



**University of St Andrews
Students' Association
Executive Committee**

MINUTES

Tuesday 16th February 2021 – MS Teams – 6pm

Present

Member's Name	Position
Dan Marshall	Association President
Tom Groves	Association Director of Events and Services
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
Joe Horsnell	SRC Senior Officer
Elise Lenzi	SRC Secondary Nominee
Maitreyi Tusharika	SRC Tertiary Nominee
Avery Kitchens	SSC Senior Officer
Sam Ross	SSC Secondary Nominee
Zaine Mansuralli	SSC Tertiary Nominee

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Apologies for Absence.

Amy Gallacher	Association Director of Education	Absent
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3. Adoption of the Minutes from the Previous Meeting

None.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

None.

5. Unfinished General Business

None.

6. New General Business

6.1. Discussion of the motion reforming the current laws of the Association

Morgan Morris (MM) noted that there have already been changes from the feedback given from the last executive committee meeting and the members afterwards, pending approval from this meeting.

Avery Kitchens (AK) noted that in points 3.4.2 and 3.4.3, for the DoSDA remit, there was a discrepancy with the Saints LGBT+ subcommittee, as it says the DoSDA line-manages the subcommittee but does not actually sit on it, as Saints LGBT+ is not listed as an SAF subcommittee. Gavin Sandford (GS) noted this discrepancy also appears the BAME subcommittee. MM said they will add BAME and Saints LGBT+ to these points. GS said that the Sabbatical position remits need to be reworked in general, and this will likely be done with a motion later in the year.

MM said that there have been changes to the 'Resolves' section of the motion after the feedback from the last meeting, and that this review is the foundational review of the SRC, SSC, and the executive committee, but other chapters such as membership have not been changed because this falls under the remit of Iain Cupples (IC). The Resolves section now notes that Chapter 1 will be reviewed by the sabbatical officers by the end of their term, Chapters 17 to 23 will be completed by relevant officers, the Director of Wellbeing and relevant officers will review the Equal Opportunities Subcommittee, the Director of Education will review postgraduate roles, the Director of Wellbeing will review the Elections chapter along with other sabbatical officers, and the Director of Events and Services will review the rules of the Union with other relevant people.

Zaine Mansuralli (ZM) asked if the joint meeting of the SRC and SAF would have any decision-making power, and Dan Marshall (DM) noted that there are two types of general meetings, an EGM which has a matter that requires both groups for discussion (such as the Barron Theatre) and the AGM which is for all members of the Association. In short, DM said he is not sure but that the decision-making power of these meetings has not been changed. ZM said it would be useful for issues such as future reforms to go to a Joint Councils-style body, and as a subcommittee head they worry there could be a radical restructure in the future and relevant members are not consulted. MM said if there would be major changes to how the SAF works in the future, this would be a matter of joint business. DM added that 50% of the membership of the executive committee would still consist of SAF members. GS also noted that implementing strategy would go to the executive committee, and the Chair would have the ability to call joint meetings, which they agreed with.

MM will add to the Resolves that the chapter about the AGM will be reviewed at a later date. ZM asked if 'all members of the Association' refers to members of Association Councils or all students, and DM said it refers to all members of the Students' Association, which involves the governance of Association's charity status and not necessarily the operations of Councils.

Emma Walsh (EW) noted that point 3.1 of the Elections section, which says the Senior Elections Officer is the Director of Wellbeing, but in point 4.1.15 it says that the Senior Elections Officer is carved up from the existing elections committee. MM says this has been reformatted and taken out, and EW said the

rest of the Elections section looks good. MM also added the Athletic Union President to the Elections section.

MM noted that amendments can be made to the laws in the future.

DM asked the group whether it is worthwhile to have Association subcommittee constitutions, as well as the constitution of the Students' Association, as they are quite different documents. Joe Horsnell (JH) said they believe it is okay because many organisations function like this.

