



Précis and action points from the Scottish Student Sport Executive Council
Meeting held on Friday 21st April 2023
Scott Lang Suite, Saints Sport University Park, St Leonard's Road, St. Andrews KY16 9DY
Or via Zoom
Meeting 10:00 – 15:00

Present

Ian Gaunt (IG)
 Chris Sellar - Z (CS)
 Jonny Pearson (JP)
 Cathy Gallagher - Z (CG)
 Dan Potter - Z (DP)
 Ewan Galbraith - Z (EG)
 Eamonn Laird (EL)
 Ciaran O'Brien - Z (CO)
 Katherine Corbett (KC)
 Heather Gault (HG)

In attendance

Pete Burgon (PB)
 Stew Fowlie (SF)
 Totty Sinclair Roads (TSR)
 Sam Bell-Minogue - Z (SBM)
 Alison Craig (AC)

Apologies

Vince Mayne (VM)
 Anna Wallace (AW)
 Robin McGregor (RM)

[Actions](#)

1. Welcome, intro and scene setting

PB opened the meeting, thanking everyone for their attendance and IG for hosting. Welcomed AC to the meeting.

2. Homologation

Apologies were received from AW, VM, RM and SB.

No conflicts of interest were noted.

The minutes from the previous meeting in February 2023 were accepted as a true and accurate reflection. Actions were talked through and are all in hand.

3. Context

Top level updates around the table

Glasgow- currently in exam season. Facility issues ongoing- not enough space for all the activity the clubs would like to host. Membership is up, especially across certain key demographics they're looking into. Accommodation issues- 2500 extra beds come Sept '23 to help with issues. Rental market has been up and down, cost of living, heavily internationalised campus so students rely on university accommodation as can't as easily access private rental market.

Stirling- currently budgeting and planning, outlook is positive from sports perspective, business will continue to grow. Uncontrollables such as cost of living crisis, staff costs and utility costs rising but same for all institutions. Staying positive and controlling the controllables. In good shape, notwithstanding the challenges that exist for everybody in the sector.

UWS- currently in budgeting and planning phase. Have requested more staff from main Uni budget, plus kit refresh. Reliance on external facilities. Plus for sport- there will be a return to campus teaching.

Dundee- accommodation looking a bit better- Uni purchased more halls. Messaging important. Recruitment within ISE- 4 additional jobs. EL former role now live.

Edinburgh- strange few weeks with JA leaving. Lots of planning and budgeting- awaiting feedback. Hoping for more staff. Footfall and facilities- very positive with 4000 visits a day to the Pleasance and 16000 student members. Currently in exam season. Refurbishment underway of Eric Liddell cardio space. Group activity 12% up which is positive. Clubs side- memberships looking good. 3 new clubs next year- baseball, Chinese martial arts, flag football- good for international students. Participating a bit down in IM so hoping to reboot that next year. Pathway schools into IM. Doing well in BUCS.

Edinburgh College- 9th lecturer strike in 10 years, every college has had a reduction in student activity- as bleak as was expected. Very challenging moving forward and not looking good for the college sector. Fantastic meeting re Active Campus, a pleasure to be with dedicated, enthusiastic, committed people..

St. Andrews- semester finished, exams starting, few competitions still ongoing and teams being promoted. Saints and Stirling represented at BUCS Golf Champs which was excellent. Similar themes- taking over a lot of accommodation in Dundee (1000 students will be there in 23/24).

Few victories for Scottish unis at BUCS Big Wednesday and other BUCS level- excellent all round. Success stories- ask CW to promote.

[CW](#)

4. SSS Strategic Update

Strong Org- staff team are in good shape, Planning Week coming up in May at Glenmore Lodge. One vacancy live- we wish MR well for her new role at CIMSPA and she leaves with our thanks for all her hard work. Healthy KPMG Audit. Organisation being well looked after. Thanks to TSR

Dev- Conference 7th and 8th June- programme to be published soon but emerging themes very positive.

Comps- 120 competitions delivered this year, good entry numbers. Good to get some NS activity back, though some frustrations around playing kit but plan in place to get all playing kits ordered over the summer.

Adv- Active Campus project- colleagues at **sportscotland** have been magnificent- Bob Wylie and Scott MacGregor in particular. 11 colleges soon to have investment papers signed so recruitment can then begin- hope to have this compete before summer. Remaining colleges might get to the start line in new academic year. Exciting bit of work. In good place with **sportscotland**. In good place with SFC- sent proposal and awaiting update- requested an increase in funding this year. Student mental health and wellbeing working group about to write new strategy, SF part of this. The wish it to bring sport, health and education closer together. The Chair and committee praised SF and colleagues for their excellent work on the Active Campus project.

Winning Students- funding approved. SFC, **sportscotland** and Stirling leading on behalf of the sector. Currently putting together timeline and planning to deliver new programme for 23/24- all really positive. Stirling will be engaging with SGBs and institutions.

5. Partner updates

1. BUCS

Events- season coming to a close. BUCS Big Wednesday and BUCS Nationals- both positive and successful, good numbers. Numbers in general across all sports have increased, having to say no as beyond capacity in a number of events sadly. Despite cost of living and challenges, event entries are still very high.

Governance- Liz Prince new Insights Manager tasked with improving governance. Proposes that Liz attends next SSS Exec to present findings, trends and plan for year to come. Liz will appoint an officer, so more support coming too. Data made available for advocacy.

Strategy and board recruitment in final stages- used external consultant to bring conversations together. Hoping draft strategy to go to board with a view to launching it at BUCS Conference. CG view is that they should take the time to gather feedback and refine and polish and ensure right strategy is published. Shouldn't have been this difficult. SBM to share updated staff diagram.

[SBM](#)

SMN- governance and comms at the forefront. Plus keeping eyes and ears open for any behavioural issues occurring.

[SBM](#)

SBM will send papers and plan to be in Scotland 21st to 23rd June so will arrange time to meet then.

2. sportscotland

AC amidst handover from SB. Update on investment- agreed amount in principal £163,350 including staffing uplift. £7,500 allowed to be carried forward for BASS. Agreements ready to go out and payments will be sent in May. The group welcomed AC warmly- noted thanks to **sportscotland** for their ongoing support- lots of excellent connections. Thanks also to Bob Wylie and his team from the Colleges on the Active Campus project. Very grateful for support and innovation from **sportscotland** for this long term investment.

3. SFC

Thanks to AW, excellent comms, working hard on SSS' behalf. Should get funding update mid-May. SFC are subject to same challenges as others- they also only get their funding one year at a time. Group queried how Winning Students were able to get a 5-year funding deal but concluded they must have a different agreement. There must be an opportunity for better collaboration with SFC funding both SSS and WS- group to explore better ways to work together.

6. Strong Organisation

Finance- Net Profit Forecast

We have been working hard behind the scenes and reforecast some of our income and costs, giving us a current forecast surplus of £4.5K. Meetings scheduled across the team to review, reflect, ensure full team understanding, then compile 23/24 budget. As explained previously, it has been difficult to predict entry levels in this first full year post pandemic and certain sports will always do better than others.

Notable changes since last meeting:

- Moved £7.5K into deferred grants for 23/24 for Active Students Survey which will now take place in

the autumn- mirrored in expenditure

- Reduced sponsorship from £7K to £3.5K as that is the deal we now have, hoping the signed version will be returned by Friday. Deal up until 2026/27 for £7K per year with Technogym.
- Programme income revised, reflective of slightly lower entries than hoped in some sports, golf for instance. Programme expenditure also revised up slightly, reflective of increased costs this year.
- Conference income and expenditure revised to reflect updated quote from QMU. Costs are higher so have put the accommodation up, but left other elements the same to keep it affordable. We expect to subsidise the event to the tune of £3k.
- Marketing forecast up slightly with some branding expenditure and photography costs.
- Salaries have gone up across UoE so £6K increase in overall annual bill.
- Remainder of overheads as expected.
- Removed contingency as feel we have everything covered elsewhere in the forecast.

