

Oriel's Junior Common Room denounces proctors' charter of disciplinary amendments, backs Wellington Square Watch.

For immediate release. 10th June 2024.

The Junior Common Room of Oriel College has backed Wellington Square Watch's campaign against **University Council's arbitrary and capricious disciplinary amendments to the Statutes**. In a vote *nemine contradicente* (thirty-one for, none against, one abstention), members of Oriel's JCR agreed the motion overleaf.

Council proposes to amend the Statutes to become a proctors' charter of arbitrary and unworkable prohibitions and powers. The amendments, if strictly enforced, could **forcibly out gay members of the university, ban research on cheap life-saving drugs if it leads to overall loss of research funding, and ban singing hymns in religious processions.** They would **endanger the position of the Proctors as impartial arbiters of disputes**, because **any exercise of such expansive powers, no matter how careful, would lead to the perception of selective enforcement.** Wellington Square Watch denounces this **institutional vandalism.**

Wellington Square Watch thanks Oriel's JCR for their kind support. Anybody wishing to support its work should contact its Secretary at jpl@epistolae.net.

Pointers on Council and Congregation.

Legislative power in the university rests with Congregation, which comprises its senior academic and administrative staff. Council has certain delegated powers, and other powers to enact regulations and make proposals subject to Congregation's approval. It discharges much routine administrative work.

About Wellington Square Watch.

Wellington Square Watch is a concern group of student members. It seeks to promote, through lawful means in the fullest conformity with the statutes and regulations of the university—

- academic freedom;
- the democratic usages of the university, including the powers of Congregation;
- administrative accountability; and
- sound governance.

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Text of motion agreed.

This JCR notes the report of Wellington Square Watch [[link](#)] concerning Council's proposed disciplinary amendments, which finds that the amendments, if strictly enforced, could

- force people out of the closet,
- effectively expel financially disadvantaged students awaiting disciplinary hearings,
- allow arbitrary withdrawals of access to IT facilities,
- ban singing of hymns in Corpus Christi processions,
- ban research that could make drugs cheaper, and
- ban affixing of posters to railings outside the Radcliffe Camera at a vigil.

This JCR considers that it would be unacceptable for the amendments to have those and the other effects enumerated in the report.

This JCR considers that the report shows that it is plausible that the amendments could have some of these effects.

This JCR therefore demands that Council wholly withdraw its misguided proposals, and for Congregation, if Council fails in its duty, to force its hand.