

Minutes of the Capitation Committee

30 January 2020

At 2.00pm in the Elizabethan Room, House 6

Present: Chair – Prof John Parnell, Secretary – Aidan Marsh, FSD – Elaine Sharkey, Student Life – Prof Kevin O’Kelly, CSC (Chair) – Lee Campbell, CSC (Hon. Treasurer) – Ronan Hodson, CSC (Treasurer) Eada Hogan, DUCAC (Chair) – Jemil Saidi, DUCAC (Treasurer) – John Bolton, GSU (President) – Shaz Oye, PUBS (Chair) – Lauren Boland, SU (President) – Laura Beston, SU (Welfare) – Aisling Leen, SU (Education) – Niamh McCay,

Apologies: Publications – Darragh McDonald, DUCAC – Aidan Kavanagh (In Attendance)

In Attendance: CSC – Joseph O’Gorman, CSC – Lucy O’Connell, SU – Simon Evans, Louise Ryan – Deputy Chief Finance Officer, Dr John Coman – College Secretary, SU (Ents) – Judith Robinson

Aidan Marsh, Committee Secretary, circulated the attendance sheet for members’ signature

Professor John Parnell as chair of the Capitation Committee opened this Special Meeting

Professor Parnell introduced Louise Ryan and Dr John Coman, and explained for those present that the purpose of this Special Meeting of the Capitation Committee was to discuss re-negotiating the Licence Agreement between College and MCD concerning the production of the Trinity Ball, the role of the Capitation Committee in the running of the Ball, and the provision of professional support to the Capitation Committee through the Commercial Revenue Unit (CRU).

Louise Ryan thanked the Committee for welcoming them to speak with the Committee. She acknowledged that the Committee had approved a revision of the contract the previous year, but explained that College wished to look at enhancing the contract with regards to certain elements as explained in a memo circulated to the Committee prior to the meeting and outlined the proposals being brought before the Committee.

The CSC Chair queried the wording of memo with regards to “Professional Support”, and raised concerns about the CRU taking over the Ball. Louise Ryan assured the Committee that the proposals were only that the CRU would assist with negotiations, and that they would play no further role outside of this remit.

The Chair asked Joseph O’Gorman and Simon Evans if they had any comments.

Simon Evans discussed the role of outside bodies through licencing (Dublin City Corporation, An Garda Síochána, Dublin Fire Brigade, Health Services, etc.) and that these bodies all had requirements that were met by the organising committee. He highlighted that when the Capitation Committee took over the running of the ball it took responsibility for debts of IRE45,000. SE also highlighted that the Ball ran because the Student Organisations wished it to run and he noted also that there was significant work and training went into the running of the ball.

Joseph O’Gorman outlined the history of the co-ordination of the Ball by the Capitation Committee. The Trinity Week Committee, a sub-committee of the Capitation Committee acted as an Executive Committee for the organisation of the Trinity Ball. Any business of the Ball, which is not now handled by MCD, is generally conducted by the Capitation Committee. He stated that the language used in the proposal being brought before the Committee suggested that the memo was based on a false premise - that the Ball was of benefit to College. The Ball exists for students, and should be run by students, and that taking control of any part of the Ball from the students should be avoided.

Louise Ryan clarified that the proposal was not intended to take away control from students, but was suggesting that the Capitation Committee allow CRU to assess the current contract and see if any improvements can be made.

Concerns were raised from various members present that the CRU would be looking at the Ball from an unsuitable viewpoint, i.e. that of a commercial opportunity such as the Summer Series, when the viewpoint of the Committee was that the Ball should be seen as being about students, and not finance, and that its nature as a student-led activity, with opportunities for student development, should not be dismissed. Lee Campbell (CSC) noted that the CSC had experienced problems with the CRU in the past when financial opportunities were placed ahead of student activities. Also raised were questions about what benefit College would gain from a review of the Ball contract from the existing version signed off by the Capitation Committee.

Louise Ryan said that student representatives can meet with the CRU to explain what is desired for the Ball, while John Coman stated that College was not seeking to gain any personal benefit from the process, highlighting that at no stage in discussions or at any other time have any benefits to the Summer Series been raised.

Ronan Hodson (CSC) raised concerns that the role of student bodies in College was being gradually eroded, and was sceptical that a greater benefit could be gained by seeking the assistance of CRU. This led to discussion of the diminishing role of students in supposedly student-run events.

Jemil Saidi (DUCAC) asked about the possibility of the CRU acting only in an advisory role, assessing the existing contract and briefing the Capitation Committee on how it might be improved. This had general support. It was noted that there was a dislike of the proposal being brought before the Committee and the CRU, but it was suggested that there would be no harm in seeing how the CRU may be able to assist in an advisory capacity, with students acting as chief negotiators.

Proposal: That representatives of the CRU meet with the Capitation Committee as soon as possible to provide advice to the Capitation Committee.

Proposal was accepted by the Capitation Committee, however it was noted that all negotiations with MCD that may occur as a result should be led by students, and not the CRU.

Meeting ended 3.10pm