

University of St Andrews  
Students' Association  
Students' Representative Council

MINUTES

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021 – Microsoft Teams – 6pm



**Present**

**Member's Name**

**Position**

Lottie Doherty	Association President
Leonie Malin	Association Director of Education
Bella Zeff	Association Director of Events and Services
Anna-Ruth Cockerham	Association Director of Wellbeing
Avery Kitchens	Association Director of Student Development and Activities
Jessica Smith	Association Athletic Union President
Maitreyi Tusharika	Association Chair
Jack Campbell	SRC Alumni Officer
AK Schott	SRC Accommodation Officer
Ananya Jain	SRC BAME Officer
Bhavya Palugudi	SRC Environment Officer
Stella Ezeh	SRC Rector's Assessor
Lucia Guercio	SRC Arts & Divinity Faculty President
Sarah Johnston	SRC Science & Medicine Faculty President
Caroline McWilliams	SRC Postgraduate Academic Convenor
Michael Logue	SRC LGBT+ Officer
Jane Yarnell	SRC Disability Officer
Emma Craig	SRC Student Health Officer
Caitlin Ridgway	SRC Gender Equality Officer

**In Attendance**

Iain Cupples	Student Advocate (Education)/HR Manager
Alex Kay	
Caitriona Hastings	
Ellie King	

**Absent**

Abd Alsattar Ardati

Rosanna Johnston  
Rhea Soni  
Sandra Mitchell  
Capri Mancini

## **1. Adoption of the Agenda**

The agenda was adopted without dissent.

## **2. Apologies for Absence.**

Abd Alsattar Ardati                      Postgraduate Development Officer                      Apologies

## **3. Adoption of Minutes from Previous Meetings**

3.1. No minutes adopted, or matters from previous meetings that need to be discussed.

## **4. Open Forum**

No business.

## **5. Reports of the Sabbatical Officers**

5.1. Report of the Association President

Lottie Doherty (LD) mentioned the covid communication and preparations for the beginning of the semester, and their meetings with sub-committees. There are no questions for LD.

5.2. Report of the Athletic Union President

Jess Smith (JS) discussed their preparations for the beginning of the semester, including the Sports and Societies Fayre, and the Give it a Go Sessions. JS added that sport matches have begun, welcoming the change from the previous year where covid restrictions prevented there being matches. There are no questions for JS

5.3. Report of the Director of Education

Leonie Malin (LM) discussed academic representation and the work they have done over the summer. This included the integration of sustainability representatives as elected officers in the class representative elections, who are now considered academic representatives, and thus have an elected mandate to represent schools in sustainability matters. LM also said that they have successfully completed the undergraduate class representative elections, and that the respective postgraduate elections will proceed in a weeks' time, asking for support in widening awareness of these elections. LM noted relevant updates for the postgraduate class representative elections following the previous semester's PG review, including the creation of the PGT and PGR presidents, as well as four PG officers. LM stated that any questions regarding these updates can be directed towards Caroline McWilliams (CW - SRC Postgraduate Academic Convenor) or herself. LM noted that this is the first year that students from the International Education Institute have been included in the class representative elections, suggesting that international foundation program students will now feel a greater sense of identification with the student election representation. LM discussed the training completed for school representatives, and the increase in social media presence on the union social media channels. There are no questions for LM.

5.4. Report of the Director of Events & Services

Bella Zeff (BZ) introduced themselves as a new sabbatical officer, noting the initial work they have been doing to reintroduce weekly nights and events at the union. BZ has also been meeting with their sub-committee leaders. There are no questions for BZ.

#### 5.5. Report of the Director of Student Development and Activities

Avery Kitchens (AKit) discussed their previous preparations for Freshers' Week, noting its success and thanking those who volunteered for the event. They also noted their collaboration with JS for the Freshers' Fayre, and their meetings with sub-committee leaders, their relevant budgets and plans for the upcoming year. AKit mentions the Union's first Farmers' Market, noting its significance as an income stream for the Association. AKit has also organised the Charitable Society's grant fund, providing greater funds to charitable events and efforts to access throughout the year. AKit has published their partnership with the Career's Centre, meaning that Careers and the Union now have an agreement about future plans, including the employability strategy for which AKit asks that members respond to an email questionnaire. AKit has also been working with JS on student group recreational sport, as well as visiting days and the room-booking system. AKit noted upcoming changes to the risk assessment process and the volunteering portal. There are no questions for AKit.

