

Bell v Go Abroad [2022] UG-UH 23

This court has been convened to determine the feasibility of Jack Bell undertaking a year abroad in Helsinki, Finland. There are three key issues: connecting with new people, maintaining Scottish connections and keeping healthy.

The First Issue: Friendships

The pursuer notes he will require a new network abroad, for living in isolation would result in unbearable loneliness and an over-reliance on unhuggable people. Fortunately, alongside existing connections in Helsinki, he attended his University's annual Go Abroad fayre to meet others also attending his host, all of whom the pursuer has begun to befriend.

Also of note is the pursuer's use of ERASMUS+ Facebook and WhatsApp groups (e.g. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/erasmushelsinki>) to meet other incoming students. He has chatted to several privately and it is accepted these could be lifelines through the year.

The Second Issue: Keeping in Touch

The pursuer worries his existing relationships, hastily grown following COVID-19 restrictions, will decay just as quickly in his absence.

Thankfully, the Internet presents many ways to maintain friendships. The pandemic both forced us indoors and catapulted communication into the next generation. The advent of Zoom (<https://zoom.us/>) allowed societies to hold events online, enabling the pursuer to remain involved, such as in Lawyers Without Borders (<https://www.facebook.com/lwobuofg/>). Friends can also hold casual game nights and gatherings online with sites like Codenames (<https://codenames.game/>) offering a tabletop experience on laptop. Together, these present the possibility of regular calls and catch-ups.

The Third Issue: Health

The pursuer expressed concern about preserving his physical and mental health; while insurance will cover the worst scenarios, he recognises his body is a temple and having it fall into disrepair will make day-to-day life harder.

Exercise, food and sleep are the pillars of health's holy house. As regards exercise, the pursuer plays badminton, and has used the aforementioned groups to find others who do. Arranging games and joining the university gym (<https://www.unisport.fi/en>) will be invaluable for the pursuer.

The food in Helsinki will not be what the pursuer is used to. He intends to try new things, however, he will also use his time-tested recipes, perhaps with British ingredients, coming with the benefit of a taste of home.

To ensure a high standard of rest, the pursuer will adorn his room with mementos both of home and happy times abroad, as well as prepare herbal drinks and make sure he does not work too late. Mental grounding tactics such as mindfulness (<https://mindyertime.scot/mental-health-and-mindfulness/>) may also be of use.

Verdict

The pursuer is clearly prepared for his mobility period. He acknowledges the initial and sustained difficulties in the above areas and others, however, facing those head-on will do wonders for his personal development and make the mobility period one to remember.