**Societies Council Notes – 9/9/2020, 1pm-3pm**

No. of student attendees: 17

No. of Sabbatical Officer attendees: 4 (CH, IN, AT, LH)

No. of SU staff attendees: 3 (JM, CL, DD)

No. of societies represented: 18

* Christian Union
* Games Development
* Roleplaying Games Paisley
* Friends of the Bees
* Anime
* Barriers to Learning
* Photography
* Pharmaceutical
* African and Caribbean
* LGBT+
* Women’s Group
* Disabled Students
* Greens
* Dramatic Arts
* Physics
* Newspaper
* Cannabuddies
* Blue Space

**Red text indicates action points and feedback from societies.**

**Aims of Council meeting**

* To explain how societies will work this year
* To help prepare societies for promoting themselves this year

**Agenda**

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| **Times** | **Content** | **Led by** |
| 1.00-1.20 | Introducing the session and each other | Clare |
| 1.20-1.35 | Welcome to the new uni year | Clare |
| 1.35-2.00 | Update on freshers' period plans | Clare |
| **2.00-2.10** | **Comfort Break** |  |
| 2.10-2.35 | Training on how to make the most of your society's web page | DD |
| 2.35-2.40 | How your feedback is helping us improve the ways we support you and your society | Jamie |
| 2.40-2.55 | Guidelines on what activities your society can do and how we will support you | Jamie |
| 2.55-3.00 | Opportunity for us to answer any outstanding questions | Clare |

**1.00-1.20: Introduction**

* Thank everyone for attending
* Tell them the agenda and aims of the meeting
* Tell them that they can use the chat box to ask questions throughout the session
	+ Depending on the question, we will either answer these at the time or at the end
* All notes from this meeting will be uploaded onto Societies Council page on website
* Introductions
	+ Clare and Jamie
	+ David will also join us to show how to use the website
	+ Everyone to introduce themselves and their society
	+ Won’t use up time on ice breakers (we have plans for socialising throughout the year) but if anyone has any pets they would like to join the meeting, please introduce them.
	+ Show Clare’s video

**1.20-1.35:** **Welcome to the new uni year**

* Explain what’s been happening
	+ What has the Students’ Union been doing?
* How things are looking
	+ University adapting to “blended learning”
	+ **Society activities will have to primarily be done online**
		- Focus needs to be on this
		- Potential to back this up with face to face meetings and activities
		- This is subject to government and university guidelines but if it can be done safely, we will support this
		- There won’t be a normal freshers’ fair this year
	+ We will give more information on our new plans throughout the rest of the session
* Use whiteboard to ask students to share their thoughts and feelings on the new uni year (can be relating to societies or uni life in general)
* Societies expressed concerns around having less engagement from students.
* Societies provided a number of questions. These were briefly discussed, then followed up during the relevant sections of the meeting.

**1.35-2.00: Update on freshers' period plans**

* No Freshers’ fairs
* Societies asked if it will be possible to host a Refreshers Fair in the new year.
	+ We won’t know this until nearer the time. It’s highly unlikely we’ll be able to hold a fair but the Students’ Union will work to facilitate face to face activities if they can be done safely and within government and university guidelines.
* 6 week freshers’ period
	+ Online events, ideally backed up by physical events
	+ Share screen to show list of events focused on societies
	+ Brief explanation of these events
* Explain Society Introduction events
	+ Zoom sessions where students can find out about societies and how to join them
	+ This is a chance for us to promote your society
	+ The best/easiest way to do this is by video
* Societies had questions on how these Zoom events will work.
	+ It was suggested that break-out rooms could be used to make it easier for societies to interact with students who are interested in joining them.
		- This might not be feasible for these events.
		- Societies were encouraged to create videos as a way to more easily introduce themselves.
	+ Jamie highlighted that all Students’ Unions are unsure how online events will work. They will require some trial and error to find the most effective method.
		- Societies were interested in working together to help trial Zoom events.
		- The Students’ Union will set up a trial event to enable societies to practice using zoom and to share feedback.
	+ The Students’ Union will send all societies invitations to the Freshers’ Zoom events.
		- Societies are encouraged to attend these so they are able to introduce themselves to students and promote themselves.
* Societies were apprehensive about facilitating their own online/zoom welcome events.
	+ The Students’ Union are happy to host and facilitate these.
* The issues of event invitations disappearing from calendars once they’re accepted was raised.
* Societies also shared different methods that they have been using for ongoing communication with their members.
	+ This included Discord and the Societies App.
	+ Societies were interested in working together to share ideas on how to use these platforms.
	+ An online meeting can be facilitated by the Students’ Union to enable this.
* Jamie invited students to join the Societies and Volunteering facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/508872700023973>
	+ This is where we currently share information on societies. This was created in response to previous feedback from societies. This can be reviewed at the next Societies Council meeting.
* Society videos
	+ If you can create a short 1/2min video introducing your society, we can play this during these events
	+ We will also be able to use this to promote the society through social media
	+ Resources and tips from Clare on how to make a good video
	+ Share Friends of the Bees video example
	+ This is a good opportunity to improve how we promote our societies throughout the year
	+ Any thoughts or ideas from students on this?
* Physical events
	+ Share screen with events again
	+ These have the same aim as the online events
	+ Across campuses
	+ Societies can host a face to face welcome event
		- Either in Students’ Union or university rooms
		- Will be able to book this through Resources and Bookings page on website by this Friday 11th Sep
		- Events will have 2 metre social distancing (Jamie will give more details on this after the break)
* Training and social events for society committee members
	+ Clare introduce calendar of online training and social events (this is based on feedback we received in March)
	+ Societies will still receive individual training sessions (Jamie will keep everyone updated on this)