#### 5.6. Report of the Director of Wellbeing and Equality

Anna-Ruth Cockerham (AC) discussed their work over the summer, drawing attention to the debate and action plan which has been released, congratulating the BAME students' network for their efforts in the matter. AC has been interviewing candidates for the Equality Committee, and the restructuring of the committee, the motion of which will be presented later in the meeting. AC has also organized the first staff and student equality forum which will be taking place tomorrow. The Equality Committee will also be collaborating on a statement with the University's central EDI committee, highlighting the main areas to work on in EDI over the next year. AC also drew attention to the work Jane Yarnell (SRC Disability Officer) and the DSN have done on their disability mentoring scheme, praising the efforts of the project and hoping that it goes ahead. AC discussed their work on the Emily Test Charter over the summer, including workshops and developing an action plan for it, highlighting the focus on university support and its policies, as well as its discipline procedures and the safeguarding and training of the student representatives. AC has also been working with Caitlin Ridgway on the proposal for the SGBV forum which will proceed later in the meeting. AC noted that Stand Together is running smoothly. Additionally, AC said that they are trained to run active listening workshops for committees, inviting members to approach them about organising relevant workshops. In terms of welfare, AC has been working on plans for the Student Mental Health Agreement and the collection of feedback that will occur over the upcoming semester. AC has also been working with the Wellbeing Committee to organize SHAG week, congratulating their work, and looking forward to planning Raisin weekend. AC also noted that they have yet to submit the election report on the by-election run over the summer, which they will submit for the next SRC meeting. AC will also report on the outcomes of the elections review. There are no questions for AC.

### 6. Questions for SRC Members

MT stated that all reports from SRC members are available on the papers for the meeting, opening the floor for any members of the council to make changes or updates to their reports.

- 6.1. Questions for Accommodation Officer
- 6.2. Questions for Alumni Officer
- 6.3. Questions for Arts/Divinity Faculty President

- 6.4. Questions for BAME Officer
- 6.5. Questions for Community Relations Officer
- 6.6. Questions for Disability Officer
- 6.7. Questions for Employability Officer
- 6.8. Questions for Environment Officer
- 6.9. Questions for Gender Equality Officer
- 6.10. Questions for LGBT+ Officer
- 6.11. Questions for Lifelong and Flexible Learners Officer
- 6.12. Questions for Postgraduate Academic Officer
- 6.13. Questions for Postgraduate Development Officer
- 6.14. Questions for Rector's Assessor
- 6.15. Questions for Science/Medicine Faculty President
- 6.16. Questions for Secretary to the SRC
- 6.17. Questions for Student Health Officer
- 6.18. Questions for Widening Access and Participation Officer

## 7. Any Other Competent Questions

### 8. New SRC Business

- 8.1. R-21-01 Motion to lobby the University to divest from the Border Control Industry

Alex Kay (AKay) introduced the motion and proposed an amendment to the wording of R-21-01, changing it to 'Making a public statement pledging to divest from the Border Control Industry'. AC seconded the amendment.

The amendment was passed **without dissent**.

AKay, speaking on behalf of Divest Borders, explained that the Union is currently invested in the companies Sodexo and Vinci Revere, who are involved in the border control industry. AKay suggested that the university should fully divest from the entire industry. AKay also described the border control industry, in that it covers migrant detention centers which neglect those detained, that the right to declare asylum is often ignored, and that surveillance is abused on migrant populations, going against protections laws and the right to privacy. AKay also noted the difficulties faced by migrants in society on account of the UK's hostile environment policy. AKay suggested that this industry makes a mockery of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the university's pledge to ensure that university funds are invested in a socially responsible manner. AKay questioned whether the university should contribute further investment and academic clout to what the Permanent People's Tribunal call verifiable crimes against humanity. AKay said that those at Divest Borders believe the university should lead a movement in the national academic industry to condemn this practice of investment.

AKay asked why Divest Borders has brought this motion to the SRC rather than to the university directly. AKay responded that they believe that the issue can be brought to the university more effectively with the support of the SRC and the Association President, because the group is not university affiliated.

