



St Aidan's College



St Aidan's College SCR Shield

Senior Common Room Constitution
October 2021

Contents

- 1. Definitions 2*
- 2. Intentions of the Senior Common Room 2*
- 3. Membership and Subscriptions 3*
- 4. General Senior Common Room Meetings 3*
- 5. The Executive Committee 4*
- 6. Elections and Appointments 6*
- 7. Finance 6*
- 8. Standing Orders 6*
- 9. Complaints and Appeals 7*
- 10. Interpretation of the Constitution and Standing Orders 7*
- 11. Changes to the Constitution and Standing Orders 7*
- 12. Access to Information 8*
- 13. Exec Indemnity 8*
- 14. Effect 8*

1. Definitions

In this constitution and its standing orders, the following definitions apply:

1. 'The University' and 'University' shall mean the University of Durham, otherwise known as Durham University.
2. 'The College' and 'College' shall refer to St. Aidan's College.
3. 'JCR' and 'SCR' shall mean the Junior Common Room and Senior Common Room respectively.
4. 'Executive Committee' shall refer to the body of students elected annually to oversee the smooth-running of the SCR and to manage its resources to achieve its aims.
5. 'Member' shall mean only a full member of the SCR as indicated in section 3 who has either paid the membership fee, or whose fee has been waived at the discretion the SCR or the College Principal. 'Associate member' shall include all other postgraduate students (i.e. full time, part time, Postgraduate Certificate of Education students and distant learners) affiliated to St. Aidan's College that are not full members.
6. 'Student' shall include all undergraduate and postgraduate members of St. Aidan's College, including (where applicable) those individuals who have opted out of either the JCR or SCR.
7. All references to officers and committees shall mean those of the SCR unless otherwise specified.
8. 'College regulations' shall mean the regulations of St. Aidan's College approved by the College Council.
9. 'University Regulations' shall mean the regulations of the University of Durham as approved by the University Council.
10. Livers-in and livers-out shall refer to students residing in College property and in a private accommodation respectively.

2. Intentions of the Senior Common Room

The purpose of the SCR is to encourage the intellectual and cultural enrichment of members by:

1. The SCR signpost its members regarding administration for College or University issues and welfare.
2. The SCR volunteers work in partnership with the College and University but does not work for the College and University.
3. The SCR provides yearly cultural development and community spirit to SCR members by providing formals (Christmas, Chinese New Year, and Burn's Night), Monthly Lecture Series.
4. The SCR acts independently of any religious body or political organisation, and pursue its intentions without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, or nationality.
5. The SCR promotes an inclusive and welcoming community, valuing people with diverse and multiple characteristics such as age, physical or mental abilities, gender and gender identity, class, marital status, religious beliefs, sex, and sexual orientation.
6. The SCR does not tolerate bullying of any kind.
7. The SCR takes care of those on the margins of society.
8. The SCR promotes interaction among members, the JCR, and regional communities.

3. Membership and Subscriptions

1. The full membership of the SCR shall be determined by the SCR executive committee and the College Principal and Assistant Principal.
 1. At the discretion of the SCR Executive Committee, a reduction in fees may be applicable for those members signing up after January.
 2. No fees are levied for associate members.
 3. In cooperation with St. Aidan's College, the SCR Executive Committee is entitled to contact full and associate members with information regarding Durham University, St. Aidan's College, the JCR and the SCR itself.
2. For postgraduates residing in St. Aidan's College, a membership fee will NOT be automatically added to the College bill, they are not members by default.
3. Membership will be offered to registered University teaching, research and administrative staff residing in the College or College houses.
4. The College Chaplain will be invited to join the SCR as an honorary member.
5. Membership may, at the discretion of the SCR President, and Principal, be offered to other postgraduate students, doctoral and post-doctoral candidates and research assistants. Members of the local community (i.e. those external to Durham University) may be invited to join the SCR at the discretion of both SCR Exec together with Principal.
6. Undergraduate students' part of an integrated Masters' course (e.g. MEng, MSci) will be invited to join the SCR for a membership fee.
7. All postgraduate students affiliated to St. Aidan's College who have not levied the membership fee are automatically associate members who do not have the right to vote or hold office.
8. Associate members may opt to become full members at any time.
9. Any member may opt-out of full membership by written notice to the SCR Executive Committee. At the discretion of the Executive Committee, membership fees may be refunded for those members opting out before January.
10. At the discretion of a unanimous decision of Executive Committee, one Honorary Life Membership may be offered to College Support Staff or an SCR member or Executive Officer per year. This award offers the recipient the right to vote, address and attend all SCR general meetings and events as an SCR member in perpetuity. The award is non-transferable.

