

# The Constitution of the Queens' College Junior Combination Room

This document was last updated on the 4th December 2020. It is due for review by the Governing Body no later than the 4th December 2025, in accordance with the 1994 Education Act.

## Preamble

1. In this Constitution:
  - a. 'Governing Body' shall mean the Governing Body of the College.
  - b. 'College Union' shall mean the College Union of the College.
  - c. the expression 'affiliation to an external organisation' shall include any form of membership of, or formal association with, an organisation whose purposes are not confined to purposes connected with the college.
  
2.
  - a. No alteration shall be made to any part of this constitution without the approval of the Governing Body.
  - b. No alteration shall be made to any part of the Constitution or the Appendix without the approval of the Council of the College Union.
  - c. No alteration shall be made to any part of the Constitution or the Appendix without it first being approved by a quorate referendum of the JCR membership, as described in this constitution.
  - d. No alteration shall be made to this constitution that brings it into conflict with the 1994 Education Act or the Constitution of the College Union.
  
3. This Constitution shall be submitted to the Governing Body for review, in accordance with the provision of the Education Act 1994, at intervals of not more than five years.
  
4. The JCR shall operate in a fair and democratic manner in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1994 and the Charities Act, 1960.
  
5. The Constitution, and the Appendix, must be available to read by all members of the JCR.

## **Aims and Objectives**

6. There shall be a Junior Combination Room (JCR) in Queens' College:
  - a. to collate and express the opinions of its members in relation to their participation in college life.
  - b. to cooperate with any similar association or organization of students in accordance with the interests of its own members, subject to the provision below under "Affiliation to Organisations".
  - c. to provide social entertainments for its members.
  
7. In fulfilling its Aims and Objectives the JCR must act within the law, in particular within the provisions of the Charities Act, 1960 and the Education Act, 1994.

## **Membership**

8. All undergraduate in statu pupillari members of Queens' College shall by default be members of the JCR and shall continue to be members so long as they remain undergraduate members of Queens' College.
  
9. Notwithstanding any provisions in this Constitution as to automatic membership of the JCR, any person who would by virtue of those provisions be a member of the JCR may in any academic year by written notice declare that they do not wish to be a member, and in that case such a person shall not be a member of the JCR for that academic year. Such written notice shall be served on the Secretary of the JCR.
  
10. Anyone who qualifies for membership of the JCR, who exercises the right not to be a member of the JCR shall not be unfairly disadvantaged with regard to the provision of services or otherwise.

## **The JCR Committee**

11. There shall be a JCR Committee, composed entirely of JCR members, to fulfil the aims and objectives of the JCR.
  
12. JCR Committee positions, and their duties, shall be named and defined in the Appendix, which may be revised to reflect the changing needs of the JCR, after

consultation with the Council of the College Union and in accordance with clause 2.b.

13. There shall be, at minimum, a President, Secretary and Treasurer of the JCR on the JCR Committee.

14. No member shall hold more than one post of the JCR Committee at any one time.

15. There shall be no sabbatical or paid office in the JCR.

16. The JCR Committee will also provide members for suitable College Committees.

17. Members of the JCR Committee may, by mutual agreement, for a specified period and with the approval of the JCR Committee, delegate responsibilities to each other.

18. The members of the JCR Committee shall assist the President in ascertaining and representing the interests of the membership of the JCR.

19. In addition, each member of the JCR Committee shall fulfil any other functions as laid down by the Constitution or by the decisions of JCR Policy.

## **Elections**

20. The procedures for the appointment of each position of the JCR Committee shall be defined in the Appendix, including but not limited to the eligibility of members of the JCR to stand and vote for the position, the procedure for nominating candidates, and the timing of any elections.

21. The members of the JCR Committee elected in Lent term shall take office in the second division of the full Lent term (the 'Full Committee Handover') and shall serve only until the next Full Committee Handover, unless re-elected.

22. In all elections:

- a. voting will be by a secret ballot.
- b. There shall be a null candidate – ‘Re-open Nominations’ (RON)
- c. voting shall nominally be by electronic means.
- d. voting will be by the system of Single Transferable Vote (STV).
- e. each member of the JCR entitled to vote in an election shall have only one vote for each post for which they are entitled to vote.