AC noted the details of the motion that describe supporting petitions and action statements released by the campaign, and asked what else the campaign is doing or is planning to do in the future. AKay replied that Divest Borders plans to work with refugee and migrant charities, including Sanctuary which is a university affiliated charity that supports Afghan refugee scholars. AKay then noted the ongoing refugee crisis in Afghanistan. AKay also discussed plans to produce a video

featuring students who have had experience, or family who have had experiences, with the border control industry, in order to give an indication of the human cost of the industry. AKay then stated that the group are ultimately working towards discussing these issues with university officials.

AKit stated that he believed the SRC should take this motion seriously, especially given the amount of support from the student body through the petition presented in the papers. AKit noted that it is the SRC's duty to represent the student body in such issues. AK Schott (AS), the Accommodation Officer, then asked whether the campaign has received any opposition. AKay noted the group's internal discussions about their approach to the issue, and the scope they should focus on, without losing sight of the human element. AKay stated that there has been no opposition from the wider student body, and that though support has plateaued it is still strong. LD stated that they agreed with AKit's point, and stressed that the SRC should be vocal in this matter because it strongly goes against the university's pledge to ensure that university funds are used in a socially responsible manner, and that they should support the wishes of the student body that people are treated equally and fairly. Claire from Divest Borders reported that their social media pages have only received positive messages of support from the student body and several societies. Ananya Jain (AJ), the BAME Officer, voiced their support of the motion, suggesting that if the university is truly committed to achieving sustainability, human issues and social justice issues are as important as any environmental issue, and that action toward sustainability cannot ignore relevant social justice issues. Sarah Johnston (SJ), the Science & Medicine Faculty President, noted the amount of graduated students who have signed the petition, which evidently shows that St Andrews graduates care about the direction of the Student Union and the university.

The motion was passed **without dissent**.

#### 8.2. R-21-02 Motion to retire the role of SRC First Years Officer

AKit introduced the motion. AKit stated that the SRC First Years Officer's remit has evolved beyond the responsibilities of any other SRC counselor, and that the SRC First Years Officer does not serve a representative function, and usually operates between May and September. AKit noted that retiring the position would not make it disappear, but that instead it would be a paid internship for a student to undertake where they would focus on social media and increasing student engagement, which he believes is a better way of achieving raised engagement.

SJ questioned whether the Union or university would fund the internship, and asked who would then take on the responsibility of the role. AKit replied that it needed to be figured out, but notes that management at the Union and Student Services have voiced their support for the change. AKit noted that they are getting more creative with generating commercial income for the Union, such as with the Farmer's Market, and that funding could come from these income streams.

AS asked how well funded the position would be, and how many hours a week the intern would be expected to work. AKit replied that current interns are paid £9 an hour, for 10 hours a week, but that the SRC First Years Officer previously worked more than that, so there would need to be a discussion with management and sabbatical officers. Iain Cupples (IC) noted that the Union has run a number of paid student internships, so management will look at the rate of pay and the hours they would be expected to work, and any work completed in the internship would be paid for. AC provided clarity from their meetings with student services, stating that it would operate like any other university summer internship, and that most get paid for more than 10 hours a week. AC continued that the internship would be with a university department as well as the Association, so it would be best for it to be a part of the wider program of summer internships. AC also noted that in the past the role included the running of Facebook groups where students would introduce themselves, but now the

main responsibility is with the Instagram account, which had previously been run by the admissions team. As such, the admissions team should not offload this responsibility onto a student for free.

AS asked for reports on the experiences of those who had previously occupied the position. AKit responded that when he held the role he felt unfulfilled as the position effectively ended in September. AKit suggested that having an SRC member who did not have a remit beyond September is unproductive and inefficient. AKit believed it would increase interest for students in the opportunities provided by the Association. MT responded that the role was quite time consuming over the summer, and that it would make sense for the role to be a paid internship instead. MT also noted that other SRC members had more specific representational duties, while the First Years Officer does not.

