



**THE UNIVERSITY
OF STIRLING
STUDENTS'
UNION
IMPACT REPORT
2020/21**

MAKING STUDENTS' LIVES BETTER

IMPACT OF COVID

Reflecting on a year in the Students' Union by putting together our annual Impact Report is always a rewarding opportunity to reflect on key aspects of our work and how this enhances the student experience of our members.

To do so effectively over the last year, we have to take into account the unprecedented challenge of COVID on us, the University and our students. From the loss of face-to-face teaching to the ability to come together either for group work or simply to socialise as part of a sports team or club and restrictions on campus and wider life, it hasn't been the 'normal' student experience.

That said, what the following report will demonstrate is both the resilience and adaptability of the student community. As we approach the end of our year, the testimonies provided through our RATE Awards, Clubs and Sports Awards and more have demonstrated how students, supported by their Union, have sought to ensure that they can continue to make the most of all that a Stirling student experience has to offer.

As we move forward, cautiously and with safety in mind, we seek to embrace the best aspects of blended, hybrid learning and activities and look forward to welcoming students back to their home in the Union.





250+

ONLINE EVENTS

The Students' Union ran or helped facilitate more than 250 online events to encourage student engagement

1569

INCREASE IN ELECTION VOTES

Despite the challenges faced by no face to face engagement, more students voted in the Union elections than in the year before

OFFICER INTRODUCTION

Each year we set out to Make Students Lives Better, and this year has been no exception to that. In spite of the unprecedented circumstances that we faced, we've continued to work hard and secure several wins for students. This has included a rent freeze, online distribution of free period products and a new initiative with STEER, called Pandemic Pals, which helped over 200 students stay connected during social isolation.

We have remained a member-led organisation throughout the coronavirus pandemic; running a Student Experience in the Pandemic' survey, launched our student voice platform and hosted 4 general meetings with over 150 participants each time. At these meetings we've passed motions about postgraduate engagement, Erasmus+ and support for student Tenant Unions. Alongside the University and the #BeConnected programme, we've also hosted a range of events and activities to continue to engage with students.

As a Sabbatical team we have put equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of our work, running a BAME student experience survey, partially funded a mural as part of Scotland's Black Lives Matter Mural Trail and worked on a review of the University and Union's strategy to tackle gender-based violence. Our Sports President has run disability inclusion training as well as Show Racism the Red Card training and our Vice-President Education has held focus groups for various widening access groups on their university experience.

As you read through this report, you will see how we represented students locally and nationally through the pandemic. All of this would never have been possible without the efforts of the Union staff team, Trustees, Part-time Student Officers and all the student volunteers who have helped us to have a successful year. As we look forward to COVID recovery, it is our hope that we can hold onto much of what we have learnt including aspects of our digital campus that have allowed us to remain connected and become more accessible to the wider student body.

Amy, Lexi, Josh & Edd
Union Sabbatical team 2020/21





#BECONNECTED

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Working with staff across the University to provide a programme of activities for students

1600+

PERIOD POVERTY PRODUCTS

Supporting the Scottish Government programme, we continued to ensure students were provided with free sanitary products throughout the year with more than 1600+ provided

A DEMOCRATIC UNION

Ensuring students were able to engage in the democratic aspects of their Union was an important focus for us this year. To assist with staggered arrivals (particularly for postgraduate students) we held the **Union By-Election** fully online in November. This allowed us to develop online training, Q&A sessions and support for candidates and positions, ensure positions were filled and National Union of Students (NUS) conference delegates were elected.

Taking what we had learnt from this, we held the main Union Elections in March 2021 with **25 candidates** including all Sabbatical positions being contested. The current Officer team held multiple Q&A sessions for students interested in running to find out more and ask questions. We also held Women in Leadership training with the Young Women's Movement (YWCA) who also run the Young Women Lead programme at the Scottish Parliament. We developed 'How to Run' training and digital election packs for all positions to take account of the unique nature of a full online election. In the build-up to the vote, online hustings and the Alternative hustings with Sabb candidates were well attended. On the day of the elections, virtual stalls were held on Teams to allow students to meet candidates.