23. If an election results in a tie, the first preferences under the STV system will then be counted for the contestants involved in the tie. The candidates with the most first preferences will be elected. If the result is still a tie, i.e. two or more candidates have the same number of first preferences, a re-ballot between the candidates involved in the tie will take place within 48 hours of the original ballot.

24. If the null candidate is elected, or if there is no nomination, then the procedure shall vary depending on the position in question. The procedures shall be defined in the Appendix.

25. Two Returning Officers shall administer the election, and the JCR Committee shall be responsible for their appointment. One of the Returning Officers shall be a member of the JCR Committee. The other Returning Officer shall be a member of the JCR, but not of the JCR Committee.

26. A Returning Officer may not be a candidate in the election, propose or second any candidate standing in the election, actively campaign for any candidate or issue during the time of their appointment or disclose the way any individual JCR member voted.

27. The Returning Officers are responsible for the interpretation of the election regulations as laid out in this document and the Appendix, including rules on campaigning.

28. Notice of the election and of the date by which nominations must be received shall be circulated to all members of the JCR at least one week prior to the election.

29. Rules regarding campaigning shall be defined in the Appendix.

30. The Returning Officers shall distribute a list of candidates for election to all voting members of the JCR in advance of the election. The minimum time before the election in which this must be done shall be outlined in the Appendix.

31. Candidates may send in a manifesto to be distributed by the Returning Officers to all voting members of the JCR. The rules for manifestos and for their distribution shall be defined in the Appendix.

32. Hustings shall take place on the same day that voting begins for all positions that are contested by more than one member of the JCR, and for other circumstances as defined in the Appendix.

33. Anyone, who for a reason that is acceptable to the Returning Officers, cannot vote in person may apply to the Returning Officers to vote in proxy for them. The preferences must reach the Returning Officers between the closing of nominations and the closing of voting.

34. The Returning Officers shall conduct the count immediately after voting closes and publish the results within 24 hours.

35. Complaints or allegations of electoral fraud must be made to the Returning Officers within 48 hours of the close of voting, and investigated by the Returning Officers, who shall notify and update the Senior Treasurer of the College Union, and the JCR Committee, of the investigation.

36. If the investigators of clause 35 believe an irregularity has occurred, such new elections shall take place as agreed between them and the Senior Treasurer of the College Union.

37. Disagreements between or with the Returning Officers shall be resolved in accordance with the provisions of the 'Grievances' section of this constitution.

## **By-elections**

38. By-elections may be held as necessary during the year, with posts being held until 12 months following the time at which the JCR Committee position's term would normally begin.

39. If a position of the JCR Committee that would, in the first instance, be appointed by election is left vacant, a by-election must be held and shall be conducted in accordance with the rules for elections except that:

a. the by-election shall be held between ten and fourteen days of the position being left vacant, except in the following cases:

i. if the vacancy occurs within ten days of the end of full term, the by-election shall be held between the tenth and fourteenth day of the next full term.

ii. if the vacancy occurs in the same term as, and prior to, the time that the position of the JCR Committee would be up for election, the by-election shall not be held, and the position will be vacant until that election, with the JCR Committee delegating the relevant duties.

b. members elected at a by-election shall take office immediately after the result of the by-election is declared.

c. an existing member of the JCR Committee may stand for election to another office but if elected shall be deemed to have resigned the previous office and the JCR Committee shall be deemed to have accepted that resignation.

## **Resignations**

40. The voluntary resignation of a JCR Committee member shall be effective at its acceptance at a JCR Committee meeting at which the resigning Committee member need not be present.

41. A post of the JCR Committee shall be deemed vacant if the holder ceases to be entitled to membership of the JCR, if the holder resigns from the JCR Committee, or if the resignation of the holder is required by a JCR Referendum whose motion is “to require the resignation of ... from the position of ...”, where the ellipses represent the name of the holder and the position of the JCR Committee they hold respectively.

42. Any member of the JCR may table a motion of no confidence in a Committee member for a JCR Committee meeting. A majority vote of all present JCR Committee members other than the Committee member in question may then require the resignation of a JCR Committee member, after which the position shall be deemed vacant except under clause 43.