Tom Groves (TG) asked for an explanation of the difference between the Association constitution and the Association laws. MM said the laws explain what things are, and the constitution explains how to do them. DM clarified the main Association constitution is the governing document of the charity and explains how the charity works, including its formal relationship with the University under the 94 Education Act, whereas the laws show how the democratic structures work, such as Councils. The constitution needs to be submitted to the charities regulator, and if they want to amend it, it has to be amended by University Court. Years ago, they decided to keep the laws separate from the Constitution because it meant they could amend the laws without going to Court, which is allowed. TG said they believe splitting the Constitution and the laws is fine.

MM asked if the other sabbatical officers and the executive committee as a whole would second the motion, and everyone agreed. DM said councillors can still send thoughts on the motion by tomorrow at 5pm.

7. Any Other Competent Business

JH asked if events surrounding Dr Allison Kerr will come to Councils next week as a motion and wanted to bring it for discussion with the executive committee. JH noted it is gaining traction amongst the student body, along with being reported in *The New York Times* over the weekend, and the petition is currently at almost 1700 signatures from students and staff. They asked if other members thought they should bring a motion to Councils on this, as they believe it is dangerous to be on the wrong side of the student opinion with issues like this. JH said there are certain things we don't know about the case, such as why this has happened because the University doesn't engage on specific employment cases. JH asked the group about their opinions on this, and they could put a motion to Councils next week if everyone thought it would be a good idea.

Elise Lenzi (EL) asked if the motion would be one supporting Dr Kerr, or supporting the University. EL acknowledged that they know her and others in the Gender Studies department, and they would be curious to know what the University's reasons are. EL said it may not be appropriate to comment on an ongoing situation when students do not know the full details. JH said this was one of their reservations as well since they only know what students are experiencing, and these experiences along with the perception of how it is being handled by the University can be incredibly damaging. JH has not been given permission to share student experiences in the Gender Studies department, but they said it is damaging that one of the foremost Gender Studies department in the UK and across Europe has seen its founder now removed, according to the student argument. JH said there is a draft motion on their website for reference, even though their motion may not be based on that. Amy Gallacher (AG) and JH

have been pondering whether this unknown information should affect whether they propose a motion on this issue, or if they should go ahead with this. JH also notes that their decisions bind School Presidents, and if they decide to stay silent, other School Presidents cannot speak out on this issue.

DM noted the fact that the University cannot comment on ongoing disciplinary matters, and because there is an active complaint, the University cannot engage due to that as well. DM said there is a lot happening beneath the surface that students are unaware of, and they would be uncomfortable passing a motion along the lines of the draft motion on the website. DM said this will also set a precedent on Councils getting involved on employment matters at the University, specifically individual staffing matters. They proposed that they could pass a motion which acknowledges the issue and students on the course, mandating that their delivery of teaching is not affected and supporting students on the programme, rather than attempting to protect a member of staff. JH said they agree and understands the reasoning, but they noted that School Presidents may be disappointed because they would like to publicly speak out on this issue.

As a secondary issue, JH noted that last week, School Presidents expressed concerns that they are bound by motions passed at Councils without being able to discuss them, and that this may be an issue to address at a later date. In their personal experience, JH reflected that when Councils passed a motion in years prior about the strikes, it bound them to quite a political view as a School President, and if they had actively wanted to go against that motion, they would have to resign, even though they do not sit on Councils and could not vote on it.

Sophie Tyler (ST) agreed with JH's sentiments and said it does not make sense that School Presidents do not sit on Councils. In terms of the discussion of the Association laws, ST said this could give way to making a change in this way. For example, if Joint Councils is only called when there is a need for it, they could possibly call a meeting with the Joint Councils and Education Committee when a motion or issue affects both groups, thereby allowing the School Presidents to have more oversight without being required to attend every Councils meeting. MM said this is why Faculty Presidents sit on Councils, but JH said Education Committee does not get the papers of the meetings in time for Faculty Presidents to discuss matters with Education Committee.

