

Student Council Minutes - Thursday 6th November 2025

Agenda	Owner	Timing
Welcome	Chair - LA	5 min (17:05)
Intro to how student council works	Chair	10 min (17:15)
Approval of last Council's Minutes	Chair	5 min (17:20)
Full Time Officer Updates and Q&A	FTOs	10 min (17:30)
Motions		
Banning of AI, Stolen and Unethical Art at SU Poster Sales	Motion Proposer, Chair	25 min (17:55)
BREAK - 10 mins (18:05)		
Motions (cont'd)		
Updating our byelaws to align with current practice in relation to Associate Membership and provisions to support student groups through the transition	Motion Proposer, Chair	25 min (18:30)
Empowering Joint Honour Students at the University of Bristol	Motion Proposer, Chair	25 min (18:55)
Any other business	Chair	5 min (19:00)
END / PIZZA		

Welcome

- Intro from Louis Anscombe, the chair: Great to see such good attendance, and a great chance for everyone to express their opinions. FTOs will give updates and attendees can ask them questions
- Housekeeping/safety info.
- The Chair gave an overview of the student code of conduct for Council, to ensure mutual respect throughout the meeting.

- Quiet space available – AR2. Also talk to staff if you need anything.
- Microphone etiquette
- DSC – available for questions about procedures or format of the meeting. You can ask them at any time, by coming up to speak to them at the far end of the table.

Intro to how student council works

- Procedure: ideas board. Students submitted ideas to this, and DSC and SU staff advise on how best to make each change suggested. Sometimes this is to put forward a motion; DSC then check and edit the motion including risk assessment. The motion then comes to Student Council for debate and voting.
- Guillotine to the meeting: student feedback has been that previous meetings have been too long. We are suggesting: the meeting will end at 7:30 at the latest, at which point we automatically postpone all remaining motions to be discussed to the next meeting. We will vote on this idea now, any questions?
 - Q: are there any considerations for prioritisation of motions?
 - A: DSC decide the order of the motions based on the best running of the meeting.
 - Q: why ending 30 mins after the end? Why not at 7 as advertised?
 - A: this was a suggestion, but we can vote on ending at 7 if the room would like this.
- Vote: on whether to guillotine the meeting at 7pm.
 - Vote in favour of guillotine at 7pm.

Approval of minutes from previous Council

- Voting to approve the minutes from previous council. Pause for attendees to look at the minutes
 - There was initially an issue with the QR code to access the minutes of the previous meeting, so the vote to approve was postponed.
 - Q: Previous council was not a formal council meeting – how do we assess the minutes?
 - A: It was a Student Council Forum, so there were minutes from the ideas raised which are to be approved.
 - Another student raised that they were unable to access the QR code on their handout to view the agenda and motions. The chair offered to share a new code on the screen.

Full Time Officer Updates and Q&A

- Chair: questions for the officers will come after the officers have all updated.

Updates from Katie Poyner, Union Affairs Officer

- New student space in lower Hawthorns, SU Basement. Will be using data and demand for this space to push for further spaces. Also developing external space guide. Listing empty study spaces.
- Challenging the government's proposals to connect tuition to course quality, maintenance grants as well as International levy which will tax their fees.
- Raised these issues at All Party Parliamentary Group for Students yesterday. Raised issue of one-size-fits-all maintenance loans, and making sure Bristol students' voice is included in national work on this.
- Ideas board to improve engagement and transparency with democratic structures.
- Associate membership changes: aware and apologetic for the confusion and frustration this has caused, and want this motion to work towards cocreating a new structure for society representation, which allows student groups to be better represented.

