**Societies Annual General Meeting – 26.03.24**

**Minutes**

Chair – Justyna Kardasz (VP Community)

Clerk – Erin Ross/Natalie Brayshaw (Activities Coordinators)

**Start of meeting** 17.05

**Attendance**

Committee members are asked to sign in using a QR code onscreen

**Information**

**Budget update** – Societies Exec allocates societies funding from two different pots – £40k in general societies funding, and £15k in Arts & Culture funding

78% of both pots has been spent to date

The last meetings of the academic year are on 3rd April, 17th April and 1st May. These are the last opportunities to apply for societies funding before August. So the deadlines for societies to submit grant requests are **12 noon on 2nd April, 16th April and 30th May**

**Societies Policy**

Staff and Socs Exec have been reviewing the Societies Policy and presented an updated version to societies ahead of the AGM for their consideration

ER talks through the new or revised points in the policy:

* Information on how a society manages conditions of membership
* Extra flexibility around an additional non-student committee role for a small group of societies who may require this
* Governance: clarity on democratic election of committee members, AGMs/EGMs
* More information on affiliation process and old/new committee responsibilities
* Clarity around resources available to societies and requirements for access
* Information around

ER invites feedback and questions on the policy points:

* Policy discourages societies using external communication channels that are open to users beyond society members. A concern is raised about this – the society in question uses communication platforms with much wider membership to communicate with e.g. other student groups.
* ER: ‘discouraging’ rather than banning. The word ‘official’ is important – this doesn’t mean you can’t chat externally or have social media platforms visible to all, but you should have an official way of sharing society communications with members only. The website messaging function provides this. Societies should think carefully about sharing information beyond their members.
* Question on the extra *ex officio* committee role – if a society discusses and agrees this role with the socs team, will it then stand for future years? Answer – yes
* Policy reiterates the documentation required for society trips. Question – is this required for any trip members are participating in as a society, or just for trips organised by the society? We think the former, but socs team to follow up

ER asks if societies ratify the policy; quorum is met and the policy is ratified.

**You said, we did – Room Bookings**

JK highlighted room bookings as an area of development this year:

* Officers and staff have consistently raised concerns and taken society feedback to relevant university teams. The university Estates team with input from JK are looking at short- and long-term actions around society space
* The responses from societies to the survey from the last GM have been reviewed and used to identify further actions
* Short-term:
  + Working on reopening plan for Royal College Gym
  + Socs team have gained limited access to the university system so it is now easier to make ad-hoc bookings for societies in the L&T Building
  + Socs team are overhauling existing booking processes and forms to improve access
* Long-term:
  + Gap analysis comparing existing provision with current/future demand
  + Identifying need for different/additional space
  + Identifying partnering opportunities with external facility providers

Questions from societies:

* Will this continue next academic year with new officers? Yes
* Can socs see which rooms are available? ER summarises that this is challenging, but there is a link to a uni timetable provided on the Room Booking page: <https://www.strathunion.com/organisation/resources/bookings-forms/roombookingform/>. Socs Exec members offer a tutorial in how to use this!
* Is there a way to mark clearly that a room is booked by a society to make it easier to show other groups who may be trying to use the room? Socs team will speak to uni Estates/Facilities Management about signs on the door or similar.

**Training**

JK highlighted developments in society training:

* Improved finance training and created a separate grant training module
* Developed comms/marketing training which will soon be available online
* Created basic safeguarding training for society committees, exploring First Aid
* Staff are now trained to deliver SplitBanana consent workshops. Show Racism the Red Card have been engaged to deliver antiracism workshops.

**Good Grant Request Examples**

JK talks through two successful grant requests and why they were successful:

* SEDS – National Rocketry Championships
  + Good comparisons and rationale for the different travel options
  + Included how much each individual student would be paying and how much the fund will subsidise these costs
* Boardgame Society – Core equipment
  + Polling society members on what they want purchased
  + Looking at cheapest options
  + All were bought secondhand – affordable and sustainable

**Alumni Fund** – This university fund is currently open for [applications from student groups](https://www.strath.ac.uk/alumni/givetostrathclyde/alumnifund/enhancingthestudentexperience/), closing 9th April

Let JK know if you are applying as she and Molly McHugh (VP Sport) sit on the funding committee

**Societies Executive Fund**

JK gives examples of what Socs Exec likes to see:

* Core equipment requests
* For any request – how does it impact and benefit Strath students
* All the costs and all the income set out in your request
* Specifically ‘expected income’ is often missing from requests – this is all your income i.e. if you are funding part of the costs from your Savings or members are paying in part themselves, include this here

**STAR Awards**

[Nominations](https://www.strathunion.com/opportunities/star-awards/) for the annual Student Achievement & Recognition awards are currently open – **deadline is midnight on Sunday 31st March**

The awards are one of the biggest and most important events in our calendar. They exist to recognise and thank all our student volunteers for their incredible work over the year, within the union, university and in our community

The awards themselves will take place on **Thursday 23rd May** - so don't book your trip home until after then - you don't want to miss this event!

**Volunteering hours**

Reminder to [create a volunteering profile, log your volunteering hours](https://www.strathunion.com/volunteering/profile/howto/) and claim your [volunteer discount](https://www.strathunion.com/volunteering/volunteerdiscountcard/)

**Year at a glance**

JK presents the current tasks for societies between now and the end of the summer:

Semester 2 (until end March)

* [Hold your AGM](https://www.strathunion.com/organisation/resources/agm-handover/agm/) and elect new committee
* Tell socs team the results using [form on website](https://www.strathunion.com/organisation/resources/agm-handover/handover/)
* Nominate for STAR awards
* Apply for Active & Engaged badges by 5th April
  + ER adds that societies keep their Active & Engaged badges earned this year until the end of Semester 1 next year, when there will be an opportunity to resubmit. So if you apply now you will have these badges to display during Freshers Week etc.

Semester 3 (April & May)

* From this point socs team will be adding new committees to the website
* [Hand over](https://www.strathunion.com/organisation/resources/agm-handover/handover/) to new committee – meet, exchange documents
* New committee get set up – [reaffiliate your society](https://www.strathunion.com/organisation/resources/prep/reaffiliation/) by end May to secure Freshers stall
* Apply for funding before last Socs Exec meeting
* New committee get [trained](https://www.strathunion.com/volunteering/training/) – in-person sessions will be offered in April & May
* Societies which haven’t reaffiliated, and old committees, will be taken off website from June

Summer (June & July)

* New committee get trained – online sessions will be offered over summer
* Prep for next year – make room bookings, complete one annual Risk Assessment, look at society finances
* Union financial year ends 31st July – we take back unspent grant funding
  + ER clarified that societies will be contacted over summer asking you to make any outstanding payments from your grant money and there is an opportunity to keep/repurpose the funds for next year

**Societies Cupboard**

Socs team will be fully resetting the cupboard over summer but for now have removed items that are creating hazards. Societies are reminded to look through these items on the floor and store them safely or take them away by the end of March. Socs team will then remove

**Sports update** – VP Sport highlights that Scottish Student Sport is conducting a survey into how the cost of living is impacting students’ access to sport and physical activity. Please respond here: <https://scottishstudentsport.typeform.com/to/hQ9cfRBP>

**Education update** – VP Education highlights nominations for the [Teaching Excellence Awards](https://www.strathunion.com/voice/teachingexcellenceawards/) are open until midnight on Wednesday 17th April

**Welfare update** – [contact VP Welfare](mailto:strathunion.vpwelfare@strath.ac.uk) if you have experiences to share about housing issues

**University of Sanctuary** – uni is looking to establish a student-led awareness or action group on campus that actively supports and raises awareness for refugees and asylum seekers

See [STAR network](https://star-network.org.uk/about-star/https:/www.glasgowunisrc.org/organisation/8497/) at University of Glasgow – group of students working to help refugees feel welcome and able to thrive at uni

**Societies Executive Elections**

Candidates are invited to speak

CP – has been on Socs Exec for last year. Along with official meetings, has been working with socs one-on-one to help with grant requests, how to expand and reach more students, and producing comms e.g. podcasts. Is President of StrathTV and on committee for Book Club – knows how to run society and the challenges

SM – has been on Socs Exec for part of the last year. Lots of volunteering experience – Welcome Team and Hear to Listen team leader, involved in ad-hoc projects like swap shop, President of Harry Styles Soc and member of many societies. Wants to stay on to keep making impact

AA – is on Welcome Team, involved in lots of societies, is an approachable person

CJ – enjoyed being engaged with uni and union this year. Knows it can be a rough start to uni experience and wants to help more people find social opportunities. Welcome Team and Hear to Listen volunteer, President of LGBT+ Society. Has held different committee/soc positions and would like to share knowledge

OP – has been on Socs Exec for last year. Is Book Club President and involved in lots of societies. Loves meeting people and the characters involved in socs/student opportunities

RB – is involved in Concert Band and Chorus committees. Has experience of socs social media and finances, particularly has an understanding of Arts & Culture fund. Strong interest in running socs

JF – has been on Socs Exec for last year+, looks after Community and Widening Access societies. President of Neurodiverse SA, Treasurer of English Soc. Approachable, very present

Societies are invited to vote online – socs team to follow up with results

**Mentimeter**

Members respond to questions on Mentimeter:

*When in the year is the best time to put stuff on for you?*

*What do you struggle to find on the website?*

*Comments about this year*

*What have you thought of my [JK’s] leadership in the past 2 years?*

**Speak to your Intersoc Reps**

Members have opportunity to chat to their point of contact on [Societies Exec](https://www.strathunion.com/groups/societies-exec/) to ask questions or to raise any issues or concerns including non-emergency welfare concerns

Attendees are invited to stay after this for food and later the Battle of the Societies quiz