

OPEN UNIVERSITY
LAW SOCIETY



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Society Committee

Friday 18th October 2024

Minutes

The minutes of the 4th meeting of 2024/25 Society Committee held online on Friday 18th October 2024.

Present:

Patricia Thomson	Chair
Mark Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle	Treasurer
William Brazier	Secretary

Absent:

Ryan Greene	Vice-chair
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Agenda:

To discuss the removal of Mr Ryan Greene, Vice-chair, for a breach of section 3(c) of the OULS Constitution, the aim 'To promote passion for law and legal education'.

Welcome:

Ms Patricia Thomson, Committee Chair, welcomed everyone to the 2024/25 Society Committees 4th meeting.

Ms Thomson explained that Mr Greene was not present at the meeting due to unavailability pertaining to employment.

Mr Greene communicated this to the OULS WhatsApp group chat at 1517 on 18th October 2024.

Housekeeping:

N/A.

Minutes of the last meeting:

N/A.

Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda:

Ms Thomson

Ms Thomson would like to bring back a Master of Moots, who will be on the committee, but will not be an officer of the committee.

With regard to the external mooting competition, Ms Thomson has put forward a team of two members to represent the OULS. Ms Thomson used a fair system to do this, however felt as though a second opinion would be valuable in the future.

Additionally, the judge for the upcoming mooting competition was unavailable, thereby the workshop and competition did not go ahead.

Mr Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle was asked about drafting and judging an essay writing competition for the OULS.

Ms Thomson was also recently in conversation with a member of the OULS who works for a solicitor's firm. They explained that such a law firm would be happy to assist the society in creating opportunities relevant to a career at the Rolls.

Mr Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle

It was accepted that it would be beneficial to bring back a Master of Moots.

Mr Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle felt as though Ms Thomson's method of selecting a team for the external mooting competition was a fair one.

It was confirmed that Mr Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle would be happy to draft and judge a OULS essay writing competition.

Mr Brazier

It was accepted that it would be beneficial to bring back a Master of Moots.

Mr Brazier explained that he was aware of a judge who may be able to assist with the judging of future internal mooting competitions.

Report:

Ms Thomson

Ms Thomson explained that Mr Greene had breached the aims of the OULS, namely in promoting passion for legal education, during the previous committee meeting whereby Mr Greene had offered unsolicited advice to the effect of committing plagiarism.

This was a concern for the OULS, as Mr Greene has access to the wider membership, and there is a concern that if Mr Greene, as a Vice-chair and thereby in a position of responsibility, was to offer this advice to a member who looked to him as such, then there is a reasonable risk such a member may follow this advice. This not only presents a potential risk to the OULS, but also to the OU Law School.

Ms Thomson explained that she had raised the issue with the OU Student Association, who affirmed that the OULS had dealt with the issue correctly and advised that the removal of Mr Greene from the committee was the most appropriate course of action. The OU Student Association also suggested that should Mr Greene take issue with his removal, then he could be signposted to them.

Upon agreement with the OU Student Societies Ms Thomson also raised the issue with the OU law school. They advised that the OULS should report the issue to the Academic Conduct Office (ACO), as this is the routine procedure to follow.

Ms Thomson reported the issue [REDACTED]

There were additional concerns raised regarding Mr Greene's alleged conduct throughout his time in office, namely, insisting no mooting coordinator was required,

as he would be able to arrange moots from the position of Vice-chair, before subsequently, and repeatedly, pushing back the dates for his arranged mooting workshop/ competition, and routinely missing the meetings of the committee under section 7(b) of the OULS Constitution.

Ms Thomson held a vote, as set out under 'Removal of an Officer or Committee Member' section of the OULS Charter. Ms Thomson, Mr Highfield of Ballumbie Castle, and Mr Brazier unanimously voted to remove Mr Greene from the office of Vice-chair with immediate effect. This amounts to a 75% majority, thereby satisfying the requirement of a 51% majority for removal of a committee member under the 'Removal of an Officer or Committee Member' section of the OULS Charter.

Ryan was to be removed from the OULS Vice-chair email account, and the OULS Committee WhatsApp group chat, with immediate effect. Ms Thomson was to send an email and WhatsApp to Mr Greene explaining this following the committee meeting.

Elections for a new Vice-chair are to be advertised and opened as soon as reasonably practicable. With respect to using the election system, Johnathon (former Chair of the OULS) had offered to assist with the use of this system.

In the interim period, Mr William Brazier will act as Vice-chair.

Due to Mr Greene's breach of section 3(c) of the OULS Constitution, the aim 'To promote passion for law and legal education', it was agreed to cancel, and refund Mr Greene's membership to the OULS with immediate effect. Whilst there is no requirement for a vote to refute a member's membership, Ms Thomson, Mr Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle, and Mr Brazier agreed that this was the best course of action.

Mr Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle

Voted in favour of removing Mr Greene from the office of Vice-chair.

On being asked whether the members should be made aware of the reasons for Mr Greene's removal, Mr Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle suggested that it could be stated that he has been removed 'in accordance with the Society's rules' rather than stating explicitly what for.

A change to the previous committee meetings minutes was also put forward, namely, to reflect that whilst Mr Greene offered advice to commit plagiarism, he himself did suggest that he had never actually utilized this method.

Mr Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle affirmed that he was happy for Mr Brazier to step in as Vice-chair until such time that the position is filled.

Mr Brazier

Voted in favour of removing Mr Greene from the office of Vice-chair.

In relation to the absent position of Vice-chair, Mr Brazier confirmed that he was happy to fill this role in until such time that the position is filled, in accordance with the OU Student Societies guidelines under the Unfilled posts rule which provides 'As an emergency short-term measure, another officer can take over the duties of the vacant post until the vacancy is filled'.

Mr Brazier suggested that the members should be informed that Mr Greene had been removed from the Committee, and signposted to the committee meeting minutes for a more detailed explanation.

Actions:

N/A.

Finance:

Mr Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle

- To fully refund Mr Greene's OULS membership.
- Confirmed that there are funds available for a prize for a prospective essay writing competition.

Proposed changes to the society byelaws and society guidelines:

Mr Brazier

Mr Brazier put forward a change from the title of Mooting Coordinator to Master of Moots.

Any other business:

N/A.

Date of next meeting:

N/A.

Signed:

William Brazier, Secretary.