



**Date:** 01/06/2020  
**Time:** 11:00 – 13:00  
**Venue:** Zoom

## Activities Zone

### Minutes

**Chair:** D'Arcy McGuinness, Activities Officer

Members:	P	AP	AB
Clara Baltay, Sports Officer (Job Share)	✓		
Conrad Woolley, Sports Non-portfolio Representative			✓
D'Arcy McGuinness, Activities Officer, Chair	✓		
Elly Chaw, Sports Non-portfolio Representative	✓		
James Henderson, Sports Non-portfolio Representative			✓
Jim Onyemenam, Postgraduate Students' Officer	✓		
Joey Jepps, Arts Officer	✓		
Laura Dell'Antonio, Sports Officer (Job Share)	✓		
Megan McKee, Sports Non-portfolio Representative			✓
Melissa Hanger, Sports Non-portfolio Representative			✓
Molly Hartill, Community Relations Officer	✓		
Sam Currie, Sports Non-portfolio Representative			✓
Samuel Jones, Societies Representative - Performance Arts	✓		
Tanya Dudnikova, Societies Representative - Media	✓		

In Attendance:
Emer O'Driscoll, Policy Zone Assistant, Minutes
Katie Sykes, Sports Development Manager
Student Observers

### 1. Preliminary Matters

The Chair asked if there were any corrections to the minutes of the previous meeting. There were none and so the minutes were approved.

There were no outstanding action points to follow up on.

### 3. Updates from Officers

The Chair invited student officers to update the Zone about what they are working on.

The Chair (Activities Officer):

- Adjusting to a new normal in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Working on contingency planning for 2020/21 for various different scenarios
- Working on clubs and societies training, Welcome Week, and Officer handover (among other things)

Arts Officer:

- Lots of arts societies have moved online (e.g. Dance Societies' "Social Dis-Dancing" activities)
- The Arts Awards will be going ahead online on Monday 8 June

Sports Officers:

- Lots of sports clubs have done online challenges, pub quizzes, and other events
- Had a Sports Rep meeting last week to discuss planning for next term
- Currently discussing how to change Varsity to make it bigger and better next year
- The Sports Awards will take place online on Thursday 4 June

Postgraduate Students' Officer:

- Mostly working on the academic side of things
- Working on Welcome Fair planning, to ensure that all students have an equitable experience

#### **4. Amendments to Clubs and Societies' Regulations**

The Chair explained that a decision needed to be made about clubs and societies which end the year in financial deficit, and inactive clubs and societies with non-grant balances that are still in existence.

The Chair suggested that if a club or society ends the year in a negative balance, they should present a financial plan to the Activities Officer for approval. They suggested that money held by inactive societies should be reclaimed after three years of inactivity.

There were no further questions, suggestions, or objections and so the amendments were unanimously adopted.

**Decision:** The C&S regulations were **AMENDED**.

#### **5. COVID-19/Grant Update**

The Chair explained that the Students' Union is facing considerable financial losses as a result of COVID-19. They added that, while the Union can draw on its reserves, there will need to be considerable reductions in spending. In the case that there is no face-to-face teaching for a period of time, there will be a reduction in the clubs and societies' grants.

They explained that there won't be a grant process for next year (2020/21) in the same way there usually is. Instead, there will be an established fund which clubs and societies can apply to if they don't have sufficient financial reserves. They acknowledged that this is not an ideal situation, but that the loss of commercial income to the Union will inevitably result in reduced funding.

There were no further questions or comments.

#### **6. Welcome Fair 2020/21**

The Chair informed the Zone that the Welcome Fair will be moving online for September 2020. They explained that an online platform is being developed, which can be adapted according to student input. They asked for members' feedback on how the Welcome Fair should run, and what functions students would find most useful in an online platform.

The Sports Officer suggested that there should be timeslots for committee members to be online answering students' questions, but that key information should be up for a longer time period, to allow for different time zones.

The Sports Development Manager asked which aspects of the fair would be most important to clubs and societies, i.e. things like live performance showcases, question & answer sessions, getting students to buy memberships, or anything else.

The Sports Officer answered that this will depend on knowing what kind of activities will look like next year, which is almost impossible to predict at this stage.

The Societies Representative (Performance Art) added that the fundamental requirement is allowing clubs and societies to show what they have to offer, but this will depend on what kind of activities are permitted to take place next year.

The Sports Development Manager asked how the group felt about the fair being run over two consecutive Wednesday afternoons.

The Sports Officer commented that this was a reasonable time commitment for committee members but that it would be better to have two different times, to accommodate those who aren't free on Wednesday afternoons and/or live in different time zones.

It was also suggested that the SU website should have a page linking to all the clubs and societies' social media pages.

The Sports Officer suggested that the most important aspect of an online Welcome Fair would be a real-time live-chat function, to allow actual person-to-person interaction.

The Societies Rep (Media) added that they had run a 'chatroom/Q&A' event for their department previously, which had worked very well.

A Sports Rep suggested the possibility of having a Zoom call with committee members, so students could actually talk to them.

The Arts Officer noted that it was important to record any live-chat activity so it was accessible to people in all time zones.

There was a discussion about how best to build community and social bonds without being able to gather in-person. It was suggested there could be some kind of knowledge-sharing, discussion group for committee members of different societies about facilitating online community building.

## **7. Remote Membership**

**The Chair asked the Zone how they would feel about introducing a ‘remote membership’ option for clubs and societies while social distancing regulations are still in place. This would be a cheaper membership that would allow members to participate in social activities while the usual, more expensive activities are not allowed.**

**The Sports Officer agreed that this was a good idea and asked what will happen when social distancing regulations are lifted. Would ‘remote members’ then have to buy full membership? The Chair responded that this would have to be worked out depending on when restrictions were lifted.**

**The Sports Officer noted that there might be difficulty for committees to plan budgets, without knowing how many remote memberships will later become full memberships.**

**The Sports Development Manager asked for suggestions of what to call these remote memberships. The Chair suggested ‘community membership’ and noted that negative words like ‘distance’ and ‘remote’ should be avoided. Several other members agreed.**

**The Societies Rep (Performance Art) asked whether it would be possible to maintain community memberships after restrictions are lifted, for those who are till distance learning. The Postgraduate Students’ Officer agreed and suggested that a community membership policy should be continued as a permanent arrangement regardless of COVID-19.**

**The Sports Officer asked whether remote/community members would have full voting rights at AGMs and EGMs. The Sports Development Manager said that the plan was for community members to be able to vote, but the Zone was free to make suggestions.**

**The Community Relations Officer suggested that there should be some kind of check to make sure that members have participated in the society in order to be able to vote. The Societies Rep (Performance Art) noted that those who purchase full membership do not always participate fully, and to deny voting rights to community members on the basis of participation would be a double standard.**

**The Sports Officer suggested putting in place a cut-off period before AGMs, so people can’t join solely to vote. The Chair noted that a 28 day cut-off period is already in place for full members and so would be extended to community members.**

**The Arts Officer asked if the same policy would apply to EGMS in October. The Chair responded that, while there is no 28 day rule for EGMs, they cannot be called until a**

**club or society has 30 members and the meeting must be quorate. The Sports Development Manager added that only members who join before the EGM is called can stand or vote.**

**The Sports Development Manager noted that the aim of the community membership system would be to allow those who can't physically access activities to still feel part of a community, and so it must be a proper membership. They suggested that it would be better to deal with people trying to abuse the system on a case-by-case basis, rather than trying to pre-empt them.**

## 8. Colours/Awards

The Chair asked the Zone for feedback on the colours and awards process this year.

The Community Relations Officer and the Sports Officers responded that the awards had been very well organised and executed under the unique circumstances.

The Sports Officer congratulated the Chair for presenting the Societies Awards online.

Members were reminded to watch the upcoming Sports and Arts Awards.

## 9. Announcements

BUCS Update:

The Sports Development Manager informed members that they are working hard planning sporting activity for next year, but that plans are constantly changing in accordance with government guidance.

They explained that the current situation allows some physical activity in sports, but it is very limited. They are participating in fortnightly calls with other university sport managers to try and plan for next year. At the moment, it looks like the BUCS competitive league season will begin in January 2020/21. Sports delivery next year will vary greatly between sports, for instance contact and indoor sports will take a longer to reinstate than non-contact and outdoor sports.

Arts/Theatre Update:

The Chair announced that although there is a lot of uncertainty about what will be possible next year, the possibility of large scale gatherings (i.e. theatre shows) looks minimal for the foreseeable future. The added that Bloomsbury Theatre is owned by UCL and so will open in line with their recommendations, rather than along with other commercial theatres.

Access Fund:

The Chair announced that the Students' Union has applied for money to establish the Access Fund to ensure equal participation in clubs and societies for those who can't afford membership fees.

Students' Union Staffing:

Members were reminded that a large number of Union staff have been furloughed, and so emails may receive automatic replies giving alternative contact details.

Honorary Life Memberships:

HLM nominations will be sent to the next meeting of Union Executive to be ratified.

Clubs & Societies Training:

The Chair announced that all training for incoming clubs and societies officers will be moved online. Phase 1 will be released in the next few days, and a new tracking system will be put in place so students can see which training they have already completed and what they still need to do. If Term 1 teaching is not face-to-face, then 'supporting communities' training will be released at the end of June.

**10. Questions to Officers**

**There were no questions for the officers.**

**11. Any Other Business**

**The Sports Development Manager announced that the Friends Trust is accepting funding application for clubs and societies running remote activities and encouraged members to apply.**

**Members were encouraged to attend the upcoming virtual awards ceremonies and spread the word to their constituents.**

**The Sports Development Manager**