

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST STUDENTS' UNION
MINUTES

Statutory Meeting of the Students' Union Council
held on 15 November 2023 in The Cube, Level 1, Queen's Students' Union.

Present:

Aidan Moran	Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement
Amitha Simon	Postgraduate School Rep - School of Pharmacy (SPMY)
Ashish Kandel	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Ben Friel	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Ben Wilson	Undergraduate School Representative - School of Law (SLAW)
Benjamin Pepperrell	Medicine, Health and Life Sciences (MHLS) Postgraduate Research Faculty Representative
Beth Elder	Student Officer - Union President
Beth Noble	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Cameron Shaw	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Caroline Kirwin	Postgraduate School Rep - School of Psychology (SBS)
Chris Beaumont	Undergraduate School Representative - Social Sciences, Education and Social Work (SSESW)
Daniel Abayomi Odeyemi	Students' Union Council - International Student Representative (including INTO)
Daniel McCormack	Undergraduate School Representative - School of Chemistry & Chemical Engineering (SCHEM)
Deivydas Sakys	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Devrath Singh Rathore	Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) Postgraduate Taught Faculty Representative
Emily Burke	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Emily O'Neill	Undergraduate School Representative - School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics (SHAPP)
Ethan Crawford	Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS) Postgraduate Research Faculty Representative
Ethan McBriarty	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Faith Wallace	Undergraduate School Representative - School of Psychology (SBS)
Grace Duffy	Student Officer Education
Hazel McMorrow	Medicine, Health and Life Sciences (MHLS) Undergraduate Faculty Representative
Jack Lydon	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
James Dixon	Students' Union Council - MHLS Representative (Undergraduate)
Jamie-Lukas Campbell	Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) Postgraduate Research Representative
Jess Hindley	Student Officer Welfare
Joel Hartley	Students' Union Council - MHLS Representative (Undergraduate)
Joel Sheridan	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
John Brown	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Jue Tong	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative
Karnika Behl	Postgraduate School Rep - School of Arts, English and Languages (SAEL)
Kieran Minto	Student Officer Postgraduate
Leo Davies	Student Association Chairperson - Environmental Action Students' Association
Lia Obiyan	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Maria Miln	Students' Union Council - All First Year Representative
Megan D'Arcy	Undergraduate School Representative - School of Mathematics & Physics (SMP)
Mehek Gijare	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Mischa Gerrard	Student Association Chairperson - Disabled Students' Association
Moksh Ahire	Undergraduate School Representative - School of Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering (SMAE)
Niall O'Hare	Medicine, Health and Life Sciences (MHLS) Postgraduate Taught Faculty Representative
Niamh Mallaghan	Postgraduate School Rep - School of Mathematics & Physics (SMP)
Oliver Cunningham	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Olivier Gastinel	Student Association Chairperson - LGBT+ Students' Association
Patrina Loughran	Undergraduate School Representative - School of Nursing & Midwifery (SNAM)
Prithish Roy	Postgraduate School Rep - School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics (SHAPP)
Rheannon Platman	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Róisín Keenan	Student Association Chairperson - Women Students' Association
Rosa Yang	Undergraduate School Representative - School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences (SMED)
Rubina Maani	Students' Union Council - MHLS Representative (Undergraduate)
Ryan Irwin	Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS) Undergraduate Faculty Representative
Sajid Khan	Student Officer Equality & Diversity
Salim Usman	Student Association Chairperson - International Students' Association

Sinead Hosain	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Sreyashi Acharjee	Postgraduate School Rep - School of Biological Sciences (SBIO)
Tiarnan Smyth	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Tim Chan	Undergraduate School Representative - School of Electronics, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science (SEECs)
Venkataharish Rayi	Postgraduate School Rep - Queen's Management School (SMGT)
Yu Sheng	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative

In Attendance:

DAMIEN CORRIDAN (CLERK OF COUNCIL)
 BARRY CRUICKSHANK (REPRESENTATION SUPPORT OFFICER)
 MATTHEW MCCALLION (UNION SPEAKER)

The Speaker of Council welcomed all attendees to the Second Statutory Meeting of the 2023-24 session of the Students' Union Council.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received for the following Councillors:

