

# Student Council

*Thursday 28 March 2019, 6 – 8 pm, Lecture Theatre 5, Appleton Tower.*

## AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Accountability  
Paper A
3. Motions
  - i. 'KB Community Garden'  
Paper B
  - ii. 'Remembering the Holocaust'  
Paper C
  - iii. 'Support the Extinction Rebellion and Declare a Climate Emergency'  
Paper D
4. Expenditure Requests
  - iv. 'Material Support for Trans/Non-Binary Students'  
Paper E
5. Affiliations

### 3. Motions

- i. 'KB Community Garden'  
Paper B

#### **What will we do:**

1. Lobby the following University departments to approve our proposal for the garden: Waste, Estates, SRS (Social Responsibility and Sustainability), and Landscaping.
2. Lobby University architects to ensure that green spaces will not be developed on- specifically the green space in front of Noreen and Kenneth Murray Library where we aim to have the garden.
3. Lobby higher-ups at the University to get a full endorsement of the garden.
4. Advertise through Edinburgh University Students' Association pages to spread the word and increase student involvement.

#### **Background to this:**

1. A proposal was previously submitted 1 year ago to build a community garden on a site at King's Buildings (KB) but was rejected by Estates using the development of KB as an excuse. This time around, we will need help pressuring Estates to accept the proposal.
2. This project is backed up by the 2050 Climate Group, as well as the SRS (Social Responsibility and Sustainability) as a part of their biodiversity strategy.
3. The garden would align well with the centenary at King's, and has support from the KB100 project to be one of the '100 things' featured during the centenary celebrations.
4. There used to be a permaculture garden at KB, but it was demolished during the development of new buildings at KB.
5. Lecturers and students studying environment-related subject expressed their interest in applying what they learn in a garden.
6. Many students, staff and community members have an interest in this project, and our first open meeting was held on March 11th.

#### **Beliefs and motivating actions:**

1. Estates have previously rejected proposal forms to start up a garden- we need extra support from students and staff to convince them that the garden would be a valuable addition to the university that would be maintained for many years to come by a student garden group.
2. The garden would ultimately be for the students and staff of the University, to provide a green space and community centre that can support the mental wellbeing of students and staff at King's Buildings. Gardening improves mental health and wellbeing- and would provide an excellent outlet for students to connect and relax.
3. The garden would provide a community space for many areas of the campus to connect through. Societies, students, staff, and the SRUC have all expressed interest in helping with the garden. This would promote connection, and could be a community meeting space through things like workshops and events. This space could also be used for teaching and learning purposes.

## Submitted with 20 Student Signatures

### ii. 'Remembering the Holocaust' Paper C

#### What will we do:

1. Each year on either the 27th of January or the closest working day to it, Edinburgh University Students' Association will commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day, in line with the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. This involves commemorating the Holocausts that took place in Europe, Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.
2. The day is to be commemorated through at least one event hosted by Edinburgh University Students' Association, as well as through social media posts on all official Edinburgh University Students' Association channels making students aware of the day and what events are taking place around it.
3. Events may include: hosting a Holocaust survivor to share their testimony, a memorial service, candle lighting, special lectures, panel discussions.
4. The events will aim to educate students on the consequences of racism and prejudice. It will also educate students about antisemitism and the many different ways in which it manifests.
5. Edinburgh University Students' Association will liaise with the President of the Jewish Society about any events taking place and will work with the President of the Jewish Society when planning, organising and promoting events.
6. Edinburgh University Students' Association will provide the Jewish Society with adequate facilities for any activities the Jewish Society also plans on the day.

#### Background to this:

1. Antisemitism has been on the rise in the UK, according to incidents recorded by charity the Community Security Trust (CST), which works with the community and with police forces.
2. The CST recorded 727 anti-Semitic incidents across the UK in the first six months of 2018 - the second highest figure recorded in more than two decades. The highest-ever number was recorded in the first six months of 2017 (786).
3. This year Edinburgh University Students' Association did not do one thing to mark Holocaust Memorial day; there was not a single social media post, event or any form of recognition. This was deeply disappointing to Jewish students across the University.
4. In the whole of 2017 there were 1,414 incidents, compared with 541 in 2008. At the time, this was the third-highest annual figure that had been recorded since the CST began in 1984.
5. According to the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust In 2019, one in 20 adults in the UK do not believe the Holocaust really happened, while one in 16 feel it has been exaggerated.

#### Beliefs and motivating actions:

1. Edinburgh University Students' Association recognises that Holocaust denial is a form of antisemitism.

2. It is within Edinburgh University Students' Association values to recognise the importance of continuing to educate students about the Holocaust, why it happened and what it represents.
3. Edinburgh University Students' Association stands with Jewish students in the fight to ensure the memory and lessons of the Holocaust live on.

### **Submitted with 20 Student Signatures**

- iii. 'Support the Extinction Rebellion and Declare a Climate Emergency'  
Paper D

#### