ABERYSTWYTH STUDENT’S UNION

**October 2023 SENEDD**

*Monday October 30th, 2023, 18:00-20:00*

Agenda

Welcome

1. Welcome and Apologies for any Absences.
2. Approval of Last meetings minutes.
3. Any Matters arising from the minutes.
4. Electing a Deputy Chair.
5. Presidents Report.

Lapsing Policy

1. Lapsing Policy one: Five Officers?
2. Lapsing Policy two: Compulsory Consent Training

Ideas

1. Idea one: Re-statement of Support for Striking Staff
2. Idea two: Replace the Traitor King
3. Idea three: Sex Work Is Just That, Work
4. Idea four: Establish a Trans+ Volunteer Officer among the Liberation Officers Elected each year by AberSU.

End of meeting comments

1. Any other Business.
2. Date of the next meeting.
3. End of meeting.

**Minutes**

**Senedd**

**24/04/2023**

# Members in attendance:

* Felix Smart (Deputy Chair of Senedd. Sports. Chair of Meeting)
* Aisleen Sturrock (FTO)
* Rachel Barwise (FTO) – *left meeting following Idea 4*
* Dafi Jones (FTO)
* Elizabeth Manners (FTO)
* Cameron Curry (FTO)
* Josh Rutty (Socs)
* Elena Bloomquist (VO)
* Zoë Hayne (VO)
* Bayanda Vundamina (VO)
* Tanaka Chikomo (VO) – *left meeting following Idea 4*
* Aimé Tonkin (Sports)
* Xavier Powley (VO)
* Bamikole Akinsehinde (VO)
* Dylan Cashon (VO)

# Also in attendance:

* Jacob Webb (Head of Student Voice)
* Angus-Alastair Walker
* Rebecca Hodgetts
* Charlotte Davies
* Luzie Völckers
* Elain Gwynedd
* Lloyd Warburton

**Absent:**

* Danny Deeprose-Brenan (Chair)
* Edward Buxton (VO)
* Matt Owen (Socs)
* Rowan Scholes (VO)
* Lowri Ellen Bebb (VO)
* Will Rutton (Socs)
* Thea Stott (VO)
* Mingshan Fan (VO)
* Kirsty Usher (VO)
* Dylan Lewis (Sports)
* Maddy Hill (Sports)