Adam Wilson	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Arran Ashfield	Students' Union Council - EPS Representative (Undergraduate)
Jack Powell	Postgraduate School Rep - School of Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering (SMAE)
Jason Wong	Students' Union Council - All First Year Representative
Jean F. Leonard	Student Association Chairperson - Student Parents' and Carers' Students' Association
Jonathan Boyd	Students' Union Council - AHSS Representative (Undergraduate)
Kelly Razey	Postgraduate School Rep - Social Sciences, Education and Social Work (SSESW)
Malachy Donnelly	Student Association Chairperson - Irish Language Students' Association
Maria Murray	Undergraduate School Representative - School of Pharmacy (SPMY)
Matt Birch	Student Association Chairperson - Mature and Part-Time Students' Association
Muskaan Adnani	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative
Nadine Curtis	Undergraduate School Representative - School of Biological Sciences (SBIO)
Niamh Bone	Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS) Postgraduate Taught Faculty Representative
Pranay Agrawal	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative
Priscilla Ebenezer Robert Kennedy	Student Association Chairperson - Ethnically Diverse Students' Association
Róisín Costelloe	Students' Union Council - Postgraduate Representative

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

2.1 Minutes of Statutory Meeting of 24 October 2023 SUC/M/23/5

It was agreed that the minutes of the Statutory Meeting of 24 October 2023 (SUC/M/23/5) were a true and accurate record of proceedings.

3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

3.1 Policy Updates

3.1.1 Formalising Logistical and Wellbeing Support for International and Ethnically Diverse Student Officers & Implementing Protocols for a More Inclusive Students' Union

Beth Elder, Students' Union President updated Council that in previous years some Student Officers felt that better support should be put in place to help prevent cultural issues and asked Queen's Students' Union to undertake a review. This was discussed at Management Board and the University's Diversity and Inclusion unit has been approached for guidance.

Beth further updated that the Students' Union was looking at additional training for staff and Student Officers and were hopeful this will be rolled out before the next academic year.

3.1.2 Supporting Postgraduate Students and Postdoctoral LGBTQIA+ Researchers at Queen's

Sajid Khan, Students' Union Students' Union and Equality Officer updated Council that he has reached out to Plus about the kinds of supports they would like to see from the Students' Union and where we can fit in, in relation to additional support they can get from Queen's. He further updated that they would keep them informed on Fund-It, for funding opportunities. Additional Sajid encouraged and advocative for two Plus members to be included in the delegation for USI Pink Training.

3.1.3 The Students' Union to Include a Working Definition of Antisemitism

Beth Elder, Students' Union President updated Council that since this motion was passed Queen's Students' Union invited Union of Jewish Students to Belfast to delivery antisemistism awareness training to all QSU staff and Student Officers, and staff feedback was excellent. Further training and awareness is being planned for the New Year.

3.1.4 Consent Training for Clubs and Societies

Aidan Moran, Students' Union Campaigns and Engagement Officer updated Council that they were currently working with Nexus NI to arrange for members of the Consent Campaign to trial Consent training. The hope would be that if the training is adequate then this could be rolled out to Queen's Students' Union Clubs and Societies.

3.1.5 An Open and Transparent Students' Union

Beth Elder, Students' Union President updated Council that Student Council profile has been considerably raised and everything mandated in the motion has now been actioned such as minutes posted online, social media coverage around when Council is taking place and how students can go about getting involved.

3.1.6 Support for Students with Eating Disorders

Beth Elder, Students' Union President updated Council that unfortunately there has been several obstacles in the way of getting this motion actioned but the Students' Union is currently working closely with Campus Food and Drink to achieve a consistent approach across all University food outlets.

3.1.7 Investigate the Potential Implementation of Drug Testing Kits in the Students' Union

Beth Elder, Students' Union President updated Council that the Students' Union were part of the DAI – Drug and Alcohol Impact strategy working on the possibility of Implementation of Drug Testing Kits in the Students' Union.

3.1.8 Introduction of Mandatory Consent Training for Students at QUB

Beth Elder, Students' Union President updated Council that they were working closely with the University and the Clubs & Societies department to get some training that would be sufficient to deliver to Clubs & Societies Committee members.

3.1.9 Student Fee Refunds

Sajid Khan, Students' Union Students' Union and Equality Officer updated Council that there was new update since the last meeting of Council and that the strategy around the campaign has changed as a result of the ongoing lawsuit by Student Group Claim, which will dictate the nature of the campaign going forward. A Refunds Campaign has been set up under the Campaigns Committee structure, which will be focused on the development of a reimbursement structure for cancelled lectures that mirrors KCL.

3.1.10 Motion for Welfare for Students affected by the Israel/Palestine Situation

Sajid Khan, Student Officer Equality & Diversity updated Council that the Students' Union had a strong presence in attendance at several protests calling for an immediate ceasefire in the conflict in Palestine. He further updated that the student office team would continue to attend such rallies until a peaceful resolution was found in the current conflict in the Middle East.

Sajid informed Council that the Student Officer team were currently supporting QUB students who were directly affected by the current conflict and was currently working on a statement to be released on behalf of the Student Officer team and would pass this to the Students' Union marketing team once ready.

