**Student Council**

**10 November 2022**

**Present**

Ruth Day – Chair of Student Council  
Adam Michael – Union Affairs Officer  
Saranya Thambirajah – Equality, Liberation and Access Officer   
Lucy Matthews – Sport and Student Development Officer  
Nicole Antoine – Undergraduate Education Officer  
Izzy Russell – Student Living Officer  
Hassan Al-Nabulsi – International Students’ Officer

There were 175 members in attendance. The meeting was quorate.

1. **Welcome and Introduction**
2. **RD**: gives introduction, including an introduction to the process of Student Council, updates from officers, motion and minute ratification, list of submitted motions (4 motions) and AOB.
3. Explained to audience what motions are. Students submit motions, if these are passed they become policy for the next 3 years.
4. **Officer Updates –** Officers updated attendees with what they’ve been working on   
     
   **Adam Michael – Union Affairs:**
5. Held a Public Forum on October 18th – solution-based informal town hall style meeting for FTOs to be transparent and for students to learn more about what the SU does for them.
6. Working closely with the International Students’ Network and the Iranian society to support students who are affected by the crisis in Iran.
7. Involved in Welcome Week, increasing the SUs presence in students’ lives.
8. Active in TB1 elections, encouraging students to stand for roles and vote.
9. Working on Islamophobia Awareness Month in November alongside iSoc.

*Chair opens the floor for questions.*

**Question:** why not make more widespread that these forums are happening? Why not contact course reps?  
  
**AM**: I should have looked deeper into how to communicate with students rather than social media. I will be doing that for future forums.

*No further questions for Adam.*

**Izzy Russell – Student Living Officer:**

1. Cost of living, secured funding for free sustainable period products in bathrooms around campus. Cheaper food options and working on a pantry coming soon.
2. Working with student groups and activists on sustainability month in February.
3. Launching My Rent My Rights campaign on 21st November, ensuring students are supported and know their rights.
4. Met with MPs and Councillors to work around university expansion, to see what they’re doing on that.

*No questions for Izzy.*

**Nicole Antoine – Undergraduate Education Officer:**

* 1. Developing student services, meeting with university stakeholders to embed student voice in the curriculum. Research and drop-in sessions coming soon to feedback to the university.
  2. Decolonization of the curriculum, potentially making a magazine about this work.
  3. Increasing visibility and the SUs visibility of what we as officers can do to support students. Having a conversation with departments and faculties about the purpose of SU, developing transparent of student services and support.
  4. Making the university aware of the cost of living and how this affects studies.

*Chair opens the floor for questions.*

**Question 1:** For students that come from private education abroad, are there any programmes that help these students with languages?  
  
**NA:** There are language courses available for international students. The International Students’ Network is also a good support system for students. Currently working with the university on how we can support those coming back from year abroads and year in industry into integrating back into life at Bristol.

**Question 2:** Is there any information on how students will be supported by the strikes?

**NA:** Page on the website has just been updated and explains what we’re doing to support students during strikes.

**Question 3:** How are students going to know about the drop-in you’re running?

**NA:** It will be promoted on the Officer Instagram, there will be some emails and maybe some posters.

*No further questions for Nicole.*

**Hassan Al-Nabulsi – International Students Officer:**

1. Working on how information is delivered and received by international students and prepare them for services and facilities.
2. On the engagement side, doing lots of events to help international students to meet each other and make new relationships.
3. Focussing on international foundation program students.

*Chair opens the floor for questions.*

**Question 1:** A few international students can’t make graduation because of visa dates. Is any action being done to have a different date for those who can’t graduate or any thoughts put in for future graduations?  
  
**HA:** Changing the graduation date is a bit difficult but I will look into it.

**Question 2:** Are there any options for language courses? As an international student, I’m not aware of any but I think they should be made available.   
  
**AM:** Not sure about subject courses, in terms of what we can do to help, we work with the Global Lounge. We can bring concerns to them, as well as the societies. Societies may be a good place to get resources.

