

UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2021/22



YOUR  
**UNION**

UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

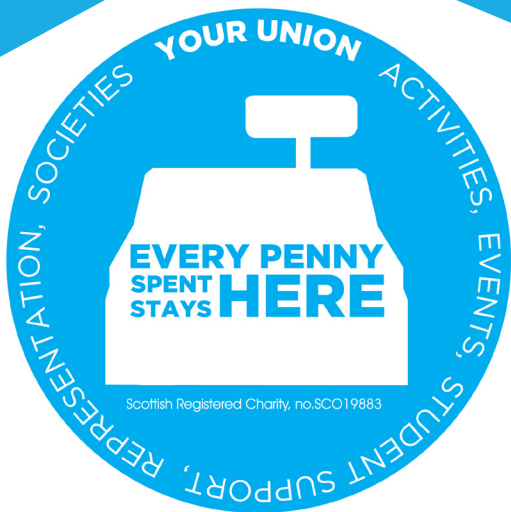


Photo: Union Building

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# Introduction

The previous Association President described 2020/2021 as “messy,” but this year has been more of a rollercoaster. There’s been many ups and downs, and constant twists and turns—relating to both ongoing issues and new situations.

Although Covid restrictions have generally been easing throughout the year, with new variants have come new spikes in cases, which have impacted on student activities and our commercial venues. Both Freshers’ Week and Refreshers had to be massively adapted and reorganised to allow them to go ahead in uncertain times. Despite the ongoing covid-related challenges, our commercial venues have been thriving, full of students wanting to go out and enjoy themselves. We’ve experimented with new styles of events and new venue set ups—some of which have been successful and others not so much, as well as bringing back old favourites such as our whole building Halloween, sell-out balls, and many a Bop. This rollercoaster year’s been a learning experience, and we want to continue experimenting and pushing boundaries so that we can provide students with the best night out in town.

This year we’ve run several surveys which allowed us to gather feedback to improve student

representation and the student experience. Throughout the summer, we ran the Student Representation survey received hundreds of responses that have been instrumental in our efforts to improve our representative structures to increase efficiency and student engagement, as well as support our elected officers. The feedback we’ve gained throughout the year, through surveys, emails, and engagement in our Representative Council, will aid the production of our new Strategic Plan, which will set out our vision for the Union for years to come.

***Lottie Doherty,***  
***Association President***

Top Row (Left to Right):

Anna-Ruth Cockerham - Director of Wellbeing and Equality

Bella Zeff - Director of Events and Services

Avery Kitchens - Director of Student Development and Activities

Bottom Row (Left to Right):

Jess Smith - Athletic Union President

Lottie Doherty - Association President

Leonie Malin Höher - Director of Education



Photo: Current Sabbs

## Lottie Doherty, Association President

Although this year has been somewhat of a 'return to normal' with in-person teaching occurring, bars being open, and our University traditions returning, Covid has continued to have a massive impact on our work and activities throughout the year. As restrictions changed, we re-wrote the Covid Code, emphasising the importance of regular testing and being mindful of others.

As Covid restrictions were easing, students were able to participate in several University traditions for the first time in 2 years. We took this opportunity to revamp Raisin, giving it a positive impact on the community. For the first time ever, we collected foodbank donations at the foam fight, and encouraged academic families to think of ways they could promote sustainability and community engagement throughout the weekend.

In partnership with the Lifelong and Flexible Learners Subcommittee I created the Commuter Student survey, which collected feedback from commuters on their experience of commuting and available support. We received feedback from over 100 students which has provided the evidence we need to make improvements to the commuter student experience. I completed a report analysing the data from this survey

which has been presented to members of University staff and informed the work of the newly formed Commuter Student Working Group.

This year I've signed us up to the Green Impact Student Union Programme! Participating in this programme will allow us to better understand how we can improve the Union's sustainability through feedback on our campaigns and policies, as well as allowing us to more easily collaborate with other Student Unions on sustainability initiatives.



## Avery Kitchens, Director of Student Development and Activities

Student activities have come back to life in 2021/22 and our societies and student groups have jumped at the opportunity to engage with the student body in new and exciting ways.

Affiliating to the Students' Association has never been easier for our societies with the implementation of the new Affiliations Portal. We've also liaised closely with the University to set up a new and improved resource booking system for our student groups to book out spaces to resume activities like normal. The return to predominantly in-person events and activities has been a welcome change for our societies and student groups, but many have stricken a lovely balance between in-person events, inclusive online sessions and innovative hybrid set ups.

On the student development front, the Students' Association has focused on employability and skill building initiatives a lot more this year. The first ever Association Employability Strategy and Careers/Association Partnership Agreement have been adopted this year and their implementation has also gotten underway.

We've also made edits to our awards process to standardise assessment and create fairer methods. The Student Excellence Awards fill the gaps where students working on equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives and engaging in student activities and events fell through. We

can now better recognise the incredible work our student cohort does!

It has truly been a privilege to be this year's DoSDA. Supporting our student groups and careers and employability collaborations with the University has truly brought me great joy and students' development and activities will be in very capable hands next year.



## Anna-Ruth Cockerham. Director of Wellbeing and Equality

Coming through COVID-19, student wellbeing has been more important than ever. Recognising the effects that isolation and health anxiety has had on our student population over the past year, the Students' Association has put a particular focus on building community and friendships. Our subcommittees have finally been able to return to their in-person offerings, including the newly created BAME and Disabled Students' Network – both of whom have ran some highly successful activities.

This year, we've also taken a particular focus on promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion. In response to the increase in spiking incidents nationally, the Association has taken significant steps to improve safety in our venues and promote awareness of spiking and has also informed the response at a Scottish Government level. This year we've also supported the University's pilot of the EmilyTest Charter – a gender-based violence charter for Universities and Colleges. Another significant area of concern has been the response to hate incidents in our community, with both the BAME Students' Network and Saints LGBT+ spending particular time on this.

We've also been collaborating with the University on their One St Andrews project, looking to promote inclusion and tackle hate in the St Andrews community.

Finally, this year we have been relaunching the Student Mental Health Agreement: a joint project between the University and the Students' Association looking at different focus areas to improve student mental health and wellbeing. In preparation for the refresh, we also ran a survey on student mental health with over 400 responses, showing students' commitment to improving mental health and wellbeing in our community.



## Leonie Malin Höher, Director of Education

The best word I can think of to describe this year would be 'tumultuous'. As is the case in most periods of transition, this year has been defined by an overwhelming sense of novelty, uncertainty, and hope. During my term as DoEd, I have been actively advocating for increasing support structures for our academic representatives despite various barriers, especially for our postgraduates.

I have helped to facilitate the addition of a new permanent staff position at the Association, the Academic Representation Coordinator, who provides much-needed administrative and advisory support to undergraduate and postgraduate academic reps and has also become a key figure leading on Students' Association elections.

Simultaneously, I have worked to maintain and enhance our relationship with members of the Proctor's Office, the Library, the Environment Team, the International Education Institute, and the external agency sparqs (Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland). One element of the role I have particularly enjoyed is the opportunity to feed into various strategic decisions, both at the University and Students' Association levels.

As a member of our Board, University Court, Education Strategic Management Group, and (many) other committees, I have been able to shape key decision-making processes related to student representation and educational

experiences. In meetings of the Undergraduate Academic Forum during Semester 2, we have had important discussions about the effects of the new academic calendar on students' engagements with their studies and drawn parallels to feedback given in 2019, which I hope will be taken forward in discussions about staff-student relationships and the use of student feedback by my successor.

There is so much I would have wished to tackle this year, but I am very much looking forward to the ways in which the next Education Executive team will build on the progress of the past few years. With tumult, there is always opportunity!