43. A motion of no confidence passed by the JCR Committee as described in clause 42 may be overturned by a JCR Referendum, triggered within one week of the motion of no confidence, on the motion “to overturn the motion of no confidence

of the JCR Committee in ...” where the ellipsis represents the name of the Committee member under scrutiny.

## **JCR Committee Meetings**

44. There shall be two types of JCR Committee meetings: Ordinary JCR Committee Meetings and Emergency JCR Committee meetings. Each shall have a quorum of half the total number of JCR Committee members at that time, applicable to decisions for which a vote is considered necessary by those Committee members present.

45. The JCR Committee shall meet at regular Ordinary JCR Committee Meetings to:

- a. decide on actions to fulfil the aims of the JCR as outlined in clause 6.
- b. receive updates on the work of individual JCR Committee members.
- c. agree on action in response to issues raised by members of the JCR.
- d. vote on the adoption and amendment of JCR Committee Policy, on the appointment of co-opted positions of the JCR Committee and on other matters where the approval of the JCR Committee is deemed necessary.
- e. discuss the current affairs of the JCR and the College.

46. The President of the JCR, or another member of the JCR Committee nominated by the JCR Committee, shall chair all JCR meetings, and shall have a casting vote.

47. Ordinary JCR Committee Meetings may only be called within full term.

48. Drafts of the minutes of all JCR meetings must be posted on the JCR website not more than three days after the meeting. They must be accompanied by the statement “These are draft minutes which are subject to confirmation or correction by the JCR Committee” until verified at a later JCR Committee meeting.

49. Any member of the JCR may attend any JCR meeting, with rights to speak but not vote.

50. Emergency Committee Meetings may be called by any two members of the JCR Committee, by notifying the Secretary of the JCR.

51. Details of the minimum frequency of meetings, the availability of minutes and other issues pertaining to JCR Committee Meetings shall be defined in the Appendix.

## **Policy**

52. There shall be two kinds of JCR Policy: Committee Policy and Referendum Policy.

53. All policy shall be binding on the JCR Committee, provided that it doesn't contradict the provisions of this constitution or involve action that is unlawful or contrary to the provisions of the Education Act 1994.

54. JCR Policy shall be accessible to read by all members of the JCR.

55. In the event of conflict between policy, Referendum Policy shall overrule the provisions of Committee Policy.

56. Committee Policy may be adopted and amended by quorate vote of the JCR Committee at any JCR Committee Meeting.

57. The purpose of Committee Policy shall be:

- a. to outline official positions of the JCR Committee.
- b. to rule on the interpretation and implementation of the provisions of the Constitution and the Appendix.
- c. to formalise guidelines for action of the JCR Committee and the Returning Officers of JCR elections and referenda.
- d. to provide rules and guidance for all issues not covered by the Constitution or the Appendix, as considered appropriate by the JCR Committee.

58. Committee Policy shall not lapse.

59. Committee Policy shall be contained within clearly titled documents, each containing policy on a particular issue relevant to members of the JCR. The documents shall be accessible to members of the JCR at any time.

60. No Committee Policy may be adopted that is in conflict with existing Committee Policy.
61. Referendum Policy shall be installed by a quorate JCR Referendum, as defined in a section below.
62. To install Referendum Policy, the motion of a referendum must begin with the words “to install the following as Policy of the Queens’ College JCR:”.
63. Referendum Policy shall stand for two years from the date on which the result of the referendum is announced.
64. Referendum Policy may only be overruled or annulled by JCR Referendum.

## **Referenda**

65. JCR Referenda may be held to:
- a. install Referendum Policy.
  - b. require the resignation of a member of the JCR Committee.
  - c. overturn the JCR Committee’s decision to require the resignation of a JCR Committee member, as defined in clauses 42-43.
  - d. establish the opinion of the JCR membership, with a non-binding motion.
  - e. authorise changes to the JCR Constitution or the Appendix.
66. JCR Referenda must have an associated motion, and voters shall vote on the question “are you in favour of the above motion?” with the option of voting “yes”, “no” or to abstain.
67. All JCR members may vote in a JCR Referendum.
68. To be valid, a JCR Referendum must have met a quorum of 100 votes; or 20% of the JCR membership, whichever is lowest.

69. The JCR Committee must provide a medium for debate on the motions of referendum that is open to all JCR members. This will be organised by returning officers.

