominees, the nominee who obtains a simple majority will be elected to the Committee.

7.7 Voting is to occur by way of secret ballot, which may include online voting, with votes being counted by:

- a) the existing Committee Members or the Senior Tutor for elections referred to in clause 6.2 herein;
- b) the President or Treasurer or Senior Tutor for elections referred to clause 7.2 herein;
- c) the Committee Members for elections referred to in 6.7(a) herein; or
- d) for elections referred to in clause 9.11 herein, votes shall be counted by:
 - i. the remaining Committee Members where one or more Committee Member is voted out;
 - ii. the proposers or Senior Tutor where the Committee is voted out.

8. COMMITTEE MEETINGS

8.1 The Secretary or President shall notify all Committee Members of Committee meetings, at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting. Such notification shall also include the agenda for the meeting. The Secretary is responsible for producing an agenda.

8.2 The Secretary or President shall give notice of forthcoming Committee meetings to all Members and make known the agenda, at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of any Committee meeting.

8.3 Members or Associate Members of the GSB may attend Committee meetings as an observer without speaking rights, unless clause 8.4 herein applies. Speaking rights may be afforded at the discretion of the Committee.

8.4 The Committee may declare a Committee meeting closed to observers in instances where matters to be discussed concern confidential information about a Member's or Associate Member's circumstances.

8.5 Fifty (50) percent of the Committee Members shall constitute a quorum for a Committee meeting.

8.6 Decisions of the Committee shall pass by way of simple majority of the Committee Members present at a quorate meeting. Each Committee Member is entitled to vote or abstain from voting.

8.7 At least three members of the Committee may proceed to an emergency decision, which must be approved by a simple majority of the Committee as soon as possible, otherwise the emergency decision shall be considered invalid.

8.8 A Chair, who is a Member and nominated by a Committee Member, may be appointed by way of a simple majority of the Committee, at the discretion of the Committee. The Chair shall have no voting rights.

8.9 The minutes of a Committee meeting are to be posted on the GSB website within two (2) days of the meeting.

9. GENERAL MEETINGS AND EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETINGS

9.1 A General Meeting must be held at least once per term and called by the President or Treasurer.

9.2 The first General Meeting must be called by the Committee within a week of the election results being announced in Michaelmas Term.

9.3 The Committee may call for a General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting and shall give at least seven (7) days written notice of a meeting being held, and the associated agenda, to Members, except in circumstances where clauses 9.4 or 11.3 herein apply.

9.4 Extraordinary General Meetings may only be called during Full Terms after ten (10) percent of the Members have given written notice to the Committee. The Committee, must then call an Extraordinary General Meeting as soon as possible and has a maximum of forty-eight (48) hours, from receipt of written notice, to decide when the meeting shall take place. Where a greater delay may defeat the object of the Extraordinary General Meeting being called, the Committee may notify the Members in writing only forty-eight (48) hours in advance.

9.5 Twenty (20) percent of the Members shall constitute a quorum for any meeting under this section. If a quorum is not achieved within half an hour of the meeting time, then the meeting stands adjourned to the next date as determined and notified by the Committee, within forty-eight (48) hours subject to clause 9.3. The agenda of the adjourned meeting is transferred to the second meeting, where quorum requirements are waived.

9.6 (a) Decisions shall pass by way of simple majority, by show of hands, except in circumstances where clause 9.12(a) applies.

9.6 (b) Members are entitled to vote by proxy. Written notice of voting by proxy must be given to the Secretary at least twenty-four (24) hours before a General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting.

9.7 General Meetings or Extraordinary General Meetings shall be chaired by a Member, nominated by and elected by a simple majority of the Committee, who shall have no voting rights. At the Chair's discretion all Members and Associate Members shall be afforded a reasonable and equal opportunity to speak.

9.8 The minutes of a General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting are to be posted on the GSB website within two (2) days of the meeting.

9.9 Visitors may be invited to General Meetings or Extraordinary General Meetings at the discretion of the Committee.

9.10 A vote of no confidence of the Committee or a Committee member must be passed by way of a simple majority at a General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting. A mandatory quorum of twenty (20) percent is required. For the sake of clarity there must be no waiver of quorum requirements.

9.11 When a motion of no confidence is passed, the Committee member or the Committee shall forthwith resign. In the case of a Committee member, the Committee shall hold a by-election. In the case of the Committee, the proposers of the motion shall hold an election in accordance with section 7 herein.

9.12(a) Any proposed constitutional amendment(s) must be passed by a two-thirds majority at a General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting.

9.12(b) No proposed Constitutional amendment(s) shall come into effect without the approval of the Governing Body.

9.12(c) No amendment(s) shall be made to this Constitution except in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1994.

10. SUB-COMMITTEES

10.1 With a simple majority vote of the Committee, any Committee Member may form a sub-committee to further promote the objects of the GSB and the Committee. The sub-committee may comprise of Members and/or Associate Members of the GSB and/or Committee Members.

11. FINANCE AND DISBURSAL OF FUNDS

11.1 Prior to the General Meeting referred to in clause 9.2 herein, the Committee must do the following:

- a) the Treasurer shall present the GSB accounts for the previous year to the Bursar of the College for submission to the College Auditor(s);
- b) the Committee members shall familiarise themselves with the GSB Committee Handbook;
- c) the Committee members shall gather student feedback related to their portfolios through any means possible, including – but not limited to – emails or online surveys, in order to gauge the interest level of Members in various GSB activities;
- d) the day before the General Meeting referred to in clause 9.2 herein, each member of the Committee shall put forward a proposal for

- allocation of funds. The proposal must reflect feedback gathered according to clause 11.1(c) herein and records of previous years;
- e) the Committee shall deliberate and finalise a budget proposal for the term, which will be presented at the General Meeting referred to in clause 9.2 herein; and
 - f) the Committee shall set aside and keep in reserve twenty (20) percent of the total funds received by the GSB in Michaelmas Term. The reserve twenty (20) percent may be disbursed only with the authorisation of the GSB at a General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting.

