



**University of St Andrews  
Students' Association  
Students' Representative Council  
Student Services Council**

**MINUTES**

Tuesday 23rd February 2021 – MS Teams – 6pm

**Present**

**Member's Name**

**Position**

Dan Marshall	Association President
Tom Groves	Association Director of Events and Services
Amy Gallacher	Association Director of Education
Emma Walsh	Association Director of Wellbeing
Gavin Sandford	Association Director of Student Development and Activities
Sophie Tyler	Association Athletic Union President
Morgan Morris	Association Chair
Emily Gilson	Association Alumni Officer
Anna Young	Association Community Relations Officer
Lea Weimann	Association Environment Officer
Georgina Beeby	Association LGBT+ Officer
Ananya Jain	Association BAME Officer
Stella Maris	Rector's Assessor
Sophie Bickerton	SRC Accommodation Officer
Joe Horsnell	Arts & Divinity Faculty President
Chloe Fielding	Science & Medicine Faculty President
Abigail Whitefield	SRC Postgraduate Academic Convener
Maitreyi Tusharika	SRC Member for First Years
Jasmine Rodriguez	SRC Postgraduate Development Officer
Elise Lenzi	SRC Member for Gender Equality
Annie Smith	SRC Member Without Portfolio
Anna-Ruth Cockerham	SRC Disability Officer
Gabby Kyriakou	SRC Member for Student Health
Tooba Shah	SRC Member for Widening Access & Participation
Kate MacLachlan	Principal Ambassador
Anna Harris	SSC Broadcasting Officer (STAR)
Amy Feakes	SSC Charities Officer (Charities Campaign)
Zaine Mansuralli	SSC Debates Officer (UDS)
Alistair Addison	SSC Music Officer (Music Fund)
Edward Spencer	SSC Design Team Convener

Ryan Delaney	SSC Entertainments Convener (ENTS)
Martin Caforio	SSC Performing Arts Officer (Mermaids)
Avery Kitchens	SSC Societies Officer
Toni Valencia	SSC Member Without Portfolio
Cara Nicholson	SSC Volunteering Officer (SVS)
Sam Ross	SSC Postgraduate Officer (Postgraduate Society)

### **In Attendance**

Sandra Mitchell  
Tara King  
Emma Craig  
Leonie Hoher  
Maisie McDavid

### **1. Adoption of the Agenda**

The agenda was adopted.

### **2. Apologies for Absence.**

Jenny Menday	Association Lifelong and Flexible Learners Officer	Absent
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### **3. Adoption of Minutes from Previous Meetings**

- 3.1. Draft Minutes from the Joint Councils Meeting on the 26th January 2021
- 3.2. Draft Minutes from the SRC Meeting on the 2nd February 2021
- 3.3. Draft Minutes from the SSC Meeting on the 9th February 2021

These were all **approved**.

### **4. Matters Arising from Minutes of Previous Meetings**

None.

### **5. Open Forum**

Sandra Mitchell (SM) asked if the reform of the Association Councils will affect how Lifers will go forward, as little has been done with it this year, and Morgan Morris (MM) said Lifers will still part of the SRC. Emma Walsh (EW) noted that Jenny Menday (JM) has been active in conversations within the Equal Opportunities Committee and been involved internally rather than externally. JM has been in conversations about people who have caring responsibilities. MM added that the current Association positions now have chapters in the Association Constitution, which are mandated to be written by those officers before the end of the semester.

Tara King (TK) asked if the long-term plan going forward is to include an element of Teams for these meetings, as it would be easier particularly for students with other responsibilities to attend on a regular basis. MM noted that they will look into this, and Annie Smith (AS) added that in the past Councils meetings have been streamed via Facebook Live and it should be possible to do this again. Dan Marshall (DM) added that the University and its governing bodies are also looking into this post-COVID so that members outwith St Andrews can attend meetings without needing to travel in for them. The University is actively considering what investment in technology will be needed to ensure this can happen.

