

University of Southampton Students' Union

Constitution of Wessex Scene

1. Adoption of the Constitution

This unincorporated association and its property shall be managed and administered in accordance with this Constitution.

2. Name

The association's name is "Wessex Scene" to be known as and hereinafter 'the Group'.

3. Objects

- 1) The objectives of the Group, 'the objects', are:
 - 1) Maintain and enrich a community which is dedicated to maintaining Wessex Scene as a student paper of the University of Southampton
 - 2) Facilitate the publishing (both online and/or in print) of content produced by Members of the Group.
 - 3) Provide opportunities for members to engage in professional development in journalism, publishing, and related fields.
- 2) For the purpose of achieving the objects set out in this Clause, the Group shall:
 - 1) Per semester:
 - i) publish and distribute a minimum of one unique editions; consider undertaking a collaboration with another group affiliated with the Students' Union or University.
 - ii) host and promote at least one 'non-drinking' event/social.
 - iii) host and promote at least one social/event in collaboration with another Media Group affiliated with the Students' Union.
 - 2) Per academic year:

- i) promote to its members the opportunity to attend a minimum of one media conference.
 - ii) seek to nominate at least two of its members and/or their respective works for a third party award(s).
 - iii) host and promote at least one event in collaboration with another group affiliated with the Students' Union.
- 3) For requirement set out in this Clause which has not been achieved at the time of the Annual General Meeting (as set out in Clause 5, 'General Meetings'), a plan to meet that requirement must be presented at said AGM; if this cannot be done for any reason, an explanation as to why must be presented instead.

4. Membership

- 1) Membership is open to natural persons, and is not transferable to anyone else.
- 2) Membership is constituted in the following categories:
 - a) Full, open only to Full Members of the Students' Union;
 - b) Associate, open to Associate Members of the Students' Union, and to those students of the University who have exercised their right not to be members of the Students' Union.
- 3) Only Full Members are entitled to be elected to the Committee, or to propose, discuss and vote at a General Meeting. These are the sole privileges afforded to the Full Members over any other category of Membership.
 - a) This may be extended to any former Full Member(s) provided that:
 - i) either:
 - (1) they can prove that they will be eligible for Full Membership the following academic year or have previously attained Full Membership, have the verifiable backing of at least three current Full Members who are present at the meeting, and there are no objections¹ from a Full Member(s). Or,
 - (2) a resolution allowing their involvement is passed by the Members at the General Meeting in question.

¹ Objections must be declared to the Committee, either publicly or in confidence to a relevant officer(s). An officer(s) of the Committee must in turn provide written acknowledgment of the receipt of an objection; this should be provided to both the person raising the objection and to the Committee as a whole (being sure to respect requests for confidentiality).

- 4) The Group may charge a fee for admission to Membership, which may be set by a Meeting of the Committee.
- 5) The Committee must keep a register of members ('the register') on the Student Groups Hub provided by the Students' Union at www.susu.org.
- 6) The Committee may only refuse an application for Membership if, acting reasonably and properly, they consider it to be in the best interests of the Group to refuse the application.
- 7) Membership is terminated if:
 - a) the Member resigns by written notice to the Committee.
 - b) any sum due from the Member to the Group is not paid in full within six months of it falling due.
 - c) a Member ceases to be qualified for their category of Membership.
 - d) membership is revoked by a resolution of the Members in General Meeting or a Meeting of the Committee, in accordance with Clause 13, 'Disciplinary Action'.

5. General Meetings

- 1) The General Meeting constitute the Group's highest decision-making body, subject to the provisions of this Constitution.
- 2) The Group must hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) in each academic year and not more than fifteen months may elapse between successive AGMs.
- 3) A General Meeting that is not an Annual General Meeting is called an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM).
- 4) The Committee may call an Extraordinary General Meeting at any time.
- 5) The Committee must call an Extraordinary General Meeting if requested to do so in writing by at least five Full Members of the Group.
 - a) The Members' written request must state a complete agenda for the EGM.
 - b) If the Committee do not hold an EGM within five days of their receipt of the Members' written request, the Members may proceed to hold an EGM in accordance with Clause 6, 'Proceedings of General Meetings'.

