



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

**MINUTES**

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2018 – Beacon Bar - 6.00pm

**Present**

<b>Member's Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
Gianluca Giammei	Arts and Divinity Faculty President
Sneha Nair	Association Chair
Morgan Morris	Association Community Relations Officer
Adam Powrie	Association Director of Events and Services
Jamie Minns	Association Director of Student Development and Activities
Nick Farrer	Association Director of Wellbeing
Lauren Davis	Association Environment Officer
Zelda Kotyk	Association LGBT+ Officer
Paloma Paige	Association President
Fiona Murray	Athletic Union President
Emma Thompson	Principal Ambassador
Camilla Duke	Rector's Assessor
Lucy Allatt	SRC Accommodation Officer
Avery Kitchens	SRC Member for First Years
Isabella Smith	SRC Member for Gender Equality
Emily Muller	SRC Member for Students With Disabilities
Robyn Wells	SRC Member Without Portfolio

**In Attendance**

Catriona Aitken	SRC Accommodation subcommittee, private accommodation focus group
Dillon Harindiran	
Iain Cupples	Student Advocate (Education)/HR Manager
Wei Wei Chen	

**1. Adoption of the Agenda**

**2. Apologies for Absence**

<b>Member's Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
Alice Foulis	Association Director of Education	Apologies
Sarah Ramage	Association Lifelong and Flexible Learners Officer	Apologies
Alisa Danilenko	Science/Medical Science Faculty President	Apologies
Ciara McCumiskey	SRC Member for Widening Access and Participation	Apologies

### **3. Open Forum**

No business

### **4. Reports of Sabbatical Officers**

#### 4.1. Report of the Association Director of Education

Not present. Alice had emailed a report.

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

Nick discussed the Reclaim the Night event: the Principal had been present and the event was well attended. He was now working on Revision Week preparation. There would be a puppy petting event, with sign-up online. There would also be an exam de-stress zone in Meeting Room A. The Wellbeing working group met today: they would target PGT students in second semester, and set up a focus group of 1<sup>st</sup> years. Scratchylous (a spoken word artist) would be doing an event next week as part of Pangaea. Elections preparation was under way and SRC members were encouraged to stand and nudge others to stand.

#### 4.3. Report of the Athletic Union President

Not present.

#### 4.4. Report of the Association President

Paloma discussed the ongoing Community Relations Week, which was a new initiative. Members were encouraged to go to events. After the motion on Universal Credit was passed, Paloma had met with other student presidents and was making progress on a collaboration with NUS-affiliated institutions on a campaign. Paloma was going to a conference on widening access and participation in Edinburgh tomorrow: the Principal would be speaking. Finally, Paloma and others had attended the Abbey Park development focus group – the motion later was an outcome of that event.

#### 4.5. Report of the Association Director of Events & Services

The X-Massaoke event would be held on Friday. Xmas ball ticket collection was arranged.

#### 4.6. Report of the Association Director of Student Development & Activities

Jamie said that he'd spent the week preparing for semester 2 student activities, including a Race2 safety team meeting. He reminded members to log their volunteering hours.

### **5. Questions for Association Officers**

#### 5.1. Questions for Association Alumni Officer

Members were invited to attend Alumni Festival Weekend.

#### 5.2. Questions for Association Community Relations Officer

There would be a community beach clean tomorrow: dinner from Cromars would be provided for participants. There was a showing of Chariots of Fire scheduled for Thursday at 6.30pm. St

Andrews's day celebrations would be on Saturday: volunteers helping with the event would receive a £5 voucher for Blackhorn as thanks.

- 5.3. Questions for Association Environment Officer
- 5.4. Questions for Association LGBT+ Officer
- 5.5. Questions for Association Lifelong and Flexible Learners Officer

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

- 6.1. Questions for SRC Accommodation Officer

Lucy was working on a 'get to know your neighbour' project with the Community Relations committee.

