

## Balliol GMs: A Very Short Introduction

**Note:** As an ‘explainer’ document, naturally I’ve omitted some of the more complex details involved. If anyone’s interested, you can read up on these here – [JCR Constitution 25.11.22](#)

### What is a GM?

- A GM, or General Meeting, is an opportunity for the entire JCR to meet up and collectively discuss major decisions affecting the whole JCR
- GMs are usually held 3 times a term, on Sunday at 8pm, with pizza and snacks
- They are chaired by the President and minuted by the Secretary, with minutes publicly available soon after the GM
- For a GM to operate, it must reach quorum – 35 members (excluding the Chair)
- The order of business at GMs consists of:
  - Officers’ Reports – updates from Committee Officers
  - Questions to Officers – questions may be submitted for any Officer via email to the Secretary by **end of day Thursday** before a GM, allowing for a response to be delivered orally or in writing at the GM
  - Discussion of Motions
- Alongside regular GMs, there is also an Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the end of Michaelmas Term where the Committee submits annual reports etc., and there is a provision to hold an Emergency GM for time-sensitive issues should the need arise

### Motions

- These form the main substance of GMs, and can be proposed by anyone, on (almost) any topic considered relevant to the whole JCR – examples include spending motions, adding to the JCR Standing Policy (its opinion) or even Constitutional Amendments
- For details on how to write a motion, check this link – [Writing a Motion | Balliol JCR](#)
- Don’t worry too much if unsure about how to write a motion, you can always ask the Secretary for advice and feedback so long as this is done well before the deadline
- Most motions must be submitted to the Secretary via email by **end of day Thursday** before a GM, but can also be submitted even if there is no GM coming up
- Motions that involve statements to be made on behalf of the JCR, such as a public letter or social media post, must be submitted by **end of day Tuesday** before a GM

### Consulting Committee Officers

- If your motion is relevant to any of the Committee roles, please consult them before sending a finalised version to the Secretary
- Some changes don’t need to go through a GM, and even if they do, Committee Officers can give you advice on the feasibility and effectiveness of your motion
- They’re also just more likely to support your motion if you give them advance notice

- Please consult the Treasurer in advance for spending motions of over £200 or motions involving reimbursement backdating over two weeks
- Please also consult the Treasurer for spending under £50 as the Committee may be able to approve your spending without needing to go to a GM
- Please consult the President, Secretary and other relevant Committee Officers in advance for proposed amendments to the Constitution or Standing Orders

### Amendments

- Amendments may be proposed to motions, though no changes can be made regarding the sum of money requested, and must be submitted to the Secretary via email by **end of day Saturday** before a GM
- To propose an amendment, write out the full amended motion, highlighting any changes in the colour blue
- The proposer of the original motion can then choose to accept or reject the amendment, and must let the Secretary know of their decision by **5pm Sunday**
- If an amendment is rejected by the motion's proposer, then the following steps shall take place:
  - The original motion will be debated and voted on
  - If this is rejected, then the amended motion(s) will be debated and voted on
- If there are two contradictory amendments (that seek to amend similar sections of the motion in different ways), there will be a vote to determine which attracts greater interest before moving onto debate on the more popular amendment

### Procedure for Debate

- The format is as follows:
  - Proposition – a speech by the proposers explaining the motion
  - Short Factual Questions – can be asked to proposers or JCR Committee
  - Debate – members give speeches in proposition or opposition (no back-and-forth dialogue, at most, you can give another speech to respond to new points)
  - Summary – one summary speech per proposition and opposition
  - Voting – anonymously via the Element App

### Voting Majorities

- 50% – for most motions and amendments, spending motions up to £200, Standing Policy dated over three years prior to the AGM
- 60% – for spending motions over £200, up to £500; or motions to reimburse money backdating over two weeks up to £500
- 67% – for motions involving a withdrawal of money from JCR Reserves (not regular spending motions, which withdraw from the JCR General Fund)

- 75% – for spending motions over £500, up to £10,000; or motions to reimburse money spent before the current term up to £10,000; or amendments to the Constitution (at two consecutive GMs); or amendments to the Standing Orders
- 90% – for spending motions over £10,000