6. Proceedings of General Meetings

1. Notice:

- a. The minimum period of notice required to hold an Annual General Meeting is fourteen days. The minimum period of notice required to hold an Extraordinary General Meeting is three days.
 - b. The notice must specify the date, time and place of the General Meeting, and an agenda for the General Meeting.
 - c. If the General Meeting is to be an AGM, the notice must say so, and must invite nominations in accordance with Clause 9, 'Appointment of the Committee'.
 - d. Notice must be given to all Members and to the Committee.
2. Chairing:
- a. General Meetings shall usually be chaired by the person who has been elected as President.
 - b. If there is no such person or they are not present within fifteen minutes of the time appointed for the General Meeting, the Full Members present must elect one of their number to chair.
3. Associate Members may speak at General Meetings with the permission of the meeting.
4. Voting:
- a. Every Full Member present at a General Meeting, with the exception of the Chair, shall be entitled to one vote upon every voting matter. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair shall have a casting vote.
 - b. Decisions may only be made by at least a simple majority of votes at a quorate General Meeting.
 - c. All voting shall be by a show of hands or secret ballot, at the discretion of the Chair.
 - d. There shall be no absentee voting.
5. Minutes:
- a. Minutes must be taken of all proceedings at a General Meeting, including the decisions made and where appropriate the reasons for the decisions.
 - b. Minutes of a General Meeting shall be made available to all Members within seven days.
6. Reports:
- a. If the General Meeting is an AGM, the Chair may invite any of the Committee to offer a report of their activities whilst in office.

- b. The Treasurer must present the Group's accounts to the Members at the AGM.

7. Resolutions:

- a. Any Full Member may propose a resolution to be discussed and voted upon at a General Meeting.

7. Officers and the Committee

- 1) The Group and its property shall be administered and managed by a Committee comprising the officers appointed in accordance with Clause 9, 'Appointment of the Committee'.
- 2) The Group shall have the following officers:
 - I) President (hereafter known as 'Editor-in-Chief'). The Editor-in-Chief shall oversee the organisation and management of the Group and the Committee as a whole; ensure the officers' accountability to Members, the Committee, and the Students' Union; and represent the Group to all external interests.
 - II) Secretary (hereafter known as 'Deputy Editor'). The Deputy Editor shall oversee the administration of the Group, take minutes at General Meetings and Meetings of the Committee, and maintain the register. The Deputy Editor shall aid the Editor-in-Chief in fulfilling their responsibilities. During periods where the Editor-in-Chief is indisposed, the Deputy Editor shall fulfil their responsibilities for the duration of that period.
 - III) Treasurer. The Treasurer shall oversee the financing of the Group, set the Group's budget, and maintain the accounts of the Group. The Treasurer shall, from time to time, aid the Editor-in-Chief and/or Deputy Editor in the fulfilment of their respective responsibilities.
 - IV) Events Secretary. The Events Secretary shall provide social and cultural pursuits for the Group's Members on a large scale, such as Balls and sojourns. They shall also support, and be supported by, the Social Secretary in the promotion and maintenance of the overall Group ethos. They are partly responsible for outreach alongside the Social Media & Advertising Manager.
 - V) Social Secretary. The Social Secretary shall provide social and cultural pursuits for the Group's Members on a smaller scale, such as nights out. They shall also support, and be supported by, the Events Secretary in the promotion and maintenance of the overall Group ethos.
 - VI) Social Media & Advertising Manager. The Social Media & Advertising Manager shall communicate the Group's activities to Members and the

Students' Union, and lead on the organisation of the Group's democratic processes. Shall coordinate the following:

