

University of St Andrews
Minute of emergency meeting 6 Feb 24

Present:

Cam Brown	Association Director of Education
Lucy Brook	Association Director of Events and Services
Caitlin Ridgway	Association Director of Wellbeing and Equality
Barry Will	Association President
Will MacFarlane	Lay trustee
Andrew Keenan	Lay trustee
Jen Munro	Lay trustee
Jonathan Jones	Lay trustee
AK Schott	Student trustee
Manon Williams	Student trustee
Christopher Milne	University-appointed trustee
Professor Clare Peddie	University-appointed trustee

In attendance by invitation:

Fiona Waddell	Athletic Union President
Antony Blackshaw	Change Director
Jillian Cowan	Deputy General Manager (Finance)
Chris Clarke	Deputy General Manager (Operations)
Dave Whitton	General Manager
Iain Cupples	Secretary to Board/HR Manager

Apologies: Sam Gorman, Association Director of Student Development and Activities

At 1300 on 6 Feb 2024, the Board received an email marked as confidential and outlining a series of concerns from members of the Association. These were regarding the legal requirements of students' unions to balance freedom of speech and other concerns, with reference to the emergency SRC meeting scheduled for 6th February at 6pm. The concerns made reference to a legal opinion prepared for another student organisation on a related matter, and claimed that some or all of this advice may apply to the case of the emergency SRC meeting. The email also detailed other concerns.

The Board convened in an emergency meeting at 1600 that afternoon to consider legal advice provided (verbally, at short notice) by our solicitors. That advice was clear that there was a duty for the concerns received to be assessed in full, and that the charity regulator would expect the trustees to seek independent advice before reaching any decisions.

Board members discussed the appropriate steps necessary to discharge our fiduciary duties while supporting the effective representation of our members. Board also expressed concern about the position of Association staff and SRC officers should the meeting proceed without full legal advice available. Given the clear legal advice provided, and the short time remaining before the SRC meeting in question, Board agreed unanimously to postpone the SRC meeting until full legal advice could be sought.

The Board affirmed their intention that the meeting should still go ahead once these concerns were addressed and their commitment to free speech and the SRC as the legitimate voice of St Andrews students. The Board agreed a series of steps for prompt communication of the decision to the student body, within the limits of what could be disclosed at this time.