



Minutes of the Capitation Committee

12 March 2021

At 2.00pm via Zoom

Present: Chair – Prof. John Parnell, Secretary – Aidan Marsh, FSD Representative– Shumane Cleary, Student Life Committee Representative– Catherine McCabe, SU Education Officer– Megan O’Connor, DUCAC Treasurer – John Bolton, Trinity Publications Chair - Meg-Elizabeth Lynch, Trinity Publications Treasurer – Jack Kennedy, CSC Treasurer - Nathan O’Regan, CSC Honorary Treasurer – Ronan Hodson, CSC Amenities - James Spillane, GSU President - Gisèle Scanlon, CSC Chair – Ryan Grunwell

Apologies: SU President - Eoin Hand; DUCAC Chair – Jemil Saidi, SU Welfare Officer – Leah Keogh, DUCAC representative (In Attendance) – Aidan Kavanagh,

In Attendance: CSC – Joseph O’Gorman, GSU – Martin McAndrew, SU – Simon Evans, SU Ents – Hugh McLnerney, CSC – Lucy O’Connell, David Donohue – GSU Oversight Officer

Professor John Parnell as Chair of the Capitation Committee opened the meeting.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of 19th November 2020

Ronan Hodson noted that he was recorded as “In Attendance” instead of “Present”

Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising

Update on Trinity Ball

The draft Terms of Reference for the Trinity Ball Committee (TBC) had been circulated to the Capitation Committee prior to the meeting.

The Trinity Ball Committee Terms of Reference were passed by general assent

As part of the drafting of the TBC Terms of Reference, a potential issue had been identified in the Capitation Committee Terms of Reference, and amendments were brought before the Committee to ensure that if necessary a meeting could go ahead in the absence of the Senior Dean.

The Dean of Students sought clarification on the term “Principal Committee” Representative and suggested that the wording “Student Life Committee” be used instead. S. Cleary suggested if the wording “Principal Committee” was to be retained, the words in brackets “(currently Student Life Committee)” could be inserted after this.

A change to the Capitation Committee Terms of Reference membership to reflect “Student Life Committee” representative in place of “Principal Committee” representative was approved by general assent.



A suggestion was made that the Terms of Reference be amended to have the Dean of Students act in the capacity of Chair in the absence of the Senior Dean. The GSU President objected to this change as they felt that the Dean of Student's position as Chair of the Student Life Committee allowed for potential prejudice in the chairing.

To account for the potential for prejudice, and to allow for meetings to take place in the absence of both Senior Dean and Dean of Students it was suggested that another amendment be added to have all decisions made in a meeting in the absence of the Senior Dean/Chair, be subsequently ratified by the Senior Dean.

No consensus could be reached on these amendments, and it was agreed to defer discussion on this subject to a subsequent meeting.

Articles had been circulated by Trinity News that indicated that the SU Ents Officer was planning on putting together a Trinity Ball. The SU Ents Officer clarified that the intent was to run an "online concert", and not a replacement of the Trinity Ball. It was asked that the event not be associated with the Trinity Ball due to potentially affecting the Ball's branding. The SU Ents Officer clarified that the use of Virtual Ball in the Trinity News article had been intended as a shorthand, and the event was not intended to be a Trinity Ball replacement.

It was noted that the Capitation Committee welcomes online/virtual events being run.

Updates on Financial Statements of Capitated Bodies

CSC

It was explained that there were minor issues with the CSC's accounts due to various issues arising out of the Student Centre Levy and that resolving the problem had taken up a large amount the CSC's time over the past several months. It was emphasised that there had been no wrongdoing or serious mistake and that the CSC wishes the Committee to note it is holding this money at the request of College.

Money had been lent to SU and CSC by College in the year that the Student Centre Levy was not collected. Some of this funding (€55k) had not been spent by the SU which had transferred these funds to the CSC prior to the 2019/20 financial year-end. As the CSC viewed this bank account as separate from the CSC's core activity, it had not been included in the initial draft financial statements. Following discussions with FSD and the CSC's auditors, the Student Centre Levy funding was recognised in the 2019/20 financial statements but the €55k lodgement was erroneously omitted from the finalised accounts circulated at the November meeting.

The revised circulated financial statements now include the €55k amount in the Student Centre Levy bank account held by the CSC. These revisions have had no impact on the Profit & Loss statement or the Net Assets as previously submitted to the Committee in November, and future accounts will include the missing information, restructured to separate out the Student Centre Levy funding from the CSC's core activity.

The amended statements were approved by general assent.



DUCAC

It was noted that despite being due in November, the Capitation Committee had yet to receive the 2019-20 Annual Accounts for DUCAC. DUCAC representatives emphasised that they understood the Committee's concerns. It was explained that the original issue was accessing documentation and stocktakes in the Pavilion Bar and that information was now with the accountant. However, the accountant had moved on with other jobs and the DUCAC accounts were now out of sequence. DUCAC informed the Committee it had received a formatted trial balance the previous day and were scheduled to meet with their accounting firm in the following week to go over the draft accounts.

The Chair emphasised the significant issue that the Committee had not yet seen even a draft of the accounts of DUCAC. The Chair had examined the remit of the Student Life Committee, and noted that

4.4 The Committee is responsible for ensuring the disbursement of monies to the capitated bodies by the Capitation Committee and for receiving an annual financial report from the Chair of the Capitation Committee.

As the Chair has not been able to provide the necessary annual financial report to Student Life Committee, he will be speaking to Student Life Committee and recommending to them that payments of disbursements to DUCAC be suspended until the accounts are received.

DUCAC stated that they would accept a hold on further payments until the finalised accounts are presented.

S. Cleary noted that a trial balance will not be sufficient, but that full audited accounts will be needed for funding to be restored.

Trinity Publications

It was noted that there were some errors in the Trinity Publications accounts presented to the Committee in November, and that those accounts were inaccurate by a net amount of €300. Publications had difficulty contacting their accountants who had not been responding to queries. S. Cleary noted that the finalised accounts will be required for the Committee's record, but that the discrepancy was not material and there were no concerns arising from this.

Update on Auditor Rotation

S. Cleary shared a presentation with the Committee.

Following the presentation S. Cleary recommended that Capitated Bodies retain their engagement with their current accounting/audit firms but request that each firm shows evidence of independence between accounts preparation and accounts auditing such as an annual written confirmation of the separate teams undertaking these tasks.

DUCAC - J. Bolton felt that recommendation was suitable, and that DUCAC would be happy to pursue the recommendation.



CSC - L O'Connell was uncertain if the CSC's accounting firm is of a suitable size to allow for this recommendation but will find out if the recommendation will be possible.

Trinity Publications - J. Kennedy noted that Publications had a lukewarm relationship with their current auditors and were happy to move accountants if the Committee deemed it suitable.

SU - S. Evans was uncertain if the SU's accounting firm is of a suitable size to allow for this recommendation. He raised a concern that if all Capitated Bodies are with one firm, and all have the same financial year-ends everyone would be looking for time-sensitive services at the same time of year creating a pressure point in the system. This was acknowledged as a potential issue.

GSU - G. Scanlon was concerned that there would be a loss of quality from changing auditors.

There was consensus that the Capitated Bodies look into the possibility of S. Cleary's recommendation. An update will be given at the next meeting.

Any Other Business

No other business

Meeting ended 15.25