4. General Senior Common Room Meetings

The highest authority of the SCR shall be the official decisions taken at SCR meetings.

1. Official decisions shall be binding on all officers and sub-committees of the SCR unless one or more of the following exceptions apply:
 1. It is in conflict with the constitution or standing orders.
 2. It is in conflict with either College or University regulations.
 3. It is in conflict with the law.
2. There shall be at least one SCR general meeting held each term. All paid members shall be invited to attend, speak, vote and stand for election when applicable. Associate members shall be entitled to attend and speak at SCR meetings, but neither vote nor stand for election.

3. The convening and business of the SCR meetings shall be regulated by the standing orders.

5. The Executive Committee

There shall be an executive committee (“the Exec”) who shall administer the business of the SCR between SCR meetings.

The Executive Committee shall comprise of:

The President

Shall be responsible for speaking on behalf of the SCR. They should function as figurehead and spokesperson to entities external to the SCR, such as the Durham Students’ Union, the JCR and student and staff bodies. The President, in conjunction with the Welfare Officer, shall be responsible for the welfare of the SCR and its members, and for the management of SCR facilities. In the event where the Chair is not available, or is running for another position, the President shall temporarily function as Chair. The President shall take responsibility for contacting new postgraduate students before their arrival in Durham to inform them of the SCR and its activities, usually but not restricted to posting a welcome pack. The President along with the Exec are to work with college to welcome in the next years student. The Chair is responsible for writing-up or training in person to hand over to new person and must provide documentation to the new President.

The Chair

Shall be responsible for coordinating the actions of the SCR officers and chairing meetings of the SCR and the Exec. The Chair should update the list of members on a termly basis and pass them to the President. The Chair organises SCR meetings in collaboration with the rest of the Exec. The Chair along with the Exec are to work with college to welcome in the next years student. The Chair is responsible for writing-up or training in person to hand over to new person and must provide documentation to the new Chair.

Administrator

Shall be responsible for taking minutes at all Exec meetings and GM and then emailing them out to the rest of the Exec. The finances of the SCR shall present the state of the SCR bank account in a detailed manner at SCR meetings and general meetings and present them at the College Council meetings. The President and Assistant Principal will hold bank cards for SCR bank account, but the Administrator will have full online access to these accounts. The Administrator along with the Exec are to work with college to welcome in the next years student. Administrator is responsible for writing-up or training in person to hand over to new person and must provide documentation to the new Administrator.

The Social Chair

Shall organise social events for members of the SCR, including consulting with the JCR for the High Table on Formal Dinners, members’ nights, and who may choose to gather and chair a social sub- committee. This sub-committee shall support the Social Secretary in all aspects of the role as they (the latter) see fit. The Social Chair along with the Exec are to work with college to

welcome in the next years student. The Social Chair is responsible for writing-up or training in person to hand over to new person and must provide documentation to new the Social Chair.

Social Media Officer

Shall be responsible for the SCR's online presence. The Social Media Officer shall work with all other Exec members and College staff to keep updated social media account. The Social Media Officer is also responsible for the dissemination of information to SCR members by arrangement of the President and or Chair. The Social Media Officer along with the Exec are to work with college to welcome in the next years student. The Social Media Officer is responsible for writing-up or training in person to hand over to new person and must provide documentation to the new Social Media Officer.

