

**Extraordinary All-Student Forum**  
**WHEREFORE ART THOU SPOONS?**

**Tuesday 28th April 2026**

**Old Union Diner**

**18:30-20:30**

**Minutes**

Chaired by: Luke Baird (LB)

These minutes by: Holly McDonald (Campaigns & Impact Co-ordinator)

Present: Alice Hodges (AH, PresAffs), Chris Clarke (CC, Chief Operating Officer), Aidan Cronin (ACr, ASF Chair-elect), Thomas Carey (TC, Employability Officer), John McNealy (JMc, Accommodation Officer), Jacob Carey (Opps Forum Chair), Alex Chun (AC, PresWell), Robert Moran (RM, PresOpps), Justin Goldberg (JG, Societies Officer), Cam Brown (CB, Rector's Assessor), Pierluigi Maffi (PM, PGT President), Caitie Steele (CS, student), Emma Hughes (EH, SVS Convenor), Bartosz Rogala (BR, PresWell-elect), Amy Hopkins (Amy H, PGR President), Elise Bateman (EB, Head of Student Engagement), Stella Maris (SM, Rector), Emily Bannister (EmB, PresEd).

Further attendance was obtained via QR code.

Two students attended online.

Meeting begins at 18:34

**1. Welcome**

LB invited all to fill out the attendance form via QR code, and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**2. Main Bar x Wetherspoons**

AH noted that AH and GK had met with the University about the loan for franchising, which was positive, but the Union has been asked for more specific information before the loan would be confirmed.

CC spoke to this via Teams. CC referred to the financial issues the Association had faced, and franchising being an option to ameliorate this situation. Following the student survey, the Union are now applying that feedback, with the Union following a franchise with JD Wetherspoons. This would allow us to use their products, but the Union would be in control of staffing and the space. CC noted this would support our financial sustainability, and this was something we have seen at other unions. CC

described this as an opportunity to save Main Bar and offer competitive prices. Work continues on feasibility and contractor costs. Other options are being explored in the event that a JDW partnership does not materialise. SMT are also working on financial forecasting for the coming year. CC also noted that an option is to continue as we are, but the recommendation from SMT is that franchising with JDW is the way forward. Papers will be submitted to SAMC in the next two weeks, after which, if successful at SAMC, SMT will then approach the trustee board to get agreement for JDW. CC reaffirmed that this will allow us to keep control of our space, employ staff, and possibly employ more staff. CC described this as “now or never” and our modelling suggests that franchising is a “game-changer” in terms of financial sustainability. CC invited questions.

ACr asked 1) Union provides a sanctuary for students, what would the entry policy be 2) on surplus produced, what is the benefit for students, is it going to societies etc?

On entry policy, CC said this is in our gift, it is the students’ venue. We would continue with sign-in policy for non-students. At the moment we operate 8 months a year at full capacity, so the opportunity to be more operational in the remaining four months through franchising is welcome from a business perspective.

In terms of surplus, CC said that too much of a surplus appears more like a business than a charity. It will require proof of concept, and once it is working, we can recover some of the deficit and support our reserves to ensure we are a going concern. Modelling suggests we can get our reserves into a comfortable position, and then in Semester 2 we will expect a surplus which could be directed to student spend or other reinvestment in the building itself. The space is largely as it was since 2012, so it is in need of an update.

AH said that the Union Executive wanted a Spoons representative to attend this meeting to ask questions to them directly. This was not possible, but it may be at a meeting in June or at a separate time.

CC said that one of the commercial directors for JDW, and they will endeavour to be available in person or remotely for the June meeting.

TC asked how Pool Soc will remain in the current space, or if this will change. CC responded that they don’t quite have an answer, but it is being worked out with JDW. CC says there will be a place to play pool as part of Pool Soc or socially, it is just a matter of where.