As part of the election process, we undertook a candidate demographics survey with NUS so the Union can understand what candidates run and identify if there are areas of underrepresentation amongst candidates. A total of **1569 students (up on last year's total) voted in the Union elections in March 2021.**

One of the main ways students fed back to us around the benefits of online engagement, focused on our democratic meetings and how hosting these online provided many more people to be able to take part. We had between **150-250 attendees at General Meetings and Zone meetings**. At the General meetings, many motions were passed by students including a Sustainability Working Group Motion, motions to update the Union's schedules and supporting postgraduate engagement to name a few.

Motions were also passed to take to NUS conferences. These include an **ERASMUS+ Motion and Tenants Union Motion** (both taken to NUS Scotland). Due to the ability to engage with such activity remotely, we had delegations attend many NUS Conferences (including liberation conferences) and ensure the Stirling student voice was heard at a national level.



4

GENERAL MEETINGS

Between 150-250 students attending each meeting and passing student focused motions

25

ELECTION CANDIDATES

Although we held our elections entirely online this year, we had an impressive number of candidates in the March election

SUPPORTING EDUCATION

Delivering and supporting the academic programme this year was a constantly changing challenge. We were fortunate to have Sabbatical Officer input into the decision-making process and a team of Faculty Officers and module reps feeding back key themes from students both to us and directly to Faculties. During 2020/21, we had **18 out of 19 undergraduate Faculty Officer positions filled, 4 out of 5 postgraduate Taught Faculty Officer positions filled and 3 out of 5 postgraduate Research Faculty Officer positions.**

Alongside this, we had almost **700 Module Reps and over 160 Programme Reps.** We supported their great work with updated training and Programme Reps were provided with their own Canvas space to share information and provide feedback. We have worked closely with Faculties to provide resources plus more information and guidance for students prior to signing up to be a rep. A **Module Reps demographics survey** was undertaken alongside Student Participation Quality Scotland (SPARQS) for first semester module reps, and the results shared with the Union's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Steering Group.

The Union were active participants in the Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR) process during the last year with the Vice President Education, Union President and Democracy & Representation Coordinator contributing to the Reflective Analysis. **11 student volunteers** (Faculty Officers, Module Reps) also took part in the Review.

On the **Enhancement Themes**, Resilient Learning Communities 2021-2023 is underway. The Vice President Education (student enhancement themes lead) and Democracy & Representation Coordinator sit on Stirling Enhancement Themes group. Our Pandemic Pals/STEER initiatives has been included as a year 1 project under the theme by the Union. The Vice President Education also ran a number of **focus groups with students** from different backgrounds and needs (Parents and Carers, ARUAA Holders, Collage Integrated Students, Care Experienced and Estranged Students, Honours Progression, Autistic Students, and Young Entrants). Feedback from these has allowed the Officer team to establish key findings to assist students and now and on-going.

In April 2021, we hosted our annual **Recognising and Advancing Teaching Excellence (RATE) Awards** which continue to be generously supported by the Stirling Fund. In recognition of the year experienced, 3 new categories to reflect online learning environment were introduced: Innovation in Online Connection. Almost **1000 students** took time to complete a nomination and the quality and content of responses continues to not only be an inspiration across the institution but also ensures best practice is identified and shared.

The **National Student survey** results in 2020 showed that Satisfaction in Student Voice at Stirling (which is in relation to student voice within academia) saw the biggest increase, with the University performing above both the Scottish sector average of 73.7% and above the UK sector average of 73.56%. Satisfaction increased from 68.53% in 2019 to 73.99% in 2020. **Stirling Students' Union moved from 8th in 2019 to 6th in 2020.**



860+

SUPPORTING REPS

Union support for Faculty Officers, Module & Programme reps to deal with key academic developments

1000

RATE NOMINATIONS

So many wonderful nominations from students for the RATE Awards. We will take forward best practice across the University

DIRECT STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

A big part of us understanding the unique challenges faced by students and being best placed to advocate for them was supported by our **COVID-19 Student Experience survey**. We put out the survey at the beginning of October 2020 and received **377 responses**.

This covered; learning and teaching, campus spaces and resources, communications, accommodation, safety and security, support and wellbeing, community and socialisation, EDI impacts and PG experience. Individual reports were created for each section which included a summary of the results and the points and issues needing addressed.

Covering so many areas and being an in-depth survey, it was pleasing to get such a high number of responses with such detailed information which the Officer team was then able to take forward.