- 6.2. Questions for SRC Member for First Years
- 6.3. Questions for SRC Member for Gender Equality
- 6.4. Questions for SRC Member for Racial Equality
- 6.5. Questions for SRC Member for Students with Disabilities
- 6.6. Questions for SRC Member for Widening Access and Participation
- 6.7. Questions for SRC Arts/Divinity Faculty President
- 6.8. Questions for SRC Science/Medicine Faculty President
- 6.9. Questions for SRC Postgraduate Academic Convener
- 6.10. Questions for SRC Postgraduate Development Convener
- 6.11. Questions for Principal Ambassador
- 6.12. Questions for Rector's Assessor

There had been a good turnout for Reclaim The Night.

- 6.13. Questions for SRC Member Without Portfolio

## **7. Unfinished SRC Business**

### **8. New SRC Business**

- 8.1. Motion to advocate for new, private, purpose-built, student accommodation to address the concerns of St Andrews students, particularly with regards to access and affordability

Paloma introduced the motion. She explained that it has been brought as an outcome of the focus group meeting about the St Leonard's Fields development, and in the context of wider concerns about private accommodation in town. The motion also presented a good opportunity to agree on a definition of terms like 'affordable', and to set a mandate for the President to campaign on these issues, especially outside the University.

The Chair opened the floor to questions. Courtney asked if the position was that the Association would support the St Leonard's Fields development, regardless of whether it delivered on the aims expressed? Paloma confirmed that the answer was no. The motion was trying to say that we support more purpose built accommodation, regardless of whether it was provided by the University or private providers, but with the very clear caveat that such provision must address the issues of accessibility and affordability.

Camilla asked about the definition of affordability. Paloma confirmed that this must mean more than 'affordable to someone'. It must be affordable to most students. Lucy noted that private providers in

the past had justified providing more expensive accommodation on the basis that it would 'take the pressure off' less expensive options: this was not something the Association believed in. Instead, the Association feared that students may sign up for accommodation that was not really affordable for them, just in order to secure some sort of accommodation. Courtney noted that due to the timing of offers to PG students, they were particularly vulnerable to pressure to sign up to unaffordable accommodation for this reason.

Morgan noted that his understanding was that a few community groups were very much against the St Leonard's Fields proposal because the site was close to retirement homes, and because they were opposed to building in that area.

Paloma updated the SRC with new information from the representative of the developers who had presented to student representatives. This was in regard to the issue mentioned in point 3 in the 'notes' section of the motion. One concern with security was that the development would be half student beds, and half hotel beds: the transient nature of the latter might create security concerns for student residents. It had now been clarified that the student residences and hotel would have different operators, which should help to reduce these concerns.

In connection with this, Courtney said that she did support the sentiment around affordability, but this apart, still had severe reservations about the whole development. She noted that tensions arose when DRA operated as a hotel, and that this type of mixed accommodation could lead to clashes. She was concerned because she felt that the motion as it stood suggested support for the development as a whole in principle. Nick asked if Courtney thought the 'resolves' section did not go far enough? Courtney said that she felt 'affordability' was not that subjective, and referenced student loan and bursary amounts as an objective measure of 'affordability'. She felt the motion had good intentions but would not necessarily do what it was intended to do. She felt that the Association should not support any new student housing unless it included affordable beds. Paloma said she was open to amending the motion title, but still wanted to take a stance of pressing for affordability. Courtney said she could vote for the motion if it made the position clearer.

Courtney proposed an amendment to change point 3 of the 'resolves' section to add the words: 'particularly taught PGs and those student living in private student residences' after 'undertake further student consultation'. Lucy seconded. The amendment was **passed** on a show of hands.

Isabella raised the topic of the 'notes' section, point 3. She said that the assurances given didn't seem concrete, and felt that the SRC should add something to make it clear that this is a concern. Lucy said that the understanding was that the hotel business was focused on tour operators, and not a massive safety concern. Courtney noted that tensions could still arise. Lucy said she understood the hotel and student accommodation would be in separate buildings, but Courtney noted this was the case in DRA, and problems had still arisen.