3.2 Establishment of the Clubs and Societies Committee of Council

The Council was asked to note that the Clubs and Societies Committee of Council has been established as approved by the October 2023 Statutory Meeting of Council. The Committee has commenced its business and is actively considering new applications for Club and Society recognition.

COMMUNICATIONS

4.1 Condolences

There were none.

4.2 National Students' Union Updates

Beth Elder, Students' Union President updated Council that NUS-USI were currently running the Big Student Survey and encouraged Councillors to take part in the survey, if possible. She further updated Council that NUS-USI would be holding in person and online sessions that students could attend if interested, before giving a Campaign overview to Council:

NUS-USI Big Conversations 2023

The next General Election is a once in a generation opportunity to change our lives as students. Right now, there's not much being offered to us by the political parties: so we're building our own Manifesto for our Future – and NUS is informing it by hundreds of Big Conversation events happening across the UK!

We need you to have your say whether it be online or in person; we'll submit your ideas and feedback which will directly shape the Manifesto! We want to hear from students on what would improve their lives and make them motivated to vote as well as set the direction on what education should look like for the students of the future. Too often we feel disenfranchised, that nothing will change, or that no one will listen to us.

Building a strong Manifesto for our Future, alongside running Turn Up - the biggest student voter registration drive in history - will make it impossible to ignore the voice of students at the coming General Election. We will make sure students are heard by all UK governments.

In person - 15th November 5pm-7pm @ The BlackBox, Belfast (food and refreshments upon arrival) or Online- 21st November 1pm - 2pm (via zoom).

4.3 National Conference Delegate Elections 2023-24 – Schedule

The Clerk of Council reported that elections to delegations for national conference will take place in semester one, with nominations opening Monday 20 November and closing Thursday 30 November, 2023.

Notice of these conferences will be sent to Student Council, Student Reps and those on the SU Voice mailing list. Notice will also be given in Inside SU and on QSU social channels.

The Clerk of Council further updated Council that we're a member of three national unions and we work with them to make the changes on a local and national level that really matter to constituents:

- The National Union of Students of the United Kingdom (NUS)
- The Union of Students' in Ireland (USI)
- The National Union of Students – Union of Students in Ireland (NUS-USI)

The Clerk of Council explained that similar to our Union, they have councils and elected student officers who decide on the issues that they work on. Their councils are made up of all the member colleges' student officers and regular students who put themselves forward to work on student issues on a national level.

Delegate Entitlement

QSU is entitled to send a set number of delegates to each conference, based on the number of student members in the Union. Most students' unions on these islands attend only one national conference. As we choose to send delegates to three national union conferences, we manage budget by sending a limited number of delegates to each conference – enough to ensure we are represented.

4.4 Student Leader Elections 2023-24 Schedule

SU Elections 2024 shall be held in accordance with the following schedule:

- Nominations Open: Fri 15 December Nov 2023
- Nominations Close: Thurs 1 February 2024 (5.00 pm)
- Polling: Mon 4 March – Thurs 7 March 2024

5. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS/RULE AMENDMENTS

There were none.

6. BUSINESS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Recognition of Clubs & Societies

The following applications for recognition were considered by the Standing Committee when it met on 13 November 2023:

- 6.1.1 QUB Cybersecurity Society (Society)
- 6.1.2 QUB Amateur Radio and Electronics Society (Society)
- 6.1.3 QUB Walkie Talkie Girlies Society (Society)
- 6.1.4 QUB Apprenticeship Society (Society)
- 6.1.5 QUB Project Choice Society (Society)
- 6.1.6 QUB SpeedQUBers Society (Society)

Beth Elder, Standing Committee Chair updated Council that all applications had completed required documentation and met the criteria in the Constitution to be considered for recognition.

She further stated that The Committee considered the application and met with representatives from each group and finally noted that the Standing Committee recommends that Council formally recognise these group as an official Clubs and Society, categorised as follows:

- QUB Cybersecurity Society (Society)

- QUB Amateur Radio and Electronics Society (Society)
- QUB Walkie Talkie Girlies Society (Society)
- QUB Apprenticeship Society (Society)
- QUB Project Choice Society (Society)
- QUB SpeedQUBers Society (Society)

Following a vote, the above Clubs & Societies were ratified.

6.2 Recognition of Clubs & Societies

The following applications for recognition were considered by the Standing Committee when it met on 14 November 2023:

- 6.2.1 QUB Country Western Society (Society)
- 6.2.2 QUB Engineers in Medicine Society (Society)
- 6.2.3 QUB Liberal Arts Society (Society)
- 6.2.4 QUB Malayalee Society (Society)
- 6.2.5 QUB Sapphics Society (Society)
- 6.2.6 QUB Poker Society (Society)

Beth Elder, Standing Committee Chair updated Council that all applications had completed required documentation and met the criteria in the Constitution to be considered for recognition.