There were some issues that were addressed quite quickly, such as the **extension of the library booking spaces**, while other are more long-term issues like **ongoing mental health and wellbeing support and resources**. The feedback provided has helped to guide input from the Officers throughout the year and ensured that key lessons have been considered for any future considerations around all aspects of University life given any further restrictions to campus life.

Work which has been on-going for some time saw the Union Officers play an instrumental role in ensuring that a **rent freeze** was put in place across University accommodation (excluding Centro House which is part-owned).

We fed back to the student community on key aspects of the survey and the data from this will continue to focus work on-going.



377

STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY

Supporting student issues, concerns and ideas regarding challenges studying during the pandemic

0%

RENT FREEZE WIN

Working with the University to ensure no increase in wholly University owned residences in 2021/22

ADVOCATING FOR OUR STUDENTS

Our Advocacy Service has been operating online since March 2020 **providing independent support, guidance and representation** and has been accessed by students across the whole University. Casework has followed much of the same pattern as previous years though the volume increased with a **significant number of cases attributed to COVID related circumstances**.

This was expected however, as not all of the impacts of the pandemic or the nature of online teaching, learning and assessment could reasonably be anticipated or adjusted for. **Individual students were able to access support from the service** to identify the correct procedures for pursuing their cases and to submit, for example, Extenuating Circumstances, Appeals and Complaints or to provide feedback or seek further adjustments. Stage 2 Appeals also increased reflecting the complexities of students' individual circumstances and the challenges of having these recognised as being 'more' than already adjusted for. **Advocacy supported each student** to present their Stage 2 Appeals and all but two were successful. Feedback, even for those unsuccessful, consistently expressed gratitude for the service and that they would have felt unable to pursue their appeals without that support.

Issues that students experienced that hadn't been anticipated, couldn't be adjusted for through general COVID measures or had to go to Stage 2 Appeal included: The impact for parents of home schooling and lack of childcare (particularly during the post-Christmas lockdown); COVID infection and especially the emergence of 'long COVID'; Disability adjustments and support being less effective or accessible remotely; Heightened levels of stress and worsening of existing mental health conditions; poor internet access or limited access to technology (digital poverty); Impact on individuals that affected professional practice placements.

COVID measures have particularly affected professional programmes and this was reflected in casework. Where possible we worked proactively, in partnership, to address these with Faculties and even with national bodies but otherwise supported students individually. Post-Christmas restrictions led to increases in discipline cases for Nursing and Paramedic students due to COVID restriction breaches. We worked with our professional programmes, maintaining our independence to effectively represent and uphold the rights of students while understanding the need to protect the public from the risks of COVID and uphold the reputation and integrity of the Nursing and Paramedic Programmes, University and respective professions.

We also **supported students through Fitness to Practice processes** ensuring students understood how to engage and ensure that their individual circumstances were considered. **Overall, individual cases supported 1:1 this year exceeded 300.** The total number of students who have benefitted greatly exceeds that as we have ensured that – reactively and proactively – we have managed issues collectively where even one case highlighted any issues that there was likely to affect larger groups or specific demographics.



300+

STUDENTS SUPPORTED

Our advocacy services continues to assist students in a variety of different ways

COVID

DIRECTLY HELPING STUDENTS

Our advocacy service provided support on the extended impact of COVID for members

AN EQUAL, DIVERSE & INCLUSIVE UNION

Inclusion has naturally been a focus for all during 2020/21 and alongside celebrating diversity and championing equality, the Students' Union continues to be a leading voice for equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I).

This year we've been working on a **review of the University and Union's strategy to tackle gender-based violence**. Alongside the introduction of resources on Canvas, we've been working with partners to further develop our ability to directly support students.