- a) the overall direction of our social media platforms and accounts
 - b) organisation and streamlining of advertisements. Where appropriate, this should be done in coordination with the Head of Design (e.g. for printed editions) and Editors.
 - c) jointly responsible for outreach in conjunction with Events Secretary
- VII) Imagery Coordinator (formerly "Head of Imagery"). The Imagery Coordinator shall oversee the creation and/or procurement of images for the purposes of publication; they shall act as an intermediary for the purpose of bringing artistic Members and writers together.
- VIII) Head of Design. The Head of Design shall be responsible for the initial and final layout and overall design of any printed publication. The Head of design shall also act in support of the Imagery Coordinator for day-to-day activities.
- IX) Technological Officer. The Technological Officer shall be responsible for the maintenance of the Group's website and assist in any technical matters which may arise for Members of the Group.
- X) Editor - Editors shall be responsible for providing prompts for writers along with editing and proof-reading submitted content. They should work together where possible to ensure that a variety of content is being produced across all sections. Editors shall serve as the primary point of contact for writers. The suggestion is to have between three and six editors per committee.
- a) As this change to the Editor position has been implemented in the 2023 academic year after committee members have been elected, we are willing to allow them to keep their Section title as a Correspondent if the electee so wishes. For example, Opinion Editor will be rebranded as Opinion Correspondent rather than Editor. This is an exception for 2023/24 committee only.
- 3) In addition to the main officers of the Committee, Sub-officers may be chosen² from among members of the Committee
- I) Welfare Officer. The Welfare Officer shall provide welfare pursuits for the Group's Members, and offer academic advice in conjunction with the course representatives of the Students' Union. The Editor-in-Chief and the Deputy should at least undergo training for this.

²The method for choosing these roles is at the discretion of the Committee.

- II) Health & Safety Officer. The Health & Safety Officer shall ensure that all relevant safety forms have been completed and approved and that all health & safety procedures are followed during society events. The Editor-in-Chief should at least undergo training for this.
 - III) Alumni Officer. The Alumni Officer shall act to maintain connections and involvement of alumni with the Group.
- 4) No one may be appointed a member of the Committee if they have been disqualified from becoming a member of the Committee under the provisions of Clause 13, 'Disciplinary Action'.
 - 5) The number of the Committee must not be less than three, though is not subject to any maximum. There must always be:
 - I) A President (Editor-in-Chief);
 - II) a Secretary (Deputy Editor);
 - III) a Treasurer
 - 6) An officer or ordinary member of the Committee shall cease to hold office if they:
 - I) cease to be a Full Member of the Group.
 - II) resign by notice to the Group, or
 - III) is removed from office by a resolution of the Members in General Meeting or a Meeting of the Committee, in accordance with Clause 13, 'Disciplinary Action', or
 - IV) fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the Committee without good reason or justification, provided that at least 7 days has elapsed between the beginning of said meetings. The officer or ordinary member shall cease to hold office at the conclusion of the third consecutive meeting.
 - V) having been elected through sub-clause (3a) of Clause 4 'Membership', fails to enrol at the University.
 - 7) An officer or ordinary member may take temporary leave of absence by informing the relevant officer(s)³. The Committee should ensure that the following steps are taken:
 - a) All responsibilities of that officer or ordinary member are evenly delegated to other members of the Committee.

³ The "relevant officer(s)" may change depending on the situation and are ultimately at the discretion of the person taking a leave of absence; private or sensitive reasons may go through a Welfare Officer whereas more trivial reasons may be declared directly to the entire Committee.

- b) In cases where that officer or ordinary member was acting as a point of contact, all Members should be informed of who to contact instead.
- c) Establish a timeframe for the leave of absence, ensuring it can be extended or shortened as appropriate.
- d) Take extra care to ensure that regular welfare checks are being made on that person if the situation calls for it.

8. Meetings of the Committee

- 1) The Committee may regulate their proceedings as they think fit, subject to the provisions of this Clause.
- 2) Any member of the Committee may request the Deputy Editor to call a Meeting of the Committee.
- 3) The Deputy Editor must call a Meeting of the Committee if requested to do so by a member of the Committee.
- 4) Meetings of the Committee shall usually be chaired by the person who has been elected as Editor-in-Chief.
- 5) The quorum for a Meeting of the Committee shall be three members of the Committee.
- 6) No decision may be made by a Meeting of the Committee unless a quorum is present at the time the decision is made.
- 7) Every member of the Committee, with the exception of the Chair, shall be entitled to one deliberative vote upon every voting matter. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair shall have a casting vote.
- 8) Decisions may only be made by at least a simple majority of votes at a quorate Meeting of the Committee.
- 9) There shall be no absentee voting.
- 10) Minutes must be taken of all proceedings at a Meeting of the Committee, including the decisions made, persons in attendance, and absences of members of the Committee⁴.
- 11) A Meeting of the Committee shall have an open attendance policy with the following rules and provisions:

⁴ Absences in which prior notice was given are commonly recorded under "Apologies from" in order to distinguish them from when a person simply does not show up.

