

## Minutes

Subject:	Union Council
Date:	Thursday 16 November
Paper:	UC 2171
Author:	Tony Moore
Purpose:	Record of decision making

## Key Points

Approved invitation for NUS President Shakira Martin to come to next meeting, Shakira will be talking about student finance and student poverty

The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) was unable to attend current meeting

Approved new Student Opportunities Groups: **SciComm Society, Consulting Society,** and **Coeliac and Gluten Free Society**

We had a low turn-out, 47, so Council cancelled Open Discussion session

Proposer withdrew the People and Planet motion on **disinvestment from fossil fuels** as after a five year campaign UEA has just agreed to disinvest

Policies passed:

2165 – **Cheap as Chips** mandates the Union to provide basic hot food or hot drink for £1

2166 – Changes to the **Staff Protocol**, the part of the Union rule book that governs the relationship between Union staff, Union staff, and Union members

2167 – Wide range of approaches to improving the **bus service to campus** including asking **other operators** to consider running services and **legal compensation for bad service** by **First Bus** (Council deleted a demand that bus engines should be turned off outside student accommodation and deleted a belief that some First staff are rude to students and there is no effective complaints procedure)

2168 – Lobbying the University to ensure there is **equality of access for all students** including wheelchairs users and other students with disabilities to all facilities but particularly the **Library** and the **Arts Hub**

**Union of UEA Students Purpose:**

“To enrich the life of every UEA student”

**Minutes of Union Council**

16 November 2017

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**Voting Members present:**

Mohaned Alhasan (International Students Officer (Non-EU)), Jack Annand (Business Society), Amy Atkinson (Women+ Officer), Lucy Auger (Non-Portfolio Officer), Chris Ball (Non-Portfolio Officer), Jack Bear (American Football Club), Connor Alex Bell (Think Tank Society), Heather Bingham (Conservation and Wildlife Society), Daniel Box (LDC YR3 UG), Thai Braddick (Momentum Society), Emilia Bugg (Umbrella Liberations Society), Sophie Bunce (Concrete), Tom Cascarini (Glee Showchoir Society), Maddie Colledge (Postgraduate Education Officer), Amelia Court (Publishing), Emily Cutler (Students with Disabilities Officer), Liam Deary (LGBT+ Officer (Trans & Non-Binary)), Chloé D'Hondt (Philosophy Society), Felipe Dissehna (Networking Society), Ruth Flaherty (PG Assembly), Katherine Frost (Headlights Comedy Society), Jake Goddard (Nightline Society), Jessica Gossett (Physio Society), Ollie Gray (Surf Club), Eliza Gurner (Tap Club), Oliver Hawksley (Bad Film Society), Andrea Hejdánková (Triathlon Club), Luke Hewerdine (Fencing), James Houghton (Rock Climbing Club), Thomas Howard (Magic Society), Orla Knox-Macaulay (Amnesty Society), Camille Koosyial (Activities & Opportunities Officer), Oliver Kuhl (Taekwondo Club), Mary Leishman (Undergraduate Education Officer), Veronica Leung (International Assembly), Lidia-Veronica (Lucaciu Korean Society), Connie Man (Pharmacy Society), Lewis Martin (Mature Students Officer), Lauren Moreton (PG Assembly), Abbie Mulcairn (Leeway Society), Matthew Mulligan (ENV SOC), Hannah Murgatroyd (Disabilities Liberation Soc (Physical Illness)), Rikke Nagell Kleven (Swimming Club), Charlie Norman (PSY Other YR UG), Finn Northrop (Non-Portfolio Officer), Ben Plummer (Table Tennis Club), Tamanna Rahman (Women+ Liberation Association (BME)), Peter Read (Consulting Society), Ellie Reeves (LGBT+ Liberation Society (Women)), Jack Robinson (Campaigns & Democracy Officer), Aaron Scott-Carter (AMS YR3 UG), Imogen Claire Shapland (NATSCI Society), Matthew Shields (Cricket Club), Ben Smith (Boxing), Andrea Sterling (Manson Latin American Society), Abu Tadesse (DEV

PGT), Antonia Wilde (Waterpolo Club), Ananya Wilson-Bhattacharya (Feminist Society), James Yule (Gluten Free)

**Chair:** S Lam

**In Attendance:**

E Folan (Campaigns and Democracy Policy Analyst), Jim Dickinson (Chief Executive), J Clare (Head of Campaigns and Policy), A Efstratiou (Student Support) and F Munro (Student Support), T Moore (Campaigns and Democracy Coordinator)

**Apologies:** N Stokes (Chair), I Edwards (Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer), N Littolff (Cheerleading Stunt)

## **Section 1 – Housekeeping**

*Note: Chair was absent due to illness and the chair was taken for this meeting by S Lam (Deputy Chair)*

### **Quorum**

47

### **Guest Speaker**

Chair noted that Prof Neil Ward, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) had been unavailable to attend the meeting.

