



University of St Andrews Students' Association
Students' Representative Council

AGENDA

21st November 2023 – Parliament Hall – 18:00

Present

Members' Name	Position
Barry Will	Association president
Cam S. Brown	Director of Education
Lucy Brook	Director of Events and Services
Caitlin Ridgway	Director of Wellbeing and Equality
Fiona Waddell	Athletic Union President
Will Christopher	Association Chair
Eva Neill	Environment Officer
Jack McNealy	Community Relations Officer
Nuttaricha Ngarmskullert	Secretary to the SRC
Meagan Neves	BAME Officer
Molly Reade	Disability Officer
Jack Kennedy	LGBT+ Officer
Arlo Bitcon	Gender Equality Officer
Alice Chapman	Charities Officer
Guillermo Canales	Alumni Officer
Jacob Carey	SRC Employability Officer
Callum Irvine	PGR President
Cooper Smith	PGT President
AK Schott	Accommodation Officer

In Attendance

Iain Cupples Advocate (Education) / HR Manager

Ishani Khemka Student Councils' Intern

Issac Pickrum

Meryem Rashidova

Absent

Sam Gorman

Grace Greene
Daniel Macdonald
Klaudia Grat
Alisdair Richmond
Katie McAdam

1. **Adoption of The Agenda**
2. **Apologies for Absence**
 - 2.1. Hitanshi Badani, Arts and Divinity Faculty President
3. **Adoption of the Minutes from the Previous SRC Meeting**
 - 3.1. 24-10-23 SRC Minutes

Previous minutes were adopted by a show of hands.

4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting**
5. **Open Forum**
6. **Reports of Sabbatical Officers**
 - 6.1. **Association President**

Barry Will (BW) provided updates on the campus larder which ran over 100 sessions this semester. BW attended rent setting meetings with residential business services which were not looking promising due to inflation and reduced government funding. He was also looking for ways to support students who were affected by the Israel-Gaza conflict, for example by giving students' academic leniency. Finally, BW covered matters regarding halls, hoping to understand why there were vacancies in halls and forming a working group to understand why students don't live in halls.

- 6.2. **Athletic Union President**

Fiona Waddell (FW) updated the SRC on plans to go to court with new AU representative committee, which would majorly change the structure of representation adding a more well-rounded approach to how it runs and leans into Saints Sports. The Wednesday following the SRC would be the first saint spotlight event, with 3 fixtures to highlight sport teams. New sport facilities that have been installed were well received by the students. FWs next area of focus would be career development career.

- 6.3. **Director of Education**

Cam Brown (CB) stated that after hopefully passing the proposed new academic model in the SRC, his next goal was to get the new academic calendar passed in senate. The Undergraduate Academic Forum would be taking place the following week with representatives from the principal and proctors office in attendance. CB also spoke of the student partnership agreement in working with the University.

- 6.4. Director of Events & Services

Lucy Brook (LB) spoke of fight night and said it went well, and that the next big event in the Union would be winter wonderland.

- 6.5. Director of Student Development and Activities

NA

- 6.6. Director of Wellbeing & Equality

Caitlin Ridgway (CR) spoke of efforts in developing an anti-bullying, anti-harassment and bystander training information booklet in collaboration with student services. The period product distribution training CR was working on had been updated and could now be done remotely. Information resources for students who do sex work were being put together. In the student services open forum individuals were working on responses to the situation in Gaza and they were in continuous engagement with the University (alongside CB and the DSN) as well as students in St Andrews. CR was also working on updates to academic alerts email and the University's drug policy.