Photo: Leonie Malin Höher

## Bella Zeff, Director of Events and Services

This academic year saw restrictions lift sooner than many expected, with the club open in time for Freshers' week and students excited to get back out again. It's been an incredible year for events, with old favourites able to return alongside new staples, and societies jumping at the chance to bring their ideas to life.

The shift to whole building events every club night was something students had expressed great interest in pre-COVID and has improved the flow and safety of nights out. We also introduced three club nights every week, with more music genre focused bop themes and society and subcommittee collaborations on Saturday nights. It wasn't all smooth sailing – increased restrictions over winter led to the cancellation of some club nights and Refreshers' Week being entirely replanned in six days. However, the temporary table service rules and lack of club nights ended up providing a real opportunity to explore what our venue and bars are capable of, introducing new events and setting precedents for years to come.

While we've been able to socialise indoors again, our outside spaces have continued to flourish with the FiEld and the Piazza hosting a variety of events. The Piazza development will continue

well into next year as the space becomes more of a social hub to welcome students into the building.

Being this year's DoES has been a whirlwind in the absolute best way possible, and I feel incredibly lucky to hand over to a wonderful successor who I know will do a phenomenal job next year.



University  
Challenge  
Sign-Ups:  
169

Money  
provided to  
student  
groups:  
£107,442.30

Election  
Candidates:  
114

Societies:  
153

Class Reps:  
420

March Election  
Turnout:  
27%

Events  
Taught by  
Ents: 125

Events in On  
the Rocks:  
41

Stalls at  
Freshers'  
Fayre:  
257

Shows funded  
by Mermaids:  
20

Motions passed  
through  
Association  
Councils:  
34

Survey  
Responses:  
1,193

Volunteering  
Awards earned:  
86

# Year in Numbers

# Our Mission

Our mission: The University of St Andrews Students' Association is dedicated to delivering an excellent student experience in co-ordination with the University and Athletic Union. We are student-led and student-run, dedicated to promoting an inclusive and progressive environment for students to develop into well-rounded and fulfilled individuals.

We represent students on all topics, ranging from areas such as educational experience, social responsibility and student wellbeing, to the University and wider community. We deliver and facilitate student development and charitable work through our wide range of subcommittees and societies. We provide and support a wide range of events and facilities for students that caters to a diversity of preferences and needs. We hope you enjoy dipping into some of these topics and learning more about our achievements this year.

We've hired new staff to support our work on Wellbeing and Equality and Academic Representation, allowing us to better support all students in a variety of areas of student life, and are working on our strategic plan which will focus on improving support for our volunteers so that they can work to better represent you.



**“We are student-  
led and student-  
run, dedicated  
to promoting  
an inclusive and  
progressive  
environment for  
students.”**

**- Lottie Doherty & Avery Kitchens**



Photo: Voting Poll

# Representation

The Students' Association advocates for students to the University, the local community, and beyond. Each year, students elect members of the Student Representative Council to debate, discuss, and vouch for student interests. Although all our meetings have had to take place virtually—and we lacked a chair for much of Semester 1—we've continued to have lively debate on a wide range of issues, allowing the elected representatives to hear student opinions, engage with other officers, and bring their thoughts and ideas to the table.

This year, we've debated motions about the ongoing strike action and how to best support staff in their fight for better working conditions while also recognising the massive impact this has on students. We've discussed our response to instances of transphobia and spiking, and how we can work to ensure that all students are safe and supported through these serious incidences. We also resolved to show solidarity with Ukraine and have worked with several student groups to organise protests and fundraising. We've supported several student campaigns in their efforts to improve St Andrews, such as changing the default search engine to Ecosia or improving the range of gluten free options in University accommodation and Union venues.

Furthermore, the Students' Association's network of academic representatives boasts a community of over 400 directly elected individuals – including International Education, Undergraduate, and Postgraduate Class Representatives, School Role holders, Sustainability Representatives, School Presidents, Language Convenors, Faculty Presidents, and various PG representatives – who are dedicated to representing students' interests at every level of study and in every degree pathway.

Our academic reps enhance learning and teaching in St Andrews using a variety of means, for example by coordinating Student-Staff Consultative Committees (SSCCs), collecting and communicating student feedback, and representing students in various forums and School structures. This year has seen an incredible uptick in postgraduate students' engagements with the academic representative system. The work initiated by past Education Executive teams to review and remodel PG academic representation has finally come to fruition this year and is a heartening indication of the potential for sustained effort and advocacy to lead to tangible change. The PGR President and PGT President positions are new this year and serve to better represent the diverse postgraduate student body. Overall, the representative structures of the Association have changed significantly over the past several years and continue to evolve in the direction of increased advocacy and inclusion.

***Leonie Malin Höher & Lottie Doherty***



# Association Councils

The past year has been particularly interesting for Councils. Continuing the work of Officers, Subcommittees, and Councils itself online has proven to have benefits, such as allowing students to easily attend our meetings but the gradual return to in person meetings has been welcomed by many.

We've seen many interesting motions come to Councils. Quite prominently the motion which began the process to update the Association Laws, seeing the SAF disbanded, and a steering group created to aid the work of subcommittees. The referendum on NUS membership, asking the student body if they wish to join, or not join, the National Union of Students. It is wonderful to see that students are voicing their opinion through motions. Topically, the motion which condemned transphobia and instructed student officers to work with the University to improve reporting for students. Whilst these motions were submitted by student officers, it is important to remember that all students can submit motions through petition. For example, the recent motion by the Gluten Free Society which saw an increase in access to safe and varied food across the University and Students' Association. As always, we strive for student involvement and feedback.

More information on the workings of councils, such as the motions, agendas, and minutes of meetings can be found on our webpage. <https://www.yourunion.net/representation/councils/>

The update to our Laws has seen some fairly big changes to the way we work; all with the intention of improving the transparency of Councils and reducing unnecessary workload for student volunteers. It is my hope that this work in restructuring the Students' Association representation and activities fora continues through the next session of Councils, and that this work encourages more students to take an interest, get involved, and understand how their Officers represent them.

To keep up to date with Councils and find out when our meetings are, you can follow us on Instagram and Facebook @StACouncils.

***Alasdair Richmond,***  
***Association Chair***

# Association Councils 2021 - 2022



Photo: Association Councils



# Students' Representative Council

Association President  
Athletic Union President  
Director of Education  
Director of Events and Services  
Director of Student Development and Activities  
Director of Wellbeing and Equality

Accommodation Officer  
Alumni Officer  
Arts and Divinity Faculty President  
Association Chair  
BAME Officer  
Community Relations Officer  
Disability Officer  
Employability Officer  
Environment Officer  
Gender Equality Officer  
LGBT+ Officer  
Lifelong and Flexible Learners Officer  
Postgraduate Academic Officer  
Postgraduate Activities Officer (PG Society)  
Postgraduate Development Officer  
\*Rector's Assessor (non-voting)  
Science and Medicine Faculty President  
Secretary to the SRC  
Student Health Officer  
Widening Access and Participation Officer

Lottie Doherty  
Jess Smith  
Leonie Malin Höher  
Bella Zeff  
Avery Kitchens  
Anna-Ruth Cockerham

AK Schott  
Jack Campbell  
Lucia Guercio  
Alasdair Richmond  
Ananya Jain  
Rosanna Johnston  
Jane Yarnell  
Rhea Meher Soni  
Bhavya Palugudi  
Caitlin Ridgway  
Michael Logue  
Sandra Mitchell  
Caroline McWilliams  
Zaine Mansuralli  
Abd Alsattar Ardati  
Stella Maris  
Sarah Johnston  
Capri Mancini  
Emma Craig  
Sophie Craig



# Education Achievements

During this year, the 'education arm' of the Students' Association has been growing and developing for the better. The academic representative structure that has been crafted over many years mirrors University timelines and processes incredibly closely. For every module coordinator, we have a Class Rep. For every School's Director of Teaching, we have a President. For School structures, we often have student-led equivalents. Academic representation must always stay dynamic and responsive, both to changes in the University's system and to students' priorities.