AC asked if there would be benefits for staff and student volunteers such as discounts. CC responded that there is no firm answer to that, but there are discounts for staff who work for JDW. He can pose this question to JDW.

JMc asked how Spoons would affect events in 601. CC responded that we would serve Spoons products in the 601 bar so drinks may be cheaper, but beyond that there should be no impact on 601, StAge, Beacon, or meeting/society spaces. This should generate money by filling spending during operating hours that aren't normally high in turnout.

JC asked about the timeline and how student consultation has been involved. In terms of timeline, CC responded that if the loan is not confirmed by next week, it is unlikely for the project to be concluded by this calendar year. If all goes to plan, Main Bar will close after exams for refit in June, staff training and soft-launch prior to Freshers, and open as normal from Freshers.

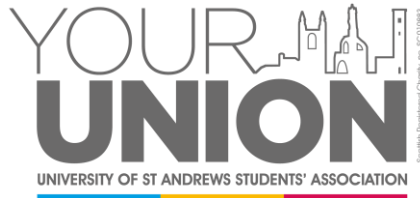
AC asked about the nature of ongoing relationship between JDW and Union, such as if they would seek to expand. AC also asked about relationships with students and the Union, and how this would impact how the surplus is spent. CC replied that JDW expect us to meet certain targets e.g. service targets, but we'd have responsibility in terms of operation. CC thinks the food offer will be elevated from what it currently is. In terms of building fabric, it would be down to us to redevelop as needed. Other than products, there would be no impact or say from JDW on how we utilise the building.

A student asked about the plan for Rector's and Sandy's. CC responded that Sandy's will over time, subject to further funding, would be an improved furnishing so that they could access JDW products. It won't be entirely revamped initially, but it will if it works and customers like it (focus on Main Bar and kitchen). At this stage, there could be more seats in Rector's but not JDW products. Rector's will at the moment remain as it largely is, with a small change to menu due to allergen cross-contamination following kitchen refit. Sandy's could still possibly be used as a reservable space, but still sorting the detail.

JC asked about one-off events like Fright Night and using Main Bar, and if Pablos will still be on the menu. CC replied that with Fright Night and similar, the Union would use it as we do now, possibly involving branding change for that event. In terms of Pablos, we will still serve Pablos (applause from those present).

AC asked if Pablos will be cheaper. CC said that it's to be determined, though he is hopeful they would be cheaper.

AC asked about the name of the Spoons: how will that be decided and how do JDW feel about it going to a student vote? CC noted that JDW do a lot of research into naming and have some level of expertise, but there is a Union project to get ideas for names from students as it is a student space (details of how this will work are TBC). Spooky McSpoon face "is not an option."



AC asked if cocktails will be served in Main Bar, or if it will only be Beacon as it currently is. CC said that we have a degree of autonomy, but he imagines that cocktails will be served at a competitive price.

AH has drop-in sessions every Friday at 2pm in Main Bar to ask questions or share feedback.

CC left at the end of this agenda item.

### **3. Draft Student Association Laws**

#### **a. [Draft Students' Association Laws](#)**

JC and RM gave a presentation, and shared a QR code linking to the updated draft Laws. At the ASF in November an initial version was presented after the decision in Feb 2025 whereby the prior Laws became obsolete. Students in November wanted more consultation and feedback, after which the DLWG was constituted, discussing feedback and various representation matters. Operational detail is largely for relevant remit Forums, but today is about how the framework as a whole works. JC has pooled the various feedback and edits from DLWG.

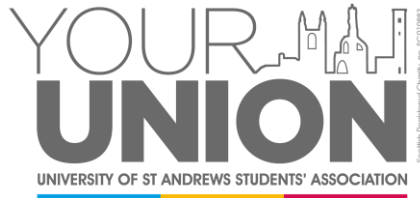
JC went through each section of the Laws in turn (as shown in the published draft Laws and via PowerPoint). The sections are Preface, Membership, Union Executive, Association Representative Officers, Forums & Executives (including consensus), Elected Officer Recall (democratic), Referenda, Elections, Networks, and Affiliated Societies. JC was applauded for the presentation. RM thanked each of the DLWG student members by name, and they were applauded for their work by the room.