She further stated that The Committee considered the application and met with representatives from each group and finally noted that the Standing Committee recommends that Council formally recognise these group as an official Clubs and Society, categorised as follows:

- QUB Country Western Society (Society)
- QUB Engineers in Medicine Society (Society)
- QUB Liberal Arts Society (Society)
- QUB Malayalee Society (Society)
- QUB Sapphics Society (Society)
- QUB Poker Society (Society)

Following a vote, the above Clubs & Societies were ratified.

6.3 Student Officer Plan of Work 2023-24

SUC/P/23/62

The Elected Student Officer team presented an overview of their Student Officer Plan of Work 2023-24 to Council.

Following a showing of voting cards, the Student Officer Plan of Work 2023-24 clearly passed.

7. BUSINESS FOR DISCUSSION

7.1 Cost of Living Crisis – Update and Discussion

Council noted that the VP Undergraduate Education and VP Postgraduate Education, Grace Duffy and Kieran Minto attended a Rustle Group Students' Union residential in Cardiff.

Over the course of the two-day residential, hosted at Cardiff Students' Union, RGSU Sabbatical Officers introduced themselves and their respective Students' Unions, discussed and chose the RGSU priority areas for the year, prepared draft Next Steps for these priority areas, and hosted a representative from the Russell Group for a presentation and Q&A session.

The RGSU priority areas as chosen by the Sabbatical Officers are: Developing a student manifesto for the General Election to cover:

- Funding, Fees & Industrial Relations
- Cost of Living
- International Students
- Postgraduate Students.

Beth, Students' Union President further updated Council that the Union Pantry has had its funding extended for the rest of this academic year and that the University is relaunching the Cost of Living focus group and she will continue to attend and update accordingly.

Council was informed that the Students' Union are planning to run a 'keep warm' campaign which would involve the distribution free food to students and availability of items such as water bottles.

7.2 2023-24 Academic Year – Emerging Issues / Concerns

7.2.1 Discussion on University Campus Events - Free vs. Paid [Pranay Agrawal]

This item was deferred to the third meeting of Student Council.

7.3 Students' Union Mental Health Activity – Update

Beth Elder, Students' Union President updated Council that the Mental Health and Wellbeing team have appointed a Social Prescriber to their team, Elaine Reid. The Executive Management Committee would like to officially welcome her to the Students' Union and wish her the best of luck in her new role.

This is a new, permanent position within the University and Queen's Students' Union is one of the first unions in the UK and Ireland to appoint a Social Prescriber.

The Committee further noted that the OMNI mental health survey results have been published and can be accessed on the [Students' Union website](#). The OMNI Action plan is also located on the [website](#).

7.4 Students' Union Strategic Plan 2020-25 – Introduction and Update

The Clerk of Council gave Council an introduction, overview and update on the Students' Union Strategic Plan 2020-25. He further updated Council that we are currently on year 3 of the 5 year Strategic Plan, and informed councillors the full plan could be accessed on the QSU website.

7.5 Students' Union Democracy Review – Update

The Clerk of Council updated Council on the Students' Union Democracy Review, the progress that has been made so far, and some feedback so far. The Clerk of Council explained how important this feedback would be in shaping future officer teams, and the new Students' Union.

The Clerk of Council then led a discussion on the Students' Union Democracy Review getting feedback from members, which was positive and supportive of the review. The Clerk of Council further updated that the proposal should be ready and submitted at the next meeting of Council for consideration.

8. BYE-ELECTIONS

There were none.

9. ELECTIONS

9.1 University Governance Review – Working Group Member (1 vacancy)

Ben Friel, Beth Noble and Salim Usman were duly proposed and deemed elected.

The candidate whose name is underlined was elected

10. MOTIONS

10.1 Queen's Students' Union Council Response to the first Race Equality in Higher Education Conference on the island of Ireland in September 2023

Council notes:

- The Queen's Gender Initiative/Race Equality Charter Network organised the inaugural Race Equality in Higher Education conference at Queen's in September 2023.

This Council further notes:

- Multiple current students and alumni participated in panel discussions and presentations.
- As student speakers attested, race equality and equity is everyone's job.
- Equity and equality is critical to the student experience.
- The Students' Union should adopt a culture of being actively anti-racist.