For the first time this year, School Sustainability Representatives were directly elected by students instead of being interviewed for their positions. This has contributed to their legitimacy as representatives and kickstarted increased collaboration between the Association and the Environment Team. There is still much left to do when it comes to optimising the School – Students' Association – Environment Team relationship, but the aim is to build collaboration on sustainability in the curriculum consistently and in line with the University's Sustainable St Andrews strategy. Similarly, this year saw the inclusion of the International Education Institute Class Representatives in the central academic elections for the first time, with the aim of integrating Foundation and other IEI students into our processes more intentionally and facilitating closer interactions between the Association and IEI staff. Education Committee members contribute so widely

to St Andrews students' experiences that it would be impossible to do justice to their work in this annual report. What can be said is that our Faculty Presidents, School Presidents, and Language Convenors always go above and beyond for students, sacrificing their free time to improve things for their peers. Information on School-specific initiatives can be found on our website in the Semester 1 Reports written by Education Committee members. In particular, our Postgraduate Academic Convenor Caroline McWilliams has been able to implement positive changes for postgraduate students based on the recommendations of the postgraduate review undertaken during Amy Gallacher's term as Director of Education, and thereby lead 100 PG Representatives in their efforts to enhance educational experiences.

Last, but very much not least, one of the most beneficial and impactful changes seen this year has been the tangible increase in support for our academic representative system through the addition of the Academic Representation Coordinator Chase Greenfield, now serving as a new permanent staff position at the Association. This represents one key step in a long journey to better support the efforts of 400+ academic representatives and the efficacy of Education Committee.

***Leonie Malin Höher,***  
***Director of Education***



# Elections

The Students' Association restructured the way it runs its annual Elections in 2021/22, handing administrative responsibility over to Students' Association Staff members for the first time. In previous years, the Director of Wellbeing and Equality and a committee of over 20 student volunteers led the entire elections process. This year, the Academic Representation Co-Ordinator organised the Union's elections efforts, relying on members of the Union staff to support on the areas of promotion, rules/discipline, and elections events.

Team members such as the Marketing and Design Manager, the Marketing and Design Assistant, the Human Resources Manager, the Finance Manager, and a newly hired Elections Intern proved irreplaceable during the months of January through April.

The revised, staff-led structure of Elections saw mixed results. On the positive, Sabbatical Officers and other student volunteers were able to prioritize representation and their manifesto goals rather than losing several months of time running elections. The staff-led elections structure protected against concerns of bias and allowed sitting officers to run for re-election or other positions without conflicts of interest.

Looking at the statistics, engagement in the School President and Language Convenor races saw substantive increases. 64 candidates stood for election for these posts, the highest number since 2016 (and the second-highest number in our recorded elections history). Voter turnout in School President races actually outpaced the other elections by a margin of about 300 votes.

Overall election turnout was approximately 26.76% of our student membership (3,139 votes out of a possible 11,485). Unfortunately, this is a decrease from last year's 31.55% (3,623 votes out of a possible 11,485) with a decrease of 484 votes overall. Although 112 candidates stood for election, two positions -the Director of Education and the Lifelong and Flexible Learners Officer- went unfilled. These posts were filled via a by-election, alongside the NUS Referendum on 1 April 2022.

In addition to the General Elections in semester two, the Students' Association ran separate undergraduate and postgraduate representative elections during semester one. This separation resulted in high engagement from postgraduates especially, with postgraduate research (PGR) voter turnout more than doubling from 2021. Although overall turnout between the Class Rep Elections dipped by approximately 9% between this year and last year, the number and percentage of contested postgraduate posts increased substantially.

Overall, the staff elections team was able to foster many new connections and partnerships with University and Union stakeholders, such as IT Services, Halls, the Sports Centre, and academic departments.

The centrally-branded and organised marketing efforts were a massive success, and the return to in-person campaign activity and Elections events received positive feedback from candidates and students at large. The Staff Elections Team will continue to improve its overall Election strategy for 2023 and looks forward to engaging with the outstanding leadership elected this year.

***Chase Greenfield,***  
***Academic Representation Co-Ordinator***





# Bame Students' Network

This was the second year of the BAME Students' Network being active as a subcommittee, and due to the lowered restrictions community engagement remained a priority for the committee. We continued multiple projects from the previous academic year, but focused extensively on facilitating in-person interactions between BAME/POC identifying students.

We hosted a number of events throughout the academic year. Some examples include out Bonfire Meet and Greet, Academic Family Finding, Free food Events, Film Screenings, Multicultural Music and Art, and our De-Stressing Event with many activities at the end of semester one. In the second half of the year we started running casual weekly network meetups to encourage people to engage with the network beyond activity based events.

Most notably was the first edition of BAMEFest, a weekend of events and activities with something to offer to everyone. We hosted 8 events, in the span of two days, ranging from sports related dodgeball and zumba, to a dumpling making class, a panel discussion on race and academia, a virtual talk on racism in sports as well as social events like queerness in communities of colour, chai and chill and our culmination, an International Music and Cocktails night. The fest was extremely well attended and received high engagement from the student body.

Through the course of the year, we worked on producing a report that investigates student interaction with EDI structures, with specific

emphasis on race and ethnicity in academic schools. The report was aimed at producing a condensed account of recurring themes and issues, as well as providing actionable solutions, from a student facing perspective. We are hoping to launch this before the end of the academic year along with another report / guide targeted at helping BAME identifying Freshers' navigate St Andrews.

We started running our own weekly newsletter and launched the BAME Students' Network Blog, to create a digital community within St Andrews and beyond. Our webpage was also launched this year and it comprises a comprehensive archive of our members, activities and resources. We continued to run campaigns through social media, but rather than disseminating information used digital platforms to generate interest in our in-person activities.

We continued our interaction with Student Services to advocate for specific referral services for BAME identifying students, and helped highlight some of the major issues that students of colour face while accessing support. We emphasised on Well Being related activities through our social events as well. We also ran a virtual Careers Day, to help BAME Students get careers advice, and hope to continue our efforts to build our own Alumni Network.

**Ananya Jain,**  
**BAME Officer**



Photos: BAME Students' Network



# Saints LGBT+

It has been an absolute pleasure to serve as 2021/22 Association LGBT+ Officer and Saints LGBT+ President. I am incredibly proud of all we've achieved and believe we can look back on this year as one of the most successful in Saints LGBT+ history.

We began the year with a small committee but had a hugely successful Freshers' Week- with especially large numbers in attendance at our LGBT+ picnic and pub quiz events. It was amazing to finally feel the return of the sense of belonging and community so vital to LGBT+ students in St Andrews- which had been difficult to maintain during the pandemic. I was also inspired meeting so many confident LGBT+ Freshers who will no doubt maintain our community in the years to come. These events gave us the momentum to carry out an ambitious programme of over 50 successful in-person events so far this year.

In October, we began our LGBT+ identity meetups, collaborating with the BAME Students' Network and the Queer Faith Community. In November we held our most successful Transfest in recent memory, with a week of events culminating in a moving vigil for Trans Day of Remembrance. In January we launched our first new edition of The Gay Saint newspaper, and we were all busy with Queerfest events throughout February. Queerfest was an amazing week with a stunning finale- Drag Walk- in early March. Drag Walk presented LGBT+ performers from St Andrews and

beyond to a huge audience in Club 601, and I am thrilled its return was so successful with overwhelmingly positive feedback. We've also been organising the return of Glitterball later in March and I'm confident this will be an equally exciting and successful celebration.