A student raised a question about the 'Referenda' section about how the threshold was decided, given past voter turnout. JC responded that this has been taken from the former Laws, but we want more wider student input to be sought when doing a referendum.

JG asked if these now reflect the changes as made at Opps Forum last week, RM confirmed they did. RM noted that at recent Opps Forum, a number of changes were made to that structure to support student voice and consultation (more to follow in AOCB).

JC commented that amendments could be made in relevant Forums or other spaces as needed, and these can be adapted as needed if the current framework doesn't entirely work down the line.

ACr said that from July these Laws will be what new officers work from, and asked if it would be prudent for the ASF to review these in 12 months time on any edits that may be required (including to Standing Orders). RM said that the Laws will never truly be done, they are foundational to put us on the right path, but if we need to edit over time, that is appropriate.



TC said that prior Laws were challenging to get things done, and asked if processes going forward will be simpler for student volunteers and others to get involved. RM responded that that was the approach with the change to Opps Forum.

JC responded that the Laws were streamlined and 'bigger picture' with standing orders to go alongside for the relevant representative structures.

EH said asked if Laws would go to DLWG if there were edits required next semester. RM responded that DLWG was dissolved for this meeting, but it could be brought back if needed, or to ASF directly without needing a reproduction of DLWG (unless it required more in-depth work). JC said that these could go to the relevant Forum Executive if required.

RM said that if anyone feels edits should be made, they should speak to EB.

JG said that any Laws questions could go to any Forum, Executive, or Association Officer, as alternative to bringing it to ASF. RM agreed, and said that the Union should feel like a community and that regardless of where you sit in the Union, and you should be able to impact.

CB asked about the 'Referenda' – formerly there was a 'stop-gap' whereby if a referendum didn't meet quorum, would it still go to the Board to be reviewed/capture student will. RM replied that it would still go to trustee board to decide on next steps.

PM said that on the PGT role description, there should be more discussion to broaden the role description out from solely academic representation over time, as it does not necessarily reflect the needs of the PGT community. RM said there will be further discussion on this, and that at Opps Forum there were productive discussions about engaging the PG community in that space.

EH asked about ensuring that the Laws remain updated where Officers change e.g. if they create an associated Network. JC replied that if the Alumni Officer can ask for a Network (following conversations), and Networks can be dissolved with the officership kept, depending on the exact situation.

BR asked about the W&C Executive. StAnd Together Co-ords & Nightline had wanted to be involved in this due to being frontline in seeing some student issues (voting or non-voting). RM replied that discussions about that have started. AC said this will go to the next W&C Executive and how we can make the space more productive. After this, they will look to pass this formally at ASF in June, depending on outcome at the W&C Executive next week. AC replied that under the DemRev, this had not included these groups as they are not elected, which is why they had not been included this year. BR asked if DLWG could add how something similar in the future could be integrated, such as new Networks/groups etc. JC replied that to be added to an

Executive it would be best to approach the relevant Executive Officer, and affiliation of groups that are non-societies would be more 'bespoke' e.g. an MoU if appropriate. AC said it would be worth picking up separately, and that MoUs can sometimes be 'tricky' from an insurance or funding perspective.

LB moved the ASF to seek discussion.

### ***Referenda threshold***

A student asked for discussion, suggesting that 10-15% would be more realistic for the referendum threshold. TC said it could a higher threshold it would give it a greater mandate. The original student replied that 10% is more realistic from a turnout perspective, and 20% would be very difficult to reach.

CS suggested we could review this in a few months' time.

CB said that no referendum in the last 10 years has met this threshold, so in terms of being realistic initially a lower threshold is preferable (though it is good to be optimistic for 20% eventually).

