

Short hands:

POI – Point of information

P – Proposer or seconder

Q – Question

A- Answer

Starts time: 16:08

Quorum: 38 – quorum achieved

Motion: Support for those affected by the conflict in Ukraine

The JCR notes that:

1. President Vladimir Putin’s decision to authorise a full-scale invasion of Ukraine was unjustified and untenable.
2. The UK government has not offered sufficient support to the country in its decision to not sufficiently waive visa requirements for Ukrainian nationals.
3. There are both students and staff members in Oxford that have been deeply affected by the crisis and the ongoing fighting.

The JCR believes that:

That the common room must lend its support to Ukrainians and members of the Eastern European diaspora in Oxford that have been hit by the crisis.

The JCR Resolves:

1. To publicly publish the below statement in solidarity with those affected by the crisis:

Statement

The St Edmund Hall JCR condemns President Vladimir Putin’s decision to authorise an invasion of Ukraine. We recognise the sovereignty of Ukraine as a nation and stand in solidarity.

We condemn the inaction of the UK government and their choice to not fully waive visa requirements for Ukrainians in light of the crisis. There are estimated to be 18,000 Ukrainian citizens in the UK as of last year, and the Eastern European diaspora are an important part of the population in both Oxford and the rest of the country.

We also stand in solidarity with Russian staff and students, whom we recognise are not responsible for the crisis at hand and may be experiencing fear of ostracization and discrimination.

2. To lobby the college administration to fly a Ukrainian flag above the college in visible support and solidarity with both students and staff affected by the crisis.
3. To donate £500 to the 'Oxford in support of Ukraine' fundraiser to raise money for the British Red Cross, who are providing essential humanitarian support. The fundraiser can be viewed [here](#).
4. To raise awareness amongst JCR members of demonstrations taking place in the city.

Proposer: Luke Drago

Secunder: Sam Cherry

P: So, I think we all know why we're here. The motion is pretty simple. It's going to do four things. One, it'll put up a statement saying that the JCR condemns what's going on currently in Ukraine and stands with our students we have here. Two, it's going to donate five hundred pounds to the British Red Cross's fund. There's a fund Oxford students set up specifically to the British Red Cross that's counting the entirety of Oxford's donations. That'll be really good for us to be able to do. Three, it'll be the JCR policy to lobby to get the Ukrainian flag flown starting, I think, theoretically tomorrow, we will start lobbying for that. And there's a fourth component as well, but escaped me, but I'm sure it's great. So those are the main provisions, but I think, you know, it goes without saying the events have happened over the last week have been absolutely horrific. And yeah, 500 pounds isn't a lot in the grand scheme of things, but anything that we can do, we should be doing. Thank you.

Q: I was thinking from a perspective of like the Russian side of things not being as nice as they could be. I come from a country where if you make bold political statements and you have a strong intelligence, they might strike back at you. So, I think we should think about what the negative sides of raising a Ukrainian flag might be. And if we have other perhaps more like, I don't want to say decent, but if we could put like little ribbons out, I think someone had that idea, should we work on that rather than raising the big flag?

A: I think the major thing here is one, we're not going to raise the flag. It's just going to be JCR policy to lobby for it. We can't, unless someone's, you know, trying to sneak up there overnight, we can't do it without college approval. And I also like the idea of having smaller actions because I agree there's a lot of ways to handle this. But at the end of the day, we're dealing with a sovereign country who may not exist next week, whose flag may not represent a piece of land next week. So, anything that we can do to show solidarity with that community, with the Ukrainian students we have here at Oxford. I come from a town that has ten thousand Ukrainians in, right? Ten thousand Ukrainians call Charlotte, North Carolina, home. Anything that I can do to show the people back home, people here, that we stand with them in the face of the greatest crisis in the entirety of their civilization's history. I think we should do.

POI: Brittany spoke to college, and they said they've got a policy where you're not allowed to fly any national flags on the flagpole. But college is happy to fly it somewhere else prominent in college.

Q: In terms of Russian students in the JCR, how do we show solidarity to them and like, how do we protect them from like being negatively impacted by the motion right now?

A: If I recall, the third paragraph of the statement that was put out says that we also stand in solidarity with Russian staff and students whom we recognize are not responsible for the crisis at hand and may be experiencing fears of discrimination. This invasion is not being done by Russian students or the Russian people. It's being done by one dude in the Kremlin. I think it's very important that we make sure we protect our Russian students and take every measure that we need to. This isn't on them. This is on a government that has decided to violate international law and sovereignty.

Q: Has there been any specific concerns raised by any students, probably Russian students about this? Or is this like purely hypothetical because we could probably just get around this by making sure everybody who would have an objection to this just clearly state their position, and if nobody has a direct objection, we shouldn't stop because of a theoretical security concern which nobody's actually concerned about.

A: The Russian society has put on state basically being like, "we're not going to put the statement." So, they've been pretty, you know. But in Teddy, no one said anything to me. I can't speak for the Russians.

Q: Where is it that you want to publish the statement?

A: Wherever it is that we publish things. It doesn't matter to me at all. It's just a standard motion going on in multiple colleges. I just modified the template to fit Teddy.

Q: Are there any like specific welfare things that we can do additional to the ones that's already happened that you think would be useful. Because for both Ukrainian and Russian, I don't even know the numbers, if we have any at all or how many there are. But are there any specific things that we can do and does someone have access to the numbers of like Russian and Ukrainian students to specifically reach out to them? Because they may not feel comfortable coming forward?

POI: College is doing that directly, that's not the JCR. They have the list which they're not going to give to us.

Q: I think we can still do our job like buy a flag for the JCR and then we can put ribbons outside like the how the rooms start facing front quad or like facing high street. And that can come out of your budget anyway. In the meantime?

Q: Is it worth maybe changing it slightly, so, posting the statement on the JCR social medias first and then also asking college because I think they're the ones who control the Facebook page which has lots of followers, too.

A: Whatever works is fine.

Q: What other colleges in Oxford are participating in the fundraiser?

A: I can pull up the spreadsheet right now. Motions are being debated at Christ Church, Corpus, HMC, Hertford, Keble, Magdalen, Merton, New, Pembroke, Queen's, Catz, us, Hilda, Hugh's, Trinity, Univ, and Wadham. Of which colleges that have gotten through already: Corpus has gotten four hundred pounds for two different charities, Queen's has got a thousand and they're going to divide that between multiple different areas, including this link. Catz did a whole fifty pounds. Real impressed with that one, guys. Hugh's did two hundred, and Somerville is also doing a thousand, donating to a huge hodgepodge of charities. This link is humanitarian. There are links to donate to like the Ukrainian Defence Fund, but I don't love the optics of the JCR, you know, donating to a weapons fund. And also, you know, given that most federal governments are picking up the slack on that one. I think our money probably best spent on humanitarian resources. I think we all generally trust the British Red Cross.

Q: Because welfare was brought up, we could probably sort of address the security concern for Russian students. We could do a friendly amendment so that we only go forward with the motion once we have confirmation from the welfare officers that Russian students have been contacted and there's no security concern raised, I think.

A: I will have to reject that.

A: I think because of got confidentiality; I don't think police would give us that information. That confidentiality shows that college wants to protect the identities of those individuals from people finding out. If we have a body of Russian students, but college doesn't give out the list of their names, then they're protecting from people knowing which Russian students we have in Teddy Hall.

Q: I guess the softer alternative to that would be to post a statement or post a question of the JCR Facebook page, give it like three days, see if anybody has any security concerns regarding the motion that has passed.

A: We have posted the motion already and we've emailed the motion to everyone in the JCR. Facebook group.

For: 38

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

All for, motion passes