

**MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 17TH MARCH 2016 AT 6.30 p.m.
IN THE WILLIAMS ROOM, JOHN MCINTYRE BUILDING**

Present: as per sederunt

Apologies: I French, D Guthrie, R O'Fee, O Schafer, H Curley, M Hau, C Hill, F Greig

Attending: B Hay, A Bankier

1. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

A Pancheva asked about her questions regarding reports and blogs on the website. L King responded that he aims to do a similar report to campus e-news on the Tuesday following council meetings.

E Napier asked that this be compatible with mobile phones as this is a problem with campus e-news.

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

2. Council Reports

2.1 Liam King – President

2.1.1 - L King updated council that the HE Governance Bill had been passed and commented that he believed this to be a massive disenfranchisement of students as they are no longer at the heart of governance system. He added that he would update on this further at the next meeting which would take place after University Court which could provide further information.

2.2 Una Marie Darragh – VP Student Support

2.2.1 - Letter to Margaret Burgess MSP Re: Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Bill.

U Darragh highlighted the letter she had sent to Margaret Burgess MSP and informed council that she would update Council when she had further information.

2.3 Ameer Ibrahim – VP Student Activities

2.3.1 – Volunteering, Clubs and Societies awards (VCS Awards)

A Ibrahim informed council that the VCS awards would take place on Thursday 24th March and asked council members to get involved.

2.4 Gemma Gratton – VP Education

2.4.1 Pop up study spaces

G Gratton informed council that two lecture theatres were booked some time ago which would be available as study space for the entire five week exam period. CTT have also checked the system to find out other free rooms available. G Gratton added that it was also planned that there would be smaller bookable group study rooms available. This should be arranged by the following week.

M Sefton offered QMU committee rooms for popup study spaces, G Gratton accepted the offer and thanked M Sefton.

Q F O'donnell – asked if the Library had confirmed if they would help to publicise the pop up study spaces. G Gratton responded that they had.

A Pancheva – asked if it would be possible for the Library to open 24/7 over the exam period. G Gratton responded that it would not be for the forthcoming exam period but that it might be something that could be looked at going forward. L King added that the Library would open 24/7 if there was demand but that their research suggested the demand was not there.

2.5 Other Council Reports Submitted

Lauren McDougall – Disability Equality Officer
Alex Pancheva – School Rep – Computing Science
Imran Hafeez – School Rep - Engineering
Scott Dallas – School Rep – Maths and Statistics
Louisa Kuehme – School Rep - Psychology
Fateme Nokhbatolfoghahai – General Representative

F Nokhbatolfoghahai updated Council that there was now a temporary reflective space in the library on level 8. She added that the Library are hoping to consult with students regarding the possibility of opening the level 9 space. F Nokhbatolfoghahai informed council that she had also been in discussions with QMU and was hoping to arrange for the TV room to be turned into a quiet space.

L King thanked F Nokhbatolofoghahai for working hard and making progress with the library.

Jenny Benson – General Representative - correction
R O'Fee – First Year Representative
Mhairi Harris – Charities Clubs and Societies Officer

M Harris highlighted her upcoming fundraising effort for Unicef's Fast24. She added that all the information was circulated to them in a recent email. M Harris asked council for a show of hands from council who would be interested in taking part and added that she would create a poll to determine a date that would be suitable.

MH will
create a poll
for fast24

Bakesale – M Harris asked Council members to get involved, informing them to get intouch through the facebook page.

E Napier – Age Equality Officer

E Napier updated council on a question from the previous meeting confirming that he had now received written confirmation from the Library that they allow parents to come in with their children.

Tuuli Lohmus – School Rep – Physics and Astronomy

B Rooney – PG Convenor - MVLS
K Muat – First Year Representative
D Guthrie – General Representative
H Kay – School Rep – Geographical and Earth Sciences

U Darragh thanked Hannah for taking peer support to her meeting with head of SLTC Gordon Curry, and added that she would be interested to see how it would develop.

E Ross – School Rep – Modern Languages and Culture
K Powell – Undergraduate Convenor - Arts

3. Motion to council regarding Glasgow Student Village Ltd.

J Richardson Presented a motion to council asking that GUSRC:

- Recognise the severity of the accommodation situation as it now appears
- Oppose any future rent increases by demanding at least a freeze on prices for the next four academic years. As we have noted, rents have increased in some cases 95% in 13 years, far faster than incomes have risen. This squeezing of students and profiteering must stop.