I've loved advocating for LGBT+ students in my role, particularly on Councils. One of my proudest achievements was working with the Director of Wellbeing and Equality to pass our motion to support Trans and Non-binary students in the wake of local transphobic incidents. I've also worked with University Staff, particularly Student Services and Registry, to improve the available support and ensure St Andrews is a place where all LGBT+ students can live authentically.

So much of my role has involved collaborating with others to make this all possible. I've loved working with this year's Sabbs, the other SRC Officers and University Staff. I've also relied on my own subcommittee who have worked so hard. I'm extremely proud of them all and incredibly grateful for their dedication to maintain a strong and supportive community here for all LGBT+ students.

***Michael Logue,  
LGBT+ Officer***





# Disabled Students' Network

2021-2022 has remained a challenging year for Disabled students in many ways, as COVID regulations were rolled back, and teaching and events became less accessible. The Disabled Students' Network have advocated to keep teaching safe and accessible for Disabled students and created and run safe and accessible events to provide a space for Disabled students to be themselves.

Particularly, in terms of advocacy the DSN this year worked on improving accessibility in labs, creating a collaboration with the University around extension policies, incorporating information about accessibility in the Inclusive Practice module being prepared for staff, and maintaining online and hybrid provision for students both now and in the future. In terms of the creation of our own resources, we have started hosting a study group for neurodivergent students once every two weeks or more often, to help neurodivergent students find motivation and study strategies that work for them. We've also worked on creating a guide to online exams for Disabled students as online exams become more common as a method of assessment.

The committee also ran many fun and successful events, ranging from educational events to career-focused discussions, to meet ups and craft events. We've established an ongoing collaboration with Yoga Society to run accessible Yoga classes and collaborated with GP society and others to raise awareness of our (still very new!) subcommittee. We ran Disability Pride Week for the second time, as well as Invisible Disabilities week.

I'm extremely proud of our committee and what we put together this year, and I look forward to the things we'll do next year!

***Jane Yarnell,  
Disability Officer***

# Lifelong and Flexible Learners Forum

This year the Lifelong and Flexible Learners Forum has looked primarily at the experiences of commuter students, which is of especial importance given the expansion of this population throughout the pandemic.

Members of the committee have looked at expanding the facilities available to commuter students, communications with commuters, and supporting community building for commuters.

The committee also ran a survey of commuter students, further informing the work the Students' Association will look at for this group of students for years to come. The committee has also looked at improving the experiences of student parents and carers, an area we hope to expand on over the coming year.

***Anna-Ruth Cockerham,  
Director of Wellbeing and Equality***





# Postgraduate Society and Representation

This year saw a complete restructure of the postgraduate academic representation system. Two PG Presidents (one PGR and one PGT) and three officers (Part-Time, Distance Learning and Commuting, International) were elected as well as almost every Rep position being filled without the need for co-option. The engagement voting rate rose 684% compared to the 2020 election and postgraduate students have shown overall satisfaction with the new system, believing that they are now better represented.

The Postgraduate Academic Convenor has continued to represent the postgraduate community on all education-based university communities and has taken on additional work to ensure that the postgraduate viewpoint is considered from every direction. Projects are underway to work on study space issues, the lack of postgraduate specific events and the problem of imposter syndrome in research. For the first time in living memory, the PGAC position was contested in the March elections, a testament to the improved communications between the postgraduate community, the Education Committee and the Association.

Rebuilding the Postgraduate Society as a body to further the interests of Postgraduate students has been a significant project undertaken by the PG Activities Officer this year. The Postgraduate Subcommittee has been restructured, integrating representation for disabled, LGBT+ and BAME Postgraduates for the first time. PG representatives have also

worked with other officers to ensure the wider reforms to PG representation are coherent, understandable, and logical including moving the election of the Postgraduate Activities Officer and Postgraduate Development Officer to PG-only elections. Accessibility has been placed at the centre of PG Society, bringing it in line with the Accessibility Pledge, holding events in accessible venues and free of charge so as many students as possible can participate.

PG Society has delivered an exciting calendar of events, many of which have attracted over a hundred attendees, including collaborative events with other subcommittees and societies to introduce PG students to the wider St Andrews community. The Society has also worked to improve communication, with the introduction of a weekly PG email 'The Wednesday Postgraduate' to provide information on opportunities around St Andrews in an engaging way, as well as the creation of a PG Society Instagram.

As representatives on Association Councils, our PG representatives have contributed to motions that highlight the concerns of the Postgraduate community, including seconding a motion to support striking PhD tutors and writing a motion on Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

***Caroline McWilliams,  
Postgraduate Academic Officer  
& Zaine Mansuralli,  
Postgraduate Activities Officer***

# Support

At the Students' Association, we work hard to ensure that our students experience a supportive environment throughout their time at university. This culture of support can be found throughout our activities, whether it's our Peer Supporters helping students to feel a part of the community, our Education Advocate supporting students through academic appeals or our representatives working to ensure every student has a positive university experience. We aim to keep our students well informed with the knowledge they'll need to navigate life as a student, from renting their first private flat to accessing healthcare through the NHS. Through events and campaigns, we are also able to promote an inclusive environment where all students feel respected and valued, as well as ensuring students are aware of the services available to them.

We also continue to foster strong working relationships with the University and external groups to ensure students can access the best possible support. St Andrews is lucky to have one of the best Nightline branches in the UK, and we are proud to support them wherever possible. Our relationship with Student Services also ensures the student voice is heard at even the highest levels of decision making, and this relationship has only been strengthened by our

work on the Student Mental Health Agreement. This is an agreement between the University and the Students' Association to work on a number of different focus areas to improve student wellbeing, ensuring student concerns are constantly being addressed. The Students' Association has also used representation as a tool to influence the University's support provisions and create a supportive environment across the whole university community.

Through this important work, we ensure that all students can have the best possible university experience.

***Anna-Ruth Cockerham,  
Director of Wellbeing  
and Equality***






Photos: Sports, Wellbeing Committee

**“Workshops aim to normalise and open productive discussion surrounding consent in all areas of life.”**

- Kara Stewart & Octavia Chappell, StAnd Together



# StAnd Together

StAnd Together is a joint initiative formed by the Students' Association and Student Services, to develop student-led solutions to issues faced by students today, with a focus on wellbeing and support. The initiative provides students with many volunteering opportunities, whilst also making a difference to student life in St Andrews. It is currently comprised of two student-run projects, 'GotConsent?' and 'GotSupport?'.

GotConsent? aims to raise awareness about sexual violence and consent, with a focus on the shared responsibility of bystander intervention. In 2020, the group achieved the introduction of a mandatory module for orientation, which was introduced based on their original workshop delivered in halls. All students had to pass this to matriculate. GotConsent? also run workshops throughout the academic year facilitated by student volunteers, covering topics such as healthy relationships and consent online.

In 2021, their leadership and consent workshop became mandatory for Union and Athletic Union affiliation. Their workshops aim to normalise and open productive discussion surrounding consent in all areas of life. GotConsent? are also hosting a survivor art installation this year titled 'What Were You Wearing?', in collaboration

with Fife Council's Violence Against Women Partnership.