DM noted that Education Committee is a subcommittee of the SRC, meaning School Presidents sit on an SRC subcommittee and the structure should allow them to actively feed in their thoughts on academic matters to the SRC. DM also clarified that as individuals they are allowed to express personal opinions, although they cannot use their official accounts to voice these views. DM said there is an issue with School Presidents being able to actively contribute to these structures but that they need to be careful in saying they have no say, but he wants them to feel that they do not have to sit on Councils to take part in matters representing education. JH said that School Presidents need to be aware of this because it is implicit that as a representative of the Students' Association, you must stand with the Association, and their link to Councils should be explained more.

On the potential for a motion about Dr Kerr, Sam Ross (SR) said they do not believe this is a matter that the executive committee or Councils should comment on or support, and they noted that none of them know the contexts surrounding it. From a staff and student perspective, SR feels this is a movement born out of respect for a colleague, but it does not necessarily take into consideration that they are in the middle of a pandemic and that even though contract staff will normally be given a permanent post, these are not normal times. SR said that this is not an emotional issue for the University and rather is a financial decision to ensure resources for a department are allocated appropriately. While SR said they respect Dr Kerr, they are not sure that this is something that an institution or governing body should take an opinion on.

On the point about School Presidents feeling like they are not able to take a stand on academic issues such as the strikes motion, GS said if there was one school that collectively held a different view, it would make sense for the School President to be able to reflect that because it is their job to reflect the views of their schools. GS asked if it were possible to create a procedure that allowed School Presidents to defer to the relevant views of their cohort, such as a School President being allowed to take an official stance that differs from Councils' stance because the group which they represent feels differently. JH said this is the exact problem which was brought up by School Presidents, as some feel they hold this position within their own School and not within Councils, as they do not identify as belonging to Councils. GS clarified that they would not wish for this to happen all the time, and instead it would only be allowed or mandated when necessary. DM said that if they were to say this as a policy, it would not be sustainable because other members may feel they could say whatever they want officially on issues that affect their role specifically. However, DM said they could still pass a motion on an issue (such as the strikes) and note that School Presidents can say whatever they want as it pertains to their School's collective beliefs. DM said this could be something that they ensure School Presidents and councillors understand, and there is nothing that precludes councillors from doing this when drafting motions or even proposing amendments. GS said it would be helpful to have a name for this, or include it as a standing order, so students are aware that they can do this. JH agreed that this should be a mechanism that is written down, otherwise it will be forgotten by councillors. ST noted that they agree in principle, particularly in reference to political issues such as the strikes, but they are concerned that there would potentially not be sufficient oversight on that School President to know that they are acting on the interests of their School rather than their personal beliefs, particularly with political issues. DM said they need to be clear that they are a Union that is working to make educated decisions on behalf of a student body and that not all students may agree with every action they take, but they do need to be clear with School Presidents to make sure they know what they are and are not bound by. DM hopes that if Education Committee are united on an educational matter, the education representatives will come to Councils on this basis and not overrule the Education Committee, and most of the time councillors should trust these education representatives on education matters.

JH asked the group about next steps with the Dr Allison Kerr situation and the issues raised by School Presidents. JH noted that a motion could not demand that Dr Kerr gets her job back, but they could raise one which allows School Presidents to act according to their constituent students' views on this issue, thereby allowing them to share this petition in an official stance. DM said personally they do not see the

value or relevance in passing a motion that says a specific School President can act in the interest of the students in their School with intervening in employment matters in that School. Instead, they believe a motion that mandates that the Faculty Presidents will liaise with School Presidents to ensure the impact on affected students in that programme is mitigated, therefore mandating the relevant officers to work with whoever is affected. JH said they believe this would be fair and achieve their goals. EL asked if the Gender Studies department has its own School President, or if it still falls under the Philosophy School President. JH responded that the department technically has two School Presidents, as it falls under the School of Philosophy and the Graduate School President.

JH asked the group about how they could put something in the standing orders about education policies, and GS said this should be a separate proposal because they would need input from IC and AG. MM agreed this would be a separate meeting between IC, Faculty Presidents, and sabbatical officers. DM would also be interested in talking to JH about the role of School Presidents within the Students' Association.

MM noted that the executive committee councillors have approved the contents of this motion and that the motion will go to Joint Councils next Tuesday, February 23.