

**University of St Andrews' Students' Association**  
**Joint meeting of the**  
**Student Support Forum and Student Representative Council**  
**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2008, Committee Room, 7:30pm**  
**Minutes**

**Present**

Andrew Keenan	Association President
James Shield	Director of Representation (DoR)
Stacy Lee	Director of Events and Services (DoES)
Phil Pass	SRC Accommodation Officer
Andrew MacKenzie	SRC Education Officer
Matthew Guest	Association Community Relations Officer; Acting Chair
Emma Foley	SRC Member for Private Accommodation
Christopher Dickie	SRC Member from First Year
Kyle Mitchell	SRC Member for Sub-Honours Academic Issues
Oscar Mitchell	SRC Member for Library and Learning Resource Users
Kathryn Garcin	SRC Member for Part Time Students
Hatty Sahlberg	SRC Member for Students with Disabilities
Kat Stevens	SRC Member for University Accommodation
Molly Uzzell	SRC Member for Women's Issues
Iain Gray	DRA Representative
Hari Kumar	John Burnet Hall Representative
Sam Fowles	SSC Member from First Year
Courtney Coleman	Director, Nightline
Linda Gray	Fife Constabulary
Jane Freer	Third year mature student
Lara Meischke	Academic Support Advisor/Discipline Officer
Jim Brown	DRA/FP Warden
CJ Smith	Proctor and Provost
James Walker	Chaplain
Rob Warren	Student Support Forum

**Apologies**

Philippa Dunn	Director of Student Development & Activities (DoSDA)
Tom Cahn	Association Chair
Beverly Macklin	SRC Member for Mature Students
Benjamin Bridgman	SRC Member for Sexualities and Gender
Laura Wilkes	SRC Member for the Faculty of Arts
Christina Potter	
Isabel Clifford	
Chris Lusk	
Elsa Ritchie	

**Absent**

Sarah McCusker	Association Sustainability Officer
Lukas Ross	SRC Member for Ethnic Minorities
Martin Schmierer	SRC Member Without Portfolio
Libby Parker	SRC Member for Widening Access
Bradshaw Hawkins	SRC Member for International Students
Sarah Lloyd-Thomas	Arts/Divinity Senate Representative
Mel Nethercott	SRC Member for Honours Academic Issues
Ed Walsingham	Science/Medical Honours Representative
Daniel Fisher	SRC Member for Science Faculty
Marcus Mayo	SRC Member for Divinity Faculty
Marc Locherty	SRC Member for Medicine Faculty
Scott Platton	SRC Member for Men's Issues
Terry Fulton	SRC Member for Postgraduate Accommodation

# Student Support Forum

## 1.0 Introduction

The Student Support Forum has previously met as a separate group; the joint meetings with the SRC hope to shorten lines of communication between students and university bodies. Part of the meeting might be put aside to discuss the format of future joint meetings; this evening topics will be approached according to SRC committees.

## 2.0 Education

### 2.1

The Education Officer said that the library is currently a big issue, specifically the lack of consultation over abolishing the Short Loan booking system. Whilst the change may have been unavoidable, it was unfair to students returning after the summer and expecting a service they had always been able to rely on. The Proctor and Provost said that the library is doing everything possible to smooth the transition, and that he has asked for statistics to be kept on borrowed books so that more can be ordered to match demand. However, he agreed that there should have been more consultation.

The Proctor said that a meeting is being held to discuss the library plans; all departments have been asked to send one SSCC representative, and members of SRC can also attend if they wish. The small group is necessary for an in depth discussion of the plans, although the SSC Member from First Year said that in future more notice should be given so that SSCC reps had time to consult the students they were representing.

## 3.0 Accommodation

### 3.1

The President asked what the current situation was with residence lock outs. Residence managers have organised a new scheme consistent across all residences: the first let-in is free, subsequent let-ins are charged at £15.

The Discipline Officer said that although there were different staff needs across the different residences, there had been demand for consistency. The amount chosen was thought high enough to be a deterrent, but not so high as to be unreasonable. Charging students for let-ins, which are not considered part of a member of staff's usual remit, does work, as there was a drop in lock-outs when the £30 charge was in place (even though at certain times of the day students could be let in for free). Students would also be expected to pay for a locksmith if they were to lose their keys to private accommodation.

She stressed that the let-in charge was not a penalty, but was to cover staff time. Some students however felt the charge was out of proportion, as it is an easy mistake to make, and that if the money raised from the charge was going to fund (as yet undecided) student activities, the argument over reimbursing staff time was a moot point.