'GotSupport?', usually referred to as 'Peer Support', is a network that provides a one-to-one meet up service for any student looking for company or support from a friendly peer during their time at St Andrews. Volunteers are trained in active listening and signposting skills, and support students in numerous ways, whether that's providing a listening ear over a coffee or attending events together. This year, volunteers have been supporting many students who were transitioning to in-person learning and life at St Andrews after studying remotely. After last year's launch of Active Listening workshops training students in active listening and signposting skills, Peer Support has focused on making this workshop open to more students through open sign-up sessions as well as holding private workshops for committees.

'GotLimits?' is a future third strand of the StAnd Together initiative, focusing on creating healthy relationships around alcohol consumption. Their focus is also on facilitating workshops for societies and groups regarding how to be inclusive and conscious about their cultures surrounding alcohol and drugs. It is set to be relaunched later this year.

***Kara Stewart & Octavia Chappell***



# Gender Equality

The Gender Equality Officer sits on the Students' Representative Council and the Equality Committee and attends groups such as the Student-Staff Equality Forum, Student Services Open Forum, and Equally Safe. The remit of the role focuses on promoting gender equality in the university community and working on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) issue areas on campus. This year I have worked with the Director of Wellbeing and Equality, GotConsent, and Equally Safe on different SGBV initiatives.

At the first SRC meeting in September I passed a motion to establish an SGBV Forum, a group that meets twice-semesterly for student representatives, university staff, and student groups to work together on initiatives and solutions relating to SGBV issue areas that impact the university. Since passing the motion the forum has had two well-attended meetings, creating a productive space covering various topics including Reclaim the Night, spiking, and the upcoming Sexual Assault Awareness Month. In November I passed a motion to mandate Got Consent leadership workshops for all society committees, a follow-up motion to one passed by last year's Gender Equality Officer.

I worked extensively with the Got Consent Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator to compile data showing the effectiveness of

these workshops, and the motion passed unanimously at the November meeting of the SRC. In addition to this, I have been active in on-campus discussions concerning SGBV, having participated in consultation with Race2, spoken on a panel on SGBV coordinated by the Union Debating Society, and spoken at and helped to organise a livestreamed vigil for Sarah Everard.

I am also pleased to have coordinated a program of events for the first Gender Equality Week marked on the Students' Association Calendar in February 2022. I collaborated with numerous gender equality-focused student societies to run events including an open Got Consent workshop, community organising training, a night jog, and a social event with themed cocktails and mocktails. Throughout the week I also collaborated with student groups, Equally Safe, and the Rector's committee to share informational posts about gender equality and SGBV initiatives on campus as part of an Instagram takeover of the St Andrews university page.

***Caitlin Ridgway,  
Gender Equality Officer***



# Equality Committee

The Equality Committee is a subcommittee of the SRC that advocates for changes to practice that discriminate against, or otherwise disadvantage, marginalised student communities. They also run events and campaigns to tackle discrimination and hate and raise awareness of the diverse experiences of our student community.

This year we restructured the committee, to introduce a staff-student forum on equality and provide a better platform for our student representatives to advocate for changes to university practices. This has seen our students work with staff from across the University to improve the experiences of our student community, promote inclusion, and tackle hate.

This year also saw the introduction of the gender-based violence forum by our Gender Equality Officer to bring together student groups looking at gender equality to work on joint initiatives and campaigns. The forum has already had several successful meetings, and most recently worked to organise the first Gender Equality Week in Semester 2.

The subcommittee has also been representing students on the University's response to hate incidents, including working with the University

to respond to racist hate incidents, and most recently Saints LGBT+'s work to tackle transphobia. In the upcoming semester they will organise a roundtable between transgender students and the Principal.

Finally, this year also saw the introduction of the International Students' Officer. The previous officer has already been doing exciting work putting together resources for international students, and we have been delighted to see all the enthusiasm and ideas put forward by this year's candidates in the election.

***Anna-Ruth Cockerham,  
Director of Wellbeing and Equality***



# Wellbeing Committee

As Student Health Officer, I and the Wellbeing Subcommittee have engaged with the Students' Association this year through work on various health, wellbeing and safety issues that affect the community. For loneliness, we held several friend-, academic family- and flatmate-finding events throughout the year, especially at the start of term, and I created a Healthy Friendships workshop alongside other student groups.

For Raising, I designed infographics and we assembled and handed out 'parent packs' to encourage students to make their Raising activities safe, respectful and accessible.

For drink spiking, we designed posters and proposed an educational video to inform students about drink spiking prevention.

For exam and work stress, we set up a 'Wellbeing Workspace' with bean bags, music, snacks, tea and study resources in a room in the Chaplaincy where students could study during Revision and Exam Weeks, and I helped the Science and Medicine Faculty President produce study resources and publicise them to students for the start of each semester.

For sexual health, we ran SHAG Week in first semester, led by the Sexual Health Representative, with a range of events and resources to increase student awareness about sexual health.

For physical health and wellbeing, the DoWell

and I updated the subcommittee constitution to have the Saints Sport Wellbeing Intern sit on the committee to bring a useful perspective and aid collaborations with the Athletic Union. For sexual violence, I attended focus groups for the Emily Test charter and sat on the Report + Support Forum to improve the reporting processes for students.

Finally, the Wellbeing Subcommittee Mental Wellbeing Representative has organised our big Wellbeing Week in second semester, with an incredible 21 creative events, both online and in-person, covering seven dimensions of wellbeing: career, environmental, social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical.

**Emma Craig,**  
**Student Health Officer**





Photos: Wellbeing Committee



## Alumni Subcommittee

This year, we got off to a great start with the recruitment of an Alumni Subcommittee who were keen to get to work, and who showed a lot of great interest and exciting ideas in their interviews. We hit the ground running with a good number of meetings discussing our plans for the coming year and laying the groundwork for a series of events with alumni.

As the year went on, progress stalled due to the difficulty of balancing this voluntary commitment with paid work I undertake to afford life in St Andrews. (A comment, I note, on the issues of widening participation and cost of living in our town.)

I am sorry to report, then, that my main achievement has been to say that I have not spent a single penny of students' money and my budget remains intact and ready to use for next year with our new Alumni Officer, Aditya - someone whom I commend as being an energetic and enthusiastic member of our committee this year. I wish him all the best in undertaking the role and moving forward with our ideas from this past year and offer my sincerest regret at having not achieved more in my position this past year.

***Jack Campbell,  
Alumni Officer***

## Environment and Sustainability

The Environment Subcommittee's focus this year has been working on intersectional environmentalism. We have collaborated with multiple union subcommittees and societies to organise events that cater to everyone's interests.

We co-hosted Line in the Sand: COP26 in September this year, with Transition and other environmental organisations. We had over 600 people attend the protest. The protest was successful in bringing together community members and students to stand for climate justice.

Green week was co-hosted with Transition in October, and we hosted a range of events in collaboration with other societies. One of our most engaging events was craftivism workshops which were also co-hosted with Marine Society, the DSN and Nightline. Craftivism provided an opportunity to engage with people of different ages and abilities.

Our final event of the semester was the Climate Justice conference which focused primarily on the need for intersectionality within environmental movements.

We are looking forward to continuing our work on sustainability next year.

***Bhavya Palugudi,  
Environment Officer***



# Employability

As the first Employability officer in this new role, this year has been focused on creating the framework for the connections and processes that will benefit future Employability Officers.

For instance, the first few months consisted of strengthening existing relationships with the Careers Centre and creating formal lines of communication between the student body and Careers Centre. The Students' Association also created its first ever Employability Strategy to fill the gaps in the University's approach to students' employability and skill building.

In addition, one main aspect of this partnership has been creating formalized papers of guidance for students (A How to Guide) for careers and employability. In addition, we hosted a successful Careers Week in November which attracted over 300 students to the 7 events hosted. This Careers Week highlighted Black and Minority Ethnic voices and student opinions within careers.