7. **Questions for SRC Members**
 - 7.1. Accommodation Officer
 - 7.2. Alumni Officer
 - 7.3. Arts and Divinity Faculty President

- 7.4. BAME Officer
- 7.5. Careers, Commuters, Mature, and Flexible Learners Officer
- 7.6. Charities Officer
- 7.7. Community Relations Officer
- 7.8. Disability Officer
- 7.9. Employability Officer
- 7.10. Environment Officer
- 7.11. Gender Equality Officer
- 7.12. International Officer
- 7.13. LGBT+ Officer
- 7.14. PGT President
- 7.15. PGR President
- 7.16. Postgraduate Development Officer
- 7.17. Rector's Assessor
- 7.18. Science and Medicine Faculty President
- 7.19. Secretary to the SRC
- 7.20. Societies Officer
- 7.21. Student Health Officer
- 7.22. Widening Access and Participation Officer

8. Unfinished General Business

9. New SRC Business

9.1. Disability officer Co-option

Molly Reade (MR) stood for the role of Disability officer. In her speech she spoke of being the deputy convener of the DSN and being involved in many projects such as sports and accommodation accessibility, disability awareness training, and increasing awareness of those who suffer from visual and hearing impairments.

Voting takes place by a show of hands.

MR is the new disability officer.

9.2. R-23-19 Motion to Advocate for a Dedicated Member of Staff as a Point of Contact for Commuter Students

Mandy Thompson (MT) stated that 17% of all students are commuters and it was their duty to advocate for someone in student services who could provide resources, update the website, and combat disengagement commuters face.

Jack Kennedy (JK) asked what commuters' experiences with student services was like. MT responded saying there was no dedicated support or centralised feedback.

AK Schott (AK) asked whether have student services had been consulted on this. MT stated there hadn't been any contact with them. BW interjected stating that he had met with members of staff and while they were open to the idea of this role, they don't have enough resources to fund the same.

CR suggested it would be a positive way to show support from union to the commuters. BW agreed sighting that since there exists no interim communicator, many commuter students who have come forward with serious issues in the past have not been able to resolve the same.

The motion was voted upon by a show of hands. The motion passed.

9.3. R-23-20 (Pending) Motion to Support and Advocate for the Adoption of Model 2a as the Academic Calendar 2023/24

CB stated that model 2a emerged as the preferred option as it was recommended by the University and was passed by the PG research committee, the teaching committee as well as Educomm. They now require formal student approval. If this model doesn't pass when it goes to senate the calendar will not change.

Voting took place by a show of hands
The motion passed.

9.4. R-23-21 Motion to condemn two recent publications by The Saint

JK introduced the motion to condemn two articles published by the Saint. They recommend that The Saint issue an apology as it shouldn't have platformed articles that minoritised individuals. Cooper Smith (CS) asked whether anyone had considered speaking with The Saint regarding a Right to reply? MT responded saying she had had dialogue with The Saint via email, they responded saying it was free speech and claimed the articles were respectful. At Educomm representatives from The Saint admitted there was fault in the process of editing articles, with the two criticised pieces lacking citations and sources. MT said that as a committee the DSN decided they didn't want to publish a rebuttal in The Saint but on their own platform. LB questioned whether representatives acknowledged the harm caused by the articles at educomm. Callum Irvine (CI) said they didn't.

AK questioned the contract with The Saint that allows them to operate within the Union. Iain Cupples (IC) responded saying the Union had a rental agreement with The Saint for many years, which has since been renegotiated. The SRC can't cancel the contract but could ask delegates of the board to do so if they wanted to as it has ended in the past over other disagreements. As an independent student publication; the union has recognised the value it has provided to the student body, however, IC stated that when they cause harm to the student body it must be considered carefully.

CS suggests that instead of passing the resolution the SRC should ask the saint to strike the articles and publish a response. JK disagreed sighting they didn't want to engage with a platform they don't feel comfortable expressing themselves on.

SRC then moved into debate to make amendments to the motion.

CI argued that as The Saint is one of the main independent publications on campus, anything negative published regarding it can be thought as preventing journalism and free speech and questioned whether this motion could defend itself against the same, instead suggesting to reword the same into something that conveys that free speech is a right but a right which comes with a responsibility. CR suggested that a condemnation of what's been written neither restricts the publications journalistic integrity but also prevented the opportunity for "them to martyr themselves."