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| **Agenda** | **Item** | **Notes** | **Voting Breakdown** | | |
| **Yes** | **No** | **Abstain** |
| **Welcome and Opening Remarks** | The Deputy Union Chairperson welcomed everyone present at the meeting | 15 Senedd Members were in attendance and the meeting was deemed quorate. |  |  |  |
| Apologies for Absence | Apologies were received from Rachel Barwise, Tanaka Chikomo for leaving early. Isaac Peat and Zoe Bainbridge apologised for being unable to attend and resigned prior to the meeting. |  |  |  |
| **Officers' Report** |  | Aisleen Sturrock, Elizabeth Manners, Cameron Curry, and Rachel Barwise reported on Union activity. The Written Officer Report can be found [**here**](President%20Report%20April%202023%20English_.pdf). There were no questions. |  |  |  |
| **Idea 1:** Should the Union hold an annual SHAG week? | Proposer speech | Aisleen Sturrock presented the idea to Senedd. |  |  |  |
| Questions | * **Charlotte D –** asked about HIV stigma and birth control. Questioned Kink workshop – mentioned kink promotes eroticised violence against women. There was an absence of sex education that addressed contraception and STIs. Aisleen clarified that sex education was addressed (e.g. Clitorarti & Kink workshop and on social media.) * **Allister W –** asked if it could be brought forward as it is held late in the year. |  |  |  |
| Invitation for additional speakers (for or against) | * **Zoë** **H –** suggested for more educational elements in the future. Emphasized the value in talking about issues not openly talked about (e.g., Kink). * **Luzie V –** appreciated the great emphasis on consent. * **Elizabeth M –** suggested it should always be based around student involvement and student interest. Noted it doesn’t have to occur at the same time each year. |  |  |  |
| Vote | **Passed** | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| **Idea 2:** Should the University and AberSU suspend their banking with fossil fuel investment banks and switch to a more ethical, green bank instead? | Proposer speech | Luzie Völckers presented the idea to Senedd. |  |  |  |
| Questions | * **Josh R** – asked how much it is going to cost. Aisleen was not able to give specifics but emphasized the need for a local branch as the SU accepts cash. Elizabeth also clarified it would not affect Sports and Soc funds. |  |  |  |
| Invitation for additional speakers (for or against) | * **Zoë** **H –** noted the need for additional research to be done on how to implement. * **Alastair W** – raised concerns about cost. * **Elizabeth M –** should get Student input * **Bayanda V –** said the idea provided a basis to hold next year’s team to * **Josh R –** suggested having a vote on the final bank the Union proposes. |  |  |  |
| Vote | **Passed** | 92.86% | 0% | 7.14% |
| **Idea 3:** Should AberSU reduce the number of Faculty Officers? | Proposer speech | Zoë Hayne presented the idea to Senedd. |  |  |  |
| Questions | * **Xavier P –** asked how it would affect the vote just done. * **Josh R** – asked how would it affect Senedd positions and how would PG students’ interests be filled if all positions are filled by UG students. Zoe said they would use the Academic Representation network to get feedback. Elizabeth said all full-time officers represent UGs and PGs. |  |  |  |
| Invitation for additional speakers (for or against) | * **Zoë** **H –** noted it would have limited impact on the number of elected officers in practice as there are rarely more than 3 (out of 6) Faculty Officer positions filled. * **Bamikole A –** suggested students should be encouraged to take up the posts. Nothing to lose to keep them. * **Josh R –** the role hasn’t been filled in 5 years; the idea would not make much of a difference. * **Dylan C –** stated if no one has filled the role, doesn’t mean no one ever will. * **Alastair W –** suggested the electoral cycle being out-of-sync with the PG application cycle may be one of the causes. |  |  |  |
| Vote | **Passed** | 53.85% | 7.69% | 38.46% |
| **Idea 4:** Should AberSU continue to support trans and gender non-conforming students by providing gender affirming products? | Proposer speech | Rachel Barwise presented the idea to Senedd on Cameron Curry’s behalf. |  |  |  |
| Questions | * **Dylan C –** asked about how to access the gender affirming products. Cameron said to [email/speak to Wellbeing Officer or Head of People and Wellbeing](https://www.abersu.co.uk/changeaber/campaigns/beyondthebinary/). * **Elena B** – asked what type of packers are used. Cameron noted they were from [Spectrum Outfitters](https://spectrumoutfitters.co.uk/). * **Rebecca H –** asked why we need this as policy given the initiative already exists. Rachel said it is one of Cameron’s priorities and clarified it is not Union policy. |  |  |  |
| Invitation for additional speakers (for or against) | * **Aisleen S –** emphasized that the products are safe. * **Xavier P –** appreciated that the items can be picked up at the SU. |  |  |  |
| Vote | **Passed** | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| **Idea 5:** Should the Students’ Union work to end its use of single use plastic? | Proposer speech | Aisleen Sturrock presented the idea to Senedd. |  |  |  |
| Questions | * **Josh R –** asked how to mitigate against not being able to use single use plastic cups. Aisleen suggested deposit cups. * **Alastair W –** asked how it would affect products such as condoms. * **Josh R –** asked if it would also apply to balloons. Aisleen said SU already have a policy against balloons. * **Elena B –** asked whether the SU can ensure single use plastics are enabled when essential for Health & Safety. |  |  |  |
| Invitation for additional speakers (for or against) | * **Zoë** **H –** said it supports the university work and stated single use plastics are not needed at Fresher’s Fair. |  |  |  |
| Vote | **Not Quorate by 1 member** | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| **Idea 6:** Should the Union help campaign for the University to take down the statue of King Edward VIII and replace it with someone better? | Proposer speech | Angus-Alastair Walker presented the idea to Senedd. |  |  |  |
| Questions | * **Josh R –** asked how long it would take to take statue down? Aisleen said it is unknown but believes the university will be OK with doing so. |  |  |  |
| Invitation for additional speakers (for or against) |  |  |  |  |
| Vote | **Not Quorate by 1 member** | 92% | 0% | 0% |
| **Idea 7:** Should the Senedd and Students Union reiterate its support and solidarity for all staff members taking industrial action - up to and including strike action - in this, and future, disputes? | Proposer speech | Angus-Alastair Walker presented the idea to Senedd. |  |  |  |
| Questions |  |  |  |  |
| Invitation for additional speakers (for or against) |  |  |  |  |
| Vote | **Not Quorate by 1 member** | 83.33% | 0% | 16.67% |
| **Idea 8:** Should AberSU enable students to be able to re-open nominations for Volunteer officer positions? | Proposer speech | Aisleen Sturrock presented the idea to Senedd. |  |  |  |
| Questions | **Rebecca H –** asked about the difference between VONC (vote-of-no-confidence) and RON (re-open nominations).  **Josh R –** asked why it cannot be implemented to FTOs. Elena said it would mean someone loses their job.  **Alastair W –** asked how to get rid of officers. Aisleen said 250 students would need to sign a petition for VONC. Same would be needed to RON. Alastair raised possibility of constant elections due to low threshold.  **Charlotte D –** mentioned that she had experienced abuse when people attempted to VONC her. She asked if someone has been RON’ed, can they run again? Aisleen said she is unsure. A VONC puts an individual on trial, while RON less so. |  |  |  |
| Invitation for additional speakers (for or against) | **Bamikole A –** said it shouldn’t only apply to volunteers. Rebecca said there are legal aspects in employment laws for FTOs.  **Rebecca H –** said it provides an alternative to avoid abuse. Although there must be a good reason for RON or VONC. Students should speak to staff or FTOs. |  |  |  |
| Vote | **Not Quorate by 1 member** | 91.67% | 0% | 8.33% |
| **Idea 9:** Should AberSU lobby the University to ensure it keeps to its Plastic Free commitments? | Proposer speech | Aisleen Sturrock presented the idea to Senedd. |  |  |  |
| Questions |  |  |  |  |
| Invitation for additional speakers (for or against) |  |  |  |  |
| Vote | **Not Quorate by 1 member** | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| **Any Other Business** | **Next Senedd**: 2023-24 Academic Year | | | | |

**FTO=Full Time Officer**

**VO=Volunteer Officer**

**Sports=Sports Rep**

**Socs=Societies Rep**

Lapsing Policy 1

5 Officers?

Passed by: Senedd

Passed on: 21/02/21

Officer responsible: President

Summary: How many Officers do we need?

Details:

I think we should ensure that next academic year AberSU reviews the roles and responsibilities of our Full-Time Officers. I have spoken to other Unions with similar student populations to ours (of roughly 8000) and most have fewer officers but still comfortably manage to share the workload between them. Considering the current changes to university experiences and priorities I think now is a really important time to revaluate the team to ensure we continue to support all students in the best way we can. Doing this research will also help us decide if officer wages are the most impactful way for AberSU to spend its money whilst ensuring then Union delivers on its promises to students.

Submitted By: Nathaniel Pidcock

Lapsing Policy 2

Compulsory Consent Training

Passed by: Senedd

Passed On: 25/03/2019

Officer Responsible: Wellbeing Officer

Summary: Provide Aberystwyth Students with compulsory consent training.

Details:

A lot of university students are faced with situations that are complex. One of the more problematic ones include when situations turn sexual. Why we don't already have compulsory consent training for students surprises me. Teaching students what consent is and how to get/give it would help clarify many situations for students. It would help students be more comfortable and there are programs online which are already set up to provide to students.  
  
This idea was amended before being passed so that the Union lobby the University to fund the delivery of any training.

Submitted By: Bethan Philips

Re-Statement of Support for striking staff

Following the less-than-ideal statement by the Students Union about the strikes, we believe it is necessary to reinforce our support for striking staff.

**Officer Responsible**: President

**Submitted by**: Dylan Lewis-Rowlands

**Summary**: Should the Senedd and Students Union reiterates its support and solidarity for all staff members taking industrial action - up to and including strike action - in this, and future, disputes?