- a) All attendees may contribute to discussions, however, members of the Committee shall take priority in discussions.
- b) Any Full or Associate Member of the Group is entitled to attend a Meeting of the Committee. Anybody not covered by this may only attend at the discretion of the Chair.
- c) Meetings shall be signposted to Members on at least one active platform with at least 24 hours notice. If any provisional meeting agenda exists, it shall be made available at this time.
- d) The under the following conditions, attendees who are not members of the Committee may be asked to leave:
 - i) During the discussion of sensitive material. "Sensitive material" may include but is not limited to discussion of individual Members of the Group such as for welfare or disciplinary purposes.
 - ii) The Chair may ask a person(s) to leave if said person(s) repeatedly causes disruption to the meeting.
 - iii) If an impractical number of people are present, those who are not there with a specific purpose may be asked to leave. In this case, a virtual element may be introduced in order to accommodate these people.

9. Appointment of the Committee

- 1) The Full Members of the Group in General Meeting shall appoint the officers and ordinary members of the Committee by election.
 - a) Elections for the Committee shall be held at an Annual General Meeting. By-elections for vacant offices shall be held at an Extraordinary General Meeting.
 - b) A First-Past-The-Post system shall be used for all elections.
 - c) In all elections Re-Open Nominations, 'RON', shall be a candidate. An election yielding a result of RON shall be re-run as a by-election.
 - d) All candidates in an election shall have received equal opportunity to campaign or otherwise promote themselves for their desired office. In accordance with Clause 12, 'Conflicts of Interests and Conflicts of Loyalties', members of the Committee shall:
 - i) Ensure all official promotion of the General Meeting is neutral, taking care not to conflate any promotion of the General Meeting

carried out in an official capacity with the promotion of any individual (themselves included).⁵

- ii) Refrain from leaking any information collected for the purpose of organising the General Meeting which may be utilised to influence how Members vote or discourage a Member from standing for election.
 - iii) In cases where they intend to run for election, excuse themselves from any organisational or promotional role which risks them violating this sub-clause (1d).
 - iv) Ensure any complaints of unfair promotion of a candidate(s) are rectified by offering the same, or equivalent opportunity to all other candidates. For instances where a situation is deemed irreparable, please refer to Clause 13, 'Disciplinary Action'.⁶
- 2) The count for elections shall be conducted publically by the Chair of the General Meeting, who must do so accurately. Should the Members in General Meeting be dissatisfied with the accuracy of the count, they may resolve as a Point of Order to have the election re-counted or, if they remain dissatisfied, re-run as a by-election.
- a) If requested by a Member, an elected Officer of a neutral third party within or affiliated with the Students' Union shall be present to verify vote counts.
- 3) There shall be a Transitional Period at the end of the academic year. This period should ideally be the month of July.
- 4) Holding of office:
- a) A member of the Committee appointed at the AGM, or at a General Meeting after the AGM but before the start of the transitional period, shall assume office at the start of the Transitional Period.
 - i) A member of the committee who holds office at the start of the AGM but is not subsequently reappointed to office before (or during) the Transitional Period shall henceforth be referred to as a member of the Outgoing Committee with respect to the office they hold.
 - b) A member of the Committee appointed after the start of the Transitional Period, but before the AGM, shall assume office with effect from the conclusion of the General Meeting of their appointment.

⁵ Note that this does not forbid them from promoting their current or past roles (or their general experience of being on committee) in an official capacity. They just have to avoid promoting individual people.

⁶ Extreme care should be taken to avoid unfairly penalising a candidate who benefitted from another Member's actions. Retributive justice should only be used as a last resort.