*No further questions for Hassan.*

**Lucy Matthews – Sport and Student Development Officer:**

1. Secured free buses to Coombe Dingle on Wednesdays. Feeding back to SEH and making changes where necessary. This will be reviewed at the end of TB1.
2. She Can They Can campaign – based on She Can campaign, wanted to make it more inclusive for everyone after receiving student feedback. This is about inspiring females and non-binary people to feel empowered to take up sport both on and off the pitch.
3. Working with Coombe Dingle about reusable cups and improving sustainability.
4. Held first club captains forum and created a WhatsApp chat for comms to update captains on this. Feedback from forum, SEH and SU on actions.
5. Reviewing AGMs and handovers, more specific sports training as well as making sure every club gets a good handover.
6. Currently reviewing code of conduct for sports clubs.

*Chair opens the floor for questions.*

**Question 1:** Have you considered making the women’s only gym hour free to introduce more women into sports?

**LM**: Takeover week has been granted, if that uptake is popular enough, SEH consider it and develop more options for women in the gym. Having conversations about making the upstairs section women only.   
  
**Question 2:** I’m currently living in East Village, main problem is coming from there to the university. Do you have any plans to add buses from East Village?  
**LM:** At the moment, it is just from campus as it’s in pilot. Will review at the end of the year and potentially add more stops. The uni bus itself should be running from the city centre.

**Question 3:** Is there anyone looking at extending the U1 to Coombe Dingle not on match days? A lot of people who play sports have to get 3 or the U1 and then walk from Stoke Bishop.

**LM:** That is up to the Council, which is why we have hired an external company. It’s on the radar, but a longer process to get through as we have to go to the council.

**Question 4:** Would there be any chance of a Voi stop added near Coombe Dingle?   
 **LM:** Last year’s Sport and Student Development Officer, Oba, did that. There is one at the top of Coombe Lane, it does get used but I don’t know much about it or whether Voi will extend it further.   
  
**Question 5:** Undergraduate students living in accommodation, will there be anything for them to have access to these bus passes?   
  
**LM:** Having conversations with university about this.   
  
**Question 6:** I only found out a couple days ago about the discounted membership on the gym. I didn’t see it before, are there any plans to advertise that a bit more?   
  
**LM:** In meetings with SEH about that. They introduced a sports pass this year which has reshuffled the accessibility and structure of sports. It’s something that I’m working on.   
 *No further questions for Lucy.*

**Saranya Thambirajah – Equality, Liberation and Access Officer:**

1. Working on Reclaim the Night campaign for the first time since 2019. Really excited to bring it back. March of the 24th of November at 6pm and a club night. One way to celebrate women and safety of people at night, linking this to work on SV and consent with the university.
2. Lots of meetings on various issues such as wellbeing, mental health, and cost of living. Resulting in things like free period products on campus.
3. Progressing to get arms off campus and working on the university on consultations about renaming university buildings.
4. Working on other campaigns for sexual health and wellbeing.

*Chair opens the floor for questions.*

**Question 1:** For sexual health and wellbeing, what support does the university currently provide for students?   
  
**ST:** At the SU we do as much harm reduction around sexual health as possible. Free sexual health campus testing on campus, something I’d like to bring back this year. Been having conversations with societies and LGBT Network and university stakeholders. Harm reduction around drugs, work with wellbeing service, counselling and inclusion team on that.   
  
*No further questions for Saranya.*

1. **Ratification of Previous Policy**
2. RD**:** Explanation of what ratification is, need to vote because not enough students at the last student council meeting. We now have enough people in the room (quorate) so the meeting can go ahead.

**Question:** What proportion does the vote have to pass by?  
  
RD: 50%  
  
**Question:** Where can I find details of the last meeting?

On the SU website in the Student Voice section.