11.2 The Committee shall not have discretionary power to disburse funds. The Committee may disburse funds only in accordance with the Termly Budget or as authorised by the GSB at a General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting as provided in clause 11.3 herein.

11.3 In extraordinary circumstances, if funds are required for disbursement in excess of the Termly Budget, the Committee must call for a General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting before any such disbursement can occur.

11.4 Termly Budgets shall be decided in accordance with clauses 11.1 (c) - (f) herein and presented at the termly General Meeting. It is clarified that the reference to the General Meeting under clauses 11.1 (d) and 11.1 (e) shall be read as referring to the first General Meeting of that Full Term.

11.5 The Committee shall present Interim Status Reports at the termly General Meetings. Each Committee Member shall, if applicable, prepare an Interim Status Report for his or her respective portfolio. The Treasurer is responsible for amalgamating the Interim Status Reports and preparing an overview of the GSB's finances. The Treasurer is also responsible for preparing and maintaining the GSB's accounts.

11.6 Reports referred to in clause 11.5 herein must be published on the GSB website, at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the General Meeting.

11.7 For the sake of transparency and fairness, any funds disbursed under section 11 herein, wherever possible, should be supported by receipts or confirmation of payments. Such receipt(s) and/or confirmation(s) are to be provided to the Treasurer.

11.8 All documents, including receipts, accounts, proposals and/or reports related to section 11 herein must be made available at a General Meeting for inspection, upon request by a Member or Associate Member.

11.9 At least annually, the Committee shall publish a financial report to the Members and the Governing Body, which must, inter alia, include details of disbursement and allocation of funds for that academic year.

12. DOCUMENTS

12.1 Any document that belongs to the GSB shall be presented or published, at the discretion of the Committee, upon request(s) from a Member, Associate Member and/or member of the College.

12.2 The GSB Committee Handbook is to be updated annually by the Committee to include, inter alia:

- a) portfolios of each member of the Committee;
- b) the Termly Budgets; and
- c) a summary report of the Committees' activities for the relevant academic year.

12.3 A copy of the GSB Committee Handbook shall be made available online and one physical copy must be left at the Porters' Lodge.

12.4 The following documents, except those referred to in clause 84 herein, shall be published, as soon as practicable, on the GSB website:

- a) notices, agendas and new proposals of Committee meetings;
- b) notices, agendas and new proposals of General Meetings or Extraordinary General Meetings;
- c) GSB and/or Committee bulletins, decisions, news, updates;
- d) the GSB Committee handbook;
- e) the Constitution of the GSB; and
- f) any other document and/or notice deemed relevant by the Committee.

12.5 The purpose of the GSB Website is to create a platform for prospective, current and former Members to access important, current and relevant information about the GSB and the Committee.

12.6 The Information Technology Officer is responsible for ensuring the GSB website is updated regularly.

12.7 If the position of Information Technology Officer is vacant, the responsibilities outlined in clauses 12.4 and 12.5 herein shall fall to the President.

13. AFFILIATION TO ORGANISATIONS

13.1 If the Committee decides to become affiliated to any external organisation, it shall publish to the Members and the Governing Body a notice of this decision stating the name of the organisation and the details of any subscription or similar fee proposed to be paid, and/or any donation proposed to be made to the organisation. Such proposed fee(s) and/or donation(s) must be ratified at a General Meeting, or if the circumstances require, at an Extraordinary General Meeting.

13.2 The Committee shall publish annually to the Members and the Governing Body a report stating the name(s) of all external organisation(s) to which the GSB is affiliated and the details of any subscriptions and/or similar fee paid, and/or any donation made to any organisation(s).

13.3 Upon at least three (3) percent of the Members proposing the GSB be affiliated with an organisation(s), the Committee must call a General Meeting to decide on the proposal.

14. GRIEVANCES, PROPOSALS AND/OR REPRESENTATIONS

14.1 Members, Associate Members or Former Members who are dissatisfied with their dealings with the GSB or who claim to be unfairly disadvantaged or have any other grievance may refer a complaint to the President and Secretary.

14.2 Complaints are to be made in writing and must be responded to by the President as soon as possible, but not longer than two (2) weeks from the date of receiving the complaint.

14.3 Any proposal, which a Member or Associate Member submits to the Committee, must be in writing to the Secretary and placed on the agenda of the next Committee meeting by the Secretary. The proposer must be invited to the Committee meeting, at which the proposal is to be voted on and/or discussed, with speaking rights for the proposer.

14.4 Should a Member, Associate Member or Former Member be dissatisfied with a response provided by the President to a complaint or with a decision made by the Committee in relation to a proposal, the Senior Tutor and/or the Tutors are to be consulted.

15. INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

15.1 The terms of this Constitution shall be subject to the laws of the United Kingdom and shall be interpreted in accordance with the relevant legislation.

15.2 This Constitution is to be interpreted in light of and with a view of advancing the objects in clauses 3.1 and 4.1 herein. The Constitution is to be read as a wholly consistent document, and any provision herein should not be read in a manner that is inconsistent with another provision herein.

15.3 Any decision(s) and/or action(s), made and/or taken prior to the commencement of this Constitution, shall not be deemed invalid by virtue of this Constitution coming into force.

15.4 This Constitution shall be submitted to the Governing Body for review, in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1994, at intervals of five years.

15.5 The formation of a Review Committee every five (5) years, to review the provisions and working of this Constitution is recommended.
