

DCSA Smoking Ban

Open Meeting

27th October 2005

<u>Present</u>	Katie Tanner (KT)	President
	Melanie Keene (MK)	Treasurer
	Rosienne Farrugia (RF)	Secretary
	Caren Weinberg (CW)	Womens
	Patrick Boner (PB)	Sports
	Claudia Crovace (CC)	Ents
	Scott Shackelford (SS)	International
	Sarah Hamylton (SH)	Green
	Joab Rosenberg (JR)	Comms
	Robin Usher (RU)	LBGT
	Mike Hoenig (MH)	Bar-chair
	Caroline Scott (CS)	Admiral

College Students

KT opened the meeting, welcoming everyone, and introducing the issue to be discussed: **Should smoking be banned in college?**

Previously KT had asked students via whatsapp to send her their opinions.

KT explained that she has received numerous complaints by email regarding concerns due to health risks, people not using the bar because they cannot tolerate the smoke either for health reasons (such as asthma) or due to personal preference for smoke free environments.

Most emails KT received were in favour of a smoking ban.

KT clarified that this is an information collection meeting. The opinions collated would then be presented to college and a future course of action determined. It is likely that the issue will be decided by a referendum.

Discussions were split over 3 main points:

- 1) Smoking in bedrooms
- 2) Smoking in the bar out of hours (when bar is closed)
- 3) Smoking in the bar when the bar during bar hours

KT opened the meeting to discussion from the students present

1) Smoking in bedrooms

Warren asked what college policy is at present.

KT informed those present that to date smoking in bedrooms is not prohibited. It is however not allowed in the common areas of hostels such as kitchens.

Problems arising from smoking in bedrooms include:

- The next person in the room has to live with the smell of smoke
- Next door neighbours get smoke wafting into their rooms through windows
- An accident in past years in one of the Newnham Terrace houses where the awning underneath a student's room was burnt by cigarette stubs thrown out of the window.

Lizzy commented that it seems inconsistent to ban candles due to fire hazards and then not ban smoking. It is as much a fire hazard as a candle flame.

MK raised the option to have separate accommodation for smokers such that the rooms are always used by smokers. It was made clear that the Clerk of Works is not in favour of this option.

Joe mentioned that it would be 'sad' for the person who lives in a room to not be allowed to smoke in what is essentially 'their' room.

In answer to this it was mentioned that smoking outside your residence – in your own garden or courtyard – would still be an option.

Warren queried whether we need to pose the question of banning smoking in bedrooms in the referendum.

The consensus was that yes the decision should be taken by a referendum as smoking in bedrooms is part of the overall policy of what to do with smoking in college.

2) Smoking in the bar area out of bar hours

Currently college staff use the bar area as a smoking area. After lunch and dinner people who smoke use the bar area.

It was mentioned that smoke from the bar area wafts out through all the downstairs area including the parlour which is a non-smoking room.

The new air conditioning system installed by the bar helps extracting the smoke. However, the bar area has no doors and so it is difficult to isolate the smoking area and contain the smoke.

On a side note it was suggested that ashtrays should be installed near the garden doors on the outside to reduce the numbers of cigarette butts on the ground around the door.

If smoke is banned during a particular part of the day, there would still be the smell of smoke during the rest of the day.

A second problem with smoking is the damage caused such as burnt carpets and upholstery.

Societies that book the common room and bar area might be put off from using these areas because of the smoke issue. Ian said that the chess club uses the bar area for their chess games and would rather there not be smoking.

Joe commented that he was not convinced that the bar area would be used more after lunch or dinner if there was a smoking ban. A number of people use it for their after meal cigarette which they cannot have in the parlour. There is after all the parlour for the non-smokers.

Warren and MH pointed out that it is not a question of number of people using the room rather than not using it but the people who do use the room to socialise etc but would rather not be around smoke.