Emma Craig (EC), the Student Health Officer, asked where the SRC would draw the line at paying councilors, many of whom do more work than the First Years Officer, and whether a standard would be set for SRC members to be paid for the work they do in the future. Stella Ezeh (SE – Rector's Assessor) agreed with EC's comment, noting the responsibilities of senior students, who are not paid for their work. SE added that there is currently no similar acknowledgment of the work senior students do over the summer, and that reimbursement would do this. AKit responded that these questions of paying councilors and volunteers are straying from the original motion, and the point of retiring the role from the SRC. AKit added that he would be happy to discuss the payment of councilors outside of this forum, or propose a separate motion. IC noted that the difference between a paid intern and a councilor is that the former is a member of staff, and as such have a very different role to an elected officer as they are not there to speak on behalf of students. IC added that Senior Students are not an Association responsibility but a University responsibility, and that the amount of work they do should be recognized. AC added that the First Year Officer resigned this year, citing the unreasonable workload over the summer and the fact that they were expected to do similar work to the paid interns. AC emphasized that the Admissions Team have paid someone to do this work in the past, but an elected official is expected to work at a similar level on the Instagram page, which is not a question of representing the student body but is a service, and is therefore not suited to an SRC position and should be retired. EC responded that their question had been settled as a separate issue to what is currently being discussed in this motion. AS noted that the point that the First Years Officer should be paid is a strange priority to have seeing as other councilors do upwards of 15 hours a week unpaid throughout the year. AC added that they are happy this could set a precedent for paying councilors, adding that the work of senior students should be fairly recognized for the work they do for the Association as well as the university, such as in the Fresher's Fayre. Lucia Guercio (LG – Arts & Divinity Faculty President) raised the fact that they know students who work for Students of St Andrews and get paid for doing work that is very similar to the First Years Officer, including social media responsibilities, so it makes sense that such a role should equally be paid.

AS noted that there has been a noticeable drop in quality of the running of the Facebook pages since the university took over the responsibility from the First Year Officer, citing an increase in scam posts which led to students being or nearly being scammed on housing. AS said that they had to report these issues to the Admissions team because they were not rectifying it themselves. Because of this, AS voiced concern that these issues would continue if the intern role was limited to a certain amount of hours every week. AKit clarified that the role would still be held by a student, just that the role would not be as an elected officer to the SRC volunteering their time until March, but it would be as a paid intern position, both set by a student and run by a student. AS then asked who would decide who gets the intern position. AKit responded that the process would be the same as the Union's approach to hiring all interns, interviewed by the appropriate line manager and relevant sabbatical officers.

SJ raised a concern that retiring the role of First Year Officer would make the SRC less accessible for first years, noting that multiple current members and sabbatical officers began as a First Year Officer. SJ suggested that if the motion passes, the council should discuss making the SRC more transparent and accessible for first years and younger students, to maintain interest in student politics. AKit responded that MT's efforts on social media has helped make the SRC more accessible for younger students, and admits that it is definitely something that the sabbatical officers need to work on.

With 15 votes in favour of the motion, 1 against, and 1 abstentions, the motion **passed**.

### 8.3. R-21-03 Motion to delegate the line managing responsibilities of the BAME Students' Network and Saints LGBT+ to the Director of Wellbeing

AKit introduced the motion. AKit detailed that the DoSDA and the DoWell have been joint line managing the BAME students' network and Saints LGBT+ in recent years, and the DoSDA has not been very proactive in those areas, stating that the two subcommittees are more suited to the remit of the DoWell. AKit notes that this is not to say the DoSDA can no longer collaborate in these areas, just that they will not be required to attend those subcommittee meetings and interviews.

AS asked whether there are any reasons to oppose the motion. AKit responded that he does not believe so, and that it makes sense. EC iterated support for the motion, but noted that the DoWell's remit is quite large, especially being the primary elections officer. EC suggested that the DoWell's remit could be reduced, or that another sabbatical officer could take over responsibility as the primary elections officer, in order to manage the DoWell's workload. AKit said that this motion would not affect DoWell's workload, but reduce DoSDA's. AC expressed their support for the motion, assuring that their workload would not increase if this motion passed.

Michael Logue (ML), the LGBT+ Officer, noted that having two line managers can be confusing when confronting issues, suggesting that the motion would simplify proceedings. AJ echoed this sentiment, stating that if there was an issue relating to a specific sabbatical officer, they would not be discouraged from speaking with them even if they are not their line manager.

The motion was passed **without dissent**.