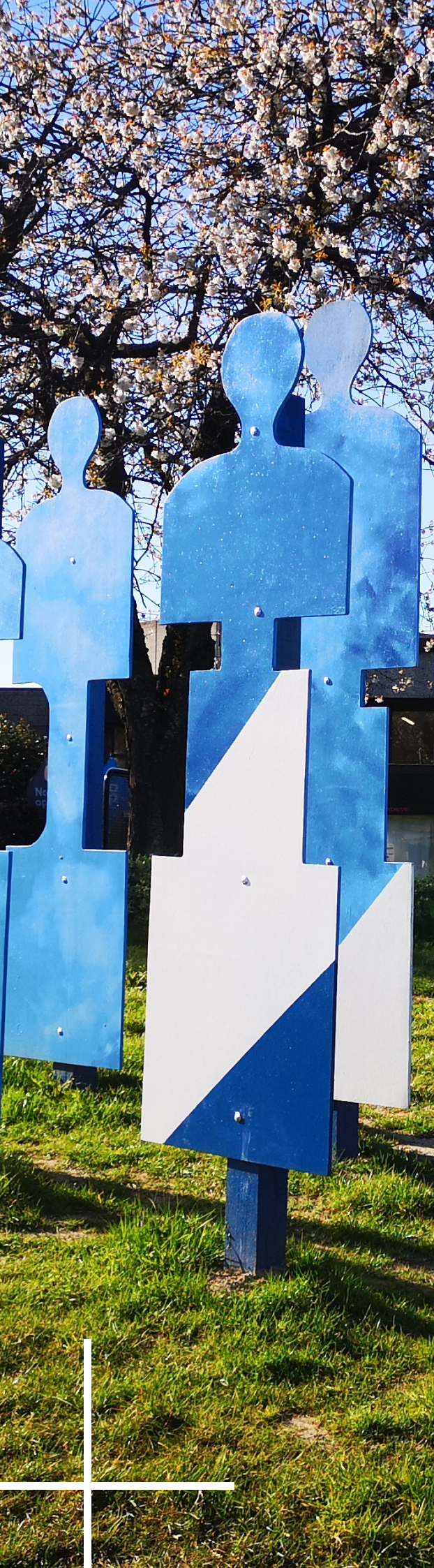
Sports President Edd held **disability inclusion training** as well as **Show Racism the Red Card training**, and our Vice-President Education Lexi held focus groups for various widening access groups on their university experience.

Being a responsive organisation and ensuring student engagement is at the heart of our ED&I work and drives it. Officers also responded to the **#blacklivesmatter** movement in the summer of 2020 and following a roundtable discussion with a group of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students, we developed a survey on the **BAME student experience**. The report, which details a variety of suggested actions, will continue to be worked upon by both ourselves and the University. It is our hope that the lived experience which students were kind enough to share with us, will allow the appropriate action to be taken by the University and Students' Union to tackle racism and build an anti-racist community.

Similarly in response to the murder of Sarah Everard, an **open letter** was sent from the Union President and other women Officers to encourage the men they represent to do what they can to challenge misogyny and do more to challenge other men on their attitudes towards women.

As part of our programme of events we celebrated **Black History Month** in October, **Pride during LGBTQ+ History month** in February (with a great line-up of online events and activities by the LGBTQ+ society) and **Women's History Month** in March. We celebrated the third annual **Inspirational Women Awards** which continue to be wonderfully supported by the Vice Chancellor's Fund. During March we received a great number of nominations for the Awards and these were awarded at an online event at the end of March 2021 when we also promoted **Trans Day of Visibility**. On the democratic front, the Union through its members, voted at the April General Meeting to **support campaigns for the banning of conversion therapy**.

Wellbeing continues to be a key factor in accessibility and several activities supported this including the social media **Wellbeing Wednesday campaign** undertaken by the Sports Union and the University wide **Wellbeing Week** which the Union actively took part in to coincide with University Mental Health Day.



#BLACKLIVESMATTER

ONLINE EVENTS

Listening and engaging with our BAME community to take forward positive change

**CELEBRATING
DIVERSITY**

ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT

Supporting Officers, groups and students to celebrate and showcase diversity events throughout the year

SUPPORTING THE STUDENT COMMUNITY

Our **Clubs & Societies Awards** were held online on April 1st and the list of winners and honourable mentions gives an insight into just some of the wide-ranging and diverse things which our clubs have organised and achieved this year. With over **150 nominations** and so many worthy winners, this showcased how essential and greatly appreciated our Clubs have been this year. **Two new awards** were introduced this year; “Community Award” and “Can do Attitude” both of which sought to recognise the unique challenges and opportunities embraced by the Clubs & Societies community this year.