**2.00-2.10: Comfort Break**

* Please be back and ready to start for 2.10pm

**2.10-2.35: Training on how to make the most of your society's web page**

* DD to explain basics of using society webpages
	+ log in to their page
	+ edit to About US section
	+ add in links to their social media pages
	+ upload their logo
	+ access their membership list
	+ find out when they get new members joining
	+ use their membership list to email students through their society email address

**2.35-2.40: How your feedback is helping us improve the ways we support you and your society**

* Survey we asked society committee members in complete in March
* Results show two things:
	+ How you have found it running a society (what’s good, bad etc)
	+ What you gain from these roles as individuals
* Two benefits to this:
	+ Help us show what you do (show value to uni, help with funding etc)
	+ Help us improve how we support you
* Key points
	+ Lots of positives (enjoying your roles, what you get from it, how we support you)
	+ How you said we can improve:
		- Website, soc media, communication
		- Main theme with these was improving consistency of these
	+ We are:
		- Updating website
		- Increased use of online forms for bookings, finances, promoting your society
		- These will help with consistency, especially across campuses
	+ How you said we can improve:
		- More interaction between societies
	+ We are:
		- Introducing calendar of training and social events for committee members
		- Societies Council (four times a year, will normally be more student led by this)
		- Will provide more social activities across campuses, when possible
	+ Also need for more support for you as individuals:
		- Development of Leadership Programme (Claire Lumsden)
		- All committee members will be able to access this
* Claire Lumsden gave a brief overview of this and other training that will be available for committee members.
* This has been really helpful for us. It’s important that we gain this feedback. We will ask again, so will really appreciate your support.
* The African Caribbean Society were announced as the winners of the £60 prize draw!

**2.40-2.55: Guidelines on what activities your society can do and how we will support you**

* Individual Society training sessions will be delivered as before
	+ I will update on this
* Focus has to be on online activities
* At the moment, physical meetings will also be possible
	+ Room and event bookings will be available through website on Friday
* University room bookings
	+ Limited times available, especially outwith Wednesday afternoons/evenings
	+ Max. booking length of 1 hour
	+ 2 metre distancing means room capacities will be much less. Not yet confirmed but apparently 17%
	+ We have requested one society booking but still waiting confirmation
* Societies were concerned that these restrictions will mean it’s not possible to effectively run their face to face activities.
	+ Only being able to book a room for 1hr, reduced capacities, social distancing and restricted availability of rooms were all seem as potentially making face to face meetings unviable.
	+ The Students’ Union will check with Timetabling for any updates on these restrictions but there will not be any flexibility on university rules for room bookings.
	+ These issues highlight the need for societies to prioritise online activities.
* Societies asked if hand gel would be provided for society meetings.
	+ The Students’ Union and university will provide the necessary support to enable societies to hold meetings safely but it will be the responsibility of every society member to adhere to safety procedures.
		- Any breach of rules will mean a society will no longer be allowed to hold physical meetings.
* Students’ Union spaces and events
	+ Lanarkshire
		- Relatively easy
		- Big space, can be closed off
		- Should be accessible during day and evening
	+ Paisley
		- Main issue is reduced opening hours
		- Until term starts we can’t know for certain how it will work
		- Level 2 capacity to be confirmed, significantly reduced, especially with lack of ventilation
		- Areas of Level 1 can be booked for society events (with 2m distancing)
		- Hope to be able to host society welcome events
* Societies asked if Level 1 will be available outwith its opening hours.
	+ Continually changing government guidelines mean it’s not possible to know exactly how are commercial services will function. Once we know more on this we will be able to update socieities on availability.
	+ Ayr
		- Union space is very small
		- Will work with uni to find best spaces
* Risk Assessment template will be provided when making any room booking
	+ This will help you plan how you will deliver meetings safely
	+ Must be completed before 1st meeting
	+ We will also provide guide on how to run meetings and events safely
		- Still being confirmed, rules are still being established
		- We will have these available before term starts
* Events and activities outside of university setting cannot be promoted through societies eg. going to pubs
	+ We need to make sure that what you’re doing is safe
	+ We can’t have any control over this
	+ But this doesn’t mean society members can’t socialise as friends outside of uni
* Responsibility lies with everyone: Union staff, committees, society members
	+ We will give you the resources to make sure you can do things safely and you can do things online
	+ If a society doesn’t follow rules provided, physical meetings and events will stop
* Not ideal scenario, but we’ll make it work

**2.55-3.00: Opportunity for us to answer any outstanding questions**

* Check all questions in chat and take any further questions
* Jamie can take questions beyond 3pm if needed