Nick asked if Morgan could comment further on community relations issues around the St Leonard's Fields development, and the views of community groups? Morgan reiterated that there were concerns about the fact that the development was in an area where there were many retired people living, and close to existing private student accommodation at Ayton House. To date, the project hadn't been discussed at Community Council but Morgan felt the CC was likely to take a stance of objection to the development. Morgan's personal view was that while more student accommodation was needed, the location of this development was problematic. Courtney noted

that she had been told the resident's group opposing the development had said they had been promised that the land would not be developed. She noted that there were wider issues of the sustainability of growth in town and whether more hotel accommodation was required or justified when considering the environmental impact and the impact on community relations. Lucy noted that an impact report existed, including environmental impact assessments, but when student representatives had asked to see this they had been told it was private. She therefore had very little information about the environmental impact.

Adam agreed that the motion title didn't reflect its aims. Paloma proposed to amend the title to 'Motion to advocate for the concerns of St Andrews' students, particularly those regarding affordability and accessibility, to be addressed by any new private purpose built student accommodation in St Andrews'. Adam seconded.

Camilla proposed to further amend the title to remove the word 'those' and add 'security'. The title would now read: 'Motion to advocate for the concerns of St Andrews students, particularly regarding affordability, accessibility and security, to be addressed by any new private purpose built student accommodation in St Andrews'. The amendment to this effect was **passed** on a show of hands.

Emily said she still had many concerns, particularly about the impact report not being shared, which suggested a lack of transparency. She wondered if a point should be added to the motion regarding disclosure? Adam noted that it was possible that the report could not be shared because of commercial confidentiality. Emily said that regardless, it was important that the SRC had clarity.

Adam said the main aim of the motion was to promote affordability. Paloma noted that the 'resolves' section, point 2 was about advocating for more affordable beds. She said that developers tended to look at meeting demand for high end beds. Camilla said there was a need to emphasise affordability, as many prospective students can't afford to live in St Andrews, and new halls tended to be expensive. She felt point 2 should be kept. Courtney asked what the motion was trying to achieve? Was it advocating only for affordable beds, or was it specifically about the St Leonard's Fields development? Paloma said it was both. The motion aimed to note and address concerns of the student focus group about this development, but also acknowledge that those concerns are general concerns for students in St Andrews.

Nick proposed an amendment to add 'resolves' point 4:

'To object to the St Leonard's Fields proposals as they currently stand.'

Paloma said that she appreciated that some members of SRC wanted to have a firm stance on the proposal, but said she felt that put us in a box, because as yet there was limited information to make a judgement on. It would also change the direction of the motion, no longer seeking to consult more but giving an outright 'no'. Adam agreed with Paloma, and pointed out that there could be a new motion to object to the St Leonard's Field development if necessary.

(At this point Gianluca Giammei and Robyn Wells left the meeting.)

Camilla suggested that the motion could include a point about safety and security as well as taking a stance on affordability. As it stands, the St Leonard's Field proposal did not seem to be affordable.

Camilla questioned why the SRC should pass a motion unless it was taking a strong stance? She suggested adding to Nick's proposed text 'until measures are put in place to ensure the development will be affordable, accessible and safe for St Andrews students'. Adam said this would be unreasonable unless the proposal was included in the motion as an appendix. Lucy noted that the situation was currently quite uncertain, as the developers were still debating what information to give student representatives. She said that the SRC could pass a stronger motion later if required. Isabella asked why the motion as it stood evoked so many concerns, if the SRC were not taking a hard stance? She felt the SRC needed to say they were not content with the lack of information. Paloma made the point that the motion as it stood gave a mandate to get more information. Further consultation would require more information to be disclosed. She felt it would be difficult to amend a harder stance if necessary.