This Council believes:

- The emotional, mental, and physical welfare of all students is important.
- The Students' Union must recognise the mental health of students who are victims of inequity, race-based or racist abuse.
- The Students' Union Management Board should retain the services of an external body for the purpose of conducting an interrogatory race equity and equality review.
- Equality, diversity, and inclusion efforts commonly lack institutional transparency and accountability, and this is reflected in the Students' Union management.
- This work is being undertaken at the school-level and the Students' Union has already fallen behind.

Therefore, this Council resolves:

- In line with motion: "Formalising logistical and wellbeing support for international and ethnically diverse student officers & implementing protocols for a more inclusive Students' Union" the Students' Union Management Board will undertake an externally led review of cultural awareness and competency training, cultural biases, racism, and discrimination within the Students' Union by January 2024.
- The Council reaffirms its commitment to retain an external advisory board of international and ethnically diverse community leaders and organisations to lead efforts on inclusion, support, and widening participation for international and ethnically diverse students.

- The Students' Union Executive Management Committee shall consider how much funding will be required to support the Ethnically Diverse Students' Association, the International Students' Association, and other interested parties in addressing race equality in the Students' Union.
- The Students' Union should be represented at such conferences, and the Students' Union President or their designee(s) should share details of such conferences in advance with the Students' Union Director and their designee(s) and formally write to them to encourage their attendance.

Proposer: Jamie-Lukas Campbell (Faculty Representative)
 Seconder: Salim Usman (International Students' Association Chairperson)

This motion has been deferred to the Council meeting 4 December 2023, at the request of the proposer.

10.2 **Extending Solidarity to Edinburgh University Student's Association (EUSA)**

Motion to take the first step in renewing our supportive stance towards the Boycott, Divestment, Sanction (BDS) campaign; by extending solidarity to Edinburgh University Student's Association (EUSA) following heavy-handed policing at a Justice for Palestine Society protest.

This Council notes:

On Friday 20th October members of Edinburgh University Justice for Palestine Society, Socialist Worker Student Society, Stop the War Coalition, and other protest attendees were subjected to heavy-handed police tactics due to engaging and partaking in a protest organised by the Justice for Palestine Society. (Viewable at Edinburgh University Justice for Palestine Society Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/eu_jps/)

Due to this the EUSA has drafted an open letter to their vice chancellor Professor Sir Peter Mathieson seeking explicit affirmation for Edinburgh University's student's right to protest as well as protection from further heavy-handed policing on their campus. (Viewable at: <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/news/article/protesting-without-intimidation>)

That although it is situation that is not currently directly transferable to Queen's University Belfast (QUB) or Queen's Students' Union (QSU), it remains that many of the concerns in the open letter to EUSA's respective vice-chancellor, are concerns, fears and feelings shared by QSU and its members. The sentiments at EUSA have in turn created requests for their VC.

It is possible that now may be the time that we make the same requests from our own Vice-Chancellor, or extending solidarity would appear to be tokenistic in its first efforts.

Queen's Students' Union's support in these regards during last year's policy change to post-graduate tuition fees, accommodation allocation as well as the support for students affected by aggressive but also successful industrial action was insufficient and at times non-existent.

It remains that whilst in this current state students who were affected were used as pawns during negotiations.

Recently students who may have wished to engage in direct action have felt that the Students' Union offered very little to no support in educational sessions highlighting acts that have taken place at QUB and QSU historically. Furthermore, there have been little to no sessions detailing your rights or responsibilities when partaking in such acts.

QUB and QSU have both offered little to no support in the means of support for organised campaigning or fundraising by students wishing to dedicate their resources for those of which are affected by the ongoing conflict in the middle east; And all protests thus far have had little to no representation from a designated QSU student bloc.

That the QSU's supportive stance for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign as seen in OTH/2016/8/10 is at this point totally insufficient and at this point a prominent display of a contradiction within itself. At the present, it serves only as a performative motion, consisting of words only. When at QSU, a stark contrast and insult is put upon its members when history has in the past shown QSU and its effectiveness at times such as these.

This Council believes:

That by extending solidarity from QSU to EUSA and their policy to protect members of EUSA and members of Edinburgh University Justice for Palestine Society due to heavy handed policing we are doing the right thing. It should not need to be stated that students should not need to suffer from heavy handed policing whilst exercising their right to protesting.

That many international students as well as students from other parts of the UK and indeed Southern Ireland feel intimidated and threatened by the Police Service of Northern Ireland due to the nature of the police as an institution as well as historical conflict within the city of Belfast itself.

That if we are to nourish and protect students right to protest, we are by extending solidarity to EUSA, taking a proactive stance in support of their rights as well as our own as well.

That by extending solidarity with students because of events that occurred due to a protest in support of the Palestinian people, we are taking the first step in renewing our stance in support of the BDS campaign.

