



Précis and action points from the Scottish Student Sport Executive Council
Meeting held on Friday 24th September 2021, via Zoom
Meeting 10:00 – 14:00

Present

Jordan Moore (JM)
Gregor Malcolm (GM)
Sophie Charlton (SC)
Jonny Pearson (JP)
Neil Brown (NB)
Chris Sellar (CS)
Robin McGregor (RM)
Cathy Gallagher (CG)

In attendance

Stew Fowlie (SF)
Totty Sinclair Roads (TSR)
Vince Mayne (VM)
Pete Burgon (PB)

Apologies

Andre Reibig (AR)
Claire Scott (CSc)
Sarah Birrell (SB)
Ciaran O'Brien (CO)

Actions

1. Welcome, intro and scene setting

Before starting the meeting, PB asked the group if they were happy for the meeting to be recorded, for the benefit of those absent. The group agreed.

Welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanks CS for chairing first meeting.

2. Homologation

Apologies were received from AR, CSc, SB, CB.

No conflicts of interest were noted.

The minutes from the previous meeting in August 2021 were accepted as a true and accurate reflection.

Charities- seek institutional input to track this, see what the pattern looks like and think about worth in having one single charity partner across the sector. Difficulty- students will often pick charities close to their heart, with a personal connection, so hard to pick one sole partner. Central cause would be worthwhile however, but more as a partner for awareness raising, rather than a fundraiser. Excellent comms piece to amplify and shine light on what students are doing. Institutions to take responsibility for mapping fundraising activity across clubs and relaying to SSS. Google doc might be best mechanism, to be updated along the way. SSS medal table equivalent might be a good way to incentivise capture and promote the volume. TSR to organise. Possible tie-in with new SSS award category- charity project/ project of the year.

TSR

3. Current Context

1. View from the COO

Staff team are in good shape and organisation in a good position for this time of year. SGB Directors met in Largs, SF attended. COVID-19 thrust CEOs together more so than before, much better connected. Question of how to galvanise these connections moving forward. Is this group different to the SSA? How can the group influence policy in Scotland? Whilst the future direction is unclear, we are connected in the right way and we do have an opportunity to reenergise the whole network into a better position. Events are starting, a few teething issues but overall positive. Funding still not confirmed but hopeful decision will be made at meeting on 27/09 and funding granted at the level requested albeit possibly for one year only. This is good and bad- bad as no assurance for 4 years, but good as more opportunities- student experience to form larger part of SFC's strategy and therefore our work will be more aligned. Sadly this means that AR will likely cease to be our project manager. In the short term we need to secure funding for 21/22, then start having bigger conversations around future funding.

2. Partner Updates

BUCS

Competition- hopeful for a full season of competition, less re-planning, mindful we need to retain flexibility and agility so still planning for alternative provision: hoping for the best and planning for the worst.

Finance- posted a £130K deficit which was £100K better than initially budgeted, so positive. New commercial partnerships on board.

Strategy development- can't eradicate racism but take it on and do our best. Built framework for the strategy. Know what members and external partners want. Once we have themes, we can make bold statements around what we're doing. 4 or 5 areas: culture (students just want to play this year, not about BUCS points in 21/22- we have to get this right, the culture), governance, leadership (workforce development, female leaders, inclusion and diversity), active campus (comps and events, as well as physical and mental wellbeing). Role for mental health in students and staff is huge. Vice chancellors group meeting- BUCS or SSS need to step into the staff gap. EUSU- right to be elected and to elect and by adding in the fee to be on EUSA Exec, it becomes exclusive which we disagree with. We believe in democracy as a value so we stand up to it. Opportunity to input, a few more consultation meetings.

CG Senior Managers Network- mixed bag, institution dependant, if very competitive, then that remains their focus, if more vocational then getting students active is the priority. It is clear that the competition side is important as institutions alone can't deliver the whole BUCS programme but can do health and wellbeing at institutional level. Need to be clear on big ticket items, be brave and do things with greatest impact.

SSS/ BUCS partnership agreement- meeting end of September.

Concerns about initiations which are being planned.

sportscotland- Reporting against investments to do. Meeting in October to look to next 4 years.

3. Member Perspectives

Strathclyde Sport- strategy refresh 2021 to 2025. Active health high on the agenda. Importance of language.

HW- connectivity across whole university much better- collaboration around Welcome Week was fantastic, joined up. Ability to influence student experience to ensure mental and physical wellbeing are at the core. Membership down on 19/20 (500 fewer students in student accommodation on campus due to COVID-19) - it'll take a bit of time to return to 19/20 levels.

UoE- looking at opportunities to try new and better ways to do things, continuous improvement, and majority of students don't know life before the pandemic.

4. Business Updates

1. Finance

Financially in good shape for this point in the year- 21 members expected/ paid up, thanks all for prompt payment. Hopeful of getting a few more colleges, Glasgow Kelvin and Glasgow Clyde in particular. Forecast end position as expected, carrying only a small amount of risk relating to membership fees. Slightly over in salary costs as expectation that Fixtures role would move to part time but this hasn't yet happened due to the funding. SF to meet with accountants end of September to get final 20/21 accounts.

2. HR and return to office plans

Currently in a transitional phase with contracts. Assuming good news on the funding, we will update contracts and recruit against new roles.

Office return- in talks about drifting back this term. Some people are keen to return, others happy working from home. We are trying to accommodate everyone's wishes. CG asked if SSS staff could go to member institutions for desk space for those who don't live in Edinburgh but would like a community space, should they so wish- Stirling would certainly welcome this. TSR will look into that. Thank you to the staff team for their efforts and their resilience in uncertain times.

TSR

3. Highlights/ needs from across the SSS Structure

Comps- events returning, JB working hard on fixtures. 2 working groups set up- one on NS and one on centralised fixtures. Might not have NS activity, and likely not in semester 1, but perhaps on a reactive basis rather than proactive basis.

Dev- coaching network set up. Welcoming aboard with dev groups and club captains. Leadership programme applications open now. Concussion workshop to take place. In talks with potential Conference hosts.

ES- positive attitudes, main topics of conversation- engagement and return of face-to face activity. Good committee engagement. Campaigns that could be run around gender based violence, mental health and engaging the inactive.

RM and JP- Colleges are struggling to stay above water. Gyms closed, no extracurricular activity on campus, so very hard to engage students- very much emergency years in colleges.

The group sympathised and asked how they could better support the colleges- opportunities for collaboration?

5. Transition in to new strategy

Need to start living the new plan- behaving in the future and retrofitting the governance, with constitutional changes come June '22.

Move away from regional and towards thematic approach is being carefully managed so as to not lose anyone from previous groups and in fact capture greater audience, especially institutional staff.

Forge a path for the Active Health function of our work- reinvent and reenergise this area.

- Who to lead the groups?
- How to recruit? Who should we approach?
- Which space should we inhabit?
- How do they report in?

The same discussions then ensued around the Advocacy Group's functionality and role. Huge value in the group itself, but we need people championing SSS in as many different forums as possible- live advocacy on the ground. We are better connected than ever before, in more conversations thanks to COVID-19 and we must take advantage of this to spread the net as widely as possible. We need external people- ambassadors in specific groups.

6. Thinking Big

Facilitated discussion: 'How can SSS influence meaningful new policy and resources aimed at the student sport network?'

Resources

Currently, we don't have sufficient resource within the student sport network, so we need to broaden our reach, recruit ambassadors externally to advocate on our behalf in wider groups- be distinctive and ambitious. We must ensure continuity from school, so similar pathway and opportunities.

College sector

The right people are not currently around the table within the college sector. It is underfunded and undervalued. We need to try to join the dots better- volunteering is compulsory in colleges so let's harness this, building upon the Active Schools model. CDN good place to start conversations.

Active campuses

Active campuses promote a good life, increase activity, bring people back to the same place, they're also scalable and adaptable. Currently a challenge as not all students have returned to campus and unsure if hybrid model will remain in place moving forward.

Link between active campus and open campus, whereby students are free to use any campus they wish and engage in activity there. How would this work?

National active campus campaigns

In practice, SF explained, an Active Campus model would have staff on every campus dedicated to facilitating activity, a network of young volunteers to actually deliver it, and a modest delivery budget to get stuff done, in and around campuses. National agencies and partners would be able to double their own investment and also steer the work to the benefit of shared priorities. The reach would be far greater, pointing in many directions.

Government

We need to continue our work in influencing government and policy, we need to be bold and make them listen, to create a sustainable system funded well into the future, rather than merely reacting.

SF

New strategy 22+

Work will commence shortly on new strategy, hopefully following a successful funding bid for 21/22, and prioritisation of work will be critical. SF working in this space, harvesting different parts of SSS network to enable this.

Active Health

It feels like we need a small, formal agile group to lead out on specifics, plus a wider community of interest to continue widening the net.

7. Closing remarks

1. **Dates and venues for the diary**
 - i. 19th November via Zoom
 - ii. 18th February via Zoom

2. **Confirm actions and close**

PB closed the meeting, thanking everyone for their input. Thanks to TSR for the minutes and warm wishes for both the ultra and the wedding!

ACTION LIST

| Summary of Action | Initials |
|---|----------|
| Create a Google doc for institutions to capture fundraising activities. | TSR |
| Investigate which member institutions would welcome SSS staff hot desking in their offices. | TSR |
| Reactivate the Advocacy Group to identify the target message and target audience. | SF |
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