## **6. Updates from the Most Recent Board Meeting**

### **7. Reports of the Sabbatical Officers**

#### **7.1. Report of the Athletic Union President**

Sophie Tyler (ST) has been helping out with elections and setting up the volunteering schedule within the Elections Committee. Over the past week, they have been working on the handover process within the Athletic Union and giving guidance to AU clubs on AGMs. ST has also been involved with discussions about plans for next year, especially club and people development. ST can now publish the large development paper for the AU, which they have been working on for the past year, and this will be going to the AU board next week. Further, ST is doing a review of the AU Constitution for necessary updates.

#### **7.2. Report of the Association President**

This past week, DM drafted a response to the University-led review of the Students' Association and worked with MM and other sabbatical officers on the Councils review motion which appears later in the meeting. DM also attended meetings about hall committee reform and widening participation in regards to academic support, as well as attending an admissions event with ST.

#### **7.3. Report of the Association Director of Events & Services**

Tom Groves (TG) attended a meeting about Raisin Weekend with other sabbatical officers and is beginning to look into ideas for virtual events. They have also been into the Union to help societies look for missing items, and TG has undertaken more website updates, with most of the role descriptions for Councils positions now completed.

#### **7.4. Report of the Association Director of Student Development & Activities**

Gavin Sandford (GS) has been helping out with RAG Week and Charities nominations, and they thanked Amy Feakes (AF) and the Charities Campaign for all their hard work. GS has worked with ACE and Can Do on plans to relaunch On the Rocks as a competition, and they have been planning for Raisin with other sabbatical officers. GS also helped the relevant officers on the laws motion tonight and met with postgraduate officers, with hopes to make progress on improving the support they get.

#### **7.5. Report of the Association Director of Education**

Amy Gallacher (AG) has done work on postgraduate representation alongside the PG report, which is now in its final phase and has been submitted to the University Proctor offices for support with

implementation. AG has met with postgraduate officers across the Students' Association to look into what they can do broadly to support these officers and their work. They noted that one of the actions from the meeting was to gather information about other postgraduate officers across the Students' Association, and AG asked councillors to please get in touch with them if they have any postgraduate officers on their subcommittees or committees who would be good for this group. AG has continued to meet with students on the Gender Studies course and supported them in navigating internal University structures, as well as meeting with the Director of the Graduate School about staffing and engagement with student representatives. The Students' Association has begun the Proctors Award and Teaching Awards. AG has also been preparing for the next meeting of the Digital Assessment Board, where they have flagged concerns about online proctoring in exams. Finally, they have progressed work with resilient learning communities, and if councillors are interested in leading projects within this they should let AG know.

#### 7.6. Report of the Association Director of Wellbeing

Emma Walsh (EW) has been working on elections this past week; nominations launched on Monday, and they noted this has gone smoothly so far minus some technical difficulties yesterday. There have been a lot of nominations so far, and ST noted there are only 12 positions with no candidates so far out of the SRC, Association, Sabbatical, and SSC positions. EW reminded councillors that they are not allowed to endorse any candidate in their official capacity, and they encouraged councillors to share information about their role and what they do as well as sharing the nudging form. EW attended the Raisin brainstorming meeting with other Sabbatical officers, and they asked councillors to please share the event on Facebook for the second election skills workshop tomorrow.

### 8. Questions for Association Officers

- 8.1. Questions for Association Alumni Officer
- 8.2. Questions for Association Community Relations Officer
- 8.3. Questions for Association LGBT+ Officer
- 8.4. Questions for Association Lifelong and Flexible Learners Officer
- 8.5. Questions for Association Environment Officer
- 8.6. Questions for Association BAME Officer

### 9. Questions for SSC Members

- 9.1. Questions for SSC Broadcasting Officer (STAR)
- 9.2. Questions for SSC Charities Officer (Charities Campaign)
- 9.3. Questions for SSC Debates Officer (UDS)

Zaine Mansuralli (ZM) has been working on delivering workshops for people with no debating experience so that they can increase accessibility. They have also delivered a series of single-speaker events about local government and the pandemic. UDS has ran two new elections to fill out their committee, with a motion coming later in the meeting about a full restructuring of their constitution.