Another aspect of the role is to chair the School Presidents Advisory Group and Careers and Employability Representative Forum, and discussion was facilitated to increase transparency and visibility of the Careers Centre events and actions to the student body.

Lastly, working with the Careers Centre, they have developed new trainings for students to take part in at the start of the summer hosted by the Careers Centre. Some trainings include: 'What is a good LinkedIn?'; 'How do you respond to emails?' and more. The hope of this role in the future will be to further these partnerships and give students an equal opportunity of interaction with their trajectory of choice in whatever field they would like to pursue.

***Rhea Soni,***  
***Employability Officer***

# Activities

It's truly been a bounce back year for activities, and the communities and relationships that have been fostered through our activity-based groups have remained a central part of the Students' Association. In a time when it's been difficult to rebuild, our societies have risen to the challenge, really thinking outside the box to fill the year with interesting and engaging events.

Our Freshers' Fayres this year looked very different than normal. We worked extremely closely with Saint Sport and set up an accessible and less claustrophobic Fayre around the running track. There were 257 stalls to visit, each with eager students or members of University staff to chat to and help guide freshers into the St Andrews society experience.

We had our regular event specifically for charitable and volunteering societies, and we were able to engage with students in these areas and help the student body to give back. Charitable Societies received £3,000 in additional grant funding this year to encourage charitable giving through events.

Speaking of societies and funding, this year we've seen a huge number of groups apply and successfully receive grant funding for student activities. The Societies Committee

has provided our affiliated student groups with over £21,000 alone! It's important to thank our student volunteers on the Societies Committee who have made this possible, as well as the Ents Crew, our other service-based subcommittee.

Our activity-based subcommittees have lots to celebrate too: from the Charities Campaign launching a new subcommittee - Challengers, to the UDS competing at and hosting several competitions, and Mermaids returning to the stage albeit in a different venue to our beloved Barron Theatre. It's been a busy year and collaborative year rebuilding what COVID-19 took from us, but there's been a lot of success.

There are hundreds of things that have happened that aren't mentioned in this report - we've had more engagement with our volunteering portal and University Challenge trials than ever - but the next pages illustrate some of the biggest achievements from the year for each of our subcommittees.

As we move into a new academic year our societies and subcommittees will continue to build on the accomplishments from this year to maintain our excellent engagement and student experience.

***Avery Kitchens,  
Director of Student Development  
and Activities***



Photo: STAR

# SAF Councillors

Arts Festival Convenor (OTR) (non-voting)  
Broadcasting Officer (STAR)  
Charities Officer  
Debates Officer (UDS)  
Design Team Convenor (non-voting)  
Ents Convenor (non-voting)  
Music Officer (MF)  
Performing Arts Officer (Mermaids)  
Principal Ambassador (non-voting)  
Secretary to the SAF  
Societies Officer  
Volunteering Officer (SVS)

Natalie Christopher & Britton Struthers  
Julia Swerdlow  
Amy Feakes  
Andrew Longworth  
Ira Kashyap  
Ryan Delaney  
Juan Pablo Rodriguez  
Molly Ketcheson  
Chloe Fielding  
Aditya Goel  
Laura Connies-Laing  
Maja Lewis



37 Photos: STAR





# Design Team

There have been several things that the Design Team has worked on this year. One of our primary goals this year was to rebuild Design Team- especially the Photography division in a post-COVID world. We have been successful in recruiting several Photographers this year and have been able to attend multiple events to provide our services.

We have also focused on increasing Design Team's outreach this year by advertising our services to multiple societies, creating a Visual Arts Facebook group, as well as collaborating with societies to fulfil design requests. Thus, this year, we have been able to further stabilise Design Team's role amongst the student community and ensure that our services are well-advertised and accessible for those who may need us.

With that being said, Design Team has also been the subject of many conversations regarding a full overhaul. We are amid a changing landscape in a post-COVID world, and as such, our committee must reflect this and evolve dynamically. Hence, we have been working with

the DoEs to amend the committee structure by removing extraneous roles, consolidating responsibility, and establishing a clear line of command, in order to facilitate communication.

We have also established a plan for Design Team's future, as we would like to expand our services toward the provision of Design training for anyone who may be interested, and this has been an option that we have been exploring this year. This enables us to provide a service to students not necessarily affiliated with societies, but still provides a creative outlet. We are also discussing opportunities to alleviate our photography services to further engage with our creative ideas, to extend our facilities into more innovative dimensions.

I am keen to see what lies in store for Design Team's future!

***Ira Kashyap,  
Design Team Convenor***



# Entertainments Committee

This year Ents has finally got back into the swing of events! With COVID restrictions easing, we've raced back to the venue and have loved jumping right back into events once more. From theatre shows to musicals, fashion shows to conferences and everything in between, we've been working behind the scenes to get everything working as well as possible.

Recruitment has been good and finally being able to launch trainings in the venue has really helped with acquiring new members and retaining them once they join! Our trainings are back and consistent every week with a focus on what our members want to give a tailored experience to our volunteers. Our joint training officers are working hard to put plans in place for new and interesting ideas going forward to give members the best experience possible and I'm really excited to see what they produce in the coming weeks.

Following on from last year's work, we're still improving and upgrading our existing systems to bring our technical equipment up to industry standard and improve our reliability and quality. We've been making good use of the camera acquired last year which has allowed us to increase our live streaming of events for student groups and produce higher quality, professional live streams for the recent elections.

Finally, our Deputy has been working hard to upgrade our sound equipment and networking infrastructure and I'm looking forward to seeing what comes out of it.

With restrictions easing even more and the rate of events scaling back up, we're excited to see what the future holds and what opportunities we can find and produce alongside the Association and with more upgrades and improvements in the pipeline, working with Association management, the quality of events can only improve, providing a better experience for student user groups.

***Ryan Delaney,***  
***Ents Convenor***



# St Andrews Radio

STAR has had another fantastic year! Our first big project in May 2021 was to host our STAR Awards ceremony to celebrate all of our amazing show hosts from the lockdown year and recognise their incredible dedication and hard work. After all, we couldn't have made remote broadcasting work without them!

Over the summer, we participated in the Students' Association's Countdown to St Andrews, organising events for incoming first years and second years who never got to truly experience Freshers' Week 2020. In September, we hosted a virtual academic family adoption event, a bonfire on East Sands, a musician and band mixer in 601, and - most excitingly - we started up Sounds of Sandy's again! We also collaborated with FemSoc, Saints LGBT+, and Got Consent to organise a music and arts festival in the Botanic Gardens with incredible performances from student artists.

Throughout the rest of semester 1, our tech team was hard at work in the studio attempting to fix our sadly broken computers and equipment. Although we couldn't broadcast until the start of semester 2, we made up for it by continuing to host music events, workshops, and supporting other societies and subcommittees with their events.

Our main goal this year was of course to get show hosts back and broadcasting from the

studio, and despite a rocky start due to technical difficulties, we managed it in the end! We now have over 100 shows airing weekly, covering all sorts of topics from music to politics to pop culture to St Andrews current events. We've also greatly expanded our Hearing Aid, The Record, and starTV subcommittees, and have created some incredible written, video, and print content that you can find on our website and YouTube channel.

As the year comes to an end, we're collaborating with On The Rocks Festival and organising socials for our wonderful show hosts.

***Julia Swerdlow,  
Broadcasting Officer***

Photo: STAR



# Charities Campaign

The Campaign is well on the way to raise over £50,000 this year for our three nominated charities: LoveOliver, Shelter Scotland, IJM, among a plethora of others. With over 80 committee members and a further 40 volunteers involved in various projects the Campaign has had a year full of student engagement. We have had the pleasure to work closely with Music Fund, supporting other union subcommittees with their fundraising efforts and collaborating with societies.

