



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

MINUTES

Tuesday 17th November 2020 – MS Teams – 5pm

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
Avery Kitchens	SSC Senior Officer
Sam Ross	SSC Secondary Nominee
Zaine Mansuralli	SSC Tertiary Nominee

In Attendance

Iain Cupples	HR Manager
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1. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Apologies for Absence.

Amy Gallacher	Association Director of Education	Apologies	
Maitreyi Tusharika	SRC Tertiary Nominee	Apologies	Proxy - Tom Groves

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. Association Councils Review

Morgan Morris (MM) began the discussion of the review, noting conversations with Dan Marshall (DM) and Iain Cupples (IC) to ensure the changes would be in line with the rules for the Union's charity status. The general changes include changing the SSC into a less formal Student Services Forum, with no decision-making power and instead acting as a place for discussion and collaboration between heads of the SSC subcommittees; holding constitutions by the subcommittees independently, rather than a 30-chapter laws of the Association, meaning any changes they want to make would go to the executive committee rather than Joint Councils, or an AGM; getting rid of Association positions and changing them to SRC positions, removing the hierarchy; reducing the number of meetings per semester to one SRC meeting per month, or about three per semester, and twice a semester for the Student Services Forum, and one joint AGM each semester. The review would also remove obsolete chapters in the laws, and the standing orders to match.

DM noted that the idea section of the document includes the initial thoughts from DM and MM, with the most important section being the Aims section as these are the problems they need to solve. MM said that after this meeting, DM and MM will work on finalising these changes and then hope to bring them to the executive committee on 16 February, with approval from the Joint Councils on 23 February prior to elections and then final approval from the board on 17 March.

Tom Groves (TG) noted they could call the new SSC the Student Activities Forum, instead of Student Services Forum, and Elise Lenzi (EL) and Emma Walsh (EW) agreed, noting that then it would not be confused with Student Services.

From an elections standpoint, EW asked if the new SSC members would still be elected, and MM said that these changes should not alter which positions are elected. EW asked how much of these changes could be made public before they are finalised, as some may be relevant to people considering running for elections. DM said they won't be able to make it public until they get approval, and that it would mainly affect SSC as they would have less meetings and less say on matters that would normally come to Joint Councils. However, DM said this would be generally aligned with how SSC councillors currently view their roles. MM noted that in the last two years, little has been brought to the SSC other than constitutional changes. Avery Kitchens (AK) noted his personal experience in the differences between SSC and SRC and said that often motions to the SSC feel like a waste of time because other councillors are usually unaware of the constitutional changes to certain subcommittees. MM clarified EW's concerns that there may be minor changes from an elections standpoint, but it should not affect positions being elected or role descriptions. IC clarified that the Education Act requires that certain positions are elected in a cross-campus ballot, but this guidance is vague, so it would be sensible to keep

electing these positions for now and look into this further at a later date. Gavin Sandford (GS) clarified that the biggest change will be less meetings, and students can still have the same expectations from their councillors, with which MM agreed.

TG asked IC how old the SSC is and what existed before it. IC noted that previously the SSC was called the Union Management Committee until someone noted it did not do any managing so they should change the name to its current one. In the late 1980s, the previous SSC discussed matters such as selling *The Sun* in the shop or bar price lifts, which are now dealt with by professional staff.

Zaine Mansuralli (ZM) said he thinks the changes to SSC were a good idea generally, but they are concerned with having the executive committee dealing with the same issues that the SSC deals with, in terms of approving motions they do not quite understand because they pertain to specific subcommittees, and they would not have the heads of subcommittees at meetings of the executive committee to clarify the motions. They also wondered if there was some merit to having members of the Student Activities Forum voting in Joint Councils, noting that when Ananya Jain (AJ) brought her motion about the BAME Subcommittee to Joint Councils, it was valuable to have members voting and debating on it who had experience running a subcommittee, even though it was fundamentally a discussion about representation. DM said that by moving these issues to the executive committee, it can remove some of the bureaucratic responsibility from councillors, and the students who would enjoy that bureaucratic side would be the ones who nominate themselves for carve-ups to the executive committee. On the debating side of motions, DM envisions that the subcommittee would decide on their constitutional changes with an EGM and then it would come to Councils for ratification. Therefore, the central discussion would take place within a group that understands their constitution and their needs, and then Councils would ensure those changes align with the Association's charity status and does not interfere with other policies or operations. ZM said that he agrees with this method where subcommittees can be more involved in the changes they propose.

ZM asked whether all students can attend meetings of the executive committee as they can with Joint Councils meetings, and MM clarified that you cannot attend executive meetings because they sometimes discuss confidential matters. However, MM noted this could change and they could open the meetings, moving to in camera when they were discussing confidential matters. EL noted that when people are making changes to their own constitutions, their default opinion is to believe that the person running the subcommittee knows best, and moving these matters to the executive committee would just ensure the subcommittees are not making irrational changes. GS asked whether any motions that have come to the SSC in the last few years have ever not been passed, and MM said that they could not think of one that had been rejected, with some being withdrawn or amended slightly during the meeting. GS said with this, it is clear SSC is not achieving much in its current state in terms of debating motions, so they would not lose anything significant by moving these matters to the executive committee.