The Accommodation Officer said it would be good to see figures from previous years to see how they compare under different systems. He mentioned that the design of, for example, DRA, encouraged students new to the residence to forget their keys, as they are told to insert their keycard for electricity. He was told that students can indeed use any other card, but this is not advertised as the point of the system is to reduce the amount of energy wasted. Students can also 'double-dip' their cards so that their rooms do not lock behind them.

The Accommodation Officer said that some senior students were not happy about the standardisation, as for example in Mackintosh it replaced a more lenient system. However, the Discipline Officer said that Mackintosh continued to have lock outs throughout the year under this policy; by contrast, St Regulus charged from the first lock out and there were no lock outs past November. The John Burnet Hall Representative said that his hall had functioned fine under their more lenient system, as a member of staff only has to walk up a flight of stairs to let people back in. He said that neither the wardens nor the residence manager were happy with the new system. The Discipline Officer said that the feedback from senior students had been in favour of standardisation, but that the wardens team should be asked to pass on opinions for when the policy comes under review. Senior Students would in general like a clearer idea of their responsibilities; the Proctor has been working with the sabbaticals on this.

### 3.2

The Accommodation Officer said that one of the main issues his committee had been

working on was the accommodation problem related to the over-admittance in the summer. The Proctor said that as far as he knew those who had applied before the deadline were offered accommodation, and the problems lay with those who had returned applications late and with postgraduates, who often enter the process at a later stage. Postgraduates can often sit on a conditional status for a long time, and the Proctor is going to discuss this with the DoR.

There is also going to be a tougher round for admittance of home students. As soon as the university's exposure is understood (around May) the university will be in contact with various groups, including the Students' Association (SA), regarding whether exposure is above or below average. A meeting will be held in advance to determine what problems might be thrown up by more or fewer students than on average. Some problems regarding this year's intake will naturally stay in the system for three or four years. The Proctor feels Accommodation Services handled the situation well, but it should of course be avoided in future years.

**3.3** The Accommodation committee has also been working on issues related to the redevelopment of Fife Park. The Proctor said that we will lose Fife Park completely if we do not do anything about it, as it is outside Fife Council's HMO requirements. The Proctor has been working through the planning of the new building so as not to replicate the faults of DRA, and a website will be developed to keep students updated. The project is in a difficult phase at the moment, especially with the other building work going on around the university.

Pricing figures have not been received yet, but the university is as anxious to get them as the SA and the firm knows this. The Member for Women's Issues asked about consultation, especially regarding the 53 objections made to the plans put up over the summer. The Proctor said that relevant objections were worked with as far as possible, but issues of affordability were not part of this planning process.

**3.4** Discussion then moved into the area of equal opportunities and widening access. The cost of accommodation was felt to be related to the fact that many St Andrews students come from a narrow background. The Proctor said that the university is not told what proportion of state to private school students it should have, and that some of the reasons for a high proportion of private school students were inherent in the university's portfolio, the high cost of living and the university not offering many of the subjects which teachers push their students towards. Education needs to be seen as a global issue. The Education Officer however said that there are targets which are consistently missed by the university, and that the "60-40" statistic seems to be pretty static. The proctor said that the university has widened access through the evening general degree (which opens university study to a section of the population the university did nothing for ten years ago), Sutton Trust summer schools, bursaries and fundraising for scholarships, such as the Wardlaw scholarship.

When asked if the university had any plans to go down the Edinburgh route of publically acknowledging that different backgrounds meant the same grades should be considered differently, the Proctor said that Bristol had publically said it would favour students from a state school background. This did not change anything and was extremely unpopular with current students. It is hard to get information about state school applicants who are accepted to the university but turn the place down, as this could be for many reasons unrelated to the high cost of living. The university is in fact sitting on 10-11 applicants per place and the problems of this summer shows that acceptance rates are as high as they have ever been.

The SSC Member from First Year suggested more publicity, as the university does not seem to have a strong presence in many state schools. It seems bizarre that the university will make presentations at schools in the USA but not come to many areas of the UK. The proctor said it was a difficult issue as the cost of increasing publicity would mean that money had to be taken from some other area.

The Accommodation Officer asked if there had been a higher demand on hardship funds. Student Support said there is always a rush at the start of the academic year due to grants and loans not coming through, but this is normally solved through short term loans

and it is too early to tell what overall impact there has been.

**3.5** The Accommodation Officer asked if he could get the police contact details for New Hall's senior student after recent vandalism in the hall; the Discipline Officer said notices had been put up and that the wardens team relies on reports - please get in touch if you see something going on.

**4.0** **Community Relations**

**4.1** The liaison officer from Fife Constabulary said that one issue the community is concerned about is cycling. Cyclists seem to have a poor grasp of road skills and a lack of respect for other road users and pedestrians, and there are ongoing problems with abandoned bikes. Police projects are usually based around education followed by enforcement, and because of the number of complaints extra funding has been given to attend to the problem. This is normally spent on a greater police presence.