Some of our Clubs have also enjoyed individual, nationally-recognised success. From **Brig Newspaper being awarded the prestigious ‘Best Publication’ award at the SPA Awards**, to the **President of the Stirling Marine Conservation Society, named an ‘Ocean Optimist’** by the national charity Marine Conservation. The environmental and conservation efforts of our students are always impressive and this year that commitment to protecting the wildlife on our beautiful campus was taken to a new level with the University being accredited **Bronze Hedgehog Friendly Campus status**. This is an example of a fun yet important campaign that capture the imagination and hearts of our campus community.

It is not a cliché to state that the year 2020/21 has been a year like no other but our Clubs & Societies, in true ‘Team Communities’ style have really pulled together and flourished in the most extreme and unusual of circumstances. Everything has moved online from **pub quizzes and open mics nights to awareness raising sessions on sexual health, mental health, environmental issues** and much more. Our Clubs & Societies have provided a safe, inclusive and open space for students. From CV enhancing and planet improving, to fun and original, our Clubs & Societies have proved their resilience and ability to deliver and achieve amazing things.

Their innovation has been nothing short of miraculous not only in surviving, but thriving and drawing on the positives that a digital world has presented. Society meetings and events have drawn interest and attendance from students all over the world and with all different sets of personal circumstances and commitments. This has made events and opportunities **more easily accessible** than ever regardless of other time commitments.

Moving online has also offered an opportunity to collaborate, meet and learn from others more easily than ever before too. Ranging from successful collaborations and engagement across all areas of the campus community such as Careers & Employability, MacRobert and various faculties to engaging with local, national and international organisations. For example, the **International Festival**, a three-day event, played host to sessions ranging from a Global Café run by Friends International and the Chaplaincy, to speakers on immigration and the EU Settlement Scheme. This is just one great example of the hundreds of informative and beneficial sessions, organised and facilitated by Officers, Clubs and individuals, all with the assistance of their Union.



944

CLUBS & SOCS MEMBERS

Clubs remained active producing innovative events and activities to connect members

£££

THOUSANDS RAISED

Community engagement remains a core part of club activity and thousands were raised for different causes

SPORTING COMMUNITY

The true strength of a community shines through when faced with adversity. Whilst 2020-21 will not be remembered for the many global sporting events we hoped for, we are immensely proud of how the Sports Union came together to build a community and welcome new students as best they could. The year was not without some elements of performance, with **Golf, Men's Football and Women's Football** amongst some of the sports that were permitted to participate in competitions during autumn 2020.

Once again, the Sports Union became home to wonderfully diverse population of almost **1300 members**. Despite the setbacks, clubs such as **Dance** managed to adapt terrifically by taking online classes and running events on our pitches. Stalwarts such as **Hockey, Athletics and Badminton** also maintained some elements of training whenever they could, including additional outdoor fitness training and coached sessions. Others such as **Cricket** also innovated, providing **new online socials** like the many other clubs who moved Give it a Go sessions and quizzes online for 2020-21.

With less opportunity to compete, our **clubs turned to the wider community**. The greatest headline undoubtedly being **£37,263 raised by 47 clubs as part of Movember for men's health**; an accolade that helped one instrumental **Club President, Camy Rosen, secure the title of Scottish Student Sport Volunteer of the Semester**.

Despite this colossal effort, many **other clubs contributed towards charities** including Start-Up Stirling, Scottish Association for Mental Health & Breast Cancer Now. Our annual Sports Ball celebrated outstanding achievements from **Women's Rugby towards Killin Mountain Rescue and Mark McGuire for Cardiac Risk in the Young**.

There has been plenty of development behind the scenes too. Through support from the Stirling Fund, **multiple training workshops towards our priority of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion** were provided to Sports Union members from our colleagues in LEAP Sport Scotland and Show Racism the Red Card. In addition, through support from the Vice-Chancellor's Fund, three additional rounds of **Disability Inclusion Training** were provided to our membership. Additional campaigns have included Sports Union engagement with **Wellbeing Week, No Smoking Day and Autism Awareness Week**.

Stirling continues to work closely with our partners at SSS and Scottish Disability Sport, but not least of all the University of Stirling Sport. The excitement of seeing clubs use a **new facility on our very own campus** has been a highlight, with celebrations on hold until all clubs return to training in 2021-22! Recognition of Sports Union groups and individual volunteers were celebrated at an online **Sports Ball event** on the 14th April.

The past year has been a time to reflect and innovate. With meetings and processes moving online we hope to have used this time to help future-proof the Sports Union and prepare for a new way of supporting our students in 2021 and beyond. A huge focus has been **student safety**, and that learning will help ensure that all Sports Union club activity is not only safe but also widely celebrated as we prepare for a full return to play in September.