Amy H asked if this was raised in DLWG, and that it shouldn't be lowered too much.

JC said it was reviewed at DLWG, and that the exact threshold is more unclear. AB said that threshold was raised as a discussion, but no alternative number was offered.

AC said that Main Bar consultation did well and may have hit close to 20% of population.

EH asked about our engagement relative to other universities. EB said that we are high in Scotland and UK with around 29% election turnout, though referenda can be different in terms of turnout.

A final comment from student was that it promotes student democracy, but still feels there are dangers with 20%, however there is a protection with the trustee board able to step in.

### **Other**

JMc said that the Laws do a lot to address issues officers face, such as where Networks should sit.

ACr asked about the review date of 12 months. JMc suggested 8 months and then 12. Amy suggested sooner than 12 months. ACr suggested it would give till January for review with new teams. JG said a review starting in Sem 2 would make sense.

JC said that as a result of DLWG we added new things like Union Affairs Forum and we got different parts of the Union involved in the review process.

### **Move to consensus**

LB asked for consensus. CS asked if the numbering can be changed because it is confusing, EH agreed. LB said formatting can be addressed at a later point.

The ASF reached consensus, no dissent raised.

*LB called for a break at 19:50.*

*ASF reconvened at 19:57*

#### **4. Rector's Committee and the role of the Rector's Assessor within Students' Association structures**

- a. [J17-12-Motion-to-formally-recognise-the-Rectors-Committee.pdf](#)
- b. [R-24-07-Motion-to-assist-the-Rector.pdf](#)
- c. [Approved Rector's Assessor role and protocol for appointment - June 2025.pdf](#)

CB gave a presentation on this topic and provided a PowerPoint presentation. He set out that St Andrews has a distinct model like other ancient universities, in which we have both a students association and an elected Rector. CB cited these changes, whereby the Rector and their office was not in the draft Laws, and that there had not been consultation with students, Rector, RA, or a vote. He gave background on the role of the Rector, its role with Court and student representation, and their opportunity to 'check' institutional power, and how they are supported by the RA and Rector's Committee. CB gave an explanation of what the RA role is and how they work with the Rector and Union, as well as what the Rector's Committee did when it was previously constituted, and how that committee used to operate and feed issues back to the Rector. He said it was not about competing with the Union structures, though different they are related, whereby students can approach the Rector for pastoral support/advice, "coordination, not competition." CB went through the J.17-12 motion from the then SAEC, recognising and constituting the RC as part of the Union from 2015. The previous Laws in Chapter 1.5 stated how the RC and RA would work. Motion R.24-07 that the Rector could create a committee and recruit an RA (this motion followed the Rector's initial removal from Court).

CB stated that to the best of his knowledge, the removal of the Rector's Office from the Laws had not been a consultative or voting process, and that changes to student representation should not be made without student consultation. CB referenced that he had written to the Union to outline concerns. The Rector offered a pre-drafted short statement, outlining their perspective that this would strengthen student representation should the Rector's Office work within Union structures.

CB cited that the RA is not included in the list of Union Officers, the RC has been removed from draft Laws, and PresAffs role description doesn't include liaison duties. CB referred to meetings and emails over time with the Union, and following advice from VP People & Gov he wrote to the Union within the last week. In this, CB

had asked that the Rector structures remained in the Union structures until after student consultation.

ACr asked if the letter was accessible. EB has a copy for circulation if required, but CB has not shared as the Union has not yet responded.

LB said we are not doing consensus on this, instead questions/discussion.

JG referred to the importance of independence of Rector's Office from both Union and University, and suggested it was 'paradoxical.' JG suggested that Rector and RA are not elected to represent students as Union officers and its other functions are for students by students. JG said that the Rector is on Court to open the meeting and support the Union officers to bring their views to that space, but that being part of the Union rather than independent seems 'anachronous' and was unsure why they would want independence but to be within the structures.