The Education Officer asked if there was a discount scheme for bike lights; there is a deal with Spokes but the uptake has not been great and does not seem to have made a difference with returning students. It was suggested that Spokes be invited to the societies fair, but one student said that their selection of lights was limited and that LED lights were smaller, better and lasted longer. Unfortunately they are also more expensive, so it was suggested the SA could help finance a bulk order of lights. It was also suggested that a couple of weeks of strong police presence might help bring the issues to the front of people's minds.

The DoES suggested tagging all bikes as a sort of warning system, informing cyclists about cycling and bike requirements. The liaison officer said this was a good idea but might highlight abandoned bikes.

Two or three years ago a local cycling group held drop in sessions on a Saturday morning offering free bike maintenance; if something like this was started up it could be used to disseminate safety information.

The police liaison officer can be contacted at [linda.gray@fife.pnn.police.uk](mailto:linda.gray@fife.pnn.police.uk), but as the post will move to someone else in six weeks' time, at that point people should use [police-liaison@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:police-liaison@st-andrews.ac.uk).

# Student Representative Council

- 1.0 Adoption of Agenda**
    - Agenda adopted
  
  - 2.0 Chair's Business**
    - 2.1** Apologies for Absence
      - As above
    - 2.2** Minutes of Previous Meeting
      - Accepted
    - 2.3** Matters Arising
      - None
  
  - 3.0 Presidential Business**
    - 3.1** *President*
      - 3.1.1** The Sabbaticals met Louise Richardson, the university's new principal from January 2009, and she was very impressed at the amount and range of services and activities organised by the SA.
      - 3.1.2** Dominic Enshaw is tomorrow having a tour of the SA building. They hope to impress on him the importance of the SA in the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary fundraising efforts over Younger Hall or the Athletics Union.
      - 3.1.3** The President is writing a list of improvements to be made to the building to aid disabled students.
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- 4.0 Representation Business**
  - 4.1** *Director of Representation*
    - None
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- 5.0 Services Business**
  - 5.1** *Director of Events and Services*
    - 5.1.1** The Starfields festival over the weekend was fun despite the problems with wind. The Ents Crew did a great job evacuating the tent and moving everything to the SA.
    - 5.1.2** Upcoming: Halloween events this Friday.
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- 6.0 Activities Business**
  - 6.1** *Director of Student Development and Activities*
    - Absent
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- 7.0 Officers' Business**
  - 7.1** *Accommodation Officer*
    - 7.1.1** Nothing to add to the above discussion.
  - 7.2** *Education Officer*
    - 7.2.1** Motion regarding the short loan booking system
  
  - 7.2.2** After explanation the motion was passed unanimously.  
The SRC meeting with Jon Purcell on Thursday has had to be cancelled and will be rescheduled for after reading week.
  - 7.3** *Equal Opportunities and Welfare Officer*
    - 7.3.1** The position is now vacant as the officer has stepped down. Please spread the word and get in touch if you or someone you know would like to be co-opted.
  - 7.4** *Association Community Relations Officer*
    - 7.4.1** The Community Beach Clean is taking place on West Sands from 10.30am this Sunday.
  - 7.5** *Association Sustainability Officer*
    - Absent
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- 8.0 Sabbatical Question Time**
  - 8.1** What about the carve-up positions held by the Equal Opportunities and Welfare Officer?  
These will be reassigned at a future date.
  - 8.2** It was noted by the acting Chair that it would be beneficial to develop a structure for the SSF; there is only one per semester so there should be plenty of time for this. The

Member for Women's Issues said she had wanted to raise an issue regarding the Mansfield (the changing of rules over the summer without prior notice), but this did not seem to fit in. The president said there have been problems mainly with the mess sometimes left in the kitchen; it is important that we keep the building open for society use as the SA does not have a suitable space to be used instead.

**9.0 Officers' Question Time**

None

**10.0 Notices**

**10.1** Next Meeting of the SRC:

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> November, 7:30pm, Committee Room.

**10.2** Next Meetings of Sub-Committees:

Accommodation: Tuesday, 1pm, Committee Room

Education: Monday, 1pm, Committee Room

Equal Opportunities and Welfare: no meeting this week

Community Relations: Monday 17<sup>th</sup> November, 3pm, Committee Room

Sustainability: Monday, 4pm

**11.0 AOCB**

**11.1** Tell people about the rector election on Friday. It was clarified that only one poster is allowed in the SA building itself; flyering is allowed but will be cleared up by staff.

**12.0 Close of Meeting**