- 9.4. Questions for SSC Performing Arts Officer (Mermaids)

Martin Caforio (MC) noted that Mermaids is putting together a Performing Arts working group for the Byre residency, and anyone interested can fill out the quick application to get involved. The group's

intensions are to ensure that all stakeholders in the Barron use are registered, as MC is continuing to work with Mermaids and other relevant officers on the plans for the Barron's closure.

- 9.5. Questions for SSC Postgraduate Officer (Postgraduate Society)
- 9.6. Questions for SSC Societies Officer
- 9.7. Questions for SSC Music Officer (Music Fund)
- 9.8. Questions for SSC Volunteering Officer (SVS)
- 9.9. Questions for SSC Design Officer (Design Team)
- 9.10. Questions for SSC Entertainments Convener (ENTS)
- 9.11. Questions for SSC Arts Festival Convener (On the Rocks)
- 9.12. Questions for SSC Member without Portfolio

#### **10. Questions for SRC Committees and Officers**

- 10.1. Questions for SRC Accommodation Officer
- 10.2. Questions for SRC Member for First Years
- 10.3. Questions for SRC Member for Gender Equality
- 10.4. Questions for SRC Disability Officer
- 10.5. Questions for SRC Member for Student Health
- 10.6. Questions for SRC Member for Widening Access and Participation
- 10.7. Questions for SRC Arts/Divinity Faculty President
- 10.8. Questions for SRC Science/Medicine Faculty President
- 10.9. Questions for SRC Postgraduate Academic Convener
- 10.10. Questions for SRC Postgraduate Development Convener
- 10.11. Questions for Principal Ambassador
- 10.12. Questions for Rector's Assessor

Stella Maris (SM) acknowledged councillor confusion about the Rector's Committee and what they are doing, encouraging anyone with questions about what they are or their long-term goals to let SM know. They noted that if councillors are aware of a position within the Rector's Committee that corresponds with the issues they work on, and they have not been reached out to by that committee member, they should flag this up with SM as they should have been reached out to already. SM said that the Rector's Committee should be able to function as a long-term continuity for councillors who have been elected for a year and may not have enough time to finish the issues they set out to work on in their manifestos. They are still figuring out where the Rector's Committee will fit into the larger St Andrews community and its relationship with the Students' Association and University going forward. The Rector's Committee values any feedback or suggestions to help them with this, and SM clarified they are not trying to duplicate the Students' Association; rather, they want to look at long-term goals and support councillors in their current efforts. For inquiries, SM's email is [see4@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:see4@st-andrews.ac.uk).

- 10.13. Questions for SRC Member Without Portfolio

#### **11. New General Joint Business**

##### **11.1. J21-06 Motion to reform and update the Laws of the Association.**

MM relinquished the chair to SRC Senior Officer Avery Kitchens (AK) and then introduced the motion. They noted that they have been doing a review of the Association laws over the past few months. The central aspects of these changes are to reduce the amount of work and pressure on councillors, change

how the SSC functions by placing more responsibility on other committees that previously did not have as much work, and removing the hierarchy of Association positions. To do this, the SSC will be changed to the Student Activities Forum (SAF), and the Association positions will be changed to SRC positions. MM noted that the Association Board has approved the preliminary ideas of this motion, and the executive committee unanimously approved it. They clarified that this motion would replace the Association laws with Appendix 3a, the remits of all officers, and Appendix 3b, the constitutions of the subcommittee. MM noted that this is only foundational work, as they could not edit and review everything as they did not feel comfortable changing things that involved other subcommittees, so there are still sections that will be mandated and changed by relevant councillors.

Lea Weimann (LW) asked if MM could explain how changing Association positions to SRC ones will affect these meetings, and whether those issues will still be seen in both meetings. MM responded that by turning Association positions into SRC positions (the Association Chair will still reside on both), they will just be a representative on the SRC as the SAF will simply oversee operations of student activities within the Union. Further, the SAF will only meet twice as semester while the SRC will meet once a month. While there will no longer be Joint Councils, Association officers can still go along to the SAF if they have a matter of interest there, and a joint meeting could be called if there was significant overlap of interest, such as the Barron Theatre motion last month.