- c) A member of the Outgoing Committee shall retire with effect from the conclusion of the Transitional Period, however, during the Transitional Period they shall be considered to be in the process of retiring and should avoid taking on any new work related to the role.
- 5) The Committee must update their committee information on the Student Groups Hub provided by the Students' Union at www.susu.org (or failing that inform the Students' Union's Student Groups Officer) within seven days.
- 6) A retiring member of the Committee must transfer all relevant information and documentation to their newly-elected counterpart, or to the Editor-in-Chief, before the end of the transitional period or within fourteen days (whichever is longer).

10. Financial Management

- 1) The Committee are jointly liable for the proper management of the Group's finances.
- 2) The income and property of the Group must be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects.
- 3) The members of the Committee are entitled to be reimbursed from the property of the Group or may pay out of such property only for reasonable expenses properly incurred by them when acting on behalf of the Group.
- 4) The accounts of the Group, as maintained by the Treasurer, must be made available to the Students' Union upon request.

11. Irregularities and Saving Provisions

- 1) Subject to sub-clause (2) of this Clause, all acts done by a Meeting of the Committee shall be valid notwithstanding the participation in any vote of a member of the Committee:
 - a) who was disqualified from holding office;
 - b) who had previously retired or who had been obliged by this Constitution to vacate office;
 - c) who was not entitled to vote on the matter, whether by reason of a conflict of interests or otherwise.

- 2) Sub-clause (1) of this Clause does not permit a member of the Committee to keep any benefit that may be conferred upon them by a resolution of the Committee if the resolution would otherwise have been void, or if the Committee has not complied with Clause 12, 'Conflicts of Interests and Conflicts of Loyalties'.
- 3) The Members in General Meeting may only invalidate, as a Point of Order, a resolution or act of:
 - a) the Committee;
 - b) the Members in General Meeting;
- 4) if it may be demonstrated that a procedural defect in the same has materially prejudiced a Member of the Group.

12. Conflicts of Interests and Conflicts of Loyalties

- 1) A member of the Committee must:
 - a) declare the nature and extent of any interest, direct or indirect, which they has in any decisions of a Meeting of the Committee or in any transaction or arrangement entered into by the Group which has not been previously declared;
 - b) absent themselves from any discussions of the Committee in which it is possible that a conflict will arise between their duty to act solely in the interests of the Group and any personal interest, including but not limited to any personal financial interest.
- 2) Any member of the Committee absenting themselves from any discussions in accordance with this Clause must not vote or be counted as part of the quorum in any decision of the Committee on the matter.

13. Disciplinary Action

- 1) Disciplinary action may be taken against any Member of the Group as a consequence of conduct:
 - a) detrimental to the reputation of the Group or the Students' Union.
 - b) opposed to the objects of the Group (see clause 2) or the Students' Union.
 - c) in contravention of any provision of this Constitution.

- 2) Disciplinary action that may be taken against any Member may be, but is not limited to:
 - a) issue of a formal written warning.
 - b) partial or total ban from certain Group activities.
 - c) disqualification from becoming a member of the Committee.
 - d) removal of a member of the Committee from office.
 - e) temporary or permanent revocation of Membership.
 - f) referral of the complaint to the Students' Union's Disciplinary Committee.
- 3) It is the right of the subject of the complaint to choose to have the disciplinary matter heard by either the Members in General Meeting, or a Meeting of the Committee. Either shall have the power to take disciplinary action, including but not limited to those measures set out in paragraphs (a) – (f) inclusive in sub-clause (2) of this Clause.
- 4) Any disciplinary hearing must be conducted in an impartial⁷, balanced, and fair manner, considering all representations on the matter.
- 5) All disciplinary action must be subject to prior discussion with the Students' Union's Vice President Activities.
- 6) Members subject to disciplinary action have the right of appeal to the Students' Union's Student Groups Committee.
- 7) A full report of all disciplinary action taken by the Group in the previous year must be presented at the AGM.

14. Affiliation to External Organisations

- 1) The Group may only become an affiliate of an external organisation if:
 - a) the aims of that organisation are in line with those of the Group;
 - b) the Members derive a direct benefit from the affiliation;
 - c) no Policy of the Students' Union is breached by the affiliation;

⁷ Note that impartiality also covers keeping the amount of information shared to uninvolved parties to an absolute minimum as to not prejudice any hearings or investigations.

