*April 30th, 2024.*

*Queen Margaret Union*

Annual General Meeting 2023-2024

President- Dan Rogers

After taking over the presidency I organised meetings with all incoming convenors to discuss their plans for the committees in the coming year and to help focus the priorities of the Union. I attempted to provide aid and understanding to how their objectives could be reached and to ensure that they would be prepared for the activities of convenorship.

Throughout the year I attended committee meetings, concentrating on those with smaller committees and that had a commercial factor that could benefit or hinder the Union, I also attempted to work with new convenors to alleviate some pressures and ensure the smooth running of the Union.

I helped with graphics, promotion and ideas for committees whilst also delivering projects to the University, during meetings of cross-campus, student experience and with Senior Management of the University.

I helped organise and run training and bonding sessions during Freshers’ Week, like the scavenger hunt to help create a bond amongst Fresher Helpers. I will be helping the incoming exec form some basis of training for incoming convenors and help flesh out roles and responsibility for board members.

I was able to procure board jumpers for both the spring election and October election board members, which had long been promised and I am glad I was able to get this done quickly for the board. In hindsight I probably should have put on it somewhere that it is the Queen Margaret Union board.

I have been constantly available throughout the year to discuss projects, plans and help board members. I’ve also had an open-door policy- even if the door is closed- for board members and general members to come to me to discuss anything. I have been able to take workloads off of people whenever they have needed, as well as providing help and guidance for the running of events or help steering projects to fruition.

This report will also provide insight and information about VPMCS and Events Convenor.

Support and advise other members of the Executive.

I had one Vice-President without board experience and one with experience of being a Vice-President beforehand. I also had limited experience beforehand of the innerworkings of the Union but was provided guidance by the previous president- and undertook the University training and the training program led by Sarah Wright.

Our executive worked closely together, almost always in constant contact and reachable when required. It helped that we all came into our positions with a similar understanding of what we wanted the Union to look like, however we may have privately disagreed with how to implement the changes we saw fit.

Iris resigned her position of VPMCS due to an internal issue, following a successful campaign for SRC VPSS. I wish her all the best and think she will do a great job at the SRC.

After this, incoming President, Archie Dodd, was made ad-hoc VPMCS- this was done in part to give him more experience of working in exec, so that he could provide more guidance for the other incomings. This hopefully has given him a better understanding of the working relationships required to proceed with job and the need to build a rapport with management, whist also knowing how cross-campus works (or doesn’t).

This new Exec have worked together to ensure that the workload didn’t build up and that project planning for Freshers’ Week continued unhindered- with meetings steadily building up with positive discussions over what we want to see and also constructive criticism of what we saw went wrong during the last Freshers’ Week.

Amongst all of the Exec- we shared responsibility of committees and convenors and I believe that all board members had the support and access to any of the Exec throughout the year.

The Executive had open and frank conversations throughout the year to discuss issues, policy and projects, and some tough decisions were made to put the Union on the best path.

Encourage involvement in the Union by ordinary members.

This year I was able to become more of a visible president, it did help being ginger and tall. I was consistently at all events except when away on annual leave- and also provided promo throughout the year- even coining the catchphrase: “I’m still Dan Rogers.” In doing so I hope that the Union had a more public face that was easily identifiable- having my video talking up the Union played in every university space potentially also helped…

During Freshers’ Week I was always about and trying to get more people involved with the Union- from manning the freshers’ stall, whilst also representing the Union during the Freshers’ Address- which I hope people enjoyed.

I have represented the Union in many different areas, from speeches to being a guest at the Rector’s investiture. I have also ensured that the Union has utilised the University to promote ourselves, ranging from promotion to internal discussions with university staff.

We have also looked at incentives for our members throughout the year and ensured our members could afford our prices within the Union, due to the cost-of-living crisis- £3 Tennent’s is one of the cheapest pints in the West End.

Communicate with our membership.

After the successful roadmap year of transitioning towards the previous ‘sticky campus’, with more and more classes being held in person again. We have continued the practice of flyering, mostly by Fran (in the cold and rain). We have also continued to utilise our social media platforms- which has seen a big uptick in followers across our committee accounts and main socials. We may have potentially overused the Instagram- and will hopefully look into other avenues to promote the ongoings within the Union.

At the start of the year- I starred in and ‘produced’ content for election promo and general promotion of the Union- usually directed by our Marketing Coordinator, Lanna.

Establish and evaluate long term goals for the Executive.

At the start of the year, after our first training with Sarah- the Executive focussed on pushing through a new code of conduct and discipline procedure- which I think needed to be addressed and updated. This was brought through just before Freshers’ Week, as we felt there could be potential challenges surrounding drinking culture and anti-social behaviour- especially as incoming freshers would potentially be more immature than previous years due to the setbacks of the covid pandemic.

Each of the incoming executives came into our roles with the idea of furthering the idea that the QMU is a live music and events space rather than a club night venue, which we illustrated by not bidding against the GUU for our ‘Wet Wednesday’ club night back- after the closure of Sanctuary.

The executive has also attempted to ensure that all decisions that were made this year have purely been done with the idea of putting the Union first- especially as we are trustees of the Union. We also attempted to change the cliché nature of the Union’s board- I think we have changed the culture, somewhat, but I am unsure if I was successful enough to change it to a fully welcoming place.

The long-term goals of the Union are hopefully beginning to be realised, especially surrounding our GBV campaign, which has been spearheaded by our Campaigns Committee. There have been some setbacks with engagement from cross-campus and the University but hopefully with our new rector- we should have a voice on Court backing the social unions.

Generate Policy for Submission to the Board of Management for Approval.

Throughout the year we have put forward effective changes to our Constitution, Byelaws, and policies- i.e., Terms of reference, Discipline procedure, complaints procedure and code of conduct.

Be a member to the Appeal Committee to hear staff appeals in accordance with the staff grievance and disciplinary procedure.

The Appeal Committee has not been called this year.

Be a member of a Staffing Committee to discuss all issues related to staff.

Staffing committee was not formally called this year, though me and management have been in daily contact to discuss issues arising- whether they be staff matters or general Union issues.

We have continued our commitment to being a living wage provider. As President, I have ensured the wage increase to staff members in line with government policy changes.

Attend all Exec-Cons, Staffing and Finance meetings where possible.

At the start of the year, I did propose having regular Exec-Cons meetings. However, due to constant time clashes and scheduling issues- I pivoted to more informal meetings and general catchups with both Exec and Convenors. I do think that Exec-Cons can be a useful practice, but I wouldn’t propose that it should be regimented. I think it is more useful depending on the Board’s needs and the ideas of the next presidents.

Our finances are still handled by Brendan, management plays a crucial role in ensuring our accounts are up to date and relevant. I have had discussions with management surrounding our finances whenever necessary. I have also signed off on all outstanding audits that were required- also providing information so that the next president doesn’t have to worry too much about this.

Submit an Annual General Report to the AGM.

Here.

Oversee all aspects of Convenorship including authorising expenditure.

As President, and the other Execs ensured that all convenors when organising projects and events have had the backing of Exec- whether that be in committee meetings or behind the scenes discussions with Management. We also ensured that each event got the necessary funding and that the events were ran smoothly but kept in line with finance projections. I am confident that all projects that were planned out that needed financial support, had the backing of Exec.

While some Convenors might have felt that support was not given, all the time or at all, I feel that there were few projects that Exec rejected or scrapped- other than the reason not enough planning had gone into the idea to merit us putting it on. As ever- the QMU is needing to be prudent over its financial expenditure and as such it is the duty of Exec to ensure proposals are watertight or that there are no obvious holes in the planning stages.

I plan on organising meetings with the new exec to cover what the role of each convenor and committee should be- and draw on their ideas to help implement better changes to the committee structure of the Union. In these meetings I also hope to discuss how to do the role of convenor- as this new exec has no convenorship experience.

I have attended committee events throughout the year- I think I missed two due to annual leave and not being in the country- I have also sat on the front desk during every event to take tickets and for people to purchase tickets on the door.

Be a member of the Health and Safety Committee and ensure the Union complies with the responsibilities of the Employer under current legislation.

We have assessed many risk assessments throughout the year and ensured the Union is compliant.

I have spent a large portion of this year arguing with the University to approve and pay for security upgrades to the building that have been neglected for some time by the University. I am glad that I have been able to secure the installation of new security cameras and the installation of SALTO doors to the Union. I believe this should help staff and general members feel more comfortable in our spaces. The need for this funding was made clear in the early part of the year with break-ins and the destruction of Union property.

It was also important to have these SALTO doors installed because it means we will be able to lock down areas of the building- during events and gigs- which will hopefully mean less stress on our security staff and duty managers.

I am still annoyed by the lack of movement either by SMG, Student Experience or Estates to fix our venue floor- our current fix was a stop-gap- which the Health and Safety at the University wanted fixed, but the Uni has not provided any new timescale of when this will be addressed.

If the University was truly focussed on the student experience or supporting student unions our venue floor would have been a priority- with constant updates to timeline. However, I feel this is another avenue for the University to drag their feet to implement change, perhaps for the purpose of diminishing the need for our student union or unions in general.