Jenny: the real issue with smoking is that it is a health hazard. We should not go around the issue discussing numbers etc but the main issue which is that smoking is a health issue and people have a right to not be subjected to smoke.

It was pointed out that the study centre is a non-smoking area and therefore the bar area is also used by people who are working and would like to smoke at the same time.

SH: The bar area is a smoking area and therefore we are seeing people who use it because they can smoke there. We are not seeing the people who would use it if it were not a smoking area.

CC: there is no easy way to enforce a no smoking ban. The issue is likely to put smokers against non-smokers. Thus why not try to raise awareness instead.

KT said that is a POLICY. If the policy is that there is to be no smoking then the college will see to it that it is enforced. Also most people will follow the policy once it is set up and there will be only a few who will defy it outright. A softer policy may create more animosity because non-smokers can ask smokers to please stop but they are not obliged to stop. Some smokers might not stop smoking even if asked and this would create more animosity.

KT informed everyone that Clare became a non-smoking college last year and the smoking ban has worked.

3) Smoking in the bar during bar hours

During bar hours the only area available for socialising is the bar and adjacent common room. The parlour cannot be used as a non-smoking area due to concerns about the furniture and paintings.

KT asked if the bar would lose custom if people who used it where asked not to smoke.

Jenny said that the prices are so cheap compared to other bars and pubs that people would not change venue simply because the bar is no smoking.

RU said he knows of people who would change and go elsewhere if they could no longer smoke in the bar. This has happened in Wolfson.

MH said that banning smoking inside would necessitate either keeping the doors open or the constant opening and closing of the outside doors by people who want to go outside smoking. This would be a security nightmare.

MH also pointed out that the bar staff cannot be asked to enforce the ban.

Ian mentioned that there are people walking in and out all the time even now. People waiting outside the main doors to sneak in are still able to sneak in. Sneaking in might be easier if people are walking outside to smoke but individuals who want to sneak in will still wait long enough and sneak in. Therefore there is not really an increased security issue.

Economic issue: the bar does not make profit, therefore if it loses customers the price of drinks would go up.

Lizzy: The bar is a relaxed bar. It is one of the best, unique features of Darwin Bar and what makes it so popular. The fact there are not so many regulations make it thus.

Jessie: Everything said about losing custom was an issue in all places where a smoking ban has been implemented. However, custom was not lost as non-smokers would attend more often and others would go to meet friends.

Gemma: It is great that the bar is so relaxed for people who are not allergic to smoke. But there are people who cannot frequent the bar because they are allergic and allowing smoking in the bar could be seen as a discrimination against people who are allergic to smoke.

SH: We are being pre-emptive discussing enforcement, security and loss of business before we get to them.

Ewan: Generally less than 50% of people in the bar are smoking but their smoke is affecting all of the people in the bar.

Jenny has been taking note of smoking in the bar. On a weekday evening there are about 5 people with cigarettes and with them are 30 other people who are not smoking.

Joe: There are a proportion of people who do not smoke and still use the bar.

CS raised the question of whether people would be against the ban because they would have to go outside to smoke.

It was suggested that closing off the common can seal that room and the smoke in it. The air conditioning system there is very powerful and will contain and eliminate the

smoke a lot better. The common room could be an alternative smoking area. However the common room has all the games in it.

Lizzy: Better to have a designated non-smoking room

RU suggested that discussing alternatives should maybe be happening after the referendum happens and we know what the opinion of the student body is.

KT reckons the referendum would have to be more complex as college might ban smoking outright if students opt for a smoking ban. Therefore we need to have all options specified during the referendum

RF needs to check the DCSA constitution to see if the referendum has to be quorate.

KT closed the meeting and thanked everybody for their feedback

Edit:

Due to the new governmental legislation coming into effect in summer 2007 whereby all smoking in public places will be banned, the DCSA has decided to hold a referendum solely to decide whether smoking should be banned in accommodation rooms – point (1) discussed above.

The referendum will be held in conjunction with the next DCSA elections in June '06