



Précis and action points from the Scottish Student Sport Executive Council  
Meeting held on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May, via Zoom  
Meeting 10:00 – 14:30

**Present**

Pete Burgon (Chair) (PB)  
Ciaran O’Brien (CO)  
Georgia Moran (GM)  
Paddy Everingham (PE)  
Cathy Gallagher (CG)  
Claire Scott (CS)  
Neil Brown (NB)  
Maddy Watson (MW)  
Chris Sellar (CS)  
Jonny Pearson (JP)

**In attendance**

Stew Fowlie (SF)  
Totty Horn (TH)  
Vince Mayne (VM)  
Adrian Van Schalwyk (AVS)  
Sarah Birrell (sportscotland) (SB)

**Apologies**

Andre Reibig (SFC) (AR)

[Actions](#)

**1. Welcome, intro and scene setting**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting, thanking them for their attendance in this challenging time.

**2. Homologation**

Apologies were received from AR.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

The minutes from the previous meeting in January 2020 were accepted as a true reflection. The actions arising from the meeting were talked through, with Awards due to be discussed later in the meeting.

**3. The Current State of Play**

SSS update from SF: currently closing off the 19/20 year to get a clear idea of ending financial position, thanking volunteers and tying off any last pieces of work. All committees have met in past few weeks to understand picture across the network. In constant dialogue with members and partners, being responsive. Conclusion- in good shape; in short term COVID-19 will have minimal impact, however conscious that difficulties will come in next 6-12 months.

Comps update from CS: discussions surrounding the different scenarios regarding fixtures, staffing and furloughed colleagues, term dates as certain institutions not sticking to usual academic year, majority of institutions planning 1<sup>st</sup> semester teaching online, with a few planning for a blend of online and offline in small groups.

Dev update from CS: committee trying to understand current landscape, be productive, remain positive and seek out opportunities and improvements; advance pieces of work not impacted by COVID-19.

Student officers' updates from PE, MW and GM: a number of furloughed staff across the network, student sabbaticals trying to tie up the year but conscious that handovers could be difficult. Generally, student officers will be in post for longer as either contracts have been extended or on rotational furlough. Desire from current student sabbaticals to ensure new cohort have the best experience possible in 20/21.

Staff update from NB: all Strathclyde Sport staff still defined as working, but salary and Finance conversations are underway as black hole to be filled (huge loss of income from gym memberships in particular)- analysing non-essential spend and looking at value for money: tough conversations. Hoping to return to campus in September with lower occupancy in teaching rooms, however talks ongoing as situation evolves.

Staff update from CG: all Stirling Sport staff still working, new facility was only a few weeks from completion so project will now take longer due to restrictions (no on-site work currently happening) so staff are preparing for new building opening. Term planned to commence in September, with all teaching online. Planning social distancing both practically and financially- hugely significant, losses from events, accommodation, student services. Positive to be taken- increased engagement in physical activity through online content- we must harness this.

College update from JP: not much good news on the College front, all currently planning for the future yet nobody really knows what that will be. Edinburgh College not currently furloughing staff, however certain colleges are so others expected to follow suit. SFC being incredibly supportive. College sector will remain, but unsure what it will look like as fear that HE students will opt to go to Universities and no longer Colleges, so their student numbers will drop.

Staff update from CO: no furloughing as yet at UWS, good planning base through the summer, looking into various scenarios, significant budget pressures. Likelihood that no one will be on campus in semester 1. Good engagement from students and staff of online content- physical activity and wellbeing- need to keep these levels high and try to create Team UWS community virtually. Also looking into team sport and competitions/ fixtures under social distancing rules.

**Sportscotland** update from SB: SGBS over initial crisis management, though different phases and pressures depending if winter or summer sport. Now looking into return to activity and how that may look. Looking to NZ as an example. Staff are all home working. Focus is on supporting partners- advance payments made, gathering data around structural and financial impact on partners.

BUCS update from VM: 51% staff at BUCS now on furlough. Staff welfare implications are big. Financially, this year will be OK- huge achievement, but problems start next year. Currently looking at different scenarios, to plan for each, but difficult as in a long chain of uncertainty. Different sports have different impacts depending on nature, team/ individual, seasonality. Wellbeing hugely important- online platform with resource for all so students and staff can access online classes from across BUCS members. Competitive sport won't happen until January they predict, then possibly shorter calendars- hold either home or away matches, for instance. Sport England being very flexible, providing funding. BUCS approach is to be as prepared as possible, use online content, realise it's not just about competitive sport, focus on wellbeing and physical activity. Regional activity will likely be the first to start up. Financially, currently modelling reductions in team entries and membership- significant budget pressures.

#### 4. Planning Ahead

SF asked the group if SSS had a role to play and what the membership felt this should be.

VM opened by saying SSS had a huge opportunity, must absolutely be at the forefront of the response- as demonstrated by huge uptake in online physical activity and communities coming together. Sport has a role and SSS must be a beacon of hope, stability and opportunity.

CG agreed, must harness what we know and can do- deliver online content and prepare for disrupted 1<sup>st</sup> semester with no league activity- create innovative offering.