Maintain appropriate archival of Union related materials.

We have ensured that everything this year has a paper trail and as such can be archived- either internally or sent to the University’s Archive which has a lot of our documents.

Submit reports to the meeting of the Board of Management detailing activities relating to their remit.

I have submitted a report every month.

Main Responsibilities

Represent the Union at all public occasions, social functions, and business meetings.

This year I have represented the QMU at the Freshers’ Address, Cross-Campus Dinner, SEC, and Cross Campus meetings.

I was unable to attend Daft Friday- as I did not receive an invite to my President’s email, which is quite easy to obtain. For reference it is not @gmail.com. I did not attend the Carol Service, but Frances Breslin did attend. I was unable to attend GUSA Ball- as I was in the Union watching a gig with a friend from home (the gig was sick).

I also did not attend the Volunteering Clubs and Societies Awards. This is because it was my birthday- and I don’t like wearing a tie.

Convene all meetings of the Board of Management.

I have chaired every single Board of Management meeting this year. I have attempted to move away from hybrid meetings- but with the allowance of exceptional circumstances or if you were older than me (David and Mags, I got you.)

Normally take the Chair at general meeting of the Union.

Almost there, I guess we will find out together.

Act as a designated officer in terms of the University Code of Practice.

We did not encounter any problems with this- this year.

Communicate with external organisations on behalf of the Union.

Over the last year- I think it is correct to point our perhaps a shrinkage of engagement with external organisations. This is partly due to our withdrawal from Northern Services- due to their favouring of selling Carling and our favouring of Tennent’s. We have developed new partnerships with drink companies- like ABK for Oktoberfest. This has been very useful to have an array of drinks for our members. I truly believe that leaving Northern Services has been a success- as it has meant we could have Scottish drinks on taps and stop selling Carling- which is an awful beer.

Oversee and be responsible for the creation and management of online content.

This year again, we have seen an increase in followers of our socials- which I credit to Lanna.

This year our Instagram has gone from 5,000 followers to 7,244 followers which is 2,244 more followers than the previous year.

This year, I believe I have had a good working relationship with Lanna and attempted to set up a PR committee for her to ease the load of both commercial and student aspects of promotion- however there was a lack of engagement with this proposal and meant Lanna had to scramble to help convenors with their ideas.

Lanna has also been a very useful and patient director- and her camera roll is littered with me flubbing my lines and breaking character. So, thanks for that too!

Contribute to the planning and control of capital and maintenance projects.

I have been involved in all discussions about improvements and maintenance of the Union. As well as chasing up the University on multiple occasions to ensure relevant funding and timescales.

Provide hands on management when required in association with department managers and general managers.

I believe I have had a strong relationship with all members of our staff this year, but you would have to ask them too. I believe there is a strong relationship between staff and board members, who have introduced themselves to the staff. I believe it is imperative for all board members to introduce themselves to staff and not to assume that staff know who they are.

Communication between staff and members has been easy, with lots of communication channels available to board members.

Liaise with the general manager on a daily basis.

I am almost in constant conversation with Margaret about the daily occurrences of the Union, as well as planning for the future- which is evidenced in our new Strategic Plan.

I believe there has been constant communication between Exec and Management- and that the majority of decisions went through multiple rounds of discussions- though some may have fallen through the gap on exec’s end.

I am confident that I have been informed on all commercial matters and aspects of the Union, whilst I have informed Margaret of all aspects of the student side of the Union.

I believe that my working-relationship with Margaret has been entirely beneficial to the Union.

Participate in the recruitment and selection of staff with the general and deputy manager where appropriate.

I have not been involved in the hiring process this year, due to all hirings been operational and student staff which is led by Paula and Management.

Be a nominated key holder of the building and the second named contact by the alarm company or the police.

I was not a key holder of the building- I believe that the President does not need access to the building 24/7- if I needed access to the building, I know I could have got in contact with anyone with access to the building, but this matter never happened.

Key Achievements and Things to Note.

Freshers’ Week.

I think that although our Freshers’ Week may have gone decent enough- I do believe that the planning stages for this Week could be better utilised. For one person to have sole responsibility for this is a mistake and I believe that this endeavour is best suited to both outgoing and incoming executives. As the outgoing can provide the early planning stages of the Week and outline exactly what the Union is needing to have a successful week- as well as providing a more detailed plan for the week, which also ensures that the new exec do not become burnt out, right out of the gates.

However, I truly believe that all new students and freshers’ helpers from across the University enjoyed their time within our Union- with our quality events of the White T-Shirt Party and ABBAmania. It perhaps also helped that we were able to sell our flagship drink, Tennent’s, at £2.50 which only highlights the far superior drink line-up the QMU now has.

I also think that, in my not so humble opinion, that the QMU’s performance at the Freshers’ Address not only showed off the Union in the best light- with better and funnier chants then the other student unions. A big thank you for those who screamed their lungs out. I also think my speech was better than the rest…

I also have issues regarding the behaviour of members of Cross-Campus throughout the week- especially regarding the safety of students and our helpers- hopefully this behaviour will have changed by the time the next Freshers’ Week happens- however having been at this University for too many years, I don’t see this changing.

I think that there should be a renegotiation of the deal between ourselves and the GUU- as I think there is room for improvement and a reminder that it is our job to ensure incoming students have the best time possible- rather than a mud-slinging contest it can turn into. Maybe, with a new exec on both sides this will change for the better and I do think the Freshers’ Week experience can be improved on both sides.

Asides from the Cross-Campus disagreements- I would say that those who purchased our Freshers’ band had good value for their money- especially in the cost-of-living crisis.

I believe that our triple-headliners of ABBAmania, Fatman Scoop and Callum Beattie did provide an array of musical tastes for people and was a good introduction to our Union. However, I do think the booking of Callum Beattie was a blunder- and that we should be focussing on known-acts amongst the 17-20 age demographic. I believe that the money spent could have used in other areas of the Week, but he did do a passable cover of Caledonia. I also think that although I loved Fatman Scoop, and it was a surreal experience of ADHD manic energy- people were potentially put off by lack of current name recognition. Hopefully this is addressed for this coming Freshers’ Week.

I do also think if the University really cared about the Student Experience, they would provide additional funding solely for that week to ensure that their new students are getting the best introduction to University life- whilst also limiting the risks of new students, unfamiliar with the city, ending up in town, where there are no safety measures or buses back to Uni accommodation.

It should also be noted here that Lachlan did a great job on the logo for the Week and was incredibly useful to me on the WTP night and the chant making for the Address.

Board and Wider Engagement.

This year I believe that there have been enough board incentives and quality board socials, ran by Fran- although I may be too old for laser tag, I did enjoy the treasure hunt you created.

I think there has been good engagement from board members towards Union events- I think as every president before would agree- there is always room for more engagement!

I understand the challenging requirements of university study and I am grateful to all those who volunteer their time for this Union- it can be a deeply rewarding/deeply frustrating depending on your viewpoint.

Again, I am proud to say I succeeded where other Presidents may have failed. I provided you all with warmth through the harrowing winter months (board jumpers). I believe now no one will forget their own names now or other board members too.

Cross Campus.

I believe that this year’s relationship amongst Cross-Campus has been superficial and weak. I’m not sure if that was due to differing personalities but I do not think there was a positive work relationship- and I think that failure is due to lack of clear communication between the student organisations. I think there should be an early concerted effort amongst the incoming execs across the board to work together in combatting the University’s failings and underwhelming funding of our organisations. It only helps the University if we fight amongst ourselves and fight for scraps- as this University compared to other Russell Groups Universities is failing its students and the experience they are given is lacking.

On a personal level, I don’t think there has been a good relationship between myself and the SRC or GUU. However, that matters little to me now.

In future if the SRC wants to claim they represent all students- maybe they could be clearer in how they represent the other student unions on campus at meetings where GUU, GUSA and us are not invited? Otherwise, it is a stretch that they represent all students.

University Relationship.

I believe that during my time as President- I have been able to build upon and create new relationships with key university staff. I think that I have had a good working relationship with both David Duncan and Jonathan Jones- who have been the main contact within the University. I do think there is still issues with how budgeting is done at this University, and I also think there should still be clearer communication of decisions- it would also be incredibly useful to be shown the rationale on how these decisions have been made. As sometimes these decisions seem to be made off the cuff and has left myself and Margaret baffled.

Throughout this year. It has continually confirmed to myself and management that the Estates department at the University has been ineffectual and due their termination of the quarterly estates’ meetings- they have gone quiet and have not solved the issues that have been happening even before I took over the presidency. I believe that it is imperative to have organised meetings with Estates- as these issues need changes which is easier to get across in person.

To illustrate my point:

The toilets need to be fixed- with a serious upgrade required for our disabled toilets.

The Venue floor needs to be fixed.

The hole in the roof needs to be fixed.

The windows need replacing.

The heating needs to be fixed.

The rotten wooden panels, both in the front and back entranceways, need replacing.

The ramp needs to meet policy changes.

All these fixes need proper funding from the University and impetus from the Estates Dept.

Again, I do believe that the University should allow all student organisations access to Court, as this could mitigate the ability of the SRC- regardless of their exec- and allows each Union to bring their concerns and challenges that need addressing.

I think this because at no point did the SRC reach out to ask us if we had any pressing issues we thought should be brought before Court. However, I understand that the University and the SRC would probably not accept this. As for the University it allows them to dismiss us and for the SRC it gives them the entitlement of elitism.

To echo my predecessor- “**I have absolute zero confidence in the Glasgow University Student Representative Council to represent the Queen Margaret Union**.”

Diversity and Identity.

I think the Union’s identity of being a live music venue and events space is constantly improving, and this year the success of these events has been lending itself to my understanding of what this Union does best at.

Oktoberfest was a phenomenal event- which illuminated to new students and old ones that the QMU is a place to be for the best live events, great drinks, and a lively atmosphere. All those involved with this event did a great job in the running and implementation of this event. I would say that our Operations Manager, Kris, and Fran did an amazing job with last minute additions- from flyering to personalised reservation signs to reaching out to ABK and ensuring that we actually sold steins with actual German beer, for a more authentic experience.

I would also state for this event- we were able to put on a quality event with a low entry fee- which meant those who wanted could enjoy the night without worrying too much about costs.

Another example of us proving our live events working was our St. Andrew’s Day ceilidh- which I think was an unequivocable success- which again benefitted from cheap prices, a bespoke drinks package and a lively atmosphere. I may not be fan of twirling in circles holding sweaty hands, but everyone looked like they had a great time and I think it was a great opportunity for members and students to let loose just before the taxing examination season.

I think putting on events during refreshers’ week will always be a mix bag- due to the fact that there is no week before the start of classes- that is not part of the holidays. However, I do think that our programme of events for that week were good. Lee and his drag bingo was a really good showcase of a popular event in Jim’s Bar- as well as getting in more members who may not come to our other events. As with all events, I think that promotion can be difficult to get right, being able to strike a consistent tone throughout to ensure people know exactly what to expect but to still enjoy what is on offer.

The Taylor Swift Tribute gig- did not have the turnout that we would have wanted but I think those who came to see it enjoyed themselves massively. A big thank you to all board members who dressed up and got into the spirit of the night. The friendship making pre-event was also a good idea- that allowed people who did not want to drink but still enjoy friendship, fun and karaoke. I think the whole event was a good illustration of what the QMU can do- when committees work together.

The Galentines event this year was a switch up from the small club night of the previous year. A night in at the QMU showing the first two Pitch Perfect movies- with pitchers and pizza- was a low-risk event. The event itself ran rather well- aside from the tech issues at the start- with, again, people who did not always come to our other events wanting to come and chill with their mates to watch some films. I would recommend this being continued throughout the next year- and could easily fit with any theme. I know in the past ‘bad film nights’ were run in collaboration with societies- I think these would work again, due to the low-risk of putting on a film during bar opening times.

I think for the success of QMU Events- there does need to be a concerted effort throughout the summer to plan, cost and execute all events that the new board want to put on. If this is done it would also take the burden of quick promotion of the shoulders of board members- as well as making it easier to have a monthly calendar on our socials and website.

On the commercial side, we have also seen an influx in some truly stellar gigs- from my personal favourites of Jeff Rosenstock to the Menzingers and of course the comedic carnage that was Badboy Chiller Crew- I believe this year Stewart has outdone himself with the calibre and variety of the gigs we have put on.

The QMU is an institution of live music in Glasgow- an I would argue the best place to see quality acts. I am proud that the QMU has furthered its musical legacy and I am sure some of the acts that have played will surely be added to our already legendary history and hopefully as additions to our evergrowing mural.

Throughout this year, we have also been able to put on some great student and up and coming bands from Glasgow after our weekly quiz. I know Margaret has found her new favourite band in In-Phase. In this regard, I’d like to thank Matilda and Ross for ensuring the QMU helped uplift new bands and give back to this burgeoning creative music scene.

An Accessible and Visible President.

As Lachlan stated in his AGM report- I am tall and ginger.

I do believe that this year I have been a very visible President, throughout the year my face has been beamed in the library, the gym and JMS. Asides from that, I have been obviously seen at all QMU events, that I was able to attend, whilst also representing the Union across all professional University meetings.

Throughout this year, I think I have proven myself in conversations, arguments, and discussions with the University that I have been able to represent the interest of the Union, whilst also keeping a cordial relationship with those I professionally have disagreed with.

Strategic Planning and Reforms.

Margaret this year and I have written and implemented a new strategic plan- which has been built upon the previous one. I believe that the new strategic plan is achievable and a worthwhile goal to achieve. However, the success of this new strategic plan is out with my control now- implementation and the success of the Union is now reliant on my successor and future successors.

As previously discussed, I was able to bring about anew complaint and discipline procedure, a new code of conduct and a term of reference for board meetings. Not bad.

Election oversight.

This year I oversaw a very successful October election. From my memory of student politics, especially at the QMU- this is the first time I have seen a contested CSR positions, both for 6-month term and the full 12-month term. I am very happy I was able to achieve a full board during my year- and proves the growing influence of the QMU, after building back from the covid years.

At the spring election, I was disappointed not to have a candidate for Social or Events convenorships, but I believe that this will be a focus of the future President to address.

Priorities for the coming year.

Archie has guaranteed me that he will still attempt to make the cost of oat milk match the prices of dairy milk in the café. He also said he will stake his presidency on this, and it will be his legacy. This is just a reminder for him.

Thank You!

So, it is the end of the year, my time is almost done- I will no longer be “Still Dan Rogers, President of the QMU” but instead return to my previous title of “Just Dan Rogers.” I am sure that there are a few that are glad I will be leaving. The two years I have spent on this board has been nothing short of an incredibly fun time. From coming in as a Freshers’ Helper because Lachlan asked, to Events Convenor, to spending a week inhaling horrible fumes, to paint Halloween decorations that nobody cared about; in the end was a fast introduction to life at the QMU.

It might have been those fumes that made my ego grow to the point of self-importance that made me run for the presidency.

Anyway… into my sincere thanks:

Ange- you’ve been an amazing constant throughout this year- you have put up with my rants and raves about everything from the SRC to latte art. You may like Taylor Swift to an obsessive amount, but I still love you. As I think everyone involved in student politics would also agree with: You definitely are my better half. I am glad now that this presidency is done and unemployment awaits- so I can hang out with you more, right??

Perhaps some thanks go to Lachlan. You are a massive reason why I got involved in the QMU- I am very glad you got me involved in this beautifully ugly building and the craziness of running this place. You have been a massive resource of knowledge- whether I asked for it or not. You occasionally give really good advice, occasionally awful but I wouldn’t have it any other way. You’re a credit to all Australians and a hard act to follow.

To my three VPs- Fran, Iris, and Archie- you have all provided me with laughs and a comfort during the multitude of stupidity that we have all had to deal with. I appreciate you all for entrusting me and for being my loudest supporters throughout.

Fran, you deserve a special shout out, you have been an amazing VP for me. I am not a massive fan of emotion, but I really appreciate everything you have done throughout the year. You are an occasionally good drinking buddy- even if you are a yapper ‘n’ a half.

Archie- welcome to the QMU presidency gang. You’ll enjoy it, you’ll hate it- at the end of it all you will be glad you did it. I think you should be able to achieve what you want from this year. Lachlan and I will be here if you need people to vent to but don’t call too much.

To Margaret and Kris- You two have been fantastic towards me throughout this year and as Events Convenor, your guidance, ideas, and laughs have been invaluable to me. I really appreciate everything you have done for me throughout the year. I hope you haven’t minded too much the plume of smoke that follows me around, and the constant conversations about the SNP being crooks… You guys have been the strongest allies I have ever had and phenomenal occasional voices of reason.

Margaret- your jokes are awful but your ability to cut through BS is epic.

Kris- Your stories are always enjoyable and a great distraction from my job.

Lanna- You have been an amazing companion throughout the last two years, your ability to yap has been second to none and I have really enjoyed messing about with you. Next up Glasto!

Lee- You’re a beautiful bastard and have been a massive credit to this Union! I will miss our chats at the bar or just general chatting shiiiiii.

Raff- Cheers for being able to translate Lachlan’s chat to actual reasonable English. You have also been able to destroy my FPL team because of your ‘advice’. You will always be my second favourite FSM.

Scott and Tricia- You guys are amazing and have been a source of great conversation, especially when I’ve been coming in late. I really appreciate everything you’ve done, and you guys deserve more recognition for your contributions.

Stewart- Your music taste is almost impeccable, a bit more country and it’ll be close. Just by booking Jeff Rosenstock you cemented your place as an icon.

Martin- You know what you did to help me, again, so thank you. I will never forget it.

Grant- For the past two years you have been a great person to discuss anything with and I really appreciate your help during my time as Events Convenor.

Finally, I would like to thank all the board members during my time as both Events Convenor and President. You all have made a lasting effect on this building, whilst also being some of the best people to talk to. I hope all of you look on your time as a board member as a positive one- if you don’t oh well.

Vice-President Board of Management- Frances Breslin.

1. Manifesto Points

1.1. QMU Events

A shared manifesto point between the whole of this year’s Executive has been to re-establish the QMU’s identity as the live music venue on campus. This has been done through the priority of hosting live student events which included Freshers’ Week, Octoberfest, St Andrew’s Day Ceilidh, Taylor Swift tribute, drag bingo, bi-weekly jazz nights and student music after the Wednesday quiz. I, and the President have worked especially hard on these events as we strongly believe that live events and music is at the heart of the QMU. Live events are how we best utilise our venue spaces and is what sets us apart from other venues in the west end.

I have promoted each event held this year by emailing all of the affiliated societies with the event information and ticket link.

Events that I took an active part in planning and organising were Octoberfest, Taylor Swift tribute and drag bingo.

Octoberfest was extremely successful, with tickets selling out just hours before the event started. The sponsorship from ABK beer was a huge contributing factor to the success of the event.

This year I took an active role in promoting these events and from this, have proven the value of flyering students. This has proven to increase engagement and ticket sales for events and should be continued as a form of promotion for future events.

In my manifesto, I had intended for the QMU to be used as a rehearsal and recording space for student bands. With help from the tech team, bands have been able to record their performances in Venue and Jim’s bar. Due to storage issues, and the university falling back on their promise to renovate the basement area into greenrooms, there is not currently space for a dedicated rehearsal space. This should be explored in the coming year as rehearsal space is an ongoing issue for all music groups at the university.

My manifesto also outlined plans for an end-of-year student showcase. This unfortunately, was not achieved due to the resignation of the events convenor. This could also be explored for next year.

I had initially been in favour of re-introducing weekly club nights as the QMU with a focus on inclusivity. However, after discussing this with the past President and management, it became clear the club nights are not the best way to utilise the Venue. Introducing club nights would also have put additional stress and strain on the student board as re-introduction of board duty would most likely be necessary. I have contacted various clubs and societies asking for their collaboration on certain events however, few even responded.

1.2. Addressing GBV on Campus

Following the results of the Ross Report, I found it crucial to work with cross campus to ensure that the University meets the recommendations outlined in the report and considered student safety its first priority.

In November, the QMU board voted to formally commit support of the implementation of the Emily Test at the University of Glasgow. This is in thanks to the Campaigns Convenor. This was reported to the following cross campus meeting however, neither GUU, GUSA nor SRC have chosen to offer their support.

Weekly drop-in sessions were made available in the second semester thanks to the work of the Campaigns Convenor and in collaboration with Women’s aid.

It seems to me extremely unlikely that cross campus will offer their support of the Emily Test in order to lobby the university. Going forwards, the success of the campaign will be dependent on support from clubs, societies, and individual students.

1.3. The QMU Building

The President and Management have worked all year to lobby the university to provide funding for updating the building. This funding is most likely to come from the SES working group but is not in the near future. As stated in my manifesto, I still see the bathrooms as most in need of updating. After discussions with the Social Convenor and feedback from our affiliated clubs and societies, the lighting in Games should be addressed over the summer to provide a more welcoming space for bookings.

1.4. Working with the Board

This year, I have done my best to work with all members of the Board of Management. In the first semester, I held multiple board socials with the intention of team-bonding. This included laser-tag and a scavenger hunt around the building. I also produced a board wall in time for Freshers’ Week and updated this to a board poster after the autumn elections. I also organised and hosted the board Christmas dinner. This year, I have seen increased collaboration across committees with each board member involved in at least one, and many involved in multiple.

I have attended meetings of every QMU committee this year, sitting in on as many as possible. Each convenor has managed to define the unique purpose of each committee in the work they have done this year. Going forward, it is essential for all committees to expand their membership to bring in new voices as well as to help delegate any work required for the incoming year.

Based on reports from the previous year’s Board of Management and the culture it formed, I have acted with every intention to shape the board into an open, fun, and collaborative environment. There is always a worry that the board could become exclusive and cliquey, which is why it is so important for board members to engage with ordinary QMU members by attending internal events.

From concerns raised last year, I made sure to have ‘incentives’ at almost all socials and internal events. To my knowledge, there were more incentives and free drinks offered to the board this year than last. Management is always happy to allow board members free entry to events when there has been board involvement in planning and promotion.

2. Main Responsibilities

2.1. Affiliations

Over the summer (2023), I created and put together a brand-new affiliation pack. This also offered a great opportunity to launch the QMU’s signing with Tennent’s as our main drinks’ provider. The affiliations pack was sent out to all of the previous year’s affiliations. It was also sent to the president’s email of every GUSA club as well as being circulated by the GUSA Vice President, however, few GUSA clubs ended up affiliating. To advertise the affiliation pack better, next year’s VP BoM might consider hosting an information evening. The number of affiliations for each month of the academic year are as follows:

· September – 37

· October – 50

· November – 59

· December – 59

· January – 59

· February – 68

· March – 74

The next step for the affiliations pack will be to introduce a sport sponsorship agreement for our affiliated GUSA clubs.

2.2. Minuting the meetings of the Board of Management

I have minuted all meetings of the Board of Management. These are available upon request of a QMU board member and are available at all times to the Board of Management on the Board Facebook page.

2.3. Representing the QMU

This year, I have represented the QMU at; cross campus meetings, Freshers’ Week meetings with the GUU, Open days, Freshers’ Week, Freshers’ Address, ‘Scotstudy’ Christmas event, the university’s carol service and GUSA ball.

I have created a comprehensive plan and building tour for future open days.

I requested to be in attendance of the welfare forum but was denied by the SRC’s VPSS.

I did not attend the Volunteering, Clubs and Societies Awards as it was the President’s birthday, and we went to see Dune 2 and had a lovely dinner at Topolabamba.

Myself, and my fellow executives did not attend Daft Friday, due to the poor treatment and disrespect shown towards the QMU and our members by members of the GUU board.

3. New Policies

3.1. Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures

A new code of conduct and disciplinary procedure was written with help from an external consultant, Sarah Wright. This was passed in August so it could be implemented before Freshers’ Week. With the implementation of these new policies, disciplining the Board of Management is no longer the responsibility of the VP BoM. With the university now focusing on a harm reduction framework, the code of conduct and zero tolerance policy may have to be revised next year.

3.2. Election Policy

The election policy was updated in February, in time for the spring elections.

3.3. Plant-based University Campaign

This year, I met several times with the PBU Campaign. After bringing their campaign to the board, the QMU will adopt a new policy to ensure there are sufficient plant-based options in our internal outlets.

4. Cross Campus Relations

4.1. GUSA

I had a good relationship with this year’s GUSA Executive. I worked with the Vice President in order to advertise and circulate the QMU affiliation pack to all GUSA clubs. Despite not collaborating on major events, I hope the QMU continues to work with GUSA and their Executive. GUSA recently voted to change one of their council positions from ‘Welfare Convenor’ to ‘Equality, Diversity and Inclusions Convenor’, I aim to work with them and the rest of cross campus before my handover, to reframe what ‘welfare’ should mean within the responsibility of a student volunteer.

4.2. GUU

Despite working collaboratively in the lead up to last year’s Freshers’ Week, the QMU’s relationship with the GUU was not productive this year, to say the least. There can at

times be conflicting personalities between QMU and GUU executives, but this is no excuse for the complete breakdown in relationship that happened this year. I strongly believe that the relationship between the QMU and GUU should only at worst, be a ‘friendly rivalry’. The QMU and GUU are both great assets to this university and combined, offer a diverse range of spaces and events that are truly valuable to the student experience. It is within the interest of both unions to work together to demand more funding from the university so we can continue to put on unique, engaging, and affordable events for our student members.

4.3. SRC

At the beginning of my term, both the president of the GUU and I worked together to convince the SRC to allow the QMU and GUU to have our Freshers’ Week stalls at the main entrance to the SRC’s ‘Welcome Fayre’, which last year were occupied by clubs based in the city centre. This was also supported by the GUSA president, who requested that the SRC highlight GUSA membership and not advertise external gym membership options during the fayre. This resulted in the QMU and GUU being given larger stalls than last year, however external clubs were still given the ‘main spots’ for their stalls. This was extremely frustrating as both the QMU and GUU agreed that the student unions should be highlighted during Freshers’ Week as we are both on campus and therefore the safest option for night-time events for new students.

I hope that this conversation is had again before this year’s Freshers’ Week as it is a student safety issue that should take priority over the SRC’s commercial interests.

Following Freshers’ week, the SRC and QMU were in strong agreement that the behaviour of the GUU’s freshers’ helpers was unacceptable with helpers’ bringing alcohol onto the night buses that the university had paid for, bringing alcohol into student halls, as well as extremely concerning attitudes and behaviours towards freshers throughout the entire week. It is my hope that the university will agree to pay for the night buses and that the GUU are at fault if this agreement is not made again this year.

For the rest of the year, the QMU’s relationship with the SRC became more strained. We held a few cross-campus events in collaboration such as the black history month panel and the home student’s day, however the success of these can be largely attributed to individual contributions.