Chair noted that the Democratic Procedures Committee (DPC) had met earlier in the week and had concluded that the programme of guest speakers for the year needed to be approved by a vote in Council.

Chair proposed that Council vote on the invitation for Shakira Martin, NUS National President to speak on the theme of 'Understanding and Campaigning on Student Poverty' at the next meeting.

*Council agreed by, 45 votes for, 3 votes against with 1 Councillor abstaining from voting, to issue an invitation.*

Chair noted that approval of the programme of invited speakers for the Spring Term would be agreed at the next meeting.

### **2155 Membership**

Council noted the new members added to the Register.

Council noted that the Amendment to the Bye Laws adopted at the 2 November meeting had been approved by the University and, accordingly, Faculty and School Convenors were, henceforth, members of Union Council.

### **2156 Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 November**

Minutes agreed.

### **2157 Matters Arising**

None noted.

### **2158 Club, Society, and Peer Support Group Constitutions**

There were no objections made to any of the Societies.

J Annand (Business Society) welcomed the creation of Consulting Society and wondered whether the two groups might collaborate on future projects.

A speaker from Consulting thanked Business for the offer and noted they would be in contact.

*Council approved SciComm Society, Consulting Society, and Coeliac and Gluten Free Society by: 45 votes for, 3 votes against with 1 Councillor abstaining from voting,*

## **2159 Appointments**

Chair asked any Councillors interested in the PG positions on the Senate Disciplinary and Appeals committees to contact the Democracy and Governance Coordinator.

## **Section 2 – Reports**

### **2160 University Committee Reports**

There were no reports received.

### **2161 Student Officer Committee (SOC) Report**

C Ball (Non-Portfolio Officer), as Chair of SOC, gave a verbal report highlighting the work of the Full Time Officers and Part Time Officers.

T Howard (HIS Convenor), online, raised concerns as to Pride's maintenance of data security; TH believed that members' sexual identities had been revealed by Facebook posts and email correspondence.

L Deary (LGBT+ Officer [Trans & Non-Binary]), noted apologies for any issues that had arisen; LD noted that Pride had trained volunteers as to social media use and the training had addressed the issue. As to email use, LD noted that there was a box on the website that members could tick and, again, this should address the issue.

### **2162 Trustee Board**

J Robinson (Campaigns & Democracy Officer) apologised on behalf of I Edwards, the Chair of Trustees, who had been unable to attend Council. JR noted that there were no significant items to report as the Board had not met since the last meeting of Union Council.

### **2163 Reports from Representatives**

There were no verbal reports.

L Auger (Non-Portfolio Officer) proposed a procedural item to defer Open Discussions to another meeting.

L Martin (Mature Students Officer), on behalf of the Democratic Procedures Committee (DPC), advised Council that, in the light of the guest speaker's withdrawal, the DPC had recommended moving from

the Teaching and Learning topics to a discussion around the theme of 'If There Were One Thing You Could Change About Council...'

L Auger (Non-Portfolio Officer), proposing, noted they were a member of the DPC and the intention had been to canvass a wide number of Councillors as to improvements to the running of Council; LC believed the low attendance at the current meeting would mean that only a small number of Councillors would take part and the consultation would not be credible.

E Cutler (Students with Disabilities Officer), against, thought the discussion section should form a part of every Council meeting and should go ahead.

*The procedural motion to defer the Open Discussion to a future meeting was adopted by 41 voted for, 2 votes against with 5 Councillors abstaining from voting.*

### **Section 3 – Open Discussions**

Deferred. (See above)

### **Section 4 – Policy Making**

#### **2164 Support the People and Planet Day of Action**

L Martin (Mature Students Officer), as proposer, noted they were withdrawing the resolution as, somewhat to People and Planet's surprise, the University had decided to withdraw their investments from the fossil fuels industry and had made an announcement to this effect the previous week. LM noted that the successful achievement of the campaign's aims was gained by the hard work of activists over the previous four years.

#### **2165 Cheap as Chips**

L Moreton (PG Assembly), proposing, believed they were the first non-Student Officer from the floor to bring a resolution to Council in the current year. LM noted the inspiration for the resolution had come when they were working late in the Library on a cold night and had nothing to warm them up. LM noted the resolution would provide students with one hot drink or hot food item for £1. LM noted they had seen a petrol station on the A11 which offered chips for £1 and thought that if an outside commercial organisation could do this then a students' union should be able to do so for its members. LM noted the resolution provided for different food options including rice and noodles but the selection would be left to the discretion of the Union's catering experts. LM believed that the proposal would benefit all students and Council would be seen to be working for the interests of all students.

A Councillor from the floor wondered where the food and drink would be sold.

LM thought that, ideally, this would be from an outside stall that would stay open late at night but that the decision on location would be taken by Union management.

There were no speeches against.

*The resolution was adopted by 45 voted for, 3 votes against with 1 Councillor abstaining from voting.*

#### **2166 Ratification of the Staff Protocol**

M Colledge (PG Education Officer), proposing on behalf of I Edwards Chair of Trustees, noted that the revised Protocol had been approved by the Trustees for ratification by Council. MC believed the revisions clarified the role of Union staff in the development of policy and the democratic process. MC noted the stricture in the Protocol that prohibited discussion of staff performance or actions in Union meetings which was important as staff were not allowed to take part in democratic decision making: they could only give advice on procedure or provide information, they had no right of reply in meetings. MC noted there were some changes to the complaints by staff section and that a reference to complaints by students had been changed to complaints by members.

D Box (LDC Other Year UG) asked for clarification as to Clause 28B in the Code.

M Colledge (PG Education Officer), in clarification, noted that the clause carried over from the previous version of the Code and extended the prohibition of criticism of staff to media, including social media, as, similar to in Union meetings, staff did not have a right to reply.

There were no speeches against.

*The resolution was adopted by 42 voted for, 1 vote against with 5 Councillors abstaining from voting.*

#### **2167 First Bus? More like Worst Bus...**

J Robinson (Campaigns and Democracy Officer), proposing, apologised for the absence of I Edwards. JR noted most Councillors would be going home from Council by bus and believed they would have a real interest in the issues addressed in the resolution. JR argued that a failing bus service represented a barrier to education as it resulted in students missing the start of lectures and exams and added to the stress and pressure of student life. JR assured Council that the resolution was not a vendetta against First Bus but was a considered response to the failure of the company to meaningfully engage with the Union. JR argued that the problem with the existing relationship with the company was that it was based around the discount student

bus pass of which the company sold a huge amount at the start of the academic year; JR believed this meant that the company had no financial incentive to maintain and improve services for the rest of the year. JR pointed to the case of Sheffield where pressure from the students' union had led to First Bus improving their service. JR concluded by asking Council to help stop the bus service continuing to be a barrier to education.

H Bingham (Conservation and Wildlife Society), against, noted not being against the aims of the resolution but having deep concerns about its approach and the way it had been drafted. HB noted they had spoken to the University and to First Bus and neither had registered an increase in complaints in the current academic year as stated in the resolution. HB believed there had been attempts to improve the service which was far from perfect but one had to be realistic as to what was possible given the volume of traffic in the city. HB noted that First Bus held a monopoly on services to campus which made the comparison with Sheffield futile, this was a far larger city with rival bus companies and a far larger student population. HB believed a comparison with similar sized cities to Norwich would be more productive. HB argued that the bus pass represented a good deal for members and was less than half the cost of a young person's card and a third less than an adult card. HB argued that if the Union pressed too hard it might lose the gains it had made. HB believed that a sensible course would be to focus on improvements to the 21 and 22 routes to relieve the pressure on the 25 and 26 routes.

A Mulcairn (Leeway Society) moved a procedural motion to take the resolution in parts.

A Mulcairn (Leeway Society), proposing, moved to delete Believes 10 which referenced alleged rude behaviour by some First Bus staff and an apparent lack of effective complaints procedure and Resolves 7 which referenced bus engines being left running when parked outside student accommodation. AM declared a personal interest as a family member was a driver at First Bus. AM stated that the engines were kept running as the drivers needed to keep the buses warm both for themselves while they were parked and for passengers when they had begun their journey. AM believed, as to complaints, that this should be a two-way process as students could behave awfully on buses and male students had made sexist remarks to female drivers.

E Cutler (Students with Disabilities Officer), against, argued that the Union was a students' union and not a bus drivers' union and that the Union should be representing its own members not those of other unions.

O Taylor (Amnesty Society), for clarification, asked that surely a students' union should be concerned about universal rights and justice rather than just those for its own members.

E Cutler (Students with Disabilities Officer), in clarification, noted that the intent of Believes 10 was not to attack the rights of drivers but to



note that there appeared to be no effective complaints procedure in place.

A Mulcairn (Leeway Society), in clarification, noted they would be in favour of a two-way complaint procedure.

A questioner from the floor, for clarification, wondered if action against Picturehouse was deemed acceptable logically action against another commercial company, First Bus, should be acceptable.

Chair ruled the question to be a speech and therefore out of order.

Council moved to a vote, in parts, on Believes 10 and Resolves 7 of the resolution.

*Council adopted the proposal to delete Believes 10 and Resolves 7 by 31 voted for, 9 votes against with 8 Councillors abstaining from voting.*

M Alhasan (International Students Officer [Non-EU]), seconding the amended resolution, argued that the service was currently late and unreliable and the bus app did not work. MA noted students had reported missing train connections and medical appointments due to the unreliable bus service. MA observed that the cost of the bus pass had risen whilst students felt the service had deteriorated. MA thought that students should stand up for their rights to access a reliable bus service.

H Bingham (Conservation and Wildlife Society), against, believed the increase in the cost of the pass to be minimal and noted this was the first increase for three years. HB believed that the deterioration in service had to be seen in the context of the increased numbers of cars on the roads in the city and the resultant traffic congestion. HB believed that the way forward was to get cars off the road and work with different group including First Bus to support public transport.

L Moreton (PG Assembly), for clarification, noted that First Bus, in previous years had run a discount scheme in that if a student bought a pass in the first two weeks of term the cost was reduced but the offer had not been available for the current year.

J Robinson (Campaigns and Democracy Officer), in summation, thanked Councillors for the quality of the debate. JR believed that the role of students' unions involved sometimes working with and sometimes working against external agencies. JR observed that the Union had tried extremely hard and devoted a lot of resources to working with First Bus and the University but there had made no progress. JR believed the Union should not remain silent when queues of students trying to get home reached almost to the INTO building. JR argued that Council should not give a free pass to First Bus management and should fight for students' interests, in particular those student groups hardest hit by the decline in the service: part-time students and nursing students.

*The amended resolution was adopted by 27 votes for, 17 votes against with 5 Councillors abstaining from voting.*

**2168 Making the Library and the Arts Hub Accessible Again**

E Cutler (Students with Disabilities Officer), proposing, noted the large number of sets of stairs on campus and in particular in the Lasdun Wall. EC noted the problems this posed for disabled students. EC reported that, if one was a wheelchair user and could not get out of one's wheelchair, one could not access the Arts Hub. EC observed that disabled students used the Hubs considerably more than students without disabilities and this made the denial of service even more serious. EC noted that the Access All Areas group had patched up a solution but EC believed this to not be good enough. EC reported on the Library that students in wheelchairs could not use the lift or use the aisles between the shelves. EC believed the Union should work toward a future where all students would have equal access to all facilities at the University.

R Klim (Ethical Issues Officer), for clarification, wondered whether equal access would include equality for students with invisible disabilities.

E Cutler (Students with Disabilities Officer), in clarification, noted all students would decidedly include students with invisible disabilities. EC hoped that the University would, one day, have a dedicated learning suite for disabled students similar to the one established at UCL.

There were no speeches against.

*The resolution was adopted by 45 votes for, 2 votes against with 1 Councillor abstaining from voting.*

**2169 Time, Date and Place of Next Meeting**

Chair noted the next meeting would take place on Thursday 30 November.

R Klim (Ethical Issues Officer), for information, reported that they would be taking part in a sponsored sleep-out for the Benjamin Foundation, a local charity that worked with the young homeless. TK noted that the sleep over would raise funds for and awareness of the charity's work that had been affected by government cuts and wider austerity policies. RK encouraged Councillors to attend and/or publicise the event.