As ever, aim is to return value to the members. Always open to better ways to make and spend the budget.

Thanks to TSR for the Finances- great sense of confidence in the figures.

7. SSS Exec Projects 22-23

1. Governance structure refresh

CS presented the context and process used, thanking everyone for their input.

Conclusions reached so far:

- Looking at new ways of working, function of certain committees.
- Dev- there is a huge amount of work in Dev, very broad. Do we need a Dev Committee?
- Exec- immovable, crucial to the organisation
- Management- also crucial, but visibility could be better.
- Comps/ Sports- need to combine what SGBs are doing, within clubs, workforce development etc. Need to be more agile, use small working groups and Directorates of responsibility. Do we need a Comps Committee?
- Concept of sprint groups that fall out of Management, identified as business needs require, so as to remain nimble and not spread people too thinly. Option to seek external support too. Would encompass current work carried out by Dev and Comps
- A possible new structure would have the following groups: Exec, Management, Sprint Groups, Forums.
- Timing of AGM will have an impact- TSR to look into options but 1 hour Zoom in August seems popular.

[Governance group](#)

Next steps- governance group to map out where business sits within the new structure, Exec to reflect on structures shared on Basecamp and feedback on anything that might be missing.

2. SSS Membership fees

The project group have sought to come up with key principals, striking a balance between membership numbers and fees. Heavily reliant on membership rather than FTE but conscious effort to not penalise those who have more members. SF explained the calculation- complex but hoping it is fair, transparent and the best possible version of a new fee structure.

Discussion around future years and whether the indices are changed or the full exercise redone as it feels like membership numbers should be checked annually. It is also important to know how much needs to be raised annually. Frailty of current system is that it has been left alone for too long.

The group agreed that whilst the table is predicated on people paying, it makes sense, seems fair and is equitable. They are comfortable and therefore SF will lift these assumptions into paper for AGM. SF will also speak with some of the Colleges and smaller members to seek their comfort.

Chair proposed cooling off period until following Wednesday evening for final comments, following which approval from Exec granted to take the model to AGM.

[CO](#)

3. Awards

[TSR](#)

CO presented the proposed plan which is to critique the awards process as it happens. CO to send: a short questionnaire post awards, another short survey after Exec make decision, then a third survey to ask members after the awards have concluded. TSR to administer the awards in the normal way.

8. AOCB

[SF](#)

1. Chair appraisal

KPMG report recommendation- thanks to CO and SF for exploring this area. Recommended we have a structure in place annually- good timing with PB stepping down as Chair. SF to send short survey to Exec members annually- cement the process. SF to take this forward.

[TSR](#)

2. Exec 23-24 and beyond

SF presented the Annex doc from 2022 AGM Minutes to identify committee gaps for 23/24. Papers will come out in due course. TSR to explore date for virtual AGM in August.

[TSR](#)

3. Hon Life VP nominations

[SF](#)

Recorded thanks and well wishes to Anne-Marie Hughes and Jim Aitken on their respective retirements. Both were proposed to receive honorary life memberships- all very happy to approve. This will go to AGM for formal adoption.

The group discussed the process for these nominations and concluded the process should be revisited and refined in 23/24.

9. Closing remarks, future meetings and actions

PB closed the meeting, thanking everyone for their input and attendance and IG for hosting the meeting. Thanks to TSR for the minutes and to SF and others for papers.

Next meeting tbc

ACTION LIST

Summary of Action	Initials
Promote BUCS success stories from Scottish institutions.	CW
Share updated BUCS staff diagram.	SBM
Send papers and plan meeting whilst in Scotland end of June.	SBM
Map out where business sits within the new structure.	Governance group
Send questionnaires post Awards.	CO
Administer Awards.	TSR
Send out Chair appraisal.	SF
Decide on August date for virtual AGM, then administer.	TSR
Take nominations to AGM for Hon Life VP members.	TSR

Revisit and refine process for nominating Hon Life VPs.	SF
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