- d) a resolution to affiliate is passed by the Members in General Meeting.
- 2) The Group's affiliation to an external organisation shall immediately lapse:
 - a) at the conclusion of each Annual General Meeting after affiliation, unless the Members in General Meeting resolve to re-affiliate at each AGM in accordance with sub-clause (1) of this Clause.
 - b) if a resolution to disaffiliate is passed by the Members in General Meeting.
- 3) All external affiliations and disaffiliations must be reported to the Students' Union's Student Groups Committee within seven days.
- 4) For the avoidance of doubt, the Students' Union is not an external organisation for the purposes of this Clause.

15. Amendment to the Constitution

- 1) The Group may amend any provision contained in this Constitution provided that:
 - a) amendments do not:
 - i) alter the objects in such a way that undermines or works against the previous objects of the Group;
 - ii) retrospectively invalidate any prior act of the Members in General Meeting or a Meeting of the Committee;
 - b) a resolution to amend a provision of this Constitution is passed by at least a two-thirds majority of the Full Members present at a General Meeting;
 - c) a copy of the resolution amending this Constitution is sent to the Students' Union within seven days of it being passed;
 - d) the resolution is ratified by the Students' Union's Student Groups Committee.
- 2) The interpretation of this Constitution shall be with the Committee, except that during a General Meeting or a Meeting of the Committee the Chair shall have this responsibility. The Members in General Meeting may resolve to revise any interpretation made by the Committee or a Chair as a Point of Order.
- 3) The provisions of this Constitution shall be subordinate to those of the Articles, Rules, By-Laws and Policies of the Students' Union.
- 4) The Committee and the Students' Union shall retain a copy of this Constitution, which the Committee must make available to Members upon request.

16. Dissolution

- 1) If the Members resolve to dissolve the Group, the Committee will remain in office and be responsible for winding up the affairs of the Group in accordance with this Clause.
- 2) A resolution to dissolve the Group must be passed by at least a two-thirds majority of the Full Members present at a General Meeting;
- 3) The Committee must collect in all the assets of the Group and must pay or make provision for all the liabilities of the Group.
- 4) The Committee must apply any remaining property or money:
 - a) directly for the objects;
 - b) by transfer to any Group or Societies for purposes the same as or similar to the Group;
 - c) in such other manner as the Students' Union's Student Groups Committee may approve in writing in advance.
- 5) The Members may pass a resolution before or at the same time as the resolution to dissolve the Group specifying the manner in which the Committee are to apply the remaining property or assets of the Group. The Committee must comply with such a resolution if it is consistent with the provisions of this Clause.
- 6) In no circumstances shall the net assets of the Group be paid to or distributed among the Members of the Group.
- 7) The Committee must ensure the register and all other data held by the Group are securely destroyed upon the dissolution of the Group.
- 8) The Committee must notify the Students' Union within seven days that the Group has been dissolved. If the Committee are obliged to send the Group's accounts to the Students' Union for the accounting period which ended before its dissolution, they must send the Students' Union the Group's final accounts.

17. Interpretation

In this Constitution:

- 1) 'The University' means 'the University of Southampton'.

- a) 'University term' and 'academic year' have the definitions set out in the University Calendar and Almanac.
- 2) 'Financial benefit' means a benefit, direct or indirect, which is either money or has a monetary value.
- 3) 'The Students' Union' means 'The University of Southampton Students' Union', trading as 'Union Southampton'.
 - a) 'Articles', or 'Articles of the Students' Union' mean the Students' Union's Articles of Association. 'Rules' and 'Policies' have the definitions set out in the Articles. 'By-Laws' has the definition set out in the Rules.
- 4) 'Media Group' means any student group affiliated with The Students' Union which shares the same category (as defined by The Students' Union) as this Group.
- 5) A 'Non-drinking' event/social shall be defined as an event/social where alcohol is not readily available for consumption for the purposes of leisure; attendees shall not be inebriated by any non-medical substance. The allowance of any alcohol whatsoever is at the discretion of the organisers.

18. Declaration

The Members of the Group in General Meeting Adopted this Constitution:

Date 30/08/2023

Editor-in-Chief



Deputy Editor



The Students' Union Approved this Constitution:

Date

Vice President Activities