1300

SPORTS UNION MEMBERS

A limited number of in-person events hasn't dampened the spirits of sports teams to pull together this year

£37,263

MOVEMBER

A phenomenal amount of money raised for the men's health charity

VOLUNTEERING

The Union continues to be **liV (Investors in Volunteers) accredited** and whilst assessment only takes place every three years, we aim to continuously improve the volunteer experience for all of students. We also work closely with the Careers & Employability Service and have nominated many individuals, groups and campaigns in their **STAR awards** which recognises student volunteers.

2020/21 saw the **launch of Pandemic Pals** as an addition to the STEER-Peer Support programme. It was identified in a Student Experience Survey in the autumn semester that students required more support to help to prevent experiences of social isolation and there was more of a mutual support required in addition to the mentor/mentee dynamic which STEER-Peer Support already provides. There were also concerns that if many students were suffering from COVID or required to self-isolate that volunteers would be required to provide practical, on the ground support. Fortunately, we never required the latter but we were well-prepared if we had. The mutual peer to peer support of the Pandemic Pals has received very **positive feedback** from the students who took part in the programme.

The number of **students engaged in STEER this year was almost 400** which is an increase of around 400% from 2019/20. It has been amazing to see and students have highly benefitted from a feeling of contributing to the overall wellbeing of their fellow students, whilst improving their own. It has been wonderful to see such an appetite for volunteering in such trying times.

Volunteering is a huge part of what the Students' Union is all about. From being elected to our clubs' committees or helping in the community garden, **much of the work that we do relies on and benefits greatly from the commitment and enthusiasm of volunteers**. The benefits of volunteering are great for both the service being improved and the students taking part and we are delighted to continue to provide experiences for students that can improve many aspects of mental health, employability and general fun and enjoyment for our students.



400

STEER & PANDEMIC PALS

Responding to student feedback,
development of Pandemic Pals to connect
and provide peer support for students

**INVESTORS
IN
VOLUNTEERING**

ACCREDITED

We work to provide the best possible
experience for volunteers

FACILITATING STUDENTS TO POSITIVELY ENGAGE IN SUSTAINABILITY

A GREEN UNION

The Union continues to be the **only carbon neutral student Union in the UK**. To support this, we continue to evaluate our carbon footprint to see how we can evaluate and reduce our impact on the planet through work we do across the University.

During parts of the autumn semester, our **outdoor community garden provided a vital outdoor space for students to come together (safely)** and enjoy what the garden had to offer. 20+ students regularly engaged with the sessions and this was supported by the work of Church of Scotland Ministries and the wonderful Janet Foggie.

In the spring, we **helped our enthusiastic student-led Hedgehog Friendly Campus team achieve its bronze award** after only a few months and our now working towards Silver, which will hopefully be achieved within the academic year.

The **Environmental Enterprises society** collaborated with the Indian NGO We Are One on the 2020 International Tree Plantation and contributed to the overall **plantation of 700 trees**. The **Marine Conservation Society** held their Ocean Action Week and across the year **raised £1,435 for marine conservation causes, held a Dumyat clean-up and removed 101.2kg of waste from beaches, rivers and land (6,330 individual items)**.

Campaigning and awareness raising are also important parts of our work. In autumn, we ran a variety of sessions for **Global Climate Change Week** and in the spring, worked alongside the University deliver **Green Week featuring 12 different events** ranging from Climate change debates, educational talks on fossil fuel divestment, sustainable finance, Scottish Marine Conservation and litter picks.

To support sustainable travel, **new cycle shelters on campus were installed as a result of funding secured by the Union from Cycling Scotland**. This development will help promote active travel across campus.

Into the New Year, we are so excited that the **Green and Blue Space will return**, having secured a new and larger unit at the entrance to the Union. Due to open in time for the new semester in September, the increased size and location has given the Union the chance to redevelop the Space to increase its impact and reach a greater number of students. To ensure it best meets student needs, we've secured funding from the Scottish Landfill Tax Community Fund and the Vice-Chancellor's Fund.



