

# Communities Zone

10th February  
5-6pm

C.LTA73 / MS TEAMS

## Minutes

- **Welcome**
- **In Attendance**
  - Members Present
    - VP Communities, Ellie Hammond (EH)
    - Arts Volunteer Officer, Tom Mackenzie (TM)
    - Sustainability Officer, Erin Smith (ES)
  - In Attendance
    - 21 ordinary members
    - 1 staff support
  - Absent with apologies
    - Co-curricular officer, Amy Taylor
  - Absent without apologies
    - Housing Officer, Aidan Lewis
    - International Officer, Reha Afzal
    - Media Officer, Brooke Mulholland
- **Minutes Ratification**
  - Ratified by EH
- **Challenges to Order Paper:** EH removed *Vice Chancellor's Fund info from Alumni team* from the agenda to allow them to present before the meeting started.
- **Dates to Note:**
  - LGBTQ+ History Month: February
  - Ramadan: 17<sup>th</sup> Feb – 18 March
  - Spring Election dates:
    - Nominations close 9 Feb @ 10am
    - [Endorsement Interest Form](#) to be submitted by 12 Feb @ 8am if society wants to endorse a candidate
    - Campaign begins: 16 Feb

- Union hustings: 17 Feb
    - Alternative Hustings (hosted by PolSoc): 19 Feb
  - SU Awards Deadlines
    - Submit society performance by 11 Feb @ 10am
    - [Nominate yourself/friend/student group](#) by 9 March @ 10am (this is also the deadline for Society Shield activity)
    - Shortlist announced 13 March
    - [Picture and video submission for slideshow](#) by 23 March @ 10am
    - [Tickets](#) off sale 24 March @ Midnight
  - Women's History Month: March
  - [Vice Chancellor's Fund](#) Applications close 2<sup>nd</sup> March
  - Holi: 3 March
  - Society dates to note:
    - SUDS Pub Quiz this Thursday to fundraise for Edinburgh Fringe Festival
    - SUDS Much Ado about Nothing semester show: 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> February @ 7pm, Macrobert
    - SUDS and F.E.M Society pub quiz collab (open to more societies): March
    - GSOC: 12-hour fundraiser for charity @ 21<sup>st</sup> March
    - Global Justice and Islamic Society collab: screening of Gaza Soundman, 30<sup>th</sup> March @ 6pm, Macroberts
    - DSAS: Sustainable Crafts Nights 17<sup>th</sup> February @ Cottrell 2B84
    - HUSSARS and Debate collab: Board Game night 24<sup>th</sup> Feb @ Green and Blue Space
    - Cards Society, Consulting Society and Mathematics Society collab: Poker night, Thu (12 Feb) @6-9pm, Venue
    - Debate, PolSoc and Model UN collab: Model UN event, 26<sup>th</sup> Feb
    - Musical Theatre, Acapella, Live Music and Poetry society: Charity Variety Show for Impact Arts, 13<sup>th</sup> March, Venue
- **Elections & Resignations: None.**
- **Reports**
  - VP Communities EH
    - Oral report skipped due to busy agenda, offered to go through report for anybody with questions.
    - [Read report.](#)
  - Arts Volunteer Officer, TM
    - Creative Cottage: Damage caused to property and equipment due to flooding. The impact of the flood has been managed and

equipment belonging to societies has been moved to safe premises.

- No permanent damage has been caused by the flooding, and no society activities were missed or negatively impacted from this.
- Creative Cottage is now open again.
- Rehearsals for Live Music Society may continue in Venue due to the building being more accessible than the Creative Cottage.
- TM hosted Horrible Histories karaoke night
- TM Elected as NUS delegate and attended NUS National Conference to discuss housing, transport and sustainability issues
- TM Hosted first Live Music Society Christmas Concert which was a big success
- Sustainability Officer, ES
  - Working on how to improve the energy supply for University of Stirling. They will be working with other universities such as Edinburgh University to discuss ideas for adopting cleaner energy sources.
  - ES has been running monthly repair Cafes at the Green & Blue Space which repairs clothes and offers to teach students how to use sewing machines.
- **Updates, discussion and decision topics**
  - Election endorsements info from Representation Coordinator, Inês
    - Societies to complete Election Endorsement Form by 12 Feb @ 8AM. They can't endorse candidates w/o submitting the form.
    - To endorse a candidate: a meeting must be held with all the candidates, then a committee vote must be recorded and sent to SU [elections@stir.ac.uk](mailto:elections@stir.ac.uk) as evidence of a fair process. If candidate is part of the committee, they must not participate in voting.
  - Societies Executive Committee and new [Societies Schedule](#)
    - From 1 June 2026, there will be no CZEC committee or CZEC committee meetings. Instead, open forums will take place.
    - The new Societies Exec Committee (SEC) will comprise of 5 society presidents, and 3 society lay members instead of being open for any student with a paid membership to at least one society.

- At the start of each academic year, a meeting will be held for all SU members to elect the new Societies Executives.
    - SEC will meet monthly to discuss issues, campaigns, vote for society funding and to prepare reports for Student Council.
  - EH discussed opportunity to shadow her as VP Communities for some experience in the role and learn what the role entails.
  - Green Week will take place in March with a variety of events, such as a sustainability fair, kilo sale, active travel and circular economies etc. If any society wishes to participate, email EH.
  - Due to an increase in society fundraising the union is looking to purchase Square card machines that can be used during these events. The SU is also looking to set up a JustGiving charity page to simplify the process of sending donations to charities, and a new method for societies to fundraise for themselves in being set up for their society pages on the SU website.
  - Society Shield: EH to email societies with relevant information about obtaining funds of £500 for their society. [Submit](#) your Society Shield form by 9 March to be considered for the trophy and £500 at SU Awards.
  - New SU societies social media strategy to be implemented to combat the issue of society events becoming overwhelming on the SU Instagram stories. Majority vote to change social media strategy for societies to upload events to Native by Wednesday which will be posted on Monday as a 'what's on this week' grid post by the SU Instagram.
  - Student Leader Training Day: Split across 2 half days or keep it as 1 full day?
    - Majority vote for making Student Leader Training 2 half days.
    - Discussion of which types of sessions students desired: tech sessions, harm reduction training, constitution and minute writing/ paperwork session, new finance request system.
    - Overall suggestion to condense the amount of training as to not overwhelm students.
  - Equipment Library: SU preparing an application for Vice Chancellors Fund to get inventory for societies to use.
    - Society suggestions: thermos, portable screen, smaller speakers.
    - Craft library to help w/ crafty activities.
    - Get in contact with EH for any other suggestions
- **Any Other Business:** None.
  - **Date of Next Meeting:** 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026
  - **Reserved business:** Society Fayre Day preference (if Tuesday is unavailable) to be discussed at next meeting.

# Vice President of Communities Report

Now that we are over halfway through the Autumn semester, here's a wrap up of everything that I have been working on over the past month since the first Community Zone meeting.

## **Sustainability**

Within my sustainability remit, I ran our recent Climate Festival, which encapsulated 13 incredible student volunteers, 16 sustainability focussed events, and lots of engagement from students' and staff alike. The highlights included our apple pressing workshop, our BioBlitz Day, and of course, releasing our two newest campus residents, our hedgehogs. Our hedgehogs were officially named Haggis and Thistle, and a massive thank you to Earth & Environment for all your help with supporting the release.

I attended a full-day training session on Divestment, Reinvestment, and Ethical Finance, which backs me in my lobbying to the University about the sustainability and ethicalness of their finances, investment, and procurement strategy. I have been subsequently working with SOS UK (Students Organising for Sustainability UK) on their 'Invest for Change' campaign, which aims to transform how universities invest their money. Thank you to Global Justice Stirling for all your help with this.

At our last University Court meeting, I raised my concerns around the sustainable aspect of using A.I on a University-wide scale. The University have agreed to include accurate and transparent information on the environmental impacts of using A.I within their new A.I guidelines for students and staff.

Alongside the Green Champions, we have begun organising the upcoming Green Week in March, which will now include a 'Digital Cleanup Day', to further cut the institutions' carbon costs.

## **Parking and Transport**

The Car Sharing Initiative is still internally progressing, with regular meetings being set up to track progress on getting this trial launched.