Updates from Sharan Khemlani, Postgraduate Education Officer

- Representing postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students
- With Mia (Undergraduate Education Officer), has worked with Tansy (Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students) on 'Tea with the PVC' and 'You at the SU' events. Chance to engage with new and returning students, talking to candidates in the TB1 elections as well. Will do these again in TB2. Good space for feedback on the work of the SU and university.
- Building on the success of Welcome events for postgraduate students, and have run a second Postgraduate Pints event.
- Supported Trinbagonian Culture Day with the global lounge and Carib Society – raised money for Jamaican hurricane relief at this.
- Workshop on estate planning, bringing student voice into planning for spaces, making these attentive to student needs.
- Reimagining inclusive assessments in the time of AI, bringing student voice to these conversations.
- Working with careers on support for postgraduate students, to make sure their support is tailored to their needs.

Updates from Linlu Ye, Equality, Liberation and Access Officer

- Secured funding for Gender Expression Fund – applications are still open.

- Bringing awareness to consent, and planning for Sexual Health And Guidance (SHAG) week. Events and messaging on consent.
- Working with the university to review accessibility features on campus. Making accessibility info clearer and easier to find on SU website.
- Made agreement with the university to provide free period products at six locations on campus – this will be run long term. This is in addition to the SU community cabinet resources.

Updates from Mia Stevens, Undergraduate Education Officer

- Big priority is assessment feedback – next week launching feedback engagement fellows: 21 paid students who will work with their faculties around improving assessment feedback. Bringing student voice into this conversation.
- Improving transparency of marking and moderation processes. This will include video explaining how these processes work and how staff arrive at the marks they have given.
- Feeding student input into personal tutoring reform project. Ensuring it meets student needs.
- Participating in National Union of Students (NUS) lobbying campaign day, on separating Teaching Excellence Framework from tuition fees – as tying tuition fees to course quality creates a system of inequality.
- Writing to MPs to lobby against only giving maintenance grants to students doing specific courses – it narrows the options available to low-income students. Working with NUS and the university on this.

The chair put up the updated QR code for the motions under discussion today.

Updates from Ella Lovibond, Sport and Student Development Officer

- Derby day will be back for another year – biggest sporting event of the year, happening Wednesday 18th March 2026.
- Secured another 15k for injury support group. This involves running coffee mornings and sport psychology workshops for students with injuries.
- Men's mental health month – we have events for this.
- Ignite Inclusive Multi-Sport Festival
- Looking at options for replacing the crest on sports kits, as it still includes the Colston dolphin

Updates from Jessie Yeung, International Students Officer

- Inclusive teaching for international students, through workshops with Bristol Institute for Learning and Teaching (BILT) and through departments
- Working on opt-in voter registration system, to create awareness for international students regarding their voting rights

- International Student Week is next week – lots of events, global food fair, karaoke, volunteering.
- Working on English Additional Language support. Getting understanding of current services available.
- Working with the university on scholarships for current international students.
- Working on securing scholarships for Palestinian students in Gaza.

Updates from Lucy Pears, Student Living Officer (Lucy's updates were read by the chair as Lucy was unable to attend Student Council)

- The Climate Action Plan at the SU is outdated. Have appointed a new role to work on this and to make the SU more sustainable.
- After securing funding for students' Laundry costs last year, now working on how to distribute this – hoping to get this out in December. Also having meetings with University staff to talk about why laundry prices are different depending on the halls. Lobbying the University to bring down all laundry prices to the same cost.
- Working on improving access to cheaper food on campus

Questions for the officers

- o Q: FTOs are trustees, will you commit to respecting the vote on the byelaw motion and not overturn it
- o A: [Katie] we are 7 members of the 16 strong trustee board – so we can't speak for the whole board.
- o Q: you say you don't know how the board will vote, but how will you personally persuade the board to vote on this?
- o A: [Katie] this will be a good question for the debate on this motion. As an officer and trustee we have to maintain a careful balance between representing students versus safeguarding risks.
- o Q: how to challenge MPs when we come from different cities with different MPs
- o A: [Mia] the officers are working on a letter to challenge MPs which can be shared – get in touch!
- o Q: Hawthorns cafe cheap meals have disappeared – will this come back or has this moved?
- o A: [Katie] Officers are also outraged by this change. Usually the SU subsidises this, but we felt that this cheap food should be available in Senate House. Source has removed this to the Merchant Ventures building and stopped accepting money from the SU to subsidise this. We are looking at the SU creating our own catering, as lobbying efforts with Source have not been as successful as we'd like. The cheap soup option

has moved to Merchant Ventures building, but it is unfortunately more limited in scope