MM clarified that these changes are the basic skeleton of what they plan to do, and while DM and MM will be working on these changes between the two of them, they will not be working in isolation as they will come to the executive committee and other councillors for clarification on wording and other matters. DM noted that they envision a model similar to the Societies Committee, where societies hold their own constitutions and they have to fulfill certain criteria, and the updated constitutions are sent to the Societies Committee each year to ensure they are meeting the requirements.

DM asked the group whether there would be more resistance from SSC members that are not part of the executive committee by losing some of the bureaucratic responsibilities of their role, as this group's role would not change as much. EL said from the perspective of people they know on SSC, they are usually frustrated with the bureaucratic side of the role and they do not believe there would be resistance to these changes. AK noted that if SSC members would like to be more involved after these changes are approved, they can run for executive committee to have these kinds of responsibilities as well. ZM broadly agreed, noting that some SSC members have been quite interested in this bureaucratic side while others were more focused on their specific subcommittees. However, ZM also suggested the idea of increasing the co-opted roles, such as an SSC representative to the Joint Councils or SRC, whichever would be the representative body of the Association. MM noted there would not be a Joint Councils anymore under these changes, and instead the two groups would be brought together once a semester in an AGM-style open forum. AK suggested that with these changes, they explain the role of the Senior Officers on the executive committee more, as currently the only differences between the senior officer and other officers is that the senior officer sits on the board. AK believes that it would be beneficial for the SSC representatives to hold office hours where SSC members could speak with them about any matters going to the executive committee.

EL noted they are in support of less bureaucracy and would like to expand the remit of the Wellbeing Subcommittee so that they could dissolve the Equal Opportunities Subcommittee and the Sex- and Gender-Based Violence Subcommittee. With this, the Wellbeing Subcommittee could move away from the perception of just planning wellbeing events and instead do more for wellbeing, as many members of Wellbeing Subcommittee sit on these three subcommittees, and EW agreed. MM answered TG's question in the Teams chat and said that the chair of the Wellbeing Subcommittee is currently the SRC Member for Student Health, not the Director of Wellbeing (DoWell), and instead the DoWell acts as the line manager. AK agreed with EL and said that in their experience with the Equal Opportunities Subcommittee, it feels like a waste of time, and EW noted that this year they haven't seen any agenda points. DM said there is some merit to changing the name of Equal Opportunities Subcommittee, or creating a joint subcommittee that includes them both to clarify. DM also noted that these changes can currently be made through a motion to Councils and do not necessarily need to go along with the restructuring of Councils. MM seconded this point and said they would be happy to sit down with EL, EW, and Wellbeing Subcommittee chair Gabby Kyriakou (GK) to discuss these changes and help them with this restructuring. EW said if they decide to change the name of these subcommittees, her role title should possibly be changed as well since the role title can sometimes be misconstrued as more involved with wellness.

GS asked if Nightline and the Principal Ambassador would still sit on Councils, and EW and MM noted that Nightline does not sit on Councils. MM said that he believes the Rector's Assessor should still sit on the SRC, but the Principal Ambassadors for the last few years have wanted to change their role as they do not see why they should sit on the SRC, and rather their role with the SRC was pushed by Admissions. GS asked whether they could remove members of the Wellbeing Subcommittee if there would be too many members when combining subcommittees, and EW said that was the situation in the past but the group size has tripled in recent years due to new affiliated groups and societies that work with Wellbeing Subcommittee. EW said there are benefits in collaboration but disadvantages to a subcommittee with 30 people, so they should possibly return to past ways where the Wellbeing Subcommittee was a core group of members. MM agreed with GS, noting that bringing everyone together in one subcommittee could be difficult, and rather they could have a less frequent forum between the Equal Opportunities Subcommittee and Wellbeing Subcommittee. GS asked if there are major differences between the Equal Opportunities Subcommittee and the SRC, and EW said that there

are two people on the committee who are not councillors, the Interfaith Representative and the Secretary. GS said if the Equal Opportunities Subcommittee and the SRC are fairly similar, they could fold them into each other, but DM disagreed that they are functionally similar. DM also noted it would be difficult to argue the importance of equal opportunities and widening access to the University when they dissolved their subcommittee dealing with these issues. EL said they believe changing the name of the Wellbeing Subcommittee could work better and that meetings could focus more on core members, as currently invited members attend meetings to force collaboration on wellbeing issues between relevant councillors. MM said that they will meet with EW, GK, and EL to discuss this further.

ZM asked about the process of incorporating their ideas today into the review that will be proposed to the Joint Councils. MM said they will work with DM to restructure their current ideas and change the wording, and it will return to the executive committee in February for final critiques before it goes to Joint Councils at the end of February.

7. Any Other Competent Business

None.