The SRC is meant to represent all students and that includes members of this board and this union. Unless the QMU Executive are given the opportunity to represent QMU member’s interests at university court, we are dependent on an open and honest relationship with the SRC Executive. Unfortunately, that did not come to fruition this year, and similar to last year is mainly due to conflicts of personality. It is my opinion that the SRC has neglected their duty and responsibility to hold the university to account and represent the student voice.

As with last year’s president I agree that I have zero confidence in the University of Glasgow’s Student Representative Council’s ability to represent the Queen Margaret Union.

5. University Relations

5.1. Campus Tours

I have contacted Campus Tours in order to update information about the QMU given on their historical tours and student life tours.

Freshers’ Week

For various different reasons, the majority of Freshers’ Week planning for 2024 has fallen to me. I am excited for this as I had originally wanted to run for VP MCS last year with the main

intention of organising Freshers’ Week. Following discussions with management, the responsibilities of Freshers’ Week planning and organisation will be split between all of the Executives so there is not too much stress on one person.

Even though I won’t be here for it, Freshers’ Week is already shaping up to be bigger and better than ever and I hope all of the new board members make the most of it and enjoy it to the fullest.

 The Incoming Year

I have worked really hard this year to create and develop resources for all future VP BoM’s. This includes templates for; minutes, board posters, flyer, and poster designs, building tours, open day plans, the affiliation pack and affiliation sign up form. I hope that this will give the next VP BoM more time to focus on ‘fun stuff’ and not stress (like I did) about how things should be formatted.

I hope that the introduction of a sports sponsorship will encourage GUSA clubs to use our spaces as well as encourage greater collaboration from GUSA council.

Freshers’ Week is our biggest opportunity to showcase the QMU to new and returning students, good luck to everyone who will be involved in the week itself. Following Freshers’ Week, I hope that there is a full line up of QMU events throughout the rest of the year.

Going forwards, the QMU should focus on live events as this is our history and what makes us unique: Making noise since 1890.

 Thanks

To Dan, you will always be my President even though you were often the cause of all of my annoyance. We both worked so hard this year to establish an identity for the QMU and I have seen all the work you have put in behind the scenes. Thank you for being the most emotionally unavailable shoulder I have ever cried on. I will not miss sharing an office with you.

Archie, we only worked together briefly as execs, and I know you’ll make a great president. Thanks to you and Dan, you have made me feel very vertically challenged. Every time I have a pint of Guinness, I will think of you.

Kris, you have always been the most enthusiastic voice in the management office, and I hope you never lose it. You have helped me when my confidence was down and especially when we both needed to rant about the university. Every time I see a bridesmaid, I will think of you.

Mags, you have helped and supported me so much this year and I cannot thank you enough for it. You have listened to my opinions and been brutally honest when it was needed. I hope that next year’s board come to know you as I have.

Lanna, thank you for all the work you have done throughout the year helping myself and convenors with promotion for the union. I look forward to Freshers’ Week planning again with you this year before I hand over in July.

Lesley, thank you for all your help with organising tickets for our events, working the doors, and all the admin work that no one else wants to do.

Paula, Lee, Zach, Ellie, Paddy, and all of the bar staff. Thank you for putting up with my drunk ramblings and never cutting me off.

Angela, Moira, Phoebe, Mary (and Zach again), thank you for always being up for a chat and keeping me well supplied with tea and toasties.

Scott and Tricia, thank you for always being a friendly face in the morning and source of building gossip.

Stewart and Chris, thank you for all the work you put into our external events and venue.

Duncan, Bob and Andy, our kitchen staff, thank you for all the Queen of Toasties and helping me put on the board Christmas dinner.

Ronnie, thank you for the discount in Soundbite, it’s the only thing that makes the job worthwhile! Thank you also for advertising our internal events on your own social media channels.

Thank you to all of our security staff, especially Lauren, Shak, Grant, and Raven who I see the most, we wouldn’t be able to do any of our student events or Freshers’ Week without you.

Thank you to all of the boardies I have worked with this year, the QMU wouldn’t be able to run without you. There is of course one particular boardie close to my heart, a certain Former Student Member, David Grindlay.

Lachlan, you were the first QMU board member I ever met way back in 2021 Freshers’ Week. Thank you for your friendship, advice, and sometimes hard truths. I hope you still stay QMU-adjacent as your experience is invaluable.

Thank you to Jamie Kelly, you’re my hero.

Campaigns’ Committee 2023-2024

Kirsty Arnaud.

**‘Charities and Campaigns’ → ‘Campaigns Committee’**

This year has seen a new approach to the Campaigns’ Committee, one which I have thoroughly enjoyed experimenting with. At the start of the year, the Charities and Campaigns Committee became the Campaigns Committee. I intended for the design of the Committee to be sensitive to the financial burdens enforced upon students. The cost-of-living crisis made fundraising an unrealistic aim for the Committee. However, this allowed for us to creatively explore cost-efficient options for both the board and students. Rather than raising money for charities, Campaigns became a platform for promoting volunteering opportunities and social causes relevant to our community. The committee has been able to strengthen our connections with the local and on-campus community. Through collaboration with a multitude of diverse societies on campus we have increased the visibility of the committee and our online engagement dramatically.

The Campaigns Committee ran a year’s worth of free, accessible, and engaging events without spending any money. By using Campaigns as a means to reflect the values of our members, we were able to create inclusive and safe space events exploring the interests and needs of our community through sustainable and imaginative methods. This is not to say that all our events were home runs, which I aim to discuss in later sections of this report, however, the feedback we have received from the student community has been telling of the QMU’s potential to foster welcoming and accepting environments. Despite considerable growth in engagement through our events/online and an increased effort to promote our meetings, the committee meetings often remained under-attended. I am hopeful the presence we have been able to create this year will only strengthen next year and the committee will grow. The following events were organised and run mainly by me, the committee’s Lefty, and kind board members with time to spare. I am very proud of the wonderful rag-tag committee and everyone who helped make our events come to life. Thank you <3

\*This is not to discredit the great fundraising achievements made during Freshers’ week and my recommendation for future convenors to reintroduce money-raising efforts.

**Freshers’ Week:**

I was unfortunately unable to attend Freshers’ Week due to a scheduled surgery. I tried my best to plan aspects of the week beforehand, however, without a committee it was quite a challenge to formally pass on any responsibilities. I would like to thank those who ran the face painting and glow stick sales on my behalf. I would like to recommend for next year that if a board member is unable to attend due to personal and health reasons, please avoid contacting them. There was an unsightly moment when I was 200 miles from Glasgow in A&E at 10pm being phone called about cotton buds.

We unfortunately were unable to engage with our chosen charity despite myself and exec having scheduled multiple meetings months before Freshers’ and going in-person to the charity’s open day. Freshers’ Week provides Campaigns a great chance to engage with new students and organisations and I regret not being able to take advantage of this opportunity to its full extent.

**Free Condoms and Menstruation Products:**

This year, we stopped running the free condom and menstruation products booth. The decision was made in response to the University cutting their provision of free reusable period products. We were assured free reusable products would be issued out to students via a new online system run by the University and we worked closely with the planning team on how to make this service as inclusive and safe for our members as possible.

Disappointingly, this service never materialised, and we have been left with no access to reusable products and a limited supply of disposable menstruation products. This has been a bone of contention, as our main tampon supply was donated by a charity. We are in an ongoing conversation with the University about this issue, but it has had personal ramifications for our members.

We still provide free condoms and tampons in our bathrooms. As opposed to the booth, we have made condoms and tampons more accessible by leaving them in boxes in the ground and third floor bathrooms. The uptake in people taking products has been huge and it’s been difficult to keep on top of the demand.

* **Sexual Health and Guidance Week**

We returned the Condom Booth for a week in the foyer and handed out free SHAG Bags. Each bag had free contraception inside as well as crucial resources for specialist services. We also ran an online campaign discussing sexual health and sharing more resources.

* **Period Poverty Event with Simon Community**

This event was one of the committee’s most successful events and first event of the year. To promote the Simon Community’s Period Friendly volunteering opportunities, we organised a panel event with speakers from reusable menstruation product companies, from students at Glasgow University Environmental Sustainability Team, Students for Choice and other Feminist societies. The event was well attended, and Simon Community received great engagement. It was unfortunate that the board social was scheduled for the same night.

**Zero tolerance and tackling gender-based violence:**

**The Committee:**

Last year the Committee had absorbed a considerable amount of Welfare responsibilities. It was decided by Exec at the start of the year that Welfare would reassume a few of these commitments, namely prevention of and support for survivors of gender-based violence. There was a miscommunication between Exec and Welfare which left gender-based violence unaddressed until November when I reacquired the responsibility. This was a shame as we had previously been a leading force in support and prevention on campus. Absorbing these elements has been a big increase in the remit of the committee and I recommended next year’s Welfare and Campaigns committee outline an equal share in relevant responsibilities. The following details the events and initiatives the Committee introduced to reintroduce a zero-tolerance stance on gender-based violence on campus.