- Chair: last question, for time
 - Q: for Mia on Teaching Excellence Framework link to tuition fees– how do we fight against this?
 - A: 20 days until the budget is enshrined, to campaign. I'm not expecting us to be able to secure change on this in this time, but lobbying and making our voices heard is important. We are looking at lobbying local MPs, and writing to the Skills Minister Jaqui Smith. Getting support from university staff on this as well. Please email if you'd like to be involved in this work.
- QR code to approve minutes from previous council – people still getting access denied to this.
 - DSC decide to postpone to the next meeting

Motions

- Chair explains the debate process:
- Rows of seats at the front that are labelled For and Against.
- Motion proposer gives 3 minute speech, someone can volunteer to come up and give a 3 minute prepared speech against the motion. During these speeches people can come and line up to give for/against speeches. Proposer and Speaker Against stay at the front for clarifying questions – these questions should be about clarifying details of the motion, they should not debate the motion. We then move to floor debate: people can give 1 minute speeches for or against the motion. Only the same number of people can speak for or against.
- For each motion: we will vote whether to have an anonymous vote, and then if this passes, vote using the voting slip in the corresponding colour for that motion. A member of DSC and a volunteer from the room will oversee the vote count.
- The vote for the anonymous voting is to allow the room to decide on this. If the room decides against anonymous voting, voting on the motion will be carried out by raising voting cards.

Banning of AI, Stolen and Unethical Art at SU Poster Sales

- Proposer speech:
 - SU runs poster sales during freshers and throughout the year. The sales are most popular amongst freshers. The company, Pyramid Posters Ltd, who sells at these, often uses AI art. This is bad as it takes art without

consent from artists and puts it through an AI programme. This is stealing art, and is damaging to artists. This conflicts with the charitable aims of the SU. The company does not supply information on how artists are paid for their work, and suggests that they are not paid fairly for their work. It exploits freshers for money. It is also unethical and unsustainable, due to the pollution and use of resources by AI. Want to protect artists, by preventing AI taking away artists jobs. Want to support creative student societies. Want the SU to stop working with this poster company and reevaluate partnerships with other organisations that use AI art.

- Chair asks for speech against – no speech against
- Chair asks for questions
 - Q: what is being classed as unethical art – is it just regarding crediting of artists?
 - A: not being credited, artists not being paid, art being stolen. Also a company that generally doesn't state its policies or where it sources its artwork.
 - Q: the company says it has appropriate licences – is it possible to investigate these?
 - A: I tried to see what the licensing was, and there was nothing to say that they have the rights to this artwork
 - Q: (follow up) some companies don't publish their licencing arrangements
 - A: I understand this, but if the policy is unclear we can't see how artists are being credited/paid
 - Q: the motion states it will make SU guidelines available – what do these say?
 - A: this motion would be to create these guidelines. Don't want to set unrealistic expectations until work begins on this.
 - Q: when voting on this, are the actions part and parcel – can we vote on actions 1 and 3 and further investigate on 2.
 - A: (chair) the motion can be split into parts, if a member wants to come and discuss with DSC.
 - [student declines to do so]
- Vote on anonymous voting : vote against
- Vote on the motion: Vote in favour, motion passes.