70. A JCR Referendum may be triggered by:

- a. a quorate vote of the JCR Committee
- b. a petition of at least 5% of the JCR membership, or 30 individuals, whichever is lowest, delivered to the Secretary or President of the JCR and containing the exact wording of the motion of the Referendum.
  - i. Petitions may contain multiple motions to be proposed for referendum.
  - ii. Petitions may be signed digitally or by paper means.

71. A referendum must be held within ten days of being triggered per clause 70 unless the petition is received within the last ten days of full term, in which case the referendum must be held within the first seven days of the next full term.

72. Referenda shall be by secret ballot, with the vote able to be held electronically.

73. Two Returning Officers shall administer the referendum, doing so without campaigning for any outcome, and the JCR Committee shall be responsible for their appointment. One of the Returning Officers shall be a member of the JCR Committee. The other Returning Officer shall be a member of the JCR, but not of the JCR Committee.

74. Anyone, who for a reason that is acceptable to the Returning Officers, cannot vote in person may apply to the Returning Officers to vote in proxy for them. The preferences must reach the Returning Officers between the closing of nominations and the closing of voting.

75. The Returning Officers shall conduct the count immediately after voting closes and publish the results within 24 hours.

76. Complaints or allegations of electoral fraud must be made to the Returning Officers within 48 hours of the close of voting, and investigated by the Returning Officers, who shall notify and update the Senior Treasurer of the College Union, and the JCR Committee, of the investigation.

77. If the investigators of clause 76 believe an irregularity has occurred, a new referendum shall take place as agreed between them and the Senior Treasurer of the College Union.

78. Disagreements between or with the Returning Officers shall be resolved in accordance with the provisions of the 'Grievances' section of this constitution.

79. The Secretary of the JCR shall be responsible for maintaining a record of all Referenda, and their results, and shall make this record available to the JCR membership.

### **Affiliation to Organisations**

80. If the JCR independently of the College Union, decides to become affiliated to any external organisation, it shall publish to all Junior Members of the College, and to the Governing Body, a notice of this decision stating the name of the organisation and the details of any subscription or similar fee paid or proposed to be paid, and of any donation made or proposed to be made, to the organisation.

81. The JCR shall publish annually to all Junior Members of the College, and to the Governing Body, the names of all external organisations to which it is affiliated independently of the College Union and the details of any subscriptions or similar fee paid, and of any donation made or proposed to be made, to the organisations within the year covered by the accounts.

82. Upon the request of at least three percent of its members, the JCR shall submit for the approval of its members a list of the organisations to which the JCR is affiliated independently of the College Union. If at least five percent of the members so require, the question of continued affiliation to any particular organisation shall be decided by a secret ballot at which all members are entitled to vote.

### **Relationship with the College Union**

83. The Senior Treasurer of the College Union shall have the right to inspect the accounts of the JCR.

84. The Council of the College Union shall assist the JCR Committee to implement the aims and objectives of the JCR.

85. Members of the JCR Committee will fulfil duties as laid out in the Constitution of the College Union.

86. The Senior Treasurer of the College Union, and the Council of the College Union shall fulfil duties as laid out in this Constitution.

## **Grievances**

87. Disagreements between the Returning Officers of, or complaints or allegations of electoral misconduct in a JCR Referendum or JCR Committee elections shall be resolved by the Senior Treasurer of the College Union, who may consult the Council of the College Union, and who shall administer any remedy as considered necessary. Any appeal against the decision of the Senior Treasurer of the College Union may be made to the Governing Body, who shall have absolute power to provide such effective remedy, if any, as they consider appropriate.

88. Any person who would normally qualify for automatic membership of the JCR who is dissatisfied in their dealings with the JCR committee, or who claims to be unfairly disadvantaged by reason of having exercised the right not to be a member of the JCR, may complain to the Senior Treasurer of the College Union. Any appeal against the decision of the Senior Treasurer of the College Union may be made to the Governing Body, who shall have absolute power to provide such effective remedy, if any, as they consider appropriate.

## **Changes to the Constitution**

89. Proposed changes to the Constitution must comply with the provisions of clause 2 and must be approved by a JCR Referendum, the Council of the College Union and by the Governing Body.