

General Meeting

5th October
5-7pm

G.LTW1 / MS TEAMS

Minutes

- **Welcome**
- **In Attendance**
 - Union President, Leen Ali (LA)
 - Sports Union President, Murray Bushell (MB)
 - Vice President Communities, Zoe Crosher (ZC)
 - Vice President Education, Katie Gethings (KG)
- **Minutes Ratification**
 - Minutes ratified by LA. No objections.
- **Challenges to Order Paper**
 - No challenges to order.
- **Dates to Note**
 - Black History Month (October)
 - ACS Black Chat: 13th October
 - Kizomba Dance Workshop: 18th October
 - Communities Zone: 10th October
 - Communities Zone Executive Committee: 17th October
 - Equalities Zone: 11th October
 - Autumn Election Voting: 17th October – 19th October
 - LGBTQ+ Working It Out with Careers Team: 8th November
- **Elections & Resignations**
 - Autumn Elections
 - Candidates announced.
 - Voting: 17th October – 19th October
 - Results: 20th October
 - Elections Committee
 - No one stood for election.
- **Reports (the Sabbatical Officer reports can be reviewed in [Paper A](#) of the agenda)**
 - Sports Union President
 - One student said that several Clubs had done initiations this year, despite the Sports Union having a zero-tolerance policy against them. They asked what measures were being taken to stop this. MB thanked the student for letting the Sports Union know, and that there isn't too much they can do unless someone alerts them of the situation. He advised that other members of the Sports Union should come to them when they become aware of initiations so that they can go to discipline and look at this on a case-by-case basis for each club.

- Another student asked for clarity on what MB meant by 'cost-of-living'. MB advised that because Sports can be quite expensive, the Sports Union is working with Sabbatical teams across Scotland on campaigns that will help reduce these costs for students nationally.
 - A student noted that MB had spoken to Brig about making Clubs more LGBTQ+ friendly. They asked what the Sports Union is currently doing to bring more queer people into sport. MB advised that this was an important part of his campaign in his first year, but that it is not one of his three main priorities for his second year. However, the Sports Union will always have the Sport For All Week, which will work to ensure all students know sport is for everyone. Additionally, they'll look at other things throughout the year, such as working with their Volunteer Officers to ensure they are doing everything they can to include everyone.
 - Vice President Education
 - A student asked how willing/enthusiastic KG is about exploring different ideas and Life Skills workshops that other societies can potentially contribute towards and collaborate with the Union on. KG advised that while the Life Skills workshops are in their infancy, societies should get in touch with her if they have an idea of what one of these workshops should look like.
 - Another student expressed concerns about high parking fees for students. LA asked that they come to speak to the Union Sabbaticals after the General Meeting to discuss this further.
 - A question was asked about the UCU and what the Union has done to provide support. KG advised that Sabbatical Officers wrote to and spoke to the University before the strikes took place, urging them to return to negotiations and to meet the UCU's demands because the Officers know that their working conditions are students' learning conditions. KG also addressed the impact the Officers knew the strikes would have on staff and students, and they wanted to do everything possible to avoid them. LA joined the picket lines, and the Union put out a statement of support on the website, which was also emailed to students.
 - Follow-up question about what the strikes were about. More information is available in the Union's statement. KG advised that the issue of 50% pay reduction of staff participating in the marking & assessment boycott was resolved on the second Thursday of teaching, as staff accepted the University's offer.
 - Vice President Communities
 - No clarifying questions were asked.
 - Union President
 - Student asked whether the Union considered the Rutherglen and Hamilton West By-Election when scheduling this General Meeting.
 - Another student asked what the main challenges are when integrating INTO students into the University ecosystem, and how can Societies take a more proactive approach to help that process. LA advised that INTO students face many challenges, one of which is that they are international and often have difficulties with their visas and travel. This may lead to them arriving late. They also start later than other students, which poses unique challenges. As for what Societies can do to reach INTO students, they can

attend the Societies and Sports Club Fayre when the Union helps organise them. LA said she would be happy to discuss this further after the meeting.

- A follow-up question was asked about what exactly INTO is and how INTO students are different from other international students. LA explained that INTO offers foundation year programmes, pre-master programmes, as well as English language programmes. INTO is meant to make it easier for international students to enter University and assist them with the English language. INTO students have an integrated degree with the University and sometimes they move on and have alternative pathways.
- Student asked if LA could expand upon what issues students said they were facing after she spoke with them during her Meet and Greets on campus. LA advised she'll be doing these Go Out And Talk, or GOAT, sessions regularly. She explained that many students brought up the parking fees and tickets, as well as the UCU strikes and how they have affected students. Many of these students expressed support for the strikes.

