

Falmouth & Exeter Students' Union

Student Council 2022/2023

Date	03.02.2023	Time	14:00
Location	DDM Seminar I & MS Teams		
Part Time Officers	Rebecca Hunt – Chair (RH) Caius Datt – UG Education Officer, Exeter (CD) Francesca Whetstone – Community Officer (FW) Jack Mullock – Accommodation Officer (JMu) Jack Myrick – Open Officer, Falmouth (JMy) Jordan Pidwell – Volunteering Officer (JP) Amber Clifton - Open Officer, Exeter (AC)		
SU Presidents	Kira Orchard - President Welfare and Inclusivity (KO) Luke Court - President Falmouth (LC) Georgi Griskeviciene - President Exeter (GG) Lauren Taylor - President Student Experience (LT)		
SU Staff	Penny Davies – Student Voice Coordinator, Falmouth (PD) - Minutes Secretary Matt Parker – Student Voice Manager (MP) Charlie Atkinson – Student Voice Coordinator, Exeter (CA)		
Apologies			
Observers			

	Item	Type	Lead
1	<p>Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair Welcome • No apologies received • Due to a busy agenda, agenda item 'Holding Presidents' To Account' may be skipped depending on time at the end of the session. 	Verbal	Chair
2	Ratification of minutes	To approve	Chair
3	<p>Make it Mandatory for Every Society President to Pass EDI Training</p> <p>CD: As it has come to my attention over the last year, there's been a few issues with being on the same wavelength on how people should treat each other in societies. A problem when you're in a leadership role or on committees. There is an acceptable way of how to treat people. On the SU website there is some form of EDI training available from 2021, the attendance was only 4 people, which wasn't great. It should be made that if you're on an important role in a society it should be mandatory to attend something like this before you start doing anything in your role - training that's more interactive to show some understanding. There is nothing mandatory at the moment, I'm just saying that I think there should be.</p> <p>MP: That was delivered to student reps by a member of Exeter university, it's old training that is tailored towards Exeter students specifically but provided to all reps. It's delivered by Rae Preston from Exeter University.</p> <p>CA: We have training booked in for the 15th of this month for Exeter EDI reps.</p> <p>LT: I completely and utterly agree. I'm setting up an accreditation scheme to show how well societies are working. Using this mandate as feedback, if it goes through, one of the requirements to get a bronze accreditation will be at least one person, e.g. SU President gets EDI training, a gold accreditation means all members have had EDI training.</p> <p>Luke: I'd like to second that I completely agree. The existing stuff is delivered to Exeter from Exeter, with all things in the students' union we need to make sure that there's a bond between the two. We have a habit of making things Exeter centric despite 70% of our membership is Falmouth Students.</p> <p>KO: Might be worth adding, bystander training can be accessed by all students through Exeter, so when it comes to looking at societies and things, it might be worth looking at making it internal, because even</p>	Verbal	CD

	Item	Type	Lead
	<p>though it is accessible to everyone I don't know if it's promoted to society and committee members.</p> <p>CD: Do you think it's feasible to say unless a committee member is signed off on this your committee can't do events?</p> <p>Luke: My only concern with that, Lauren's done a lot of work breaking down barriers and about getting students involved. Putting barriers in place might impact engagement.</p> <p>RH: Maybe it's just at least one committee member or the president.</p> <p>CD: I agree that everyone should be able to take part in societies, but we're encouraging people to take part in these activities so people should be members of groups that represent their values.</p> <p>RH: are you guys happy to talk about that more? It's a shame we don't have more people, I'm sure more people would want to be involved.</p> <p>MOTION PASSES Yes – 9 No – 0</p>		
4	<p>Proposal for the SU to publicly endorse the Cornwall Council Devolution Deal</p> <p>LC: Falmouth university are interested in getting involved in the Cornwall council devolution deal talks. Me and Lauren went to a public meeting last Friday and have done our own research. There was a panel of council members and we were able to ask questions about what the deal entails, and what we can do as an SU if we choose to support it. It's a deal where the democratic structures of how Cornwall are able to make decisions and govern themselves is put to the people of Cornwall rather than the council members. This deal means the elected leader of Cornwall Council will be put to a public vote. They will get an elected mayor that will go to Westminster. They will also get a 390 million pound investment from the gov., 360 to use over the next 30 years to develop many things, the most relevant things to our members including sustainable business growth in many sectors. Creative arts, aerospace, mining. 30 million to be spent to develop affordable housing. It's a long term thing so this council won't likely see the fruits of that work but Falmouth and Exeter students down the line will, and we have a responsibility to the community as the only Students' Union as well. The cons to this is that the decision to accept the devolution deal isn't going to public vote, it's being voted on by the council, but there is a public consultation. As an organisation, we can write a letter to</p>	Verbal	Chair

	Item	Type	Lead
	<p>the council in favour or not in favour of the deal. Is this something we want to support or not?</p> <p>CD: Would there be any problems with this, you've mentioned positives but would there be any cons?</p> <p>LC: That I'm not 100% sure on. Right now, it's a vote for elected reps in Cornwall to vote for who would be their leader, this would be devolved to the public, I suppose that opens up risk of, do we believe the public are the right people to make those decisions? But to me that makes it more democratic to put it to the people as to who represents their voice in Westminster.</p> <p>FW: Can you think of any ways that it would affect us as a Students' Union specifically?</p> <p>LC: In the deal, they're going to pump lots of money into adult education, that does benefit the university in terms of widening participation. Falmouth will likely get a chunk of the money to put into other things, the end goal of both the SU and Falmouth is for people to have the best education. It's clear that Cornwall needs support when it comes to housing, for students and everyone – it would try and remedy some of those issues. My take on it is that it's clear that there has to be some change in Government in Cornwall, it's a county in the UK but it's one of the most deprived in Europe.</p> <p>JP: Could this block the SU's or the University's applications to other funding?</p> <p>LC: Nothing is guaranteed in terms of where the funding is going, but there's a good understanding from Falmouth that they will be able to access some of that money in relation to development of skills, sustainable business growth. I don't think it will impact other funding, this is more the council will get that money and they'll decide where it goes.</p> <p>JP: If we're writing a letter in support of opening a vote to the wider public, does this letter need to be voted off by the wider student community?</p> <p>LC: There's no guarantee that this deal will go through whether we write the letter of support or not. It's just whether we want to support the deal or not.</p> <p>MP: The public consultation closes on the 17th feb.</p> <p>RH: JP's point is valid, equally we have been elected to do that to an extent. But it seems like this is something that, there's no obvious</p>		

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	<p>con at this stage. As long as we're not supporting the political party but widening democracy...</p> <p>JP: Could we link the letter to our own democracy review? To say we're trying to widen participation, this is why we think this is the right thing to do.</p> <p>LC: Me and LT will take the lead on writing the letter, so we'll circulate in with you all before we send it.</p> <p>MOTION PASSES</p> <p>Yes – 9</p> <p>No – 0</p>		
5	<p>Make the Sustainability Café Fully Plant Based</p> <p>KO: I think it's a great idea, it makes sense, my only thing is that it will probably raise the cost, which has been a point of contention in our time as Presidents. It's just that risk of coming across as us asking people to have more expensive things.</p> <p>CD: Personally I don't see the problem in them having both available.</p> <p>LC: I'm inclined to not agree with this in the sense that Kira worked a lot with FXplus around being inclusive when it comes to dietary needs, worked hard to allow meat provisions at FXplus. Now there is halal meat on campus. To turn around and say actually we're getting rid of it, completely contradicts what we just worked on. Not that it's just that... There are already a lot of options, plenty of plant-based options as well if that's something that students want.</p> <p>JP: The thing that irritates me about the café slightly more is you see the, walking in with boxes wrapped in plastic. Sustainability is almost like a shield.</p> <p>RH: We need some level of freedom to decide for ourselves how far we commit to that lifestyle.</p> <p>CD: I just think further on the inclusivity point, if it was the other way round and there were no vegan options it would be a problem. Having options that suits everyone's dietary requirements and choices is probably more important.</p> <p>RH: You could investigate the true sustainability level of the meat option.</p>	Make A Change	Chair

	Item	Type	Lead
	<p>GG: sustainability option for meat and dairy, there are lots of sustainability options you could look at including locality, and the Sustainability café are already doing that. They have milk that's from Cornwall. I agree with everyone else on the inclusivity front.</p> <p>JP: I don't know how factual this is, but my understanding that the food comes from a company in Devon, so more than likely in a carbon guzzling machine to the campus. Whereas if we went to a local bakery and made sandwiches on campus that's much better.</p> <p>LC: we're in a weird time because this campus prides itself on how sustainable it is but also, we have the cost of living stuff that's important to students running alongside that. Being sustainable with that is difficult, it's a challenge we know as representatives. To get cheaper things we have to bulk buy elsewhere.</p> <p>JP: When we talk about equality diversity inclusivity we often forget about people who can't afford stuff. That inclusivity in terms of can they afford it is just as important as well.</p> <p>GG: There's an opportunity to potentially put some comms out about this to explain why we didn't vote on this for the students who submitted the make a change, and other options that could be looked into.</p> <p>LT: The wording of the make a change almost comes across as if they think we run the Sustainability café as well. We wouldn't be able to make change in the café, we'd have to campaign for it to happen. The wording makes me wonder whether they don't realise that the café is FXplus.</p> <p>JMy: I assumed it already was all plant based. What's the purpose of the sustainability cafe? if we're allowing more options isn't it just like any other cafe?</p> <p>FW: It's not about adding more options though, you're just keeping it as it is right now.</p> <p>RH: I'd be happy to have that conversation about locality and plastic waste, personally. Just so the response isn't a no, but there's deeper issues.</p> <p>GG: In response to JMy, I don't think the Sustainability café really know what it's out to do at the moment. In my opinion FXPlus haven't really thought about it, because now they've put Starbucks right next to it, which is much cheaper and not at all vegan or sustainable in any way. It's a difficult one as to why they've set up the</p>		

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	<p>sustainability café, that's a conversation for FXplus to have in terms of what they want to do with it.</p> <p>MOTION REJECTED</p> <p>LT: FXPlus has a board that makes decisions, made up of representatives from the universities, essentially there's always been an SU rep as an observer not a voter, even though GG and LC are voting members on the top board of the universities. What I'm trying to do is get a representative as a voting member on the FXplus board so we can have a say and not be an observer. Will update on this.</p>		
6	<p>Update Regarding UCU Strikes</p> <p>MP: Last council meeting, there was a fairly unanimous vote in favour of supporting UCU strikes. We're coming back because the decision was to take the endorsement to the end of the current mandate of the strike, originally to April. However, they are going to be re-balloting to extend their mandate. We don't want to get caught in the lurch and say we're doing to keep going rather than stop at the April time – we would like some steer from council, do we continue to the end of the strike period or give a date to finish? The presidents have a plan of what action they want to take forward relating to the strikes. Campaign work, input from council is wanted.</p> <p>LC: I want us to check we were fully aware that it was an 18 day strike mandate when we voted in support. I wanted ot run it past council again to check, do we understand how disruptive this strike is being and do we understand the nuance between Falmouth and Exeter as they're very different institutions. I want to make sure we're solid in our stance as a council before I talk to UCU and the Universities. Students are more angry this time around, but it appears to be anger at the Universities. Speaking for Falmouth, support for lecturers seems very strong, but it's not forgetting that this is massively impacting students. Not asking for a revote, just a discussion.</p> <p>JMy: I am worried that student opinion is turning against the strikes as they seem to be increasing and only really harm the students experience. The fact that students are the ones paying 9k a year is what I think is annoying people.</p> <p>LC: I met with the VC yesterday, we've been talking about issues with having student voices heard. The withheld funds from the last two rounds of Falmouth strikes went to student hardship – this time they'll use it to pay for associate lecturers and staff to keep things going (admin bits and bobs), lecturers to cover – almost as a cover. I</p>	Verbal	MP

	Item	Type	Lead
	<p>don't know if this is ok or if it negates the point of the strikes. The VC wanted me to know that it's the tactic of the UCU to be as disruptive as possible, it's not just university lecturers it's also coordinated with schools, so staff who are not intending to strike have to cover childcare and can't be in. People's lecturers might not be part of the union but still can't come in. It's designed to cause as much disruption to students.</p> <p>CD: My issue more isn't the disruption that strikers obviously need to cause but the uni's response in terms of mitigation. An email from Exeter said something along the lines of 'I understand this is different but just turn up for everything and teach your peers'. That is my main problem, I feel like whilst the reasons behind the disruption are valid, there isn't too much being done in ways of mitigation and helping people. I thought that email was unacceptable.</p> <p>RH: As a part time student that works, I can't work round that in my schedule. I agree that the way they're translating that to us isn't good.</p> <p>LC: The reason the universities are saying that is because the Union members aren't under obligation to tell the University if they're striking so the university doesn't know who is or isn't striking. I think their approach to the comms is that they can't tell people not to come in if their session could be on, but they don't know which sessions are cancelled or not.</p> <p>LC: I would like to know from you guys; how do we communicate this? How do we get this across?</p> <p>JP: If we say we're fully in support without context of the disruption to students, we might upset people. We aren't saying we fully support the disruption, we can say we fully support the staff and put the onus on the universities but not the disruption to their lessons.</p> <p>GG: In the SSLCs I've attended recently there's more confusion this time around as to why they're striking, we need to get the reasons behind it in any comms we put out. I also think I know we want to put pressure on the uni and help students with the disruption side of things, and that's not necessarily two separate things that we're trying to achieve, because if we put pressure on the uni the disruption will stop. If we're going to support this, we're going to support it for that reason – so that the lecturers get what they want and the disruption stops.</p> <p>LC: Us coming out in support does make a difference because it puts more pressure on the vice chancellors to act but it's a huge national picture. Because we're a joint union it makes it more difficult</p>		

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	<p>because the contexts for Falmouth and Exeter are vastly different and the financial situations are vastly different. I don't know for 100% but it's more likely that Exeter will be able to afford what the Union want them to do but Falmouth won't without slashing the quality of their education.</p> <p>CD: The universities aren't doing enough to support the students that fund them. In the statement, if we can focus on that issue, and that students shouldn't be treated as a third party, that would be good.</p> <p>RH: It seems like a good idea to develop a standardised process, to better deal with this now and in the future. A better process of mitigation for students.</p> <p>KO: The matter of fact with the situation is that LC isn't being brought into conversations, and Exeter don't listen. In order to support the students we have to be loud. I think something stronger needs to happen.</p> <p>JP: The strikes are a short term impact on students for a longer term benefit, I wonder if that's how we communicate. The short term negative impact could create a longer term better impact.</p> <p>LT: The mandate we specifically approved was to support the strikes, not just the lecturers.</p> <p>LC: were very polite with the past two rounds of strikes because it hasn't happened for Falmouth for years. We worked with Falmouth closely, in hindsight we worked with them more than with students which is a mistake on my part as a rep. Whatever our stance is after this meeting we need to make sure it's heard.</p> <p>CD: In response to JP, if we say it's for long term gain, the caveat with that is that students could argue these assessment periods do contribute to the difference between one job and another. It could impact individual students in the long term as well. We need to be aware of that.</p> <p>LC: I agree. Our third year students this year have probably had the roughest University experience in history.</p> <p>JMy: It might be a good idea to come up with a strategy to define what our limits are as well as how we can make the most impact. Maybe we should set up some drop in sessions and have some more meetings throughout?</p>		

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	<p>LC: My suggestion is that our mandate lasts until April, we don't know what the re-ballot will entail and there is a good chance that it could be a marking boycott which will be even more disruptive because it will stop students from being able to get their degrees.</p>		
7	<p>NUS Independent Report into Antisemitism</p> <p>There was a presentation from KO regarding the NUS report.</p> <p>LT: NUS and NUS charity are separate organisations, NUS UK handles campaigning, NUS charity handles training sabbatical officers/presidents.</p> <p>RH: Is the charity involved in the allegations?</p> <p>MP: The allegations are against the democratic structure of NUS, not the charity.</p> <p>CD & JMy: How does membership to NUS help students?</p> <p>KO: you have access to their campaigns and can get involved. We can get you totum discount cards, but you obviously still have to pay for them. We won't be doing next steps now, it's just a discussion for now about what we think. I want us to go away and reflect before we vote on anything. With a referendum, We vote, within the next 5 days we'd have to hold the vote, which is why we're not doing that vote now.</p> <p>LUKE: In response to CD and JMy - The national union of students, it's the union for SUs. They deal with all of the bigger picture stuff. They are SU's link to government policy and they facilitate all of the nationwide campaigns. They have a history of positive stuff from back to the 60s, first institution on the uk to have a gay rights policy. They listen to SUs, who listen to their members, which gets fed up to the top Government level. That's what we get from them. They train sabs over summer to get us prepared as soon as possible to deal with national campaigns and issues because the turnover of SU presidents is so quick. Obviously, this investigation has shown that the way they're going about it isn't inclusive of all of their members and needs to change.</p> <p>RH: have any other unions disaffiliated?</p> <p>MP: The most recent is Warwick, in "February 2023". There's roughly 20 odd. The number is growing, it tends to happen in waves.</p>	Verbal	

	Item	Type	Lead
	<p>FW: is there another body like NUS?</p> <p>KO: no, that is their position.</p> <p>CD: What would disaffiliation look like in terms of leaving us worse off for our SU?</p> <p>KO: it's quite balanced to be fair. They can be seen to cater for bigger unions with bigger student bodies, because we're in the middle of nowhere with a smaller student population, not all of their campaigns are necessarily relevant, however it does mean we don't have the chance to have our voice heard in bigger campaigns, e.g. cost of living campaign. There was a small percentage rise to the maintenance loan on the back of that campaign.</p> <p>LC: If we did decide to disaffiliate, we'd get the money back, but we'd be missing that link to make change on a national level. At its core, my concern with a mandate to disaffiliate is the current political climate where we're under a government that's very anti-union and wants to weaken the power of the people. You can see it across the country in every sector around the right to protest and unionise. We have a government that's strategically trying to break those connections down. Without nus FXU would not be heard in that conversation.</p> <p>AC: Would it be possible to reaffiliate? As this affects future years of students.</p> <p>KO: if we disaffiliate, we have to pay back the discount we get on fees to make up the membership costs. I'm not sure how that works if we re-join. We've always been affiliated so we've never done this before, but disaffiliating isn't new.</p> <p>RH: I guess we need to think about what it says if we leave. Does it say we don't accept that an organisation can change, it's not perfect so we don't want it?</p> <p>CD: On what RH just said, I think it's the case of wanting to be part of an institution that proactively accepts everyone, rather than just because they're getting criticism and people are disaffiliating. It's about whether there's a motive to make things better or not.</p> <p>MP: if anyone wants more information, please get in touch with Student Voice. If you vote to disaffiliate it would still have to be brought to council as a motion.</p>		

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8	<p>Campus Bike Facilities</p> <p>There was a presentation from AC/ the Campus Bike User Group (BUG) regarding campus bike facilities.</p> <p>AC: I'm just looking for people's opinions on this - I was approached by the BUG on what they're trying to achieve, because they've tried going directly to FXPlus with no success. They found a bike storage option which would be around £11k, they think it would improve the number of people cycling to campus because it would be secure, weatherproof and evenly spaced parking. The current parking on campus isn't. The lighting at the bottom of campus could be better so people feel more secure cycling along it.</p> <p>RH: This sounds like a local council issue in terms of building bike routes.</p> <p>KO: I keep asking about these, in a few months there should be a report and from there council can start working on a solution. I also fully hear you about the lighting, LT and I have taken this to estates many times. There's an agreement with the council about light levels as well as natural areas that they can't put a certain amount of lighting in. It's good that we've brought it up because we can go back to them and show that it's still a problem for cyclists.</p> <p>CD: I used to cycle to campus, but don't because of the issues mentioned, and the roads are ridiculous.</p> <p>RH: I probably would if these improvements were made, but I'm not sure what we can do as a council.</p> <p>LC: On the FXPlus side of stuff, with the bike sheds – we can continue to lobby for that stuff. With the external council stuff, by mandating it in council that means it becomes an SU stance so even when the presidents leave our posts the people who replace us still have to uphold that so it gives the project longevity.</p> <p>RH: We can flesh the idea out more, they need to have a better idea of what they need from us but there's a good impression in the room that people want to support it. If you come back with an action plan and we can see if we want to vote to support on that.</p>	Verbal	AC
9	<p>Any other business</p> <p>No AOB was raised.</p>	Verbal	
10	Date and time of next meeting TBC	Email	

Appendix:

Appx 1: Make a change: The SU to show support in favour of the UCU strikes

“This proposal is for students to vote to get the SU to show support for the UCU strikes happening nationally on the 24th, 25th, and 30th of November, at both Falmouth and Exeter universities. We believe that as students of a Students' Union, we should be able to officially declare our support for our lecturers and academic staff and having the SU in support would really help to put pressure on the university management teams to meet their industrial action demands.”

- Please note that strikes, and other industrial action is likely to continue into 2023.
- Other forms of industrial action (AKA , refusing to make up work lost as a result of strike action, refusing to cover for absent colleagues and marking boycott.

Appx 2: Make a change: University of Exeter and Falmouth University to Divest from The Border Industry

“Border violence is rife and is inflicted and propagated by corporations, some of which are supported by university investments We call on the Student Union to publicly endorse the Divest borders campaign demanding that the University of Exeter and Falmouth University: Adopt a publicly available ethical investment policy which excludes border industry companies Exclude border industry companies from their investments Fully divest from current investments in border companies within 3 years. “

- This is a campaign from the student organisation People and Planet.
- More information about divest borders, what it means and a list of companies that the campaign is explicitly focussed on can be found here: [Divest Borders | People & Planet \(peopleandplanet.org\)](https://peopleandplanet.org/divest-borders/)

Appx 3: The SU to oppose the dismissal of Zoe, the Pagan Chaplain

Following the occupation of the Chapel Lecture Theatre by EndFossil Fal/Ex. Zoe, the pagan chaplain was dismissed from her post. She was asked for support by students who were involved in the occupation (bearing in mind supporting students is in her job description). After a picture of her was taken trying to give the occupiers a basket of fruit, a complaint was made about her presence, and she was dismissed. We are appealing this dismissal and need full SU support.