TG asked what 'significant overlap' means in terms of warranting a joint meeting, and MM said this will be up to the interpretation of the chair and the argument presented in a particular motion, with the Chair also consulting with other Sabbatical officers on this.

LW asked if there will be any form of communication so that the SAF knows what is happening on the SRC and vice versa. MM noted that the executive committee will meet more often and communication will go through them via the carved-up members from the SAF and SRC to the executive committee. If anyone seeks to make changes to the constitution, this will also go through the executive committee.

Anna-Ruth Cockerham (ARC) motioned to move to debate and ST seconded.

ST stated their approval of the motion. DM said that each year students remark that Councils is too complicated and they do not understand what is going on, and there have also been long-term issues with Councils positions being inaccessible to people who work part-time or have caring responsibilities. In a review of the Association last year, DM noted that they found Councils was seen as intimidating and inaccessible, and they hope these changes help to resolve this with less meetings to attend and less bureaucratic responsibility such as passing motions on changing the laws, as this will go to the executive committee and to councillors who choose to do this work. DM hopes that when people come to Councils in the future, it can be more of a place where discussion and debate can happen, rather than one where 'Councils hacks' discuss the laws. DM therefore noted they approve of this motion.

LW asked if there will be a review of this motion to see how effective the changes will be. MM noted that the review date is set at January 2022, and the review will be undertaken by the Association Chair successor. LW also asked if the names will change for Association positions, and MM responded that all positions, excluding non-elected positions, will become an 'Officer', such as Environment Officer or Gender Equality Officer. If the motion passes tonight, people who are currently standing for election will be made aware of this.

GS also noted that the names of the subcommittees have changed within the Constitution, such as Debates Subcommittee as opposed to UDS, but if these subcommittees have another name this will be placed in brackets, such as Debates Subcommittee (UDS). This will make subcommittee names more equitable across the board.

Edward Spencer (ES) asked if the names of non-elected positions have changed, and MM said they are staying the name. However, there may be plans to look at this in the future, as noted in the Resolves section, and see if these will change. This responsibility will lay with the sabbatical officers.

ARC asked about people who are currently nominating themselves for positions under the positions' current names and structures, and writing manifestos under these structures, wondering if they will change the names of positions on the Elections Portal now or wait to implement this until the new Councils first meet. ARC also asked if this makes the Elections cycle confusing. MM said no changes will take place until after the Elections cycle, and the changes from this motion will be brought up at their first meeting. However, the people currently standing for election will be made aware of these changes in case it dissuades them from standing for election, but MM does not believe it will change current nominations as these changes only slightly affect remits and otherwise are just simple name changes. MM welcomes feedback from councillors on this as well.

DM noted that these changes are not official until the Association Board has approved them on 17 March.

Toni Valencia (TV) motioned to move to a vote and DM seconded.

With 27 votes in favour and two abstentions, the motion **passed**.

### **11.2. J21-07 Motion to update the Saints LGBT+ Committee Structure.**

Georgina Beeby (GB) introduced the motion, noting that this motion comes from GB's review of the constitution to clarify which positions are elected and which are interviewed. The main change is that the Marketing Officer is now interviewed because this has worked better for the committee than when it was elected.

Elise Lenzi (EL) motioned to move to debate and Amy Feakes (AF) seconded.

TV motioned to move to vote and ST seconded.

With 28 votes in favour, the motion **passed**.

### **11.3. J21-08 Motion to Reform the Debates Board.**

ZM introduced the motion, noting that the Debates Board was expanded at the beginning of this term, but the Board now has 18 people on committee and it is not reasonably possible for every member to explain what they are doing in each meeting. The constitution also included unnecessary and archaic information, making it inaccessible. The motion creates three subcommittees: one for public debates, one for competitive debates, and one for the executive members.

GS motioned to move to debate and ARC seconded.

LW motioned to move to a vote and ST seconded.

With 27 votes in favour, the motion **passed**.

#### **11.4. J21-09 Motion to Add a 'Special Arrangements' Clause to the Societies Committee's Laws.**

AK introduced the motion, noting that it will set a precedent on how future Societies Committee should handle a large number of societies within a specific academic discipline. They noted that the Societies Committee recently held a Medical Societies Forum and met with the School President of Medicine. From this, they wrote a proposal for an optional opt-in system where societies could join a network of other medical societies for students who could not afford to join every one. This motion will therefore set a precedent if a Societies Committee ever wants to do this again.

ARC asked about the point in the motion that discusses waiving the £3 membership fee for societies and how this will affect their funding. With medical societies as an example, AK noted that the societies can choose whether they would like to waive the fee for the network itself, as medical societies did not want the £3 fee anyways. They also said that there is a rule where societies can waive this fee if they can prove they are funded by an external body.

ARC motioned to move to debate and ST seconded.

ARC motioned to move to a vote and ST seconded.

With 26 votes in favour and one against, the motion **passed**.

### **12. New General SSC Business**

None.

### **13. New General SRC Business**

#### **13.1. R21-02 Motion to support the MLitt Gender Studies cohort**

Joe Horsnell (JH) introduced the motion, noting that this will mandate AG, JH, and the two relevant school presidents to look after the MLitt Gender Studies cohort due to staffing issues. JH noted that over 2,000 students have signed an open letter on this, demonstrating this is of importance to students, and that it is important to mandate student representatives to be able to help these students as they will be negatively affected by these changes. As a result of this motion, the Director of Education would be able to discuss the structures of the Graduate School, as this has been an issue with how certain staffing-related matters are communicated to students and discussing fixed-term contracts in general. This motion steers clear of discussing the specific incidents which have occurred, instead focusing on looking after the affected students. It also endorses the long-term existence of the Institute for Gender Studies, partially because JH believes it is a fantastic asset for St Andrews and also so that students who wish to take a leave of absence can return knowing the programme will still exist once they return, allowing them to finish their degree.



ARC asked why they are steering clear of mentioning the specific incident. DM said this is partly because neither the councillors nor others have the full information in this case, as the University does not comment on individual staffing matters and because this is an ongoing complaint. Additionally, the goal of the Students' Association is to represent students, and this motion will work to ensure the cohort is not negatively affected. DM added that it is important to talk about staffing matters where it is appropriate and when they affect students, which is why this motion will look at the way fixed-term contracts are used and how they can affect individual cohorts. DM said that it is important not to intervene in individual staffing matters when they do not have the full information.

ARC motioned to move to debate and Abi Whitefield (AW) seconded.

ST motioned to move to a vote and ARC seconded.

With 20 votes in favour, the motion **passed unanimously**.

### **13.2. R21-03 Motion to lobby the UK Government to compensate fee-paying students affected by the pandemic**

DM introduced the motion, noting that a significant number of students have been calling for tuition-fee refunds over the past few months, given the impact of the pandemic on education. While they do not want to get students' hopes up with refunds from the University, they believe it is important to push for something they believe they can get in terms of refunds from the UK government. DM believes that tuition fee refunds will never come from the University as the University does not have the money, and it would cause significant redundancies of staff with long-term effects on students if they were ever forced to do so. This motion would affiliate with the campaign that is pushing the UK government to compensate fee-paying students, as DM believes the responsibility and management of the pandemic ultimately rests with the government. The government has bailed out other sectors which have been affected by the pandemic, but they have not yet done so with higher education. DM said it is important that students are compensated, but not through the universities and thus at the expense of a future generation of students, and therefore DM believes this is a reasonable campaign by pushing for student compensation without threatening the viability of the higher education sector overall.