That QSU should create, edit, or facilitate a process to enable a failsafe protocol at times in which a student voice is desperately in need or want, but for whatever reason there may not be the ability at an officer level for one to exist.

If Student Voice is going to become increasingly more valued than allowing and supporting students at times of civil dispute or global conflict is an effective and efficient way of doing so.

Therefore, this Council mandates:

That as a union we should create a way of signing the open letter to support EUSA and their policy to protect members of EUSA and members of Edinburgh University Justice for Palestine Society and by doing so sending our solidarity following the events highlighted in Edinburgh University. We do this not because it reached national news, but because it is the right thing to do.

That we look at how we refresh and renew our positive and proactive, vocal, and visible support for the BDS campaign.

That by highlighting and subsequently exploring the almost frightening relevance in the following extract from the open letter from EUSA – QSU officers should explore the relevancy and requirement of not only supporting this letter but also drafting a much-needed similarly tailored to suit letter to Sir Professor Ian Greer in much needed timely fashion:

“While we understand that the University cannot forbid Police from our campuses, it is vital that the University's own Security Team intervene and work to deescalate situations like those that took place last Friday. We believe the response to Friday's action was disproportionate. It unnecessarily escalated an already tense situation on-campus and posed a real threat to student safety. If the University felt disciplinary action was necessary, the University's Code of Student Conduct provides plenty of scope, without any need for Police intervention.

The University's commitment to freedom of expression and to students' wellbeing must extend to student protestors. These protestors hold the University and political leaders to

account. It is unacceptable for the University to prioritise the protection of its property over the protection of its students.

We are therefore calling on the University to:

- Make a public statement affirming students' right to protest, on and off our campuses.*
- Commit to a proportionate, Security-first approach to managing on-campus protests, which prioritises student welfare and is in-line with the University's duty of care towards students.*
- Ensure University Security staff are equipped with the skills to effectively deescalate situations, including at protests, and engage with students from marginalised groups.*
- Failure to address this issue risks exacerbating the distrust between the University and its students.*
- We therefore urge you to take action as a matter of urgency."*

That by sending a similarly drafted and relevant open letter to Sir Professor Ian Greer in the wake of supporting EUSA and their policy to protect members of EUSA and members of Edinburgh University Justice for Palestine Society; we are alleviating some concerns, fears as well as clarifying some of, clarifications and considerations that are needed and currently posed by students represented by QSU.

To investigate the scope for the possible development of a student initiative that will not only live up to the historical achievements that members of QSU of the past have been a part of, but that also allows students who are yet to become members must look forward to. This initiative should be supported but not run by officers, this to avoid ineffective activism, favouritism as well as performativism. The initiative should take consideration as to not be labelled or structured club or society as it can leave it to fall foul and victim to the various internal issues that can arise from within them. Although the initiative for QSU could benefit from the benefits that clubs and societies on a huge scale so consideration of that should be brought into the development process. The scope for a newly designed internal structure, revamp of responsibilities as well as inclusivity of membership that becomes mandatory for political societies could also be considered during this initiative shaping process.

Proposer: Chris Beaumont (School Representative)
 Seconder: Aoife Press (Student)

Chris Beaumont moved the motion.

Total Valid Votes Cast: 38

Votes In Favour: 15
 Votes Against: 15
 Abstentions: 8

Following a vote, the motion fell.

10.3 **Referendum: Decolonise, Demilitarise and Democratise Queen's University Belfast**

Council approves calling of a Referendum to determine the opinion of Student Members on the following issue:

Decolonise, Demilitarise and Democratise Queen's University Belfast

Background:

- Queen’s University Belfast handles its investments through BlackRock, the largest investor into oil, gas and coal of any investment management company.
- Queen’s University Belfast, via BlackRock investment management fund, invests its money into companies such as Elbit Systems, which is an Israel based defence electronics company that creates spy-ware and military aircraft that are utilised in the illegal occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, contributing towards 85% of Israeli arms.
- Blackrock also invests in banks that use funding to prop up illegal settlements in the West Bank, in violation of International Law.
- Queen’s University Belfast also has strong academic and partnership ties to the Thales Group, an arms company which specialises in the development of missile systems. These are sold to governments which have a record of using these weapons to subjugate workers, attack refugee camps and destroy communities. Thales also jointly operates with Elbit Systems on the manufacture of Israeli drones. Queen’s works with Thales to provide placements for students.
- Queen’s University Belfast has a long-standing relationship with BAE Systems, which over the course of the Saudi-Yemeni War, sent £16.7 billion to the Saudi Arabia government. This conflict has directly killed nearly 20,000 Yemeni civilians. There were numerous allegations of bribery levelled at BAE Systems and their political involvement has been substantial in the UK and the US. It is also a major seller to Turkey which is operating a bombing campaign in Rojava/North and East Syria.
- Queen’s University Belfast’s Chancellor Hilary Clinton has been a strong supporter of colonialism and has openly supported the bombing campaign against Gaza which has led to over 10,000 dead including over 4,000 children.
- Many of the civilians of this war have been killed while in refugee camps.
- Due to the decentralised nature of Schools and Faculties, there are ties to the military and to fossil fuel industry that are yet unknown.