The Welfare Officer

Primary role will be to assist students by signposting them to the University Counselling Services, College Student Support Staff, Academic Tutors or NHS services when appropriate. The Welfare Officer shall attend at least one Nightline Training weekend as well as briefings organised by the Durham Students' Union. This position is meant to act primarily as a listener and should under no circumstances give advice to students as per what they should or should not do - however they can suggest students to turn to other, more qualified members of staff. The Welfare Officer must be acquainted with various official documentation (such as the Serious Adverse Circumstances Form) and University Policies regarding student welfare). It is important to note that all student members (full and associate) can benefit from the SCR Welfare service. In case of doubt, the Welfare Officer shall consult senior members of staff (i.e. the College Principal, Senior Tutor, or Assistant Senior Tutor). The Welfare Officer along with the Exec are to work with college to welcome in the next years student. The Welfare Officer is responsible for writing-up or training in person to hand over to new person and must provide documentation to the new Welfare Officer.

Bar Rep

The SCR is to have a PG student represent the interest of the wide PG community concerning St Aidan's College Bar. The PG Bar Rep is encouraged to gain employment working in the college bar and report back to the Exec activities and events taking place in the college bar. The Bar Rep will be the liaison between the College (VP) and the SCR and must attend all college bar meetings and report back to the Exec in person or in writing. The Bar Rep advocates the interest of the PG students in SCR.

The SCR Executive Committee does not work for St Aidan's College or the University of Durham.

The SCR Executive Committee is to keep office hours once a week on Wednesdays (very minimum from 1-4 pm).

The Executive Committee shall be collectively responsible for the business of the SCR, except when an explicit responsibility as the result of an SCR meeting and/or constitution.

The Executive committee shall meet at least one time a term in addition to a mandatory termly general meeting.

No one person may hold more than one position simultaneously. In the event that a position is vacant, the duties of that position will be delegated across and executed by other members of the Committee.

The committee shall be responsible for ensuring that at least one SCR representative attend meetings of the College Council. This is usually the President or the Chair but is not a necessary configuration.

6. Elections and Appointments

1. Members of the Executive Committee shall be elected by levy paid members of the SCR. Positions may be held up to two years without being re-elected. Only open Exec positions or positions held by the same person for two years continually are available for all incoming SCR levy members to run. During the SCR year, October Time to October Time, if the post of President becomes vacant, the Chair shall take on the responsibilities of the President. Responsibilities may be disseminated to other Exec members.
2. The means to remove any elected officer from their office by a vote of no confidence (VONC) for not showing-up to do their job. But is subject to appeal on the grounds of erroneous information or unforeseen circumstances.
3. Standing Orders shall provide the means to elect or appoint other officers.
4. Standing Orders shall provide the means for a position to be held by more than one person.
5. Proxy votes may be counted in the event of quorate meeting. Proxy votes, where possible, will be sent to the Chair and will be counted, if required, after the procedures which take place in the Standing Orders.

7. Finance

1. The finance of the SCR shall be administered by the Administrator. If the position of Administrator is vacant, the President shall administer the finances at the discretion of the Chair and the Exec.
2. The SCR shall not take out a loan or commit the SCR to any financial payment options which could cause the SCR to become overdrawn. Standing Orders shall describe the approval procedures required for the Administrator to make expenditure.
3. The Administrator shall prepare a summary of the SCR's account each year, and a budget for the following year which shall be made accessible at an SCR general meeting and at a College Council meeting. These shall be available for inspection by any member of the SCR on request to the Administrator.