*Meeting moves to a vote. Motions from last Council are ratified.*

1. **Motion debate**

**Motion 1: Continue to Support Bristol Student Housing Cooperative**

**Proposer**: Bristol Student Housing Coop has enjoyed fantastic solidarity from our SU over the past three years. This motion is to continue that. Actions are pretty straight forward, if anyone doesn’t know what a coop is, it’s a fully neutral society, in practice, it’s a group of people that democratically run an organization.  
  
 In a housing coop situation, that means no landlords. Everyone lives in a house together, set the rent together, that’s what we’re aiming for.

We don’t have a property but we’re actively trying to find one and raising funds for one. This is partly where this motion comes from, asking the SU to share their expertise and intelligence.

*No speech against. Chair asks if anybody has any questions.*

**Question 1:** Will this focus on housing for international students?

**Proposer**: International students are welcome and we’d love to have them involved.

**Question 2:** Will you buy the property or lease one? You frame the rent of the property?  
  
**Proposer**: There are a few models we can try. There are a few student housing coops that are already established in the UK. In Edinburgh, if they make a profit, they share it with the owner of the property. They set the rent at a zero sum, way below market value. Any money left goes into fixing the property or split the profits. In Bristol, you can raise a deposit and then mortgage as a group. Over the years, you basically pay off the mortgage. This house goes into the trust.

**Question 3:** If there’s a problem facing in the house, who should they go to?

**Proposer**: They would fix it themselves and anyone else who lives there. They cooperatively run it, they have all of the power. No more power structures, landlordism doesn’t exist anymore.

**Question 4:** What happens when students graduate? Do they keep it?  
  
**Proposer**: Members don’t raise the money, we go to rich people or people who have spare housing. Community share drive, we fundraise and collectively raise money. Somewhere in Nottingham have raised 300,000. They are selling to release equity to pass the house to other student coops. Members don’t put substantial money into the chat.

**Question 5:** What sort of contract binds the students? If one wants to move out, how would that work? Would they still have to pay the agreed sum of rent?   
  
**Proposer**: Up to the members to decide as a cooperative. We would never want to financially harm someone. Policy still needs to be derived, but they’d sign up for a rolling contract and everything would be done with their best interests in heart.

**Question 6:** This has been supported by Bristol SU for three years. How many properties have been done so far?   
  
**Proposer**: None! We’re very sad about it.

**Question 7:** What is the BSHC?

**Proposer**: Bristol Student Housing Coop was formed out of the fantastic work SLO, Rent Strike Coordination, a group of students won money from the university. They created this society, registered it with financial conduct agency.

We previously started negotiations with UoB and were offered a property. We commissioned a survey, but found that it was substandard and it wasn’t fit for human habitation. The university has since taken that hall back but they’ve taken it back because it was over-recruited and it’s still not fit for human habitation but they’re still charging students.  
  
Working on a campaign about that. This is why we need the SU’s solidarity and need to spread the message, students don’t have to live like this. We’re back to zero because of the uni, but we will find another property. Hoping to open our first property in September.   
  
**Question 8:** If we’re following similar trajectory to Glasgow or somewhere abroad, what could we see something happen within two years?

**Proposer**: An organization called the North American Students of Cooperation, they have hundreds of properties. The change that’s been achieved in the past few years has been exponential. Several have opened in the past five years. I can’t give proper numbers, but it’s promising. What we’ve seen from our friends in Switzerland, it’s becoming a normal way for students to live in what is an overpriced society.   
  
*Meeting moves to a vote.*

*Motion passes.*

**Motion 2: Earlier Timetable Release for Students***No proposer present for the motion.*

**Motion 3: Entrepreneurial Initiatives Support**

**Proposer**: I am a course rep and a lot of my peers have me they don’t have any support with this. It is hard to find a team and access funds. I would like Bristol SU to lobby the university for more support with this.

*No speech against.*

**Question 1:** How does it differ from the careers service existing, as well as the online courses that they offer, and those offered by the innovation and enterprise centre at the university, through modules or extracurricular?