The Students’ Union Has the Following Related Policy Positions:

- *An Antifascist and Antiracist Students’ Union* (Policy Ref: COM/2022/6/7) and *Anti-Fascism & Anti-Racism* (Policy Ref: COM/2019/6/2) which solidify QSU as an antifascist and antiracist union.
- *Establishing a Campaign to Make QUB a University of Sanctuary* (Policy Ref: COM/2018/6/2) which supports the University to become a University of Sanctuary.
- *Justice and Human Rights for Palestine* (Policy Ref: OTH/2016/8/10) that maintains the Union supporting human right and justice in Palestine and the Union’s support for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions of the Israeli occupation.
- *Fossil Fuel Divestment* (Policy Ref: OTH/2015/8/2) Motion 8.05 which calls for the divestment of all fossil fuels by Queen’s University Belfast, and *Amendments to the QUB Green New Deal* (Policy Ref: DGR/2021/4/1) which included a demand for fossil fuel divestment, which has been incorporated into the University’s Strategy 2030 corporate plan.

Queen’s Students’ Union Believes that:

- A university should not act as a funnel for fossil fuel companies or the military industrial complex.

- Sheltering investments through BlackRock is a move taken to avoid accountability for unethical investment practices.
- BlackRock's large portfolio of fossil fuel companies, arms companies, unethical banking practices and more undermines the principles behind the great work done to reach Net-Zero carbon emissions and any attempts to become a University of Sanctuary.
- Queens should not invest in or collaborate with companies that trade arms to countries that violate international law.
- The military-industrial-academic-complex creates incentives to support the psychological, moral, and material interests of colonial markets and the destructive enterprise of war.
- University financial and academic ties should reflect the values of the students, staff and academics who make up the University.
- The University's decisions should not be based around the interests of profit but the interests of the staff and the students that make up the University.
- That, given the current model of university-for-profit, there should be democratic accountability for any and all partnerships, research and investments to ensure these are representative of the ethos and values of the constituents that make up the University.
- If the University wants to become more international, it should take an active and public stance on promoting peace and equality internationally and oppose colonisation and occupation.
- If the University wants to become a University of Sanctuary, it should not have a relationship with organisations which cause displacement and are used to target refugee camps.
- If the University wants to be seen as a symbol of peace, it cannot have Hilary Clinton representing it as Chancellor while she continues to make statements that condone and support war crimes and ethnic cleansing.
- The University cannot claim to have a neutral stance on the Israel-Palestine issue while it is financially, politically and culturally supporting a state which is committing atrocities.

Queen's Students' Union Agrees:

- That the Union put pressure on the Senate, the Planning and Finance Committee, the Investment Committee, and the respective Schools for the University to cut all contact with any organisations which supply arms to states or institutions which violate international law.
- That the Union put pressure on the Senate, the Planning and Finance Committee, and the Investment Committee to completely divest from Blackrock.
- For any replacement for Blackrock must be reviewed by a group involving democratic representation from all Unions on Campus.
- That the Union put pressure on the Senate and any 'Special Committee' (set up to appoint a Chancellor) to dismiss Hilary Clinton as Chancellor and to boycott and organise protests against any events she attends as Chancellor of this University.
- That the Union put pressure on governmental reform within the University to ensure that the Investment Committee, Planning and Finance Committee and Senate have at least 50% voting membership given to the Unions representing the students and workers on campus.
- That the Special Committee must include a 50% voting membership to the decision to appoint a Chancellor.

- That the decision of the Special Committee must be put to a referendum across all staff and students.

Proposer: Aidan Moran (Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement)
Secunder: Salim Usman (International Students' Association Chairperson)

Aidan Moran proposed the motion.

Total Valid Votes Cast: 38

Votes In Favour: 32

Votes Against: 2

Abstentions: 4

Following a vote, this motion was carried.

10.4 Provisions for Pregnant Students & Parents

Council notes:

- There is no Individual Student Support Agreement (ISSA) like structure for pregnant students, this means they need to apply multiple times for extensions for the same underlying cause (pregnancy and all it entails.)
- There is no specific breastfeeding room in the Students' Union, and whilst we recognise that breastfeeding is welcome all throughout the SU, the option of a private comfortable room is not one that a student can currently avail of.
- There are no nappies/baby food/baby wipes available currently in the Pantry.