This year we have really pushed the awareness of our charities, with each having a week focused on them and their work. The team has been to visit and help at the LoveOliver store, five individuals slept outside raising over £1000 for awareness of those without a home, among many more efforts and awareness events.

Our year began with a new push for our new subcommittee Challengers, which has signed up 75 students to fundraise through Skydiving, trekking through the Balkans and carrying out the Three Peaks Challenge. These groups of students have carried out numerous fundraising efforts from yoga classes and escape rooms to bake sales and much more. RAG Week held over 26 events across a week, with highlights of Bonza Bingo, the re-launch of purple prints, and Irish Soc and Triathlon club both taking part in physically demanding challenges.

After a year hiatus due to COVID, CATWALK had their show, with the support of The Union,

it was made into a whole building event! With over 400 attendees to the show and a further 600 to the after party, one night alone raised us over £15,000.

These are just a few highlights from the year, among many other efforts in Cloakrooms, small events, Race2 planning, which should not go without a mention. Each student has dedicated much of their time to ensure the campaign has smoothly moved out of COVID into a fully packed event schedule.

**Amy Feakes,**  
**Charities Officer**



# Union Debating Society

This past year has been incredibly challenging for the UDS, but despite the difficulties we have faced, we have made huge strides in returning to a pre-pandemic normal. In September, the Debates Board was one of the most inexperienced committees the society has had in 228 years. None of us had ever organised an in-person public debate, training session, competition or Schools outreach workshop before.

Despite this, we returned to a busy schedule of in-person events. We managed to restart our weekly public debates in Lower Parliament Hall and hosted dozens of eminent speakers such as human rights activist Benedict Rodgers, Richard Thompson MP as well as other leading academics and politicians. We collaborated with numerous societies to ensure that opinions from across the student body were addressed. In what I believe is a first for the Union, we managed to feature the society in a Dutch TV documentary about life in Scotland.

Our competitive program reached new heights this year. We have begun collaborative training sessions with activist societies focused on positive change such as FemSoc and One for the World. In terms of competitions, two St Andrews teams managed to make Silver and Gold at Bogwall, the annual St Andrews Novice competition. We also managed to win the Pro-Am final of the prestigious Oxford IV.

We have begun a new partnership with First-Chances and have held weekly debate

workshops for children at Schools across Fife in a restart of our schools' program. We were also able to hold the annual St Andrews Schools Competition in-person and hosted Schools from across Scotland.

We have accomplished a great deal this year due to the incredible work of Board and I believe the society is positioned to reach great heights in the very near future.

**Andrew Longworth,**  
**Debates Officer**



Photos: Union Debating Society

# Music Fund

This year has been one of change for the Music Fund. We have given the subcommittee a new identity and we have found and covered needs in our community.

The first thing that I believe is worth mentioning is the negotiation of a society membership from the Music Centre. The project that has been conceived because of this is 'Sounds of St Andrews' a compilation album comprised of original music by student musicians, recorded in the studio of the Music Centre. The aim of this project is to release one volume with 10-12 songs per year.

This year, we secured a budget of £2000 from David Russell Apartments to refurbish their

music room. We have created a plan on how to spend this money to improve the music facilities in David Russell Apartments and we are hoping to be able to have a freshly refurbished music room for DRA students who start in September. Finally, we also had conversations with Andrew Melville Hall with the purpose of adapting a common room to a music room. We have only agreed that the Music Fund will service the piano located in the Lower Common Room, but we are also looking to add to the available instruments for students in AMH.

We have also been actively in contact with other societies and subcommittees. We organised a lecture on legal copyright with Law Society to orientate our artists on how to protect their songs. We have also cooperated closely with the Charities Campaign for the organisation of two charities concerts.

We have also made available instruments to bands who have used them to perform both in the Union and at other locations in town.

We have redefined Music Fund this year and we have given it a new essence. The most important action taken by us this year has been the formalisation and consolidation of well-defined subcommittee roles. It has been because of this that the committee has been able to work efficiently, with each person concentrating on their own projects.

***Juan Rodriguez,  
Music Officer***





# Mermaids Performing Arts Fund

This year Mermaids got back on its feet and back on-stage! We've had a fantastic year of in-person theatre, producing four productions in first semester, and twelve in second semester, including our weeklong Freshers Drama Festival. We will also be sending four productions to the Edinburgh Fringe in August. The transition back to in-person theatre was far from seamless, and there were many challenges along the way, such as dealing with ever-changing government guidelines and shows getting cancelled and postponed due to positive covid cases. We went back to producing in-person theatre as soon as restrictions allowed, and the fact that we were able to do this successfully and on a large scale is a testament to the dedication and talent of the committee.

This year, half of our productions have been student-written shows, one of which will also be performing at the University of Edinburgh's Festival of New Theatre Scotland in March. We have also hosted tech training workshops, introduced a concrete shadowing scheme to get new students involved, and expanded our community through joint socials with affiliated societies. This year also brought about the return of Christmas Ball! The ball was a huge

success, and, through the hard work of our Ball Convenor and her sub-committee, was both fun and safe.

The biggest change this year has been the move from our home at the now-closed Barron Theatre on North Street to our residency in the Laurence Levy studio at the Byre. The Barron move has been challenging and is ongoing, but the committee, especially our Barron Manager, my line managers, and I have been in constant discussion with the Byre and the University to work through problems of the transition and advocate for student needs. I created a student feedback form on the transition process and have taken student opinions into account at every turn.

Though it remains an imperfect situation, the move to the Byre has provided the opportunity for Mermaids to work closer with the Byre staff, which has been a wonderful experience and the beginning of a fruitful partnership.

***Molly Ketcheson,  
Performing Arts Officer***



# On The Rocks

On the Rocks has a great year thus far working towards our March 14-23 festival. After a 2-year hiatus wherein our 2020 and 2021 festivals were cancelled, and the subcommittee did not run last year, the Directors could not be prouder of our committee's work in reviving the festival, as well as expanding the festival's reach, branding, and impact throughout the community.

As the festival has not run since 2019 and the subcommittee did not exist in the previous academic year, we were very aware that OTR had essentially no brand-recognition within the student community. After our re-launch, our Events team ran a very successful On the Pebbles one-day mini festival, collaborating with unique and new venues such as the Heritage Museum, and the Rusacks hotel. This one-day taster of the festival included a live-music gig, a maker's market, a watercolour workshop, a sustainable clothing swap, an art exhibition, and a dance workshop. In addition to On the Pebbles, the Community and Outreach team has also expanded its role outside of the typical festival run, running craft and card-making workshops prior to our festival, and planning workshops with local schools.

Aware that many students might not be aware of what the festival or "OTR" is, our programming team reached out directly to over 100 societies with a comprehensive information packet about the festival, suggesting they apply to run an event with us. We are thrilled that our March festival contains approximately 40 events,

including dance, theatre, student-written pieces, film screenings, a career panel, live-music gigs, comedy, craft sessions, a cappella concerts, a drama competition, art exhibitions, and a cocktail making workshop.

Our in-house events team has worked especially hard to plan a vast array of impressive events, including a stellar career panel with film-industry professionals at the Byre theatre, a film screening in collaboration with SANDS film festival, and a lawn party at the botanic gardens. We are delighted to have revived the festival and are encouraged that the connections and relationships our committee has fostered this year will continue.

Our next project after the festival concludes is hosting a watercolour workshop and a series of gigs with the Rusacks Hotel. We couldn't have achieved all we have without the support of the Byre Theatre and Union staff.

We are excited about our upcoming recruitment for next year's committee, hope that OTR will continue expanding and improving in future years, and could not be more thrilled with our recent success in the wake of major pandemic setbacks.