**Proposer**: I would like it to be promoted better. Lots of people aren’t aware of this. A lot of projects that happen at the same time in different areas, postgrads, undergrads, nothing as formalized. Something more casual, society would be a great answer, but most of the time societies don’t have a sustainable framework. If the uni could do a different program, they could keep it going.

**Question 2:** What kind of support would you offer for pre-existing companies, things like internships?

**Proposer**: I’m not able to offer any support. But I would love to have a mentor, I would love to have big events, meet people who are passionate about the same thing and have knowledge and help to fill the gaps I’m experiencing.   
  
**Question 3:** I agree with everything on screen, but would there may be a way to amend it to include entrepreneurial societies that already exist? Is there a way to include them in this?

**Proposer**: That’s why I’m here today. I need all of this room to help achieve my vision. Opportunity to have this motion passed, happy to discuss more afterwards. Any help or ideas would be great.   
  
**Question 4:** International students can’t work as entrepreneurs, not motivated to work this type of project. So just wondered if you can think of solutions to include us in this project?

**Proposer**: Initial conversation for this motion, included that. That’s why this would be great. Visas expire, not only about money, learning from others and trying to develop. Will look into that.   
  
**Question 5:** I entered a new enterprise competition. We got all of the support, got the mentors, got workshops. Do you want to campaign to make people more aware that these resources are there, or to give out more resources? On the resources side, there are networking events, you have mentors through those programs.   
  
**Proposer**: Main goal to advertise this and to increase the power of the initiatives. To empower to students to do this. This would be the first step to lobby, it’s a bit different but it needs changing. My main goal is to increase awareness.   
  
*Meeting moves to a vote.*

*Motion passes.*

**Motion 2: Earlier Timetable Release for Students***Chair has now found someone to propose the motion.*

**Proposer**: International students have to plan 3-6 months in advance when travelling to and from the UK to complete their studies. It is crucial for timetables to be released earlier.  
  
*No speech against.  
  
Meeting moves to a vote.*

*Motion passes.*

**Motion 4: Proportionate Spending in affiliated Student Groups’ Sub-Groups**

**Proposer**: To clarify, an example of a subgroup is University Tennis Club has 7 sub-groups, beginners, etc.

There are currently no SU byelaws that relate to financial responsibilities of these sub-groups, in relation to the larger group. In some of these clubs, they only have one bank account. This means that, if some money has been paid into one sub group, it’s going into the same bank account for the whole group.

It is easy to unintentionally spend this money elsewhere. This becomes an issue, disproportionate spending of money.

*Chair asks if anyone would like to speak against this motion.*  
**Speech against:** The main problem with this motion is how poorly defined it is. When we vote on this, we voting purely on the wording of the motion and nothing more. We have no idea what a subgrouping is. I can think of 100 ways I can split my society into different groups, the spending and budgeting. Every single member could be a subgroup. This is a one size fits all solution which makes it wrong for this sort of plan, the sort of thing that should be sorted at an AGM or EGM in a society. Don’t mandate it for every different society, when this is not a great solution.   
  
**Question 1**: Lots of money raised by external tournaments. How would you go around this, if the coach brought in the money, and we’re paying money for the coach, is that proportionate for the members? Too financially inflexible for it to work.   
  
**Proposer**: This is only the last section. The full document clarifies the specific situation that I want to stop. It’s not a general thing, it’s a specific thing. This is about a specific membership fee of the group.

**Question 2:** What policy changes are you proposing specifically?

**Proposer**: I’ll clarify the top half of my motion. A committee must have the permission of its members to move the membership fees from one subgroup to another subgroup. You can’t do this without permission. It’s the same default, unless a committee ask a subgroup for their permission, they can’t move it.   
  
**Question 3:** Shouldn’t it come down to an AGM, rather than a byelaw?

**Proposer**: The best way to do it is to perhaps on the membership screen and you pay, there should be some sort of clause on the page saying that this is where the money will be spent.