Council believes that:

- The lack of the ISSA like structure and the subsequent need to constantly apply for an extension for the same situation causes unnecessary hassle and stress for pregnant students.
- The lack of a breastfeeding room can cause hassle for a student who wishes to avail of such a room. There are breastfeeding rooms across campus, however a student should not be made to leave the SU to avail of one of these when one could be opened within the SU. This motion does not seek to undermine those who choose to breastfeed publicly throughout the SU, but simply offers more choice to parents.
- The cost-of-living crisis is hitting students hard, and in particular those with dependents. The Pantry was opened to ease financial stress on students; however, the lack of nappies/baby food/ baby wipes, for some, furthers this stress.

Council resolves that:

- Pregnant students should only have to apply once for an extension package which will apply for the remainder of the academic year. SU will look into this, and push for this to be implemented. This will ease stress and enable students to be treated holistically.
- A private comfortable feeding room for babies will be looked into by the SU to be created from an existing room in the SU. This will allow for the comfortability of students, to use the SU with more ease as they know they can avail of this room, if necessary, rather than move across campus with their dependant.

- SU will push for the Pantry to provide nappies, baby food, and baby wipes. This will ease the cost-of-living crisis effect on students with dependants and allows parents to know in an emergency that their child will not go without toiletries.

Proposer: Róisín Keenan (Women Students' Association Chairperson)
 Seconder: Sajid Khan (Student Officer Equality and Diversity)

Róisín Keenan proposed this motion.

Total Valid Votes Cast: 38

Votes In Favour: 38

Votes Against: 0

Abstentions: 0

Following a vote, this motion was carried.

11. REPORT OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD AND RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 Report of the Management Board

Beth Elder, the Students' Union President gave a verbal report of Management Board.

This report was accepted.

12. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 Report of the Executive Management Committee

Beth Elder, the Students' Union President gave a verbal report of Executive Management Committee.

This report was accepted.

12.2 Report of the Union President (July 2023) SUC/P/23/44

This report was accepted.

12.3 Report of the Union President (August 2023) SUC/P/23/45

This report was accepted.

12.4 Report of the Union President (September 2023) SUC/P/23/46

This report was accepted.

12.4 Report of the Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement (July 2023) SUC/P/23/47

This report was accepted.

12.5 Report of the Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement (Aug 2023) SUC/P/23/48

This report was accepted.

12.6 Report of the Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement (Sep 2023) SUC/P/23/49

This report was accepted.

12.14 Report of the Student Officer Equality & Diversity (July 2023) SUC/P/23/50

This report was accepted.

12.15 Report of the Student Officer Equality & Diversity (August 2023) SUC/P/23/51

This report was accepted.

12.16 Report of the Student Officer Equality & Diversity (September 2023) SUC/P/23/52

This report was accepted.

12.18 Report of the Student Officer Postgraduate (July 2023) SUC/P/23/53

This report was accepted.

12.19 Report of the Student Officer Postgraduate (August 2023) SUC/P/23/54

This report was accepted.

12.20 Report of the Student Officer Postgraduate (September 2023) SUC/P/23/55

This report was accepted.

12.10 Report of the Student Officer Education (July 2023) SUC/P/23/56

This report was accepted.

12.11 Report of the Student Officer Education (August 2023) SUC/P/23/57

This report was accepted.

12.12 Report of the Student Officer Education (September 2023) SUC/P/23/58

This report was accepted.

12.18 Report of the Student Officer Welfare (July 2023) SUC/P/23/59

This report was accepted.

12.19 Report of the Student Officer Welfare (August 2023) SUC/P/23/60

This report was accepted.

12.20 Report of the Student Officer Welfare (September 2023) SUC/P/23/61

This report was accepted.

Student Officer Reports for October 2023 and November 2023 shall be considered at the December Statutory Meeting of Council.

13. REPORTS FROM OTHER UNION COMMITTEES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Reports for Committee meetings held between the October and November Statutory Meetings of Council shall be considered at the December meeting of Council.

14. REPORTS FROM UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES

There were none.

15. CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS

There were none.

16. QUESTIONS (TO ELECTED STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES)

There were none.

17. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

18. DATE OF THIRD MEETING OF THE STUDENTS' UNION COUNCIL

The Third Meeting of the Students' Union Council 2023-24 will take place on Tuesday 5 December 2023, In the Blue Sky Room, in the Students' Union Building.

Agenda Items Deadline: Friday 1 December 2023, 9.00 a.m.

Constitutional Amendments Deadline: Friday 17 November 2023, 9.00 a.m.