CB referred to various pieces of legislation, and that if the Rector's Office sets up a separate structure from the Union, that is incompatible with the 1889 Act. The RC was brought into the Union to allow them to feed into the Rector, as opposed to being a representative body in and of itself. It was clarified by CB that there is no desire to create a competing body.

JG then asked the purpose of an RC in light of this, such as having a representative for LGBT+ students' issues when a role exists for this in the Union already, if the Rector's role is about Court, when the RC could offer administrative/assistive business rather than advocacy.

JMc asked about the Rector's Office being physically in the Union in Soc Room C, not charged rent and the space is not booked for alternative usage when not used otherwise.

CB replied to JG that the RA cannot be in every Forum or meeting, so members of the RC can spread this. University Court a few years ago were of the view that it was appropriate for the RC to be within the Union, rather than adding an additional channel. SM confirmed the year for this was 2021, and asked if she may be able to speak to some of this. LB said they would if questions were raised directly to SM.

CB responded to JMc's question, and that following relevant motions in 2024 the Rector was offered a desk in the Union, and latterly they were offered a separate office. CB said the guiding principle was that the Union was a hub of representation, and as such the SRC were given a larger office space, then the Rector was requested to move to their current space. They were not asked to pay rent as they were at a subcommittee of the Union, according to CB.

LB referenced time issues and organised the question order.

CS asked why not use existing Union Officers for specific remits (e.g. BAME issues) and have a smaller committee for administrative purposes. CB responded that this was the intention, without putting pressure on Union volunteer time, liaising and coordinating with existing Union volunteers.

ACr asked what an ideal set-up would look like from CB's view. CB responded that in the meantime we work together on a longer-term plan, and as a stop-gap keeping the RC and RA in the Laws until conversations with Union, Rector, and University have been concluded. CB said they had not recruited an RC this year while things were up in the air structurally, with a view to a plan for G&N.

A student asked a question of SM about the Rector's role. SM replied that the Rector is independent of the Uni and Union, as an independent voice and can speak more frankly on student issues as a result, but they are not independent of Uni structures (like Court). The role of Rector has had a history around student voice, and that the Union is a representative body for students, whereas the Rector as a representative can interact with the Union as an avenue of representation but with independence of Union and University such as where students may not feel comfortable approaching either directly.

LB asked for student discussion.

### *Discussion*

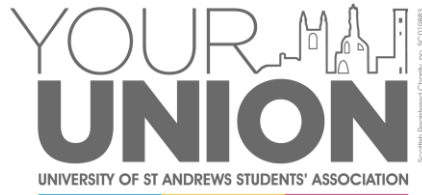
EmB asked CB about the roles on the RC. She asked how an extra network of RC, how would we ensure there is a difference between the Union's Accommodation Officer or the proposed Accommodation Lead (such as access to relevant University meetings etc). CB said that the Rector gets emails frequently about accommodation issues and they would feed these findings to the Union overall, and ensure the Rector and Union are both informed on the issues. CB said there could be further discussion about safeguarding the roles once a structure is confirmed.

SM said that the RC are not student representatives, they are reps of the Rector, so the RC feeds student issues back to the Rector, independent from the Union.

EH mentioned that they were concerned the RC had a full committee several years ago not going about things in the right way, and the structure proposed seems the same.

CS said that whatever happens next, the structure of the RC looks like it needs to be reviewed so students are more comfortable.

CB replied that they had asked about the structure and how it should look for the academic year, and would like to work together in the meantime, without repealing the Rector/RA/RC structure.



ACr asked how the RC should be in the Union if the RC members are not elected members. ACr felt that the RC and Union should have some relationship, but that a proposed stop-gap would not work.

*LB closed the meeting due to the end of the room booking at 20:32.*

*The below items were not discussed due to time:*

**5. AOCB**

- a. *Opportunities Restructure*
- b. *NSS*