**The Board:**

This report recognises that these projects should have been in place much sooner and a more active approach is recommended to promote education, training, and awareness of our zero-tolerance commitment among our board and student members. The use of appropriate language and conduct when addressing this topic is vital and something that has not always been apparent this year. I was grateful the board was open to my suggestion of introducing terms of reference for our board meetings to avoid unintentionally making members feel uncomfortable at any point. But this report cannot overstress the need for board member training and an active approach to enacting our zero-tolerance values.

1. **Enough! Glasgow Women’s Aid Drop-In sessions**

Since December, the team at Enough! have been running weekly one-on-one drop-in sessions for young women to discuss gender-based violence. This unique service is essential for plugging the gaps in support services on campus. I would recommend diversifying the help offered to be inclusive of our diverse community.

1. **The Emily Test Campaign**

This Campaign has been discussed by committee members for the past two years. I aimed to bring the campaign to life, and as a committee in conjunction with the board we have made big efforts in raising awareness and committed the Union to lobbying the University and societies on campus.

 As convenor, I was able to represent this campaign at a cross-campus level and engage with a number of interested clubs and societies. We hosted an information meeting with clubs, societies, and student bodies which was well attended. Although commitment was informally expressed by attendees, no formal action plan materialised.

The Emily Test was also not endorsed by key figures on the cross-campus level which made our campaign efforts challenging. Due to personal circumstances, I did not have the ability to take this campaign on by myself. I believe strongly in The Emily Test, and I was encouraged to see it feature in many manifestos across the student bodies this election season. A team approach which upholds and genuinely embodies the value of the Emily Test is the necessary approach to successfully launching this campaign. I intend to review the Emily Test further and explore ways in which the Union can embark on the right path.

1. **Making resources more accessible**

A conscious effort was made to make resources for support services more available, physically around the building and virtually through our socials.

1. **16-days of action**

**Pints, Poetry, and Placards**

This event was designed to make placards for the Fight for the Night March. QMUnicate helped promote the event and together we created a lovely safe space for people to share their creativity and discuss the importance of zero tolerance. We also used this event as a platform to discuss the Emily Test Campaign. Women’s Aid also attended and contributed to our discussion. This event was relatively well attended considering the 16 days of action occur alongside exam season. The event was free and contributed to bar sales for the night.

**Fight for the Night March**

Organised by Strathclyde Union, I was so happy to see so many QMU faces there and of the people who had attended the Pints, Poetry, and Placards event.

**Vision Board Making**

This event was in collaboration with Urban Angels and Women’s Aid. The intention was to create a safe space to destress after 16 days of action. It was a wholesome but considerably under-attended event. It was the last week of university, and I was not anticipating a massive turn out.

**International Women’s Day**

We hosted another Pints, Placards, and Poetry night for the IWD march. However, this coincided with a variety of IWD events. This came at a busy time for myself and the committee, I would recommend making a better effort to collaborate with the feminist societies to increase engagement for next year.

**Safe Spaces and Widening Inclusion:**

**Trans-Day of remembrance**

This was an effort by Welfare and Campaigns to create a comforting environment for those who were marking trans remembrance day. The board played a massive part in materialising this, a massive thank you to everyone who attended the memorial and baked goodies for afterwards - we received wonderful feedback from attendees.

**Gender Affirming Clothes Swap**

The clothes swap is the jewel in the Campaign's crown. We ran three successful, free, and accessible clothes swaps with the intention to provide affordable, alternative styles for those seeking to affirm their gender within the queer community. The feedback we have received from the student community has been wonderful. This has had a fantastic impact of increasing Campaigns visibility on campus and on socials.

The clothes swap also epitomises the importance of bringing new people into the Union. This project was Katie’s wonderful idea, the committee’s Lefty. Katie has brought so much energy and life not just to Campaigns but to the Union as a whole. Katie’s insight and creativity has been so refreshing, I have felt so lucky to have them play such an integral part in the committee this year. I have had a lot of fun bringing this project to life with Katie. We are going to spend the last few weeks of myself as convenor to think of ways in which we can expand and grow Safe Space and Widening Inclusion focus of the Union.

**Conclusion:**

I have thoroughly enjoyed assuming the responsibility of Campaigns Convenor for 2023-2024. I was very warmly welcomed into the QMU during a personally challenging time, and I was immediately made to feel a part of a heterogeneous community.

The QMU became my safe space and it's been a pleasure to try to make it a safe space for others.  Thank you to everyone, past and present, who has been a part of cultivating that vibe.

The diversity of our community is our biggest strength. Celebrating this and upholding inclusion and care at every level of the QMU, particularly among board members, should be our main motivation. It is understandable to become distracted by profit and practicalities, but for convenors I feel the Campaigns Committee this year is evidence of the possibilities achievable without a budget and too much stress. There were many other things I wanted to achieve during this year, but I want to say one final massive thank you to everyone who helped make the things Campaigns did this year so special. Especially Katie Kurth!

Publications Committee- Ailsa Morgan.

General

In my manifesto I outlined a lot of plans and ideas for the magazine, some of which were more successful than others.

One thing that we did manage to do was distribution! I was really glad about this, the team all managed to distribute issues of our Autumn edition around campus and in Glasgow coffee shops and third spaces. I think that this will definitely be repeated for our spring edition too!

Despite having an events manager this year, we weren’t able to put on as many events as we would have liked and most of our energy was focused on launch parties. This was mostly due to personal circumstances and hopefully won’t be the case next year!

I’m very proud of the team from this year - we all became great friends and have bonded really well. I hope it’s been a fun, supportive, and creative environment this year for everyone!

The Team

This year I made a change to the editor team application process, where instead of potential editors simply applying online through Google Forms and me making decisions based off their responses, I created a Google Form for applicants to register their interest in a specific role and then invited them for an informal interview and chat. We had a great response with this, and although it was a time-consuming process, I think it was wonderful to meet everyone face to face before inviting them to be part of the team. It was also great to build relationships with those who didn’t get the position, and some of them have still engaged with the magazine as contributors!

I kept most of the positions from the year before, including editor positions for Arts and Culture, Creative Writing, Design, Features, Film, Music, Lifestyle, and News and Politics. I also kept the two online editors, but I got rid of the advertising and fundraising role, as it was made mostly redundant by the Events position as well as the Deputy and myself. I think we definitely didn’t suffer for this, and I would recommend to the next EIC to do the same thing.

Meetings

Especially in the first semester, we had a lovely uptake in contributors at meetings. In the weeks after fresher’s week, our meetings usually had about 20-24 attendees; this has inevitably boiled down to a smaller but very loyal group of contributors who come every week, some of whom I think will be trying for editor positions next year! It was also lovely to see some more board members taking an interest in the magazine and coming along to meetings. Lots of our editors have now expressed an interest in freshers helping and taking part in the wider QMU community.

In terms of general engagement numbers, we had 66 new members added to our Facebook contributors’ group, and 142 new followers in the Instagram in the past year!

Publishing

Across the year we have had three issues (two online, one in print) and a fresher’s zine (also in print).

We were very excited to make the freshers zine but due to some problems with the company and delivery times, it ended up being delivered later than expected. This meant that we missed out on our main opportunities for distribution, which were helping the freshers move into halls, although we still distributed a fair amount at the freshers’ fairs and are still doing so at QMU events. I think next year the fresher’s zine definitely needs to be sent away earlier!

Four our autumn issue, we printed less than last year due to the rising cost of print – compared to last year with 300-400 copies, we printed just 200. This worked out pretty well actually; we had enough for everyone at the launch party, as well as some left over to distribute around campus and the west end, and some for the archive. I think we’ll stick with the same number for the upcoming spring issue!

Events and Launch parties

During Fresher’s Week, we had three events, including our first physical meeting on the Wednesday! We also had an arts and crafts/collage event which was really well attended, but we had particular success with our poetry open mic event on Thursday! I think particularly because our deputy editor was also the president of the Poetry Society, and the event was a collaboration between the two societies, we had an impressive number of attendees and lots of people signed up to perform. It went to well that I think we will look to making it a more regular thing next year, as long as we maintain our relationships with the Poetry Society as I think that really improved attendance.

We also had a little mini-collab with Campaigns, where we ran a Pints, Placards, and Protest Poetry night with them. It was mid-December, so the attendance wasn’t great but everyone there had a lot of fun and we had speakers performing protest poetry from Poetry Soc too. We were planning on having a jewellery-making event for the QMU Winter Wonderland but that was unfortunately cancelled.

We’ve had just a launch party for our autumn edition so far, and we have another one coming up mid-April for our spring edition! We also had a smaller event for our summer issue; since it was a charity issue, and our editors hadn’t been able to meet each other yet, we organised a small event with just contributors to the issue, editors on the team, and board members. This was completely free, but we had a small money pot where people could donate the price of a pint for the charity – the tagline was “a pint for yourself, a pint for the charity!”. This event didn’t make any profit, but we made £80 for Maggie’s, the cancer charity that we were supporting with our summer issue, purely out of donations.

For our autumn launch party, we had two musical acts and three stalls. One was our design editor, Tilly, who paid a small fee to us and then kept her own profits, another was our own stall selling posters and stickers, and another was Jessie, our events manager who was selling handmade things for the charity Impact Arts (because this was for charity, we didn’t charge a fee). Our tickets

Finances

For the autumn launch, we sold 72 tickets in advance, so earned £252 from advance tickets.

We also paid tech £50, and the two acts were paid £40 each.

Acknowledgments

Want to thank everyone on board, especially those who came along to the meetings! A special thanks to Dan and Adam for their help with the website, Toyah for her support as leftie, and Tilly our design editor for her tireless and excellent work. Loved being on board this year, can’t wait to be CSR.

Social Committee- Ross Bryson

* 1. Freshers’ Week



All turnout figures are estimated.

Freshers’ Week was incredibly tiring but rewarding to run. I personally did not prepare enough at all for the week, leaving most of my planning to the last minute, simply okaying what was on the timetable, and mostly planning each event the day before it actually happened. Similarly, I recruited helpers on a mostly ad-hoc basis, although I had to do this because my committee was very small at the time. Helpers were absolutely amazing – I simply couldn’t have done it without you. Thanks to Lucy Widdows, Cam, Jenny, Katie Whitham, Lachlan, Raff, Jamie, and Rosie for being incredible hosts, and thanks to Urja, Gregor, Matthew, Lucy Stobie, Katie Kurth, Erin, David, and Martin for helping behind the scenes, setting up Speedmating and helping mark the quizzes.

On a personal note, I believe my failure to plan events properly was partially due to anxiety about the role, which could have been prevented had I not been so scared and out of my depth at early board meetings – I didn’t feel as if I really knew the board so was afraid to make suggestions and ask for help. This was further complicated during Freshers’ Week as when I ended up being stressed and struggling to run events properly, it ended up being other freshers’ helpers that helped me – not necessarily those on Board. I feel this opened up a gulf between myself and Exec that I will discuss later in my report.

1. Big Bar Quiz

The Big Bar Quiz has been such a blast to run. It’s been the highlight of my week, as well as the point in my week I always stress the most about. As this year we decided to merge the BWNPQ and the Friday Music Quiz, it has ended up being our only weekly union-run event, which is obviously a big responsibility to take on – but that’s what Social is about! It was certainly a learning curve, but I feel the effort I put into organising the event has paid off, as the quiz has continued to attract crowds late into second semester – something that both quizzes last year did not do to the extent of the Big Bar Quiz. Slumps mid-first and mid-second semester were remedied through the use of themed quizzes – with Movember and the Music Quiz in the first semester, and the various nostalgia-themed quizzes we’ve had in second semester. It’s also worth noting that despite relatively low turnouts for some of the themed quizzes in late second semester, we have built up a highly loyal group of regulars, most of whom first attended the quiz after we started with the themes.

A few changes were made in-between the first and second semesters – those being the raising of the entry fee from £1 to £2, the capping of the cash jackpot at £250, and replacing the jackpot question with a paper aeroplane challenge – average attendance did drop from Semester 1 to 2, but what has resulted in a far bigger revenue on entry fees from second semester. It’s also worth noting that the nights with the best atmosphere and hence best student retention from week to week have been our most recent themed quizzes, culminating in higher turnout for the Nostalgia quiz.

Band turnout has been an interesting conundrum. We noted a phenomenon where most quiz participants did not stay for the bands after, which correlated pretty well with the band having brought their friends along to the quiz or not, and whether the bands promoted the gig in advance or not. This was complicated in second semester by bands not having been booked far in advance leaving little time to promo. Overall, my thoughts on the premise of having a single band play after every Big Bar Quiz are that the formats of a quiz and a gig are very different, with groups who had been having a good time chatting to their friends were unable to do that during the (very loud) gigs, so left to go to another pub. I also feel that the atmosphere of the quiz was slightly hampered by the dancefloor setup of the seats, as it split a large crowd into two smaller crowds, which made the room feel emptier, with less ambience. Overall, I would recommend that post-quiz gigs be limited to acoustic artists, jazz bands and other artists that you can talk over, and that student rock bands be offered a different gig format that would suit their needs better, with more time to promote and sell tickets, and to play with other bands on the ticket.

In terms of what to do differently next year, I feel the cash prize has been a distraction and has caused needless stress. The nights where the cash prize has been given away, we’ve seen a very different type of crowd that did not engage (or drink) as much, and the offer of a cash jackpot that has not actually been won through the challenge has certainly made a few punters angry. The nights on which we didn’t offer a cash prize, engagement did not see a massive decline, and recently toward the end of the quiz, winning regulars actually forfeited taking the jackpot challenge! Overall, I feel this shows that the Big Bar Quiz would do well to get rid of the cash jackpot and move to a system where quality sponsored prizes (BOOZE) are offered as the main prize, as this still provides a good prize but leaves out the stress and the unpleasant people that a cash prize attracts. This also raises the possibility of doing away with or reducing the entry fee, as the £2 entry fee did slightly affect our turnout. Themed quizzes should also be the way to go from the start, and the hosting should stay in the middle ground between genericism and pure niche in-jokes that Urja and Lucy (later Urja and Gregor) managed to occupy very successfully.



1. Karaoke

This year I continued the Society Karaoke which John started last year, to mixed levels of success. Booking was successful in first semester (barring an incident in the first week after Freshers’ week which John helped me out with), while in second semester I ran into a few more problems with societies cancelling last-minute, or not showing up. Highlights included the amazing Skate Society, whose “Marioke” events were incredibly successful and attracted many students from Strathclyde (showing the possibility of running more events aimed at Strath and Caley students), as well as the fantastic Movember Karaoke, which shows the importance of good hosting and a good theme on karaoke events.

The main reason for the drop-off in society interest in second semester was the issue of lighting in Games bar. Multiple societies asked if the lights could be dimmed and complained about the harsh lighting. Those that complained, ended up not coming back as they felt the atmosphere was too awkward. For successful nights such as Marioke, the atmosphere benefitted from the TV’s being connected to Wiis and a Nintendo Switch, but this was hard to replicate for other events. The most successful nights were also slightly hampered by the 10pm closing time, as they had to finish just as people were getting drunk and the atmosphere was getting going.

My recommendation for next year is for karaoke events to continue, but with special attention paid to which societies are invited, and for the Social committee to try out actively hosting its own karaoke events. I would also strongly recommend that karaoke events be moved to a Thursday when the Union is open until 11pm, and that more ambient lighting be installed in Games bar to increase the venue’s attractiveness for both societies to book, and general students to come and drink.



1. Other remarks

This year has certainly not been without stress. The gulf I mentioned earlier was persistent and present, first between me and Tilda, and later me and Exec. I feel both these relationships did get better over time, but they only got better through a lot of arguments and a lot of getting to know the other person.

I must admit though, many of these issues were my fault. As I went into the position of Social Convenor straight from first year, I did not know how the Board worked at all. Looking back, I feel that it was a mistake to step into the role with hardly any experience, as to be honest I did feel pressured into taking on the position. I feel the fact that I was learning how to actually be Social Convenor limited the events I felt I could run – I regret not continuing the pool and darts tournaments from Freshers’ Week, and I should have put on more games nights, although those can certainly happen next year now that the Quiz is in a better position – I’m very excited to see what I can do as a CSR!

It would however be wrong for me to say I regret my term as Social Convenor. I am proud of the work I have done bringing the QMU’s Wednesday night pub quiz back to a strong position, and I am proud that I did not give up. I have grown a lot over the year, and the things I have learned, the people I have met and the relationships I made have made my term as Social Convenor the most exciting year of my life so far.

A few final thank yous:

Thank you to Tilda, for booking the bands, making the Insta posts and doing way too much of my own job.

Thank you to Lesley and Kris for printing out all those sheets and sorting all those amazing prizes.

Thank you to Lucy, Cam, Urja, Jamie, Gregor, Archie, Martin, and Raff for all your quiz hosting charisma.

Thank you to Gregor for being the world’s greatest leftie, and to Jamie for being the world’s greatest honorary leftie.

Thank you to Katie Kurth for doing all that marking, and to your half-dead computer that never gave out.

Thank you to Katie Whitham for beating the dead horse that is the Cheesy Pop round.

Thank you to everyone else in the committee for your insane ideas.

Thank you to John, for helping me through that first week.

Thank you to Paula and Lee, for keeping everything on track.

Thank you to Dan, Fran, and Iris, for keeping me in check.

Cheers,

Ross Bryson

Social Convenor

Tech Committee- Malak El Dessouki and Adam Meek

Due to some personal circumstances, I was not able to have a full report for submission in time for the meeting, but I’ll be outlining some highlights below. If anyone is interested in a full report, let me know and I can pass it on once it’s ready.

It’s been quite a successful year for the tech team, we’ve seen the number of events increase significantly compared to the past few years, and with the addition of Assistant Tech Manager Chris Flynn to the team, we’ve been able to introduce and improve a lot of new systems to insure the strength and longevity of the tech team.