Camilla withdrew her proposal to amend the amendment, but still felt that the language in the motion should be stronger and needed to demand affordability, accessibility, and safety. Further discussion on the St Leonard's Field project should be with the aim of getting these objectives.

Nick said that he had been convinced by Paloma's arguments, so wished to withdraw his proposal for an amendment.

Camilla raised the issue of rent rises, making the point that 'affordability' should include ensuring rises were reasonable as well as initial rents. Adam suggested amending 'resolves' point 2 to more closely reflect the new title of the motion. Zelda proposed an amendment to the text of this point to replace 'for' with 'that any' and to add 'accessible and secure' after the word 'affordable'. Adam seconded. This amendment was **passed** without objection.

Jamie then moved to vote on the motion. Adam seconded.

The vote was: 16 in favour, 0 against, 2 abstentions. The motion as amended therefore **passed**.

## 8.2. Co-Option of SRC Member for Racial Equality

After speeches and voting, Wei Wei Chan was co-opted to fill this vacancy.

## 9. Any Other Competent Business

None

## 10. Collaborative Solutions

Not minuted

## **SRC + ASSOCIATION REPORTS**

### **Association Alumni Officer – Olivia Sutton**

No report submitted.

### **Association Community Relations Officer – Morgan Morris**

Community Relations has had another busy week preparing for Community Relations week (Week 11). We have a series of events taking place which can be seen on our Facebook Page, including St Andrews Day, Wine and Cheese with our Community Councillors and a Chariots of Fire film showing. We are still looking for volunteers for St Andrews Day, so please fill in the form here:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc58niF1OSVuzYL979DwkIA-BPkCBT9QT65iC9eO3\\_jUN8XZw/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc58niF1OSVuzYL979DwkIA-BPkCBT9QT65iC9eO3_jUN8XZw/viewform?usp=sf_link)

I took part in an Abbey Park Focus group last week, to discuss the Students Associations stance on the new development. Other than that we have been looking to next semester to see what we can do between then and elections.

### **Association Environment Officer – Lauren Davis**

Nothing to report.

### **Association LGBT+ Officer – Zelda Kotyk**

Things have been incredibly busy recently but we are moving along and getting some amazing things done. We have been looking into how to get gender neutral bathrooms in place everywhere, examining what can be done in regards to trans/nb inclusion in sports clubs and preparing for World AIDs Day/St. Andrews Day. TDOR went very well even though the wind was ridiculous.

### **Association Lifelong and Flexible Learners Officer – Sarah Ramage**

The Lifelong and Flexible Learners Instagram takeover was a huge success. A number of people, including non-LFL students, have said it was great to see LFL students and their student experience being promoted.

### **SRC Accommodation Officer – Lucy Allat**

This week has been a slower week, just responding to the first few question about finding accommodation, all of which have been easy to answer, this has made me question if there will need to be a 'surgery' for accommodation for next semester in the union. The find a flatmate event is coming on with a discussion starter list of question being made for people to get to know each other and see if they would be suitable flatmates. I attended the abbey park focus group, it was interesting to hear more about the proposal, and get to know more student views on the proposal.

### **SRC Member for First Year – Avery Kitchens**

No report submitted.

**SRC Member for Gender Equality – Isabella Smith**

No report submitted.

**SRC Member for Racial Equality – N/A**

**SRC Member for Students with Disabilities – Emily Muller**

No report submitted.

**SRC Member for Widening Access and Participation – Ciara McCumiskey**

Nothing to report.

**Arts/Divinity Faculty President –Gianluca Giammei**

Nothing to report.

**Science/Medicine Faculty President - Alisa Danilenko**

No report submitted.

**SRC Postgraduate Academic Convener –Ashley Clayton**

No report submitted.

**SRC Postgraduate Development Convener –Courtney Aitken**

Postgraduate Development Group are meeting this week on Tuesday 27th November. I have been invited to sit on Student Experience Committee this Friday 30th November.

**Principal Ambassador – Emma Thompson**

Nothing to report.