AK added that within the UK free speech isn't considered universal as equality rights apply to the same. AK suggested that as representatives of the DSN it was the responsibility of the SRC to back up their statement and the SRC could do so by republishing the DSN post on Union social media platforms.

LB urged that the SRC include an amendment to the motion that the union will release the DSN statement

The amendment passed by a show of hands.

FW put forward another amendment rephrasing the motion to, "we feel affiliated groups and committees would benefit from a response from The Saint and ask the publication to reconsider their response."

The amendment passed by show of hands.

The amended motion passed by a show of hands.

9.5. R-23-22 Motion to establish an initiative ‘Saints Solidarity’ to combat abuse, harassment, and discrimination

CR reported, based on students’ recent interactions with report and support tools, it was found that this year instances of bullying, harassment, and racism have increased. While the information booklet was already being worked upon, many students wanted to see more initiatives talking about microaggressions and having formal training sessions to combat the same. Thus, CR proposed to set up an initiative under equality committee to discuss union and university activities relating to this area, promoting advocacy and training and education which would result in consistent and sustainable responses to these issues.

The motion passed by a show of hands.

9.6. R-23-23 Motion for Advocating for a Ceasefire in the Israel-Gaza Conflict

Meagan Neves (MN) introduced the motion. She spoke of the statement BAME released a condemning the violence and displacement caused by the Israel-Gaza conflict and calling for peace. MN shared that BAME had been making continued efforts to provide academic context and promote advocacy. She said the motion would have tangible impacts on the St Andrews community and that it would display that “our generation will not accept indifference of power or the apathy of our leaders,” and it would give strength to members of the community.

AK questioned what roles MN envisioned SRC officers undertake given the first two points of resolves. MN responded saying that she hoped sabbatical officers could open conversations with students and society officers and promote education regarding the conflict as students have been reaching out to elected officer. However, MN said that this would not be a mandate but a personal choice.

The SRC moved into debate.

BW said that he believed this motion was staff and students and should be advocated for which the University has done for other conflicts. BW said there can and should be a ceasefire and it is the SRCs duty to take a stance as representatives of the student body. The representatives have the power and ability to lobby in higher education sectors which could influence ministers in government and given that this is one of the worst humanitarian crises seen in our lifetime, BW suggested that we have a responsibility to take a stance and say that we demand a ceasefire and to find resolve. He also noted how the university chose not to advocate for a ceasefire, however they didn't hesitate to do the same during the Russian, if the university has taken a stance before it should be able to do so again

Alice Chapman (AC) agreed that with the rector's email coming out that day, it also looked good for the union and Rector to be in agreement.

Jack Mcnealy (JM) added the Lemkin Institute classified this as a genocide and found it embarrassing that the university was standing by and not calling for a ceasefire.

CB added that the university's position on not calling for a ceasefire was because officials were concerned that it would allow, in the wider scheme, a “regroup of Hamas”. This was not official reasoning but something CB had heard and added that University officials were not opposed to calling for a ceasefire.

FW suggested the positives of advocating for a ceasefire outweighed the perceived negatives and the SRC rallying in support for a ceasefire could encourage the university to make a statement.

Meryem Rashidova (MR) urged the SRC to consider this motion as the voices of the SRC are important and would provide comfort and support for people in the community. Calling for a ceasefire was the bare minimum that could be done as an institute it should've happened weeks ago. The vigil that was organised gave a lot of support to the community; this motion would continue it.

CI suggested changing the wording to say, "ceasefire with the aim of everlasting peace" to which CB added that the University would even perhaps agree to a statement that said something along the lines of a "humanitarian pause with the aim of a ceasefire." CR disagreed with this paraphrase as they believe there is a difference in between the terms "ceasefire" and humanitarian pause. CB clarified that this was purely hypothetical if the union was interested in releasing a joint statement with the university.

Guillermo Canales (GC) asked whether a ceasefire was just a humanitarian pause that lasted longer than a few hours and if it just prolonged the inevitable. Issac Pickram (IP), interjected asking the SRC to revisit the resolution as it was not speaking of conflict at its crux. The issue of the matter was that Palestinians didn't have basic resources and a ceasefire allowed respite from the continuous violence. IP didn't believe that a debate on lasting peace was worth having as it placed a large burden on a group of people that were essentially uneducated on the matter.