A more official structure has been put in place for training techs that has allowed us to shift away from the “we do this because it’s always been done this way” mindset and towards ensuring that the technicians actually understand what they’re doing, how it works, and why they’re doing it. This has significantly decreased the amount of human error equipment malfunctions and has strengthened the team’s ability to put on events and troubleshoot when needed. The training also covers health and safety in serious detail to ensure that our team is always safe when handling any equipment. We started the new training program during freshers’ week for both new and returning team members and were able to hold several more sessions over the course of the year. Advertising the last round on social media and around the building proved to be incredibly beneficial, despite it being posted at very short notice.

We have also been able to improve and maintain the organisation of equipment around the building, and to a large extent, once the system was put in place, techs have been keen to keep everything clean and organise, which has been incredibly useful for ease of access to equipment and avoiding damage due to improper storage.

The number of people on the tech team, especially senior techs, fluctuated greatly over the course of the year, which often meant that I was having to cover more than I should be, but having 3 newly trained senior techs and 3 trained junior techs, who with shadowing experience between now and September will hopefully also become senior techs, this hopefully should no longer be an issue. We have also transitioned to assigning shifts based on availability (and skill) instead of personal preference, as during the first semester lots of shifts were going by unassigned because people were not interested in the events, not because they weren’t available to do it.

During the first semester, there was a huge problem with external payments not coming in or being months late despite several emails from both me and the Operations Manager. Introducing the late fee this semester has proven to be incredibly useful. It’s still not ideal that techs end up having to wait two weeks for the payment, but once a final warning before the late fee is added is issued, all but one society in the past 3 months have paid before the final deadline set in the email. It may be worth exploring taking partial or full tech payments **before** events like room hire, but in the meantime, this has been a good solution.

Despite now having a good system in place for equipment repairs by Chris, we’ve had quite a few important pieces of equipment die on or that are poorly functioning, including two sound desks and the PA in jims. Hopefully funding that has been previously discussed is finalised and comes through in time for the equipment to be available for freshers’ week, because with what we have right now, at any moment when there are events running in all four rooms, there is no back-up or spare equipment in case of emergencies, with some of the equipment being used being quite unreliable.

The BBQ gig nights were, if nothing else, great learning and teaching experiences for practical gig tech. Thanks to Grant, we were also able to coordinate with GUST to get a lot of the performances professionally filmed and recorded, the material from which hasn’t been used yet, but will be incredible for both general QMU and QMU tech team marketing.

Again, a more detailed report will be available if anyone wants it, but I can’t end this without thanking some people.

First and foremost, the person who genuinely changed my life by inviting me to join the tech team, even if she probably won’t see this, Ashleigh! (and STAG for dragging me into the QMU in the first place I guess...)

The entire 2021-22 tech team, thank you for welcoming me into the team with open arms.

 My STAG tech babies turned awesome QMU techs, Grace, Attis, Rae, Sophie, Kate, Mia, Mehnaaz, Catherine, Lou, Svea, and probably a hundred others, whether you’ve worked one shift at the QMU or fifty, I’m so proud of every single one of you and I’m so glad that I got to spend time working with you all.

Toyah, your eagerness to learn and passion is unmatched, and I am so happy to have gotten to know you.

Frank, even though you fell of the face of the earth halfway through the year, our shifts together were genuinely some of the most enjoyable shifts I’ve worked, and I can’t wait to keep hearing about you taking over the tech world.

Ale and John, thank you for the endless supply of hugs and moral support, I probably (definitely) wouldn’t have survived without them.

Grant, I think I finally understand your descent into madness that we all witnessed last year, you left incredibly big shoes to fill, and I hope that I did you and the tech team justice.

The QMU security and staff, Lesley, Lauren, Shak, Moira, Zach, Patrick, the rest of the bar staff, and of course Paula and Lee, thank you for making the endless shifts slightly more tolerable. Your support for the tech team does not go by unnoticed.

Alan, Avais, Chris, Stewart and Richie your support throughout the year and my time at the QMU has meant the absolute world to me. I don’t think you understand how much I have learned from you all and how big of an honour it was to work alongside you.

Lanna, Margaret and Kris, thank you for your constant support for the tech team, the board, and every single member of the QMU. It has genuinely been a pleasure to work with you all.

To the 2023-24 exec, thank you for constantly standing by me and the tech team. Having you fighting in our corner meant more to me and the team than you know. Thank you for coming to so many meetings, even if it probably made no sense half the time.

The 2023-24 board. Ale, Ailsa, Ross, Kirsty, Matilda, Grant, Toyah, John, Martin, Adam, Raff, Urja, Gregor, Lucy Stobie, Izzy, Lucy Widdows, Katie, and David. Regardless of how long our time together on the board was, you made my last year at the QMU so magical, and I can’t thank you enough.

Last but certainly not least, Mr. Meek himself. Having you as a leftie and as a senior tech was a godsend. Your knowledge and skills (though at times slightly concerning) brought more to the tech team than you realise. Learning from you and with you over the past few years has been incredible, and I don’t think there are more capable hands to be leaving the tech team in, even if I still see plenty of wake-up calls with questions from the tech team in my future. This position can be overwhelming at times, but I know that you’ll find ways to make everything a hundred times easier than it is now, and I will always be available to help and support you in any way you need.

When I leave Glasgow in June, I will have (somehow) been a part of the QMU tech team for 950 days. This union and its people is probably what I’m going to miss most about Glasgow. Over the past three years, it has been the one constant in my time in Glasgow and in one way or another, every single person I have met during my time has shaped my experience to being as incredible as it was. I don’t think I’m ever going to forget my time at the QMU, and I have you all to thank for it, and I’ll always be ready and willing to support the tech team and the union, even from across the world.

Thank you.

Adam Meek

I’ll be giving a summary from my perspective as tech leftie and next year’s tech convenor. I’ll try to cover as much as possible, but I obviously can’t speak for Malak’s exact thoughts on how this year has gone.

**The Tech Exodus**

A significant issue experienced by the tech team this year was the number of techs leaving due to finishing University and otherwise becoming old. It seems probable that the covid years resulted in a lack of uptake by students that started during this period. As a result, there were quite a few occasions where Malak and I had to take on more shifts that we’d ideally like to, in order to pick up the slack. In response, we made several efforts to attract new members and train up our less experienced ones, such as tech taster sessions and an Instagram takeover. Following this, we have seen some growth that hopefully will continue, especially with Malak leaving next year. Our stall for the recent offer holders’ day allowed me to meet a few potential students who expressed interest in joining, which was worthwhile.

**Training**

We had quite a few training sessions throughout the year, with help from Chris and Alan. These went pretty well, helping to build the confidence and skills of some of our newer techs. I intend to continue these, as well as record some instructional videos on frequently required tasks for reference.

**Freshers’ Week**

Freshers’ Week 2023 seemed to go relatively well. We ended up with a decently sized team, many of which stayed on for “normal” tech shifts in the following weeks and months. There didn’t seem to be *too many* disasters (save for a malfunctioning DJ deck and drinks raining from the balcony) and the team performed well overall. Malak and I worked slightly extremely hard, to the point that each of us were forced to take a day off by the other. Malak also timetabled everyone’s shifts for the week which was very useful, leading to minimal confusion and mishaps.

**Union Events**

The weekly Big Bar Quiz has been a great opportunity to work with student bands on a regular basis, and I hope this has proven useful to members of the tech team. Moving this event to venue has allowed us to improve production values significantly. Tech specs arriving on time (or even knowing whether there will be a band) continues to be a bit of an issue, although usually this gets sorted before doors open.

Oktoberfest, the Ceilidh, and Drag Bingo all happened without any significant issues and were great fun.

**Society Events**

We had a huge amount of society events throughout the year, which only exacerbated the issue of tech team size. But in the end, we managed to make it work. Communication of tech specs from societies continues not to be optimal, and I hope to work on this further next year. That being said, I don’t believe any events were hugely disastrous (at least on our part).

**External Events**

Again, there were many external events this year which stretched our team thin. As a result of this, shifts shadowing and helping with professional gigs have been largely sidelined in favour of events where our techs are 100% required. However, these shifts remain available to those who particularly want to do one, as they remain a great source of experience with “real” gigs and events. Other external events like the Marxist conference went well across

the board, at least on our end.

**Equipment & The Building**

I don’t think we’ve seen too many equipment losses this year, which is nice. This is thanks in part to the work of Chris who has been doing a great job of fixing up our equipment and generally making our lives easier. Notably we still don’t have any strobe lights in venue, which is disappointing. There was also talk of a new sound desk being purchased soon, which would be useful to have in time for freshers’ week. There was also the previously mentioned problem with a CDJ that was never quite figured out, but luckily hasn’t reoccurred since. Obviously, further upgrades to venue’s lighting rig would be great, such as replacing the par cans with LED moving head washes, as it would bring our increasingly dated rig up to modern standards.

**Thanks**

It’s at this point in Grant’s AGM report (that I am shamelessly referencing) that he goes on to thank literally everyone he has ever met – even Dan! I think I’ll save that for next year, mostly. I would like to thank Malak, though, for everything she has done as tech convenor this year, and hope I’ll be a worthy successor.