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**STANDARDISING HALAL CHICKEN OFFER IN COLLEGE**

* **Background**

A proposal by the DACC to standardise halal chicken in College was approved by Governing Body in Week 4 of Hilary Term 2025.

The proposal outlined that at the servery for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and in the Mansell Room at lunch we currently have no Halal meat option for observant Muslims. We provide vegetarian food as an alternative, but some customers have long requested a halal meat option as standard offer.

Given the space and equipment that we have in the College kitchens, the proposal stated that the catering team might not be able to maintain halal traceability in the kitchens if we were to procure both halal and non-halal chicken. Equally, offering both would create confusion among some customers as to when the chicken provided was halal, and when it was not. For those reasons, it was recommended that we must choose to provide either all halal chicken or none at all (except for second hall).

The proposal also stated that all other meats served will not be halal as standard. If, for example at second hall or at any event where food is ordered by a customer, a request is made for halal, then the College will try to provide other halal meats for those customers only. It was not part of the proposal to provide all meats (lamb, beef, goat etc.) as halal as standard.

If we were to adopt this as a standard chicken offer for all outlets (Servery, Mansell Room and the Café), other choices would be available to anyone who did not wish to eat halal chicken.

* **Definition of halal**

Halal means permissible or lawful in Islam. This means that the animal/bird is killed by a trained Muslim slaughterman with a humane and swift incision on the throat that cuts at least three main vessels. The slaughterman says a prayer *"Bismillah Allahu Akbar"* meaning *‘In the name of God; God is most great’,* prior to the swift slaughtering of the animal.

The animal/bird should be alive and healthy at the time of slaughter. It should not thereafter come into contact with anything that is considered Najis (impure) in Islam, such as a non-halal carcass or cross-contaminated equipment.

Non-halal means that the animals/birds may have been slaughtered by a non-qualified person or in a non-halal-compliant manner, or it may have been processed and packed in a manner or using equipment that is considered Najis. It does not mean that the food is unsafe, or that it has been prepared harmfully. It also does not mean that the processes and practices or equipment are not clean and hygienic.

* **Our suppliers**

Our meat supplier – Aldens - provides products to the College through the FoodQuad contract, which is in itself provided through Compass. FoodQuad provides catering supplies to 31 colleges and ancillary members within the current contract. Aldens is a local firm that currently supplies College with both halal and non-halal meat. It is audited for halal compliance by an independent halal certification body, the Halal Certification Organisation.

Aldens has provided the following advice about its processes:

*Halal meat is slaughtered using the method of Stun - Prayer - Slaughter. A skilled halal slaughterman will say a prayer "Bismillah Allahu Akbar" meaning ‘In the name of God; God is most great’, prior to the swift slaughtering of the animal. Non-halal meat is slaughtered using the method of Stun - Slaughter.*

The only difference between the halal meat and regular meat slaughter process is that there is no prayer between the stunning and the slaughter with our regular supplies of other types of meat. By moving to all halal chicken, we will not be contributing to any additional animal welfare issues.

* **Processing halal chicken in College**

Halal chicken from Aldens is segregated from intake to outtake, and this is what keeps the traceability chain, which proves non-contamination.

The traceability chain starts at the slaughterhouse. Traceability codes and batch coding of all chicken from our suppliers demonstrates that it is halal-slaughtered. On delivery to college, we are then responsible for ensuring our storage and processing methods maintain the halal traceability. We use separate boards and knives to retain halal compliance. Halal meats are also cooked and served separately from other meats to avoid cross-contamination at any point until consumption.

* **Menu advice**

Advice on the menus will make it very clear that halal chicken is used in chicken dishes, so that those who might wish to opt out of consumption of halal meat are able to do so. Other halal meats will be available upon request for second hall, and specific dinners where meat is served.