**Rector’s Assessor – Camilla Duke**

The Rector’s Committee would like to thank everyone involved with Reclaim the Night! This was truly a collaborative effort and we’re looking forward to more progress on this important issue. We’re also working on plans for next semester, and making our final efforts to push for consultation on the GP out of hours service.

**SRC Member Without Portfolio – Robyn Wells**

Nothing to report.

**R. 18-3 Motion to advocate for new, private, purpose-built, student accommodation to address the concerns of St Andrews students, particularly with regards to access and affordability.**

Owner: Paloma Paige

In Effect From: Immediately

Review Date: 27 November 2018

**SRC Notes:**

1. On 21 November 2018 a focus group was convened by the Association President with the view to discuss the proposed project on the St Leonards Field site (also referred to as Abbey Park) and provide a recommendation to the Association President. The details of this group are attached as appendix a.
2. A Pricing Policy was not available for the focus group to review, although it was made clear that it would likely follow the model of Ayton House.
3. The focus group had concerns that a joint hotel and student hall would create security issues and would create an environment conducive to tensions building between neighboring residents and hotel residents/student residents.
4. The focus group recognised that there is a shortage of purpose-built student accommodation in St Andrews, but agreed that:
  - a. The need for more choices of accommodation among students with limited financial means was greater than that of students with that means.
  - b. Whilst there may be a demand for high-end student accommodation, there is no shortage; conversely, there is a shortage of low-cost student accommodation
5. The focus group concluded that as the project proposal is currently written, it does not meet the need of students for whom there is a shortage of affordable accommodation.
6. The focus group agreed upon the following action points for the Association President:
  - a. Draft a motion, in collaboration with all members of this group, to the SRC or Joint Councils
  - b. Encourage there to be a consultation of the wider student population by the operators and those in a position to determine how it will function, what facilities there will be, the design in terms of sustainability, how rents will be set.
  - c. Liaise closely with local groups on this issue

**SRC Believes:**

1. An increase of purpose-built student beds in St Andrews would benefit the wider student population, but the current plans for St Leonards Field do not indicate any provision of affordable and accessible student beds.
2. 'Affordability' is subjective, and definitions vary across the student body. For those students who consider the rent level of Ayton House to be unaffordable, we cannot expect them to consider the St Leonards Fields Development, as it is currently planned, to be a viable option for them.
3. 'Access' to accommodation should be equal across the student body and the private accommodation available in St Andrews should support this.

**SRC Resolves:**

1. To mandate the Association President to extend current engagement to include all community groups involved in the planning and approval process for the St Leonards Fields Development.
2. To advocate for new, private, purpose-built student accommodation to address the demand for *affordable* student accommodation.
3. To encourage the property developers and appropriate planning committees to undertake further student consultation.

**Proposed by:**

Paloma Paige, Association President

**Seconded by:**

Nick Farrer, Director of Wellbeing

Ciara McCumiskey, SRC Member for Widening Access & Participation

Lucy Allat, Association Accommodation Officer

Morgan Morris, Association Community Relations Officer

**Appendix A.** agenda for the Abbey Park Focus Group

## Appendix A.

### Abbey Park Focus Group

#### Purpose of the group:

This group has been convened to debate the merits of the proposed Abbey Park project, to put forward a student position on the issue, and to provide recommendations to the Association President. Membership has been established to include both student councilors and lay students. The intention is that this group will meet once.

#### Membership of the group:

Association President (chair); Association Alumni Relations Officer; Association Community Relations Officer; Association Environment Officer; Association Chair; SRC Accommodation Officer; SRC Member for Widening Access and Participation; 7 non-councilor student guests.

#### Agenda items:

1. apologies
2. presentation of background paper as prepared by Joe Noble
3. questions to the presenter
4. discussion
5. summary of points and draft statement
6. establishment of action points for the Association President

Appendix a. paper prepared by Joe Noble

Appendix b. project plans/images