

Amending Constitutional Position of RAG and the Community Action Group

A paper by Peter Mabbott, SCC Chair

Introduction

The constitutional position of CAG and RAG is that they are “President’s Committees”, a special position giving them a status pretty much equivalent with the CSCs. Their activities, however, are much more on the scale of an ordinary club.

The Problems with this

Firstly, although there is a chain of responsibility laid out in the Clubs and Societies Policy, by lying outside of the usual club-CSC/FU-CSB-Sabbaticals structure neither committee has an officer of the Union with intermediate oversight on their activities. In the past this has caused problems, with an oversight by a previous CAG committee ending with an appeal to CSB for £1500 of funding.

Secondly, regulations 5.G.50. and 5.G.61. state that “*Community Action Group shall provide the opportunity for Full Members of the Union to carry out voluntary work in the local community*”, and “*The Rag Committee shall co-ordinate and promote charity events within the College and raise money for charity*”. This is not an accurate representation of what is actually happening.

CAG have their weekly soup run, but do not provide any other opportunities for voluntary work. Additionally, SCC Interact and a range of other clubs duplicate this regulation by providing volunteering opportunities. RAG do indeed promote charity events, but there are half a dozen charity clubs that do the same thing.

Additionally, although this discussion falls outside of the remit of the Clubs and Societies Board, the positions of RAG and CAG give them a disproportional amount of influence in the governance of the Union compared to the constituency they represent.

Clearly, CAG and RAG have an unusual constitutional status in the Union, and this status isn’t very well represented in practise.

Matter for Discussion

What should the long term role of RAG and CAG be? Three options immediately present themselves:

- 1) Leave them operating as they are now.
- 2) Recommend to Council that CAG and RAG be converted to ordinary clubs, since what ever historical circumstances that gave them status as president’s committees are now outdated.
- 3) Recommend to Council that RAG and CAG be reorganised to have the structure of a CSC – a collection of clubs undertaking activities, with an Exec providing representation and financial and operational oversight. In the light of club numbers, probably the best way to achieve this is to create a VCCC (a Volunteering and Charitable Clubs Committee) containing RAG, CAG and about 10 other clubs who also fall under the remit of the new CSC.

Matters for Decision

To recommend to Council that the result of the above discussion be integrated into the Constitution.