***Britton Struthers and  
Natalie Christopher,  
Arts Festival Convenors***



# Societies Committee

The academic year 2021-22 has been a year of transition. As the world has slowly emerged from the global pandemic, societies have had to re-adapt to holding in-person events, whilst observing government guidance and ensuring their activities remain accessible and open to all.

The business of the Societies Committee (Socs) has reflected this change. Whereas our budget of £32,000 was barely touched last academic year, this year we have spent nearly £16,000 on grant requests and a successful Society Mixer event. We are yet to spend further sums on the Annual Society Awards Ceremony (the first in-person one since March 2020!) and its associated prizes. Increased expenditure on this front testifies to the fact societies have come back fighting hard with revitalised energy and enthusiasm after a long period of stagnation.

We continue to receive new society requests on a weekly basis. This year Socs has established a New Society Affiliations Portal to streamline the affiliation process. Long gone are the days of endless email exchanges and paperwork clogging up the Affiliation Officer's inbox. Now constitutions, GRAs, bank details, society email addresses, committee member details are all contained in one secure location, making it easier for the Affiliations Officer and Union departments, such as the Cash Office, to keep track of this vital information.

For all this success, it would be wrong to

ignore the ongoing difficulties that many societies continue to face. Generally, these concern a shortage of paid members and the inaccessibility of bank accounts. The Societies Committee Publicity Officer has been working hard to help publicise society events on the Socs' Facebook and Instagram pages. Hopefully, Socs' acquisition of the St Andrews 24 Instagram page will further facilitate this publicity drive. Moreover, this upcoming reaffiliation process will see a relaxation of the 25-member rule to ensure smaller societies are not disaffiliated due to problems outwith their control. Further measures to help enable struggling societies to become self-sustainable again must be addressed as we move into the next academic year.

In the coming years, Socs will be in a stronger position than ever before to support our brilliant community of student societies.

***Laura Connies-Laing,***  
***Societies Officer***

# Spaces and Events

It's been a great year for Union spaces as we've been able to fully reopen with far fewer restrictions than last academic year. We opened Main Bar ready for students' return in September and introduced three club nights a week adding regular Wednesdays and Saturdays to the old favourite Friday Bops. Beacon reopened ready for Halloween, and the bar in Sandy's was back up and running in second semester.

This year more than ever before we've explored how versatile our venue is, the StAge and Club 601 have hosted a huge variety of events from club nights to live lounges, karaoke to musicals. Thursday nights with JazzWorks have become so popular that they've taken over the club. Increased restrictions over Refreshers' Week led to creative new ideas and innovative uses of the venue. Club nights have transformed into whole building events following on from the survey conducted during the pandemic. Wednesday club nights have seen experimentation with the layout of the venue, while Saturdays have seen increased collaboration with societies and subcommittees, most notably the introduction of fortnightly 'Queer Nights' in collaboration with Saints LGBT+.

Rector's Café has maintained popularity among both students and locals. Food service in Main Bar has continued to do well. The use of all of our spaces by students as a place to study during the daytime has drastically increased this year,

and the opening of Beacon Bar as a study space for commuter students has been a real success. This year also saw the return of our major whole building events and, while a storm led to the cancellation of Winter Wonderland, Halloween and St Patrick's Day were huge successes, returning for the first time since 2019.


The development of the Piazza is still a work in progress, but a lot of work has already been done to make it a more inviting and usable space for students such as the addition of overhead covers and heaters. It's also been used for a variety of events throughout the year. Our outdoor spaces continue to flourish and lessons learned this year will benefit students for years to come.

After the success of opening to the general public last summer - we showed sport on the big screen and held regular live music sessions we will continue to work on this venture to support the local community as well as give students who remain in St Andrews over the summer the full union experience.

***Bella Zeff,***  
***Director of Events and Services***



Photo: Freshers 2021



# Customer Safety

As part of our mission as a student led organisation, we took the decision to develop and employ a student-based Customer Safety Team to operate our new style of night-time events.

This new department is overseen by professionally trained, permanent staff members with many years of experience working in Student Unions; this allows for students to be taken care of by their peers at night-time. We run a safe bus from the Union, taking vulnerable students to a place of safety – this operates every evening until the early hours and helps ensure students can be confident that they will be taken care of whatever the situation is.

We have had a number of challenges this past year around safety and have responded with several initiatives that we will continue to work on over the course of the rest of the semester and new academic year:

- Introduction of a dedicated Customer Safety Control Room Operative with constant monitoring of the CCTV throughout any night-time event.
- Full review of the current CCTV system and proposal to upgrade and increase the number of Cameras in the building.
- Ongoing review of the member disciplinary procedure to aid staff members in keeping unwanted customers out.
- Specific “spiking incident” and follow up procedure defined and included as part of staff induction and continuation training.
- Use of raised boxes and high vis bibs to increase visibility of Customer Safety team members, both as a deterrent and obvious point of contact for customers.
- All Senior Customer Safety staff licensed under the nationally recognised SIA qualification and increased number of first aid trained Customer Safety staff members.
- Increased vigilance and training on spiking, gender based and drug related incidents including increased bag searches at point of entry.
- Increased staff training on our Zero tolerance policy and “Ask for Angela” scheme and the introduction of a monitored safe space during all night- time events.
- Ongoing collaborative work with University Student Services Department where any vulnerable students or victims of any sort of incident can be referred to.

***Chris Clarke,  
Deputy General Manager (Operations)***

# Staffing

As some long-standing staff members came to the end of their time with us, we were able to use this opportunity to restructure some of our key departments as well as recruit new staff to our permanent team:

- We have a new Senior Accounts Assistant helping to support student groups.
- A new Design and Media Assistant working in the Design and Marketing Department.
- A new Assistant Bar Manager and Bar Supervisor to aid in the delivery of our daytime and night-time Bar operation.
- A new Wellbeing and Equalities Co-ordinator to support this year's Director of Wellbeing and Equality.
- A new Academic Representation Co-ordinator to support our Director of Education and leads on all Elections within the Association.
- We now have a new Building Manager, and Facilities Supervisor who lead our team of porters, bolstered by the addition of a new porter.
- To oversee our new Customer Safety Team, we have also recruited 2 permanent Customer Safety Supervisors in order to better support the student community and lead on safety initiatives.
- As part of the Senior Management Team, we have a new Deputy General Manager to aid the existing Deputy and General Manager in the governance and strategic direction of the organisation.

So, it's been a busy year for our permanent staff and Management Team, we have had to overcome many challenges working closely with the Sabbatical Team to leave the Students' Association in a better place than it was at the start of the Pandemic. We are very excited about what the next year holds for us and are looking forward to welcoming a new cohort of students as well as working with all of our existing dedicated groups, volunteers and subcommittees.

Photo: Union Building



# Afterword

So, to sum up, although this year has been a bit of a crazy rollercoaster ride, it's been a good one. We've been using all the ups and downs and strange twists to learn and using our movement forward away from pandemic restrictions to make improvements to our structures and policies which will have a positive impact on the student experience for years to come.

We hope that by reading through this report—this document of a year of Union history—that you can better understand the unique challenges we've faced this year, and all the hard work that your Sabbatical Officers, elected representatives, and staff members have done to make changes and improvements.

***Lottie Doherty,***  
***Association President***



# SABB TEAM 2022/23



Association President:  
Juan Rodriguez



Director of Wellbeing:  
Emma Craig



Director of Student  
Development & Activities:  
Sam Gorman



Director of Education:  
AK Schott



Director of Events  
& Services:  
Lucy Brook



Athletic Union President:  
Ailsa Martin

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