- Discourage new students from staying in GSV accommodation in order to highlight the current situation, and draw greater attention to the actions of an organisation which puts profits before student welfare.
- Petition University Court to exercise its right to unwind its agreement with Sanctuary/GSV and retake control of university accommodation in order to better deliver affordable living arrangements for our students.

Following discussion it was agreed that the wording of point three be changed to:-

‘Discourage new students from staying in halls by presenting them with the severity of the GSV situation, and giving them alternatives to draw attention to the actions of an organisation that puts profits before student welfare.’

Council approved the motion (appendix).

4. Proposed New Council Officers

4.1 Home Student Officer

U Darragh updated council that it had been decided that while improving support to home students is important and must be taken forward, the creation of a new position on council would not be the best way to go at this time noting that any officer would only be elected in Autumn.

Instead it was suggested that engagement of home students would start at Freshers Week with helpers specifically dedicated to this task. A working group would also ensure that GUSRC would prioritise the needs of home students, and set out clear aims.

This issue could be revisited if the proposed plan is unsuccessful and the creation of a new officer post could be reconsidered.

Following discussion L King asked E Ross and U Darragh to meet and work out the shape of the proposed working group with reference to the discussion and report back to Council.

UD & ER to
meet to
discuss
working
group

4.2 - Religion belief and equality officer

U Darragh informed council that it had been decided that they did not want to create a new position. It had been decided that, as GUSRC have two representatives on the Religion Belief and Equality committee, that better promotion of the committees that individual GUSRC council members sit on to ensure that that students with an issue can get in touch with the relevant representative.

L King asked UDarragh E Ross and F Nokhbatolfoghahai to meet and work out what actions need to be taken to improve representation and report back to Council.

5. AOCB

S Dallas – informed council that he had met with head of admin of the Maths and Statistics and has arranged for students to be involved with the transition group.

U Darragh commented that at her Maths and Statistics PSR it had been clear that there had been very good engagement with S Dallas

L King thanked S Dallas for his engagement with the school.

6. Date of next meeting

L King informed council that he was trying to ensure F Coton could attend the next meeting and update council on the Learning and Teaching hub and consequently the date of the next meeting could be subject to change.

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Appendix – Approved motion

Fourteen years ago, the University sold six student residents to Sanctuary Housing (via a company created for the purpose known as Glasgow Student Village Ltd. [GSV]) in a multi-million-pound deal, whereby all future rents until 2035 would go directly to GSV. Since then, we have witnessed fourteen years of above-inflation rises in the rents students are being asked to pay.

In 2002/3, the year the University sold to GSV, a single standard room in Cairncross house cost under £56 a week. In 2016, it is almost £113 a week. This adds up to more than £2200 per year extra that students, or their parents are being asked to pay out. To put it another way, the price of accommodation at Glasgow University has more than doubled since the University sold up to GSV, and increased at two and a half times – on average – the national rate of wage inflation. Students are being asked to fork out more and more of their income for the privilege of living with their peers close to campus, while GSV rakes in the profits.

We have reached a crisis point.

In this time, the SRC has consistently attempted to work with university Residential Services, Sanctuary, and GSV to constructively raise the issue and deliver a better deal for students. As we near the midway point in the 32-year accommodation deal, we must conclude that there is little prospect of meaningful change being achieved in this manner.

This motion calls on the SRC to:

- Recognise the severity of the accommodation situation as it now appears.
- Oppose any further rent increases by demanding at least a freeze on prices for the next four academic years. As we have noted, rents have increased in some cases 95% in 13 years, far faster than incomes have risen. This squeezing of students and profiteering must stop.
- Discourage new students from staying in halls by presenting them with the severity of the GSV situation, and giving them alternatives to draw attention to the actions of an organisation that puts profits before student welfare.
- Petition University Court to exercise its right to unwind its agreement with Sanctuary/GSV and retake control of university accommodation in order to better deliver affordable living arrangements for our students.

Proposed by: James Richardson

Seconded by : Kate Powell