AK added that they didn't believe they should compromise in advance. The SRC, AK believed was in a prime position to pressure the leader of organisation like St Andrews (Sally Mapstone) that has a stake in this matter to take action. These conversations were about not upsetting Jewish students, having taken note of the rising hate against them, but were to promote resources of support. AK then asked who would vet the resources spread by association, to which MN responded that the BSN was already compiling resources and they also sent out a call to other organisations like STAMSA and MEENA to narrow down the same. They then hoped to run them by association representatives.

LB suggested an amendment based on AK's suggestions, clarifying what the aims for the ceasefire were, which included raising awareness, creating resources, and organising educational events.

The amendment passes by a show of hands.

LB worded this amendment as "The Students' Association express support for an immediate ceasefire in the Israel Gaza conflict, which includes the *cessation of military activity* by Israel and the release of hostages by Hamas..." MN stated that the motion wanted to refer to bombardment and not just military activity, so the motion also included Hamas

Arlo Bitcon (AB) suggested an amendment that altered the wording of the motion to, "The Students' Association express support for an immediate ceasefire in the Israel Gaza conflict, which includes the cessation of bombardment by Israel, termination of terrorist activities by Hamas, and the release of hostages to allow civilians to receive humanitarian aid and recover from the current conflict."

ABs' amendment passed by show of hands.

AK asked whether the SRC would feel comfortable endorsing the rector's email. FW said she would agree with the content of the email, and while she personally didn't agree with way of communicating the

contents of the email, she would rather the SRC advocated this from a collective rather than influential stance.

The motion passed by secret ballot.

9.7. Hall Committee Reforms Update – Accommodation Officer

AK shared efforts made by the Hall Committee reform team to generate proposals for student-led support as part of the residential experience in halls. They shared that hall committees were not recognised by any student body, and thus don't have much support in higher forums. They recommend the SRC take on the senior student forum in some capacity to make this more regulated. Other ideas included considering aligning hall committee constitutions and role descriptions, implementing enhanced and standardised handovers, offering training and guidance materials, making changes to financial oversight, adding additional supervision and support for key committee roles, and the potential to formalise the position of the Senior Student Forum.

IC added that this sort of idea has been proposed before but was done so in a way that hall committees would continue to have no support and wondered how the SRC would be able to help the same. AK suggested that committees could come up with reports and ideas of what they would need to function better which could be advocated for by the SRC.

LB asked whether this would mean that senior students would become officers, which would then change the way they'd be elected. AK responded that the senior student forum could become a subgroup of the accommodation committee, splitting the position into someone to advocate for those living in private accommodation and those in halls. LB then asked whether this meant that senior student groups would be held to the same standard as societies are. AK didn't think this would be a bad idea as with every proposal from their groups there was zero financial oversight and the senior students don't undergo any training, since this is significant responsibility of the University, training would be useful. AK said that it might be beneficial then if they were made a part of the association.

LB asked if senior students would be happy to be held to those standards, because incidents in the past suggested that they have not met these standards before. AK said that it was the occurrence of those incidents that prompted the review

MN added that she was on hall committees, and they're already connected to union in some ways so it should be an addition. LB said she would agree to the idea if it was reworded.

10. Open Discussion

CR shared that reclaim the night was taking place the following Friday.

AK added that the fife council was doing a canvas for students to register to vote and urged students to vote.

JK also asked for individuals to show their support for the trans day of remembrance

11. Any Other Competent Business

LB suggested that currently when a motion passes there is no accountability or follow up and wondered whether it was worth including in reports that an officer must write an update of what they've done since the motion passed.

JK asked whether the equality and diversity policy on the website was the most recent version. IC said it was and was sorely overdue for a revision.

Motion to adjourn is introduced, the motion passed by a show of hands.