Updating our byelaws to align with current practice in relation to Associate Membership and provisions to support student groups through the transition

- Both speakers will have 5 mins

- Proposer speech:
 - Motion proposed by full-time officer team. This motion does not debate the trustee decision to end associate membership. The motion is to update the byelaws to reflect the changes that have already been made. In 2024 there were serious sexual misconduct complaints against associate members. We launched an independent review of our code of conduct, particularly around sexual misconduct. We found that there was no process for bringing complaints against associate members. This meant that there was no safeguarding process for associate members. One of the recommendations from this independent review was to review the associate membership scheme. The decision was made by the trustees to remove the associate membership scheme to protect students from misconduct. Charitable purpose is regarding students only, not associate members. Insurance is only applicable to students. The decision was made to protect students, which is the purpose of the trustees. We recognise that not all associate members have engaged in misconduct, but the risk is too great in the system. The SU has met with the Open Letter writers, 30 different drop-ins for student groups and put in special measures to keep groups safe. We've launched a scheme to allow non-students to contribute to student groups in a secure and safeguarding compliant manner. We've created a scheme to train students to give coaching at groups. Looking at a reciprocal membership scheme with UWE.
- Speech against:
 - The SU purports to support democracy – the process of scrapping the scheme has proven this not true. Now they want to update the byelaws to reflect the change. Even if we vote against this motion, the board of trustees can overrule this. If they do so, this exposes how undemocratic the SU is. Some of the board is elected by students, but there was 30% turnout at the last elections. I urge you to vote against this motion to demonstrate that the student union is not as democratic as it claims to be.
- Chair calls for questions
 - Q: Can I make a speech for delaying the motion?
 - A: [chair]: you can come to speak to us at the front about this. [Student goes to discuss with DSC]
- Q: With regards to insurance, I was under the impression that the associate members had to buy membership – would there not be scope for including the additional cost of appropriate insurance in this cost?

- A: Katie: third party liability insurance – there's no option to add it. Insurance is just one part – yes there may be some mitigation regarding insurance, but this was only one part of the reasoning for ending associate membership.
- Q: could you repeat your name – speaker against? (Tim) I share the frustration on it being put in place without much input from student societies. However I also recognise the need for more safeguarding. If we don't pass this motion, what actions could we take to make sure safeguarding is protected?
- A: all students are bound by code of conduct, all associate members are bound by the same code of conduct. I don't see why they can't be bound by the same safeguarding measures that students are, though I don't have the expertise to discuss safeguarding in particular, but can discuss this with the SU.
- Q: as a small number of committees were consulted, and many of them were not in favour, how does the SU defend this as being representative?
- A: looking at stats – only 177 members were associate members, which is less than 1% of total society membership.
- Q: you spoke about the coach instructor scheme – how would this help with safeguarding?
- A: this scheme is a much more rigorous way of collecting data – the associate membership scheme was much less formal and there was no collection of data. This means they're accountable, and have insurance.
- Chair: allows further questions
- Q: I was part of the consultation after the open letter. Attended 2 meetings, and associate membership wasn't brought up during these – when did this become the focal point?
- A: Katie asked for clarification on when these were – these were in March and June
 - Katie spoke to this student: the consultations they attended were on the code of conduct review from the year before. This was on how to handle complaints and misconduct. This was the review that produced the recommendations which suggested that the associate membership scheme needed to be reviewed.
- Q: for many students here, I'm a 1st year course rep, to clarify the background on this decision – why was this decision made without consulting student groups?
- A: Ella – the email was sent in January to specific groups due to the sensitive nature of the topics related. This came on the back of the code of conduct review that happened the year prior.
- Q: to clarify – as it's a byelaw change will we need 66% of attendees vote to approve?
- A: [Chair]: Yes