ST asked whether Scottish students deserve compensation as well, and DM said it is worth making the distinction between compensation and support; they noted that many students need financial support as well, and ScotGov has offered a lot in hardship funding so far. However, DM did add that this hardship funding does not go far enough, as other parts of the UK have spent more on hardship funding and thus they are working with the NUS to get as much as they can. That being said, DM noted a lot is available right now within this hardship funding that can be used until the end of March. In regards to compensation, DM said that a lot of postgraduate and international students have spent a significant amount of money from savings, and UK students will be in debt for this, so the question remains whether students should take a financial hit from this past year.

AS asked about the progress of this issue on the national level so far, and DM responded that most of the previous efforts have been directed at universities refunding fees or telling the Government to tell universities to give refunds, which DM said would not happen for a variety of reasons. However, there has been increasing pressure from students for compensation, and there have been abstract discussions about compensation within the UK government, with about seven Tory MPs calling for students to be

compensated and PM Boris Johnson saying in an offhand comment that he believes students should be compensated. DM believes that even if the pandemic situation improves, the argument for compensation by students will continue because there are likely to be legal challenges and complaints which come at the end of the academic year, based on the quality of experience they have had. This can therefore spark larger policy discussions because many students feel that they have not had value for money this year with their tuition fees.

AW asked about what exactly the compensation is for and whether it is to do with quality of teaching or student experience, as they believe many academics would disagree with the quality of teaching argument as they have had to work harder. DM says this is why the motion is carefully worded, as staff have done as well as they can and delivered what they could in difficult times. DM clarified that this is not about academic staff delivering high-quality teaching, but rather that when students pay tuition fees or take out tuition loans, they are buying into a wider student experience, and the UK government essentially funds the higher education system by doing this. DM said it is entirely reasonable for students to say that whilst academic staff have delivered quality teaching, their tuition fees are designed to pay for more than that, and therefore they should be compensated. DM added that this is why it is important that the campaign looks to reevaluate and comment on the way that the system of higher education in the UK is funded, as universities, especially Scottish ones, are essentially reliant on international students paying tuition fees.

ARC motioned to move to debate and LW seconded.

TK said that, in their opinion, teaching this year has been above and beyond, and they worry there is a danger of undermining and demoralising teaching staff who are working insane hours to do their job. In terms of the particular politicians supporting this campaign, they worry that they may use it as a way to influence universities, such as political interference in the way that universities run and the things that can or cannot be taught. DM responded that these questions are coming whether we like it or not, and they believe they should be solved by the UK government and not universities, as the government specifically states that it is their job to fund universities when universities cannot fund themselves. DM said that the campaign and the Students' Association should therefore emphasise that this is a problem caused by the UK government, and that universities are not to blame and not necessarily the ones with whom students are angry.

ARC says it is important to echo DM's sentiments and, irrespective of whether they believe teaching staff or the University has done well this year, it is reasonable to say that students have had a hard time this year and will struggle in the future as a result of this, such as facing £45,000 of debt as they struggle to enter the job market. ARC believes that it is important that the government, irrespective of universities, takes accountability and acknowledges that it cannot leave students in a long-term, negative financial situation. DM agreed.

ST motioned to move to a vote and LW seconded.

With 20 votes in favour and one against, the motion **passed**.

### **13.3 R21-04 A motion for the Students' Association to publicly reject the UK Whitehaven Coal Mine Project**

LW introduced the motion, stating that this is an important national decision and campaign with far-reaching efforts into the future. While the UK has the target to be carbon-neutral by 2050, LW noted that the Whitehaven Coal Mine Project was approved in October 2020 and would be the UK's first coal mine in 30 years. This motion asks Councils to publicly reject this and would mandate councillors to speak on this in an official capacity, such as sharing the petition. LW added that the Whitehaven Project would lock the UK into a high-carbon economy and infrastructure, and it is our duty to inform students about this national project and speak up against it.

ARC motioned to move to debate and ST seconded.

AW motioned to move to vote and ST seconded.

With 22 motions in favour, the motion **passed unanimously**.

#### **14. Any Other Competent Business**

None.

#### **15. Collaborative Solutions**

15.1. Handover Documents

15.2. Dissolution of Association Councils 2020-2021

Not minuted.