## Details:

The Senedd and Students Union reiterates its support and solidarity for all staff members taking industrial action - up to and including strike action - in this, and future, disputes.

The interests of students and the strikers are one and the same.

The administrative workload of lecturers, fewer staff members, and greater insecurity has led to hours meant for actual academia and education are instead spent on fulfilling the universities increasingly high administrative burden.

We ask the officers of the students union to again endorse the position democratically agreed at the AGM to support the strikes and striking staff members.

We reinforce and reiterate that their working conditions are our learning conditions.

## Notes:

As well as a statement, the Students Union could;

* Issue guidance for students about their rights
* Encourage students to not cross a picket line
* Advocate on behalf of students to ensure that anyone supporting strike action is not penalised.
* Work with the UCU to ensure that student voice is represented in discussions, and on the picket lines.

Replace the traitor king.

Take down the statue of the Traitor King and replace it with someone better.

**Officer Responsible**: President

**Submitted by**: Angus-Alastair Walker Stewart

**Summary**: Should the Union help campaign for the University to take down the statue of King Edward VIII and replace it with someone better?

## Details:

Outside Old College there is a statue of King Edward VIII, the Nazi-sympathiser who abdicated to marry Wallis Simpson.

Given the Royal Family **ostracised** him and it's the only statue in the UK of him, it's high time the students began a campaigned to remove it and replace it either with Charles III (who learnt Welsh at Aber) or someone just not a Nazi.

First, the SU endorsing a policy of change for the statue and issuing a statement against its continued existence.

Then sustained internal & external pressure on the University to remove it. Make a bold statement each time the University refuses, invite the Cambrian Times get the local community discussing about who to replace it, etc.

## <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/edward-viii-britains-traitor-king>

Presented By: Dylan Grant

Sex Work is Just That, Work

Union to make a stance to be supportive of sex work

**Officer Responsible**: Wellbeing

**Submitted By:** Helen Cooper

**Summary**: Should AberSU take a pro-sex worker stance?

**Details:**

Working in the sex industry comes with a lot of stigmas. Under the Cost-of-Living Crisis students are more inclined to do gravitate to perceived easier ways to make money, one being Only Fans. Seeing other people’s success or ease with this only incentivises it more. This policy is more about being able to speak openly about this, the union to support people who want to pursue this and ultimately make them aware of the safe ways to go about it. That being regarding their identities, careers and futures at the university.

Establish a Trans+ Volunteer Officer among the Liberation Officers elected each year by AberSU.

**Officer Responsible:** President

**Submitted By**: Dax Aziraphale FitzMedrud

**Summary:** Should AberSU establish a Trans+ Volunteer Officer role as one of the Liberation Officers?

**Details:**

Aberystwyth has been named the gay capital of Wales. In the 2021 census, Ceredigion had the highest proportion of people over 16 who identified as a different gender identity from the one assigned to them at birth (0.23%), which was the highest percentage for a local authority in Wales and the fifth-highest in the UK ([Office for National Statistics](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/genderidentity/bulletins/genderidentityenglandandwales/census2021)). Trans+ liberation, though it is currently represented in the role of LGBTQ+ officer, often requires additional tactics and considerations beyond those adopted by a broader LGBTQ+ movement. For instance, trans+ students face difficulties in accessing healthcare, toilet facilities, and trans-inclusive health and safety information where individuals with LGBQ+ romantic and sexual identities do not have the same barriers. This is a pressing concern now because of the recent, popular backlash against trans rights. Establishing a Trans+ Volunteer Officer would establish an elected individual to continue work on trans+ liberation regardless of the identity and interests of the LGBTQ+ officer, maintaining motion within the union toward trans+ and wider LGBTQ+ liberation simultaneously. At the moment there are two, jointly elected LGBTQ+ Volunteer Officers. Since the Autumn Election has passed for the 2023-24 Volunteer Officer committee, if this idea passes, one of the incumbent LGBTQ+ Volunteer Officers would fill the Trans+ Volunteer Officer role for 2023-24, as the joint officers have already split responsibilities along these lines since their election for the 2022-23 academic year.