- **Motions**

- Mandatory First Responder Training for All Committees ([Paper B](#) and [Appendix 1](#))
 - Motion Proposer Introduction
 - ZC explains that this training will help committees respond to students who come to them about sexual harassment/assault, and that this training makes it safer for the committees as well as the student approaching. It will prevent committees from feeling like they need to sort these issues themselves. The Students' Union will promote the training and it will be available within the training resources for Volunteer Officers.
 - Clarifying Questions
 - A student asked if non-members of Societies and Sports Clubs would be allowed to participate in the training. ZC advised that while it will be more marketed towards Clubs and Societies, it will be available to all students.
 - Speeches For and Against the Motion
 - No speeches made either for or against the motion.
 - Motion summation
 - ZC encouraged students to get in touch with them if they have questions about the motion. They advised that because it's a sensitive topic and some may not feel comfortable speaking up now, so anyone can approach her about it later if they want to know more about the content of the training or the awards that will be given to Clubs and Societies.

MOTION PASSED (91.5% IN FAVOUR)

- Commitment to Fighting the Housing Crisis ([Paper C](#))
 - Motion Proposer Introduction
 - Eliot Wooding-Sherwin (EWS) explains that the University is directly responsible for perpetuating student homelessness, as they have increased rent. They've also increased the student numbers yet again without providing more homes. Housing is

becoming less and less affordable, and the Students' Union needs to be tackling the housing crisis. This motion gives direct actions for the Students' Union to follow to help them fight the student housing crisis, which is one of the most important issues faced by students.

- Clarifying Questions
 - One student asked whether it was the University or Stirling Council who is responsible for providing more housing. EWS advised that the University has student accommodation on campus, as well as purpose-built student accommodation, which involves third-party contracts between the University and whoever runs them. There is also private tenancy. He explained that they aren't sure how to respond to who's responsible for providing housing. However, they know that student numbers have increased by 4000 within the past 4 years, yet no more homes have been provided. The University is increasing the population of the city without providing more homes or working with the council to provide more homes. Students are having to commute from Glasgow or elsewhere because they can't find a place in Stirling.
- Speeches For and Against the Motion
 - ZC spoke in favour of the motion. Mentions that the housing situation is dire and that the Union should give as much support as possible to work against the crisis.
 - No speeches were made against the motion.
- Motion Summation
 - EWS summarises by saying that housing and education are human rights, and it's pretty difficult to study when you're trying to find a home. He explains it's important to do everything we can to fight the housing crisis and encourages members to vote for the motion.

MOTION PASSED (100% IN FAVOUR)

- Representation and Transparency (Sabbatical Officer Meetings) ([Paper D](#))
 - Motion Proposer Introduction
 - Dan McPadden (DP) notes there is a lack of engagement and attendance with the Union, as well as a lack of understanding from the wider student body that the Union is here to represent them. The 23/24 Housing Officer had a meeting recently about the Housing Crisis, and before that meeting, she posted on social media to make it widely known that this was going to happen. From that, she had a lot more power going into this meeting and her responses had a lot more impact. Essentially, this motion will ensure that the Union, as a whole, follows this to increase engagement and to give more power to students in discussions with the University.
 - Clarifying Questions
 - A student asked for more clarity on what this motion would entail and the impact, as well as on how this would increase engagement. DP advised that this motion would, for any relevant meeting, make students aware if possible, and seek to consult with

them. Where possible, it would also publish outcomes from these meetings. Specifics of which meetings are included within the motion.

- Speeches For and Against the Motion
 - A student spoke in favour of this motion and thought it was good when the Housing Officer asked students what they wanted to be said in this meeting. They thought it was really important for transparency, and as DP mentioned, it's also about giving Officers more weight when going into meetings.
 - No speeches were made against the motion.
- Motion Summation
 - DP summarises by saying that this won't solve the current lack of engagement, but it will certainly help. It should also give the Union a little bit more power, so would encourage everyone to vote for it.

MOTION PASSED (91.5% IN FAVOUR)

- **Any Other Business**
 - There was a follow-up point regarding whether the Union considered the Rutherglen and Hamilton West By-Election when scheduling this General Meeting. There was also a request that the Union consider National and Local Elections for future meetings. LA advised that they should contact the Union following the General Meeting to discuss this further.
 - LA noted that the Equalities Zone was happening next week, and the Equality Officers would be elected. There would also be discussions on Black History Month activity.
- **Date of Next Meeting: 5-7pm, 30th November 2023**
 - Motion Deadline: 10am, 23rd November 2023
 - Motion Amendment Deadline: 10am, 28th November 2023