20+

COMMUNITY GARDEN SESSIONS

With wider restrictions in place, the garden provided a space for groups of students to come together regularly and safely

**BRONZE
AWARD**

HEDGEHOG FRIENDLY CAMPUS

The Environmental Enterprise Society achieved Bronze status and well on the way to Silver

PROVIDING SECURE & ATTRACTIVE SPACES FOR STUDENTS TO STUDY, SOCIALISE & RELAX

ADAPTING YOUR UNION

Throughout this year, we've continued to ensure we communicate with our members whilst not being in our normal home in the Robbins Centre. From posting regular COVID related updates ahead of the autumn semester to communicating details in place for both our in-person and online offering as part of Freshers 2020, we've sought to **inform the membership** on both the latest news and opportunities available.

For example, in September 2020 our **Freshers programme** did look a great deal different. Despite the restrictions, we held several opportunities to meet the Officer team, try a slice of Domino's pizza and meet fellow students. **This was particularly evident in our facilities and welcomed by students socialising in our bar at night.** Our team worked hard to comply with all aspects of making our venues as safe as possible including the introduction of an online ordering platform for our food and beverage outlets. **Providing a social experience (mindful of social distancing) at the start of the term was welcomed by our members.**

We also provided on-going **online opportunities for meet and greets, quizzes and much more. In total, more than 250 online events were hosted by the Union, Clubs, Societies and Sports Teams during the year.** It was noted that many of these allowed new ways to engage and we will be working to take the best aspects of what happened during this year forward to provide the very possible hybrid approach for students. A great example of this was our **Christmas advent calendar which featured everything including a quiz, giveaways, mindfulness exercises and even recipes for Christmas treats!**

Working remotely also allowed us to **develop new ways to engage with students and provide further accessibility.** From Teams meetings with the Advocacy team to online check-ins with international students, we've made use of new forms of engagement. Another great example is with our **growing Instagram following and running content which allows us to directly engage and signpost to Union services and opportunities.**

Another example of our ability to meet the needs of our members was with our **Online Shop.** With restrictions in place, we saw a huge jump both at Freshers (for the must have Stirling Uni hoodie) and throughout the year as restrictions allowed. This was also supported by the **Period Poverty initiative** we worked on with the University and Scottish Government, to provide **free sanitary products to students** and have them sent directly to their home. In the last year alone, **more than 1600 free products have been supplied.**

In 2020/21, our **overall web visits were up more than 7%.** Our Online Shop rose an incredible 222%. Communication remains central to how we continue to engage with our membership and make their lives better.



250+

SUPPORTING EVENTS

The Students' Union ran or helped facilitate more than 250 online events to encourage student engagement

222%

UNION ONLINE SHOP

Everyone still wanted their 'must have' Stirling hoodie and our online shop provided a way to stay connected with the Union. Website pages views were up 222% on previous year

LOOKING FORWARD

Our Union has delivered incredible work over the past year, particularly when considering the unique challenges faced. The outgoing Officers have been forced to deal with a completely unexpected situation, and thanks to their adaptability and support from Union staff, have successfully set the path for a COVID recovery year. We want to thank them for their work and help to prepare us for the year ahead.

As the new Sabbatical team, we aim to keep supporting the student community, as well as strengthening the bonds with the University and the local Council. As well as taking forward the motions passed for postgraduate engagement and Erasmus+ and more, we look forward to engaging with the membership to campaign on what is important to them.

As a group, we are aligned with the Union's core values and therefore we will be prioritising the mental health and wellbeing of our students, while ensuring that our actions remain true to the Union's equality, diversity, and inclusion principles. Similarly, on-going communication with students will be important. We want to actively listen and plan on running further Student Experience Surveys on aspects that are essential to students. We will carry on the work for equality, collaborating with external organisations for an inclusive, sustainable and progressive campus.

We've been so impressed at the commitment and engagement from Clubs, Societies, Sports Teams and volunteers, who have excelled at running events and activities in a whole new way. This has shown an admirable resilience by the whole Student Union community, which we aim to keep supporting.

We are so excited to be joining the Union team and helping shape what the immediate future may hold. The student voice will be more important than ever and we'll be seeking this directly to help shape our new strategic plan. With further Campus Central developments, a new Green & Blue space and lots of exciting new opportunities, we're looking forward to making students' lives better.

Nela, Calum, Alyson & Sophie
Union Sabbatical team 2021-22





www.stirlingstudentsunion.com