### 8.4. R-21-04 Motion to reform the Association's approach to equality representation

AC introduced the motion. AC described the motion as a response to problems in the Student Association's over the past few years, since the split of the DoRep officer into DoWell and DoEd. One of the difficulties the Equal Opportunities Committee has since experienced is a lack of leadership, noting that elected officers are not being well supported in their roles related to equality. AC stated that this motion is intended to restructure the committee to better support the officers, facilitating greater collaboration. The motion would also rename the Director of Wellbeing to the Director of Wellbeing and Equality, as the job title should reflect their duties and role in the equality committee. AC suggested that renaming the position would show the student community the extent of the DoWell's role, would better represent the nature of the role for those applying to be a sabbatical officer, and ensure that the DoWell takes responsibility for the Equality Commission.

LM asked whether other officers had been consulted on this motion and the effects it would have on their role remits. AC responded that it had been agreed unanimously by the SRC Equal Opportunities committee. LG questioned whether this would change how elected officers would approach the

DoWell. AC emphasized that the DoWell's role would not change, nor affect the democratic process, and that it would be appreciated if committees' EDI plans would continue to be run past her. AJ noted that a change in the DoWell's title would help ensure that future candidates were aware of the importance of the role in equality, and leading the equality commission. AJ noted that this would not prevent any councilor from working on equality. SE raised a concern that this motion would affect or complicate the Rector's remit, as they were elected on a manifesto containing questions of equality. LM added that it could potentially be unproductive if councilors only approach the DoWell on matters relating to equality following the name in the change of the title. MT noted that the motion only affects the title of the role, and that it would reflect the remits that the role already encompasses.

With 11 votes in favour of the motion, 5 votes against, and 1 abstention, the motion **passes**.

#### 8.5. R-21-05 Motion for the creation of an SGBV forum

Caitlin Ridgway (CR), the Gender Equality Officer, introduced the motion. CR stated that the motion would centralize how SGBV issues would be covered in the Students' Association. Currently there are multiple groups in the university and different initiatives working towards SGBV issues, including the Rector's committee forums and Student Services forums. Centralizing a forum for these issues would make clearer for members who to approach with such issues, and where issues are being dealt with. It would also make working on separate issues more sustainable, allowing for open invitations for relevant groups to certain discussions, and encompassing different initiatives such as Reclaim the Night and Sexual Assault Awareness Month which have previously been external to the union and thus it has been more difficult to access union resources. CR suggested that a centralized SGBV forum would ensure that the university's commitments to these areas are visible and appear high-priority.

SJ wanted clarification on whether the initiatives mentioned had been approached about this motion, and whether they were in support of centralizing. CR responded that these groups had noted issues with accessing funding, and that they supported a move towards being more involved in the union. CR added that the groups themselves would still be responsible for their own initiatives. SE noted that this motion is very similar to forum proposed by Student Services, suggesting that a SGBV forum would perhaps be more effective under Student Services rather than the Students' Association. SE added that Student Services have specific sensitivity training for issues relevant to SGBV, and that they have less turnaround than the Association. AC responded that Student Services could still have a forum specific to their remit, but that the representation would be more effective with the Association, noting that members of Student Services supported the motion. It also provides more freedom for SGBV as the Association is not bound by restrictions set by university policy. CR added that it would ensure sufficient representation for the student body in relevant matters.

EC noted confusion around leadership in these issues, stating that often Sexpression would be contacted even when it was not the most effective route to resolving questions or concerns. AS questioned the way in which groups would be assessed for funding allocation, especially considering non-affiliated groups that do not have the same responsibilities as Union-affiliated groups. CR said that the forum would still require applications for funding, which would be vetted under the previous conditions. AC referred to the Students' Association's financial cascade, noting that any money spent by a subcommittee must be accounted for in the minutes for that meeting. AC also noted other avenues for possible funding, that require relevant applications. EC re-iterated that Student Services staff believe it would be better for this forum to proceed away from their office,



and said that any issues raised against the university would be more effectively consulted on outside of the university's remit.

With 14 votes in favour, and 4 abstentions, the motion **passes**.

## **9. Any Other Competent Business**

9.1. AJ said that any questions or concerns about workload could be directed towards her.

## **10. Collaborative Solutions**