8. Standing Orders

There shall be Standing Orders to regulate the business of the SCR, which shall include the items required by this constitution:

1. The business of the SCR meetings.
2. Any additional responsibilities of Executive members.
3. The conduct of election for Executive positions, the method of election or appointment to other SCR positions and the means to remove elected officers by VONC.
4. The procedure to be followed before making a complaint against the actions of the Exec or a member of the SCR.

5. The procedure for adopting changes to the Constitution or Standing Orders.
6. Standing Orders on other matters may also be formed.
7. Standing Orders may provide for their own suspension with immediate effect, for a period up to the start of the next SCR meeting.

9. Complaints and Appeals

Any member or associate member who is dissatisfied with their dealings with the SCR may appeal against the SCR's actions to the College, in particular:

1. A member or associate member considers an SCR meeting or election to have been unfair.
2. A member or associate member disagrees with a ruling on the Constitution or Standing Orders.
3. A member or associate member considers a decision of the SCR to be unfair.
4. A member or associate member is dissatisfied with the actions of an officer or committee and does not wish to raise the matter at an SCR meeting.
5. Any form of bullying will not be tolerated and if any members engage in this type of behaviour they will be removed from the Exec and they will be held accountable by the college VP.

Before a complaint can be made, those concerned must attempt to reach consensus on the matter where the President shall mediate. If an agreement cannot be reached, the College Principal or Senior Tutor shall be invited to arbitrate. If the complaint refers to a Standing Order or an election, this may result in the SCR meeting being declared void.

If an agreement cannot be reached by an internal procedure, or the appeal is made against a VONC, the matter shall be referred to the college Principal (Dr Susan F. Frenk) or Senior Tutor (Sukanya Miles- Watson who is a life-time member) who shall act in accordance with the University's Code of Practice.

10. Interpretation of the Constitution and Standing Orders

1. The Constitution and Standing Orders shall be interpreted by the Executive Committee. A ruling of the Exec on the Constitution or Standing Orders may only be overturned through the appeals procedure.
2. The Chair may make rulings on the Constitution and Standing Orders relating to the conduct of the meeting, but any ruling may be overturned by the Exec.
3. The President may make rulings on the Constitution and Standing Orders outside of SCR meetings if they consider the matter too urgent to be dealt with at the next executive meeting. Any decision made in this manner shall be subject to approval by the Exec at the next meeting.

11. Changes to the Constitution and Standing Orders

Standing Orders shall outline the procedure for proposing changes to the Constitution and Standing Orders themselves.

1. Any paid levy member of the SCR may propose a motion to change the Constitution or Standing Orders if the changes uphold the ethos of “The Rainbow College” and the University.
2. A motion to change either must be submitted at least 10 days before the SCR meeting and shall be published as soon as possible.
3. Such changes can only be carried if approved by majority of SCR Exec meeting.

In the event of conflicts following a change to the Constitution and Standing Orders, the following rules shall apply:

4. In a conflict between the two documents, the Constitution shall take precedence over the Standing Orders.
5. If articles of the Constitution, and likewise of the Standing Orders are in conflict with each other, the Chair shall make a ruling on the interpretation of the conflicting parts. If in doubt, the most recently adopted part shall take precedence.

12. Access to Information

All members and associate members shall be entitled to see any information the SCR holds about them within 7 days of a request made to the President or to the Chair.

13. Exec Indemnity

Each executive member of the SCR shall be entitled to be indemnified out of its assets against all losses or liability they may sustain or incur in, or about, the execution of their employment. No such person shall be liable for any loss, damage or misfortune which may happen to be incurred by the SCR in the course, or because of, the execution of their (the executive member) duties in relation thereto - if this shall not be because of their own negligence.

14. Effect

This constitution is adopted by a of the SCR Exec meeting, and in doing so revoked all previous constitutions pertaining to St. Aidan’s College Senior Common Room.

The SCR Executive members to sign are the President of the SCR and Chair, and date below acknowledge that this Constitution is adopted, effective Midnight after signing.

SCR Chair and President Print and sign Name/Date:

President:

Chair: