Societies General Meeting 3

Thursday 3rd February 2020, 5pm

Minutes

Chair: Ru Wallace, Vice President Community (RW)

Clerk: Jenny Thomson (JT)

1. **Charity Month**
2. **Sustainability Month**
3. **STAR Awards**
4. **Alumni Fund Spring Application Process is now OPEN**
5. **Finances/Active & Engaged**
6. **Society Emails**
7. **Re:Store**
8. **Societies Membership Proposal**

CM1 raises concerns about the continuous element of the membership. RW assures that the Union will have clear communication with Alumni members about this.

CM2 raises concerns about-

* Costs for Associate Members having to buy a Union membership, plus membership for any society they wish to join. RW notes that Societies will continue to have control over the prices they charge for their memberships and the Union membership will not be expensive.
* Costs for disclosure checks. RW says that grant requests will be available for those people who need a disclosure check and who are needed by the Society, such as a conductor for the orchestra. If any student has alternative ideas, they will happily be considered.
* Students from other Universities who were part of the society while attending their University, but once graduating could not become associate members of the union and could, therefore, not continue to attend the society. RW notes that this has never technically been a possibility within the current policy, but it is something they will look into.

CM3 raises concerns about music societies that need certain numbers and asks if an exception could be made for some societies.

Benn Rapson (BR), Union President, reminds the meeting that this policy is not a societies policy, it is union wide. BR notes that concerns around disclosure checks will be addressed and that the aim of this change in policy is to include groups who previously have not had connections with the Union, such as the Centre for Lifelong Learning and University Staff, as well as increase transparency.

CM4 asks what exactly the purpose of this new policy is. RW explains it is aiming to address concerns raised by societies around safety as well as generally providing clarity that was previously lacking, and the policy is not about increasing the Union’s revenue. CM4 then asks why associate members are having to pay to ensure safety, as surely there are other ways to do this. RW notes that they are paying for the facilities they get to use by being a member of the Union.

CM5 raises concerns about plans for visiting students under schemes such as SICSA exchange scheme (short-term visiting students- from a few days to a few months- from other universities who come to work and study at our university for a period of time but are not enrolled as students) as the current proposal has that they must be based in the UK as they have to prove they are students (therefore they have *‘.ac.uk’* emails). RW says they will look into how to verify student status for students at non-UK institutions. CM5 also agrees with concerns raised previously about non-Strathclyde students.

CM6 asks- in relation to safety concerns and disclosure checks- about the Union’s disciplinary procedure and says that surely societies should be going to the authorities once it gets to a certain level of severity of behaviour. BR notes that the Code of Conduct only applies to students or others directly connected to the Union *[post-meeting addition: JT notes that a how-to guide for societies is currently being worked on as to how societies deal with inappropriate behaviour, it is currently with Lisa (Student Engagement) and Holly (Advice Hub) for approval]*.

BR notes that the new proposal aims to make it easier for non-Strathclyde students to sign-up so that they do not have to be signed-in by a Strathclyde student. BR stresses that these issues are best raised at Student Parliament or at the Union AGM next week as it is not only societies that are affected.

BR further notes that those who do get a membership will hopefully have more enhanced possibilities including room bookings for private events at discounted prices.

CM7 asks for the justification for making associate members undertake a disclosure check, but not society committees, or Strathclyde students and asks if associate members are a significantly greater risk. CM7 also asks about the timeline provided by RW in an email sent to societies who provided feedback on the proposal previously where it said they had hoped to bring this proposal before Student Parliament by mid-February. Both BR and RW say that this was perhaps a little optimistic, but they do hope before the end of the semester so that the new incoming exec are not still dealing with this issue.

CM8 asks that for January intake students, who get full year memberships, why do these only last until August. RW says that the society memberships tend to work in semesters, but this is a point he will consider.

CM9 raises concern about access being denied after 6pm in the Livingstone Tower affecting the Language Café. RW notes there have been some issues with University security regarding society access in the evenings and this is something he hopes to sort out, and he plans on trying to arrange a meeting with security sometime soon. CM5 notes this is also an issue in the Graham Hills building. CM9 continues that they also have issues accessing the Union after 6pm due to the requirement of a COVID-19 vaccine passport. BR notes that it is a COVID-19 vaccine passport or a negative lateral flow test or a natural immunity certificate. The Union did not want to implement the COVID-19 passports until the lateral flow test option was available so as not to exclude students who cannot get their vaccine status on the NHS Scotland app.

CM2 raises another concern about students being able to opt-out of Union membership, but can join societies, yet they cannot be on a society committee. BR explains this is due to legal requirements that they cannot leave any student out of Union services but the University does not fund their place if they opt-out. BR notes that students opting-out is very rare, and he is unaware of any student doing so in the whole year he has been President. CM2 asks how societies are meant to know if a student has opted-out and therefore cannot run for committee. BR says he will look into this.

1. **Societies Exec**

Socs Exec reaffirm that they do not accept retrospective grant requests except in exceptional circumstances.

CM10 asks if they need to submit that they are doing an event for Charity Month. RW answers yes, if they use the nomination form on the Charity Month webpage *[*[*https://www.strathunion.com/societies/charitymonth/*](https://www.strathunion.com/societies/charitymonth/)*]*, then they will be considered for the Charity Month prizes.

CM11 asks what the policy for food in the union is, and whether societies can have food brought in. JT notes that the Union will provide catering in most circumstances and outside food (with the exclusion of snacks) should not be brought in, unless the food the society is look for is something the Union cannot provide. Food requests for societies should be raised with Lisa Brennan and included in any risk assessment. CM5 asks about university rooms hosting society events. JT notes that the University currently has a strict no food or drink (other than water) policy in its rooms. CM5 then asks if more Union space will become available for societies. BR notes that the Learning and Teaching building while only partly in-control of the Union is meant to be more of a student building, especially in the evenings. They are currently working on allowing students to use spaces on Level 8, where staff offices are, and generally across the building more spaces to be open for use by students in the evening.

CM12 asks about air conditioning in the Royal College Gym and whether this could be fixed.

CM13 asks if the Mature Students Association space in the Livingstone Tower can be open in the evenings again. BR says that there should be a solution to this issue soon but cannot confirm the details yet. This will also assist in the issue raised earlier by CM9 about the Language Café.

1. **AOCB**

CM2 raises issue with room bookings being cancelled last minute. JT notes that often last-minute cancelations are by the University, which the Union cannot control. CM2 says that they were removed for another society. JT notes that this is usually done with both societies consent where there has been a double booking or a mistake has been made, which is rare. JT will raise this with Tally Kerr. CM5 adds this was an issue, particularly during COP26/COY16. RW notes that there will be a consultation into students experience of the conference in November soon.

CM12 asks about pole fitness and their proposal to have a space in the Graham Hills to allow them to use their proper equipment. BR notes that societies that think they could use specific space, like pole fitness, can submit proposals and should hopefully be able to get such spaces soon as the University is moving many services into the new TL building, leaving a lot of space free in other buildings.

CM12 adds they would be interested in taking part in any future discussions about issues relating to security and society events.

Meeting closes: 6.30pm

Next meeting: AGM, Wednesday 16th March 2022, 5pm