- Q: why is this motion being brought now – there's still a lot of discourse on this issue, why is it being finalised now?
- A: Katie – it's important to change the byelaws to align with current practice – we've already ceased associate memberships. It made sense for this to come to the next student council. The motion talks about how to support student groups through this change.
- Quick speech against [the speaker originally suggested this was a speech for, but this was overturned by DSC]
 - The change to associate membership is a travesty – but the current motion is not on this. This process has eroded trust. The SU doesn't propose enough funding towards supporting student groups – the motion could go further.
 - DSC rules that this was a speech against the motion.
- Quick speech for:
 - What has already happened isn't ideal, but I appreciate that the SU has been trying to support societies. For example the introduction of the instructors scheme – although there have been issues with this such as covering costs, still the implementation of it has been beneficial. I found it useful for our society who had associate members who weren't instructors – would like to find a way to incorporate that in future.
- There has been a proposal to extend the meeting guillotine by 15 mins, which we will now vote on.
- Vote on extending the guillotine: vote in favour of extending the guillotine to 7:15.
- Speech for:
 - Removal of associate membership scheme will increase costs for societies – they need further support. Please vote to support this motion, but the support must go further.
- Speech against:
 - From the start this has been a charade – this decision was made without a mandate. In the review 85% of students wanted to keep associate membership. At every university that was looked at in the review, they all offered associate membership in line with the NUS. They're looking for retrospective democratic approval of a decision that has already been made. Vote against it.
- Chair: will allow for 3 more questions on this, as its an important topic
 - Q: as a queer person of colour, I have concerns to how the scheme will disproportionately impact identity societies – as members who have worked and grown in the society and are then cut off from accessing it. We feel that those societies will be policed more with regards to these changes.

- A: the decision to remove associate memberships wasn't intended to cut friendships or networks. We are developing toolkits to create alumni membership schemes, alumni just won't be part of your regular activity.
- Q: about reciprocal membership – is this available? If they're pursuing this, how does safeguarding factor into this?
- A: reciprocal membership – we are working on policies in both organisations (University of Bristol and University of West England) about mitigating safeguarding concerns. With reciprocal membership, the organisation that the student comes from would be able to investigate complaints against that student. Reciprocal membership aims to benefit students from both universities, but puts onus on the institutions to investigate misconduct relating to students from their institution.
- Q: curious as I'm a new rep and master's student – people are upset that the decision for removing associate membership was taken by trustees, not student council. Why is the decision coming to student council now, after the decision went to trustees – was it because it was felt students wouldn't support it?
- A: this motion is debating the byelaw changes and the further support provided by the SU, not on debating whether to keep associate membership. Trustees made the decision to cease the associate membership scheme as their responsibility is to protect students with regards to safeguarding.
- Closing statement, for:
 - I've been working on this for many months, and have been consulting students on the outcomes going forward. I agree that students weren't consulted before this decision was made, and that's why we want to change that going forward. We are trying to put these changes in place to support students' safety going forward. The coach instructor scheme would not restrict groups from accessing support from people who would make your groups safer. The funding for groups wouldn't be applied across the whole student body as groups have different needs with regards to safety, so the funding for this can be used for the groups that need it. We apologise for the lack of consultation on the original changes, and hope that this motion will provide support to student groups going forward.
- Closing statement against:
 - Want to register discontent regarding the speech for being marked as against by DSC. We weren't able to split the motion into parts, so we need to be able to speak for some parts and some against. The way the associate membership scheme was scrapped was undemocratic, and this motion is to get retrospective support for the change, and is embarrassing.

- Vote on whether to vote anonymously: vote goes against voting anonymously.
- Vote on the motion: 28 in favour, 74 against, 26 abstain. Motion does not pass.

Empowering Joint Honour Students at the University of Bristol

Speech for: How many of you have tried to be in two places at once – this is what it's like for joint honours students. The system does not offer sufficient support for these students. They can end up with different exams on consecutive days. This motion calls for access to better communication (etc) from both schools.

This is about fairness, inclusion, and the value of multidisciplinary learning.

No speaker against.

Questions:

Q: paleontology course is not joint honours, but teaching is split between different schools. Would you be willing to expand the motion to include students on such courses?

A: the motion aims to support any student who shares modules between multiple schools.

Vote on this motion: motion unanimously passed.

Any Other Business