## **Societies**

Probably the most exciting thing which I have been working on is preparing and planning for our upcoming Students' Union Awards Evening. I'm really excited to celebrate all your achievements with you; it's going to be such a great night!

As you may be aware, the Stirling Fund deadline has just passed. I supported the Paramedic Society on their application to receive breasted CPR dummies, which they will use to support Societies to get CPR trained. I also achieved my own grant to decorate the new Society Common Room, which is called 'The Conservatory' in the Airthrey Castle. We also achieved funding for Sensory Awareness Training for Societies, more to follow soon, but there are lots of training and fundraising opportunities available for societies to get involved with, to expand their CV and contribute to their Society Shield progress. Societies also recently had another batch of Scottish Mental Health First Aid Training, which is another great thing for your CV.

## **Gender-Based Violence**

I have been planning the upcoming 16 Days of Activism campaign, which runs from the 25<sup>th</sup> of November, which is International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, until the 10<sup>th</sup> of December, which is International Human Rights Day. This year, I am leading both the Students' Union and University approach to 16 Days. I also sit on the Forth Valley 16 Days of Activism Planning Committee, as well as the National committee. This integrates and streamlines our approach to the 16 Days period on campus, and in Stirling more widely. If any societies would like to run a 16 Days of Activism event or get involved with anything that we are doing, then please don't hesitate to reach out!

Last week, at University Court, which is the highest level of governance within the University, I raised my concerns regarding an incident at Abertay University, where a representative from JIMS (Justice for Innocent Men Scotland) was allowed to give a talk to Criminology Students. I highlighted the damaging effect this can have on survivors, and how the hatred spread by this group has no place in our society, or in a university classroom specifically. I'm currently looking at our policies and processes for external speakers to prevent something similar from happening here.



I spoke with Brig, on their BrigCast Podcast after Reclaim the Night, about the importance of getting involved with gender-based violence campaigns and charities, so be sure to give it a listen.

I have collaborated with National partnerships to launch the SARCS campaign. This is the Sexual Assault Response Coordination Services, which is a dedicated NHS Scotland service which offers healthcare and support to people affected by sexual crimes.

### **Accessibility and Equality**

Our LGBTQ+ drop-in sessions continue to be a success! We held the Unions' first Trans Solidarity Workshop, where we spoke about some of the challenges which Trans students face, and how we can better support our Trans community. This was followed by a non-binary workshop, where we spoke about the othering of gender in everyday interactions. Justine and I wrote a Trans Solidarity Motion which got taken to the last General Meeting, and the motion would allow us to highlight and stand by the fact that solidarity with our trans community is essential to our student community and integral to being a truly inclusive Students' Union.

Adding Tactile Paving and Braille to our campus is progressing extremely positively within the University. We are now in the consultation phase of this, and hopefully work will start imminently to get these adjustments in place in the atrium primarily.

### **Housing**

I have been working closely with Marks Out of Tenancy, to produce articles and content regarding the support available to students' whilst renting and finding accommodation. I'd like to highlight to everyone the Hardship Funds and Grant Opportunities which are available to all students within the University of Stirling. There is a link on this written report when published. [The Hardship Fund | About | University of Stirling](#)

### **Other**

Alongside this, I have been meeting one-to-one with my new Volunteer officers, who you are going to hear from shortly, to ensure they fully understand their role and how they can support and get supported to do cool things for you all. I have began working



with NUS on an election campaign, which encourages students to vote in the upcoming Scottish elections. A quick reminder that everyone can vote in these elections, even if you're an international student, you just have to register. PLEASE DO REGISTER. I have been working with Global Justice Stirling and MENA society to form a Palestine Coalition of Stirling Students' to align campaigns we are individually working on, there is more details to follow on this! I have also been helping with our University wide Movember campaign, and it has been so nice to see so many of our societies getting involved too! Now, I've got some prizes, the current society fundraising leaderboard sits at:

- 1) Formula 1 Society
- 2) Debate Society
- 3) Officer Training Corps
- 4) Disney Society
- 5) Paramedic Society

If any of these societies are here just now, please see me at the end of the meeting to get a prize!

As always, everything I work on is for you guys, and remember that I'm always here for you all. Please don't hesitate to email me about anything 😊