**Question 4:** For societies that are almost entirely subgroups, medical society has 100 subgroups. Would you recommend that each group has its own individual bank account?  
  
**Proposer**: This is specific to subgroups with specific required memberships. Does each group have a required membership? Possibly having individual accounts so you can track it for each individual subgroup. The thing this motion is asking for is to confirm with the subgroup to move money from one subgroup to another.   
  
**Question 5:** Is there any way we can see the rest of the motion we’re referring to? That might help to clarify to people if that’s doable.   
  
*Chair opens up full motion.  
  
Chair opens up to another round of debate.*

**Speech for:** Each group has respective membership fees so that if you have a lower section of the club, unless you have permission from the lower section, you can’t take their membership fees to subsidize the top section essentially. There’s nothing else this motion specifically addresses, although may be other things.   
 **Speech against:** I do agree with part of this motion. Members of the clubs do put time into social teams. If you put money thing into that, you’d have to consider payments, etc. I agree with the point that it can become inaccessible lower down. It can get really inaccessible at the top end. Ridiculous asking them to pay, we want higher players to play for the uni. We don’t want to scare them away by asking them to pay more. It’s not just bookings, it’s coaches, etc. It’s important to specify between a sports group and another group.   
  
**Question 6:** I agree that this motion is a cultural issue within clubs. If it did pass, what are you suggesting for committees? You’ll need a treasurer for every subgroup, for BUCs teams? Does this need a dynamic change in committees?   
  
**Proposer**: One example could be that lots of sports clubs have captains for each section, i.e., performance, social. One potential way is to have the captain of a subgroup to be responsible for that subgroup and the financials of that. Large full groups have financial responsbilities in the byelaws.   
  
**Question 7:** As this requires a change in the byelaws, will the motion need 2/3 majority to pass?   
  
*Democratic Standards Committee confirms it will need to be a 2/3 majority.*

**Question 8:** This looks like it needs to be raised in the EGM or AGM, rather than an entire byelaw change?   
  
**Proposer**: I did this for my own EGM, but when this happened, the EGM was 40 members from the top and less amount from the bottom section.

**Question 9:** Is it worth asking the SU for an entire byelaw change?   
  
**Proposer**: I asked that, but they said there was no byelaw precedence. So I’m submitting a motion.   
  
**Question 10:** I have a question on action 2. This specifies changes to byelaw 9, but it doesn’t specify which byelaw and how they are going to change. Could you give more clarification on that?  
  
**Proposer**: I wasn’t sure the best way to stop this problem. It’s not necessarily one size fits all. I wanted to leave this open, particularly if others didn’t think it was the best way to solve this. The key issue is to decide whether it’s a good idea first, then the specifics can be decided and the full extent then.   
  
**Question 11:** If one of the subgroups, were accused of using all of their subgroup allocated budget and someone had to submit an expense claim, and the other subgroups vote against paying them back. This could impact the student. Do you have a suggestion on how you’d deal with that situation, or how it could effectively come around to that?   
  
**Proposer**: Something that would separate each account specifically. Not necessarily what my motion is about, more about the larger scale decisions. The committee can’t choose to subsidize the higher group without permission.   
  
When the committee meets at the beginning of the year about membership fees, they can’t plan to subsidize higher sections without permission from the lower section.

*Meeting moves to a vote.*

*The motion does not pass.*

1. **AOB:**
2. Izzy Russell: 24th November, protest and a club night for Reclaim. My Rent My Rights, two week campaign from 23rd Nov to 2nd December around renters rights.
3. Nicole Antoine: We have an Instagram. If you follow us, you can DM us with questions and we can get back to you faster.
4. Lucy Matthews: She Can They Can, including Bend It Like Beckham viewing tonight
5. Adam Michael: Islamophobia Awareness Month events coming up.