SF asked if it would help membership to pay 2021 membership fee now, end of 1920, before things are more difficult. CG said this wouldn't be possible- expenditure currently frozen at Stirling. Understand need to pay- as membership organisation, have to take responsibility, non-affiliation is not an option, however scenario planning required- certain 'easy' savings could be made- travel expenditure will reduce, for example. CG asked if fees could be flexed or payment plans put in place. GM said Napier would struggle to pay a membership fee and would need to see other opportunities, so as to justify membership fee. A payment freeze or payment plan would be welcome.

SF asked if the membership would be happy for SSS runs at a deficit for a few years?

NR asked about funding situation. SF responded that currently on solid ground, various budget options, though structural changes might be required. JP thinks SSS is vitally important, opportunity for university body to get behind SSS. SF said that no indication as yet received for partners entering strategic review, though this begs question if we are ready now or would be in 6-12 months to put forward new strategy proposal. Hard to do so with any purpose in current climate.

CG said upcoming BUCS Senior Managers meeting might be good place to test assumptions- reimagine whole year, new approaches and thinking. VM happy to share outcomes from meeting. BUCS Play currently running survey asking students about new activity habits in lockdown- VM proposed creating a subset for Scottish students. CO reinforced need for clear narrative to accompany budget discussions that all sector will be having (surveys could certainly help with this)- focus on health and wellbeing, move towards fitness, recreational and intramural sport, smaller, local groups, online content and competitions. GM agreed that engagement in online content has grown. PE added, however, that he felt students simply wanted to return to campus, sport may not be so high on the priority list. There is a worry that students defer the year when they hear all Semester 1 will be online. PB concluded further info required around financial membership modelling and other scenario-planning for medium- and longer-term, supported by SSS' Planning Week.

SF

## 5. SSS Awards

Group discussed nominations and if quality of submission impacted decision making. Agreement made that committee members will not always know some/ any nominees so must use good judgement, see past submission wording for achievement and recognition. Group agreed that sufficient, good quality applications received and as awards run for whole year, despite curtailed season in some sports, sufficient activity over past 12 months- happy to proceed with awards this year. Votes to be emailed to TH by 6<sup>th</sup> May- top choice in each category awarded 3 points, second choice 2 points, third choice 1 point. TH to aggregate scores upon receipt.

Awards will be announced online in some form- SSS staff currently deciding on best delivery method, with greatest impact. CS asked if we could celebrate Award winners at AGM, after business transacted, as big audience so maximum effect. SSS staff working on plan, but will ensure best method chosen: clear, professional comms and big celebration.

SSS Staff

## 6. AGM Planning

11th June will see first virtual AGM, via Zoom. Desire for one representative from each member institution. Transact normal business, but make it as interactive as possible. The discussion turned to membership fees- CG queried if whole membership conversation should be had at AGM. SF's steer is that SSS needs full membership fees for the year, but that they won't increase from 1920. As per Constitution, membership fees should be set at AGM, so we should be exploring options prior to AGM.

VM reinforced importance of cashflow- membership have to understand they need to pay, or delivery will not go ahead. Small savings must be made, certain areas of activity will need to cease. Redundancies are an option,

not a favourable one, but we need to look at the sector, create right image and do right thing in these unprecedented times- it will be a difficult year with difficult decisions.

CG agreed the membership need to support SSS, but reinforced the point that institutions are seeing budgets cut significantly, and this will naturally have a knock on effect with SSS. They understand they absolutely need to pay a fee, the questions remains how high the fee is. Shall SSS post a deficit for 2021? Could membership fees be paid in instalments?

PB concluded there are 2 options: fees remain same as this year or they are decreased and a reduced offering is delivered.

SF talked though current financial position- healthy, solid reserves which could be accessed before dipping into the £200K war chest. This is an option- make a deficit in 2021 to the tune of our current reserves.

JP asked if we could seek alternative income streams, such as asking SFC to fund a portion of the membership fees.

PB feels there is sufficient business and the staff would deliver an offering that made financial and practical sense. The next step therefore is for SF and TH to come up with a few financial models, taking into account core costs, then have 2 short calls prior to AGM.

SF and TH

PB reminded the committee members whose position was up open for election. TH will circulate committee nominations in the coming weeks. MW asked what will happen for student offices not yet elected- plan is to have student sabbatical training day end of May, so potential there to get committee and election details to them. TH to speak to NS and MR about this.

TH

## 7. AOCB

CG informed group of 4 upcoming BUCS Senior Managers Network calls, planned to shape future, assist with recovery plans and decision making. CG stressed importance of this group and also of engaging with Student Associations and Sports Unions too.

Future diary dates:

12<sup>th</sup> May, BUCS Senior Managers Network

15<sup>th</sup> May, Exec get-together regarding membership fees, post Management Group

11<sup>th</sup> June, AGM and Exec meeting

### 1. Confirm actions and close

PB closed the meeting, thanking everyone for their attendance, acknowledging challenging times but congratulating members on efforts and engagement.

#### ACTION LIST

Summary of Action	Initials
Scenario planning for medium to longer term	SF
Awards delivery plan.	SSS Staff
Financial modelling for Exec Meeting 15 <sup>th</sup> May.	SF and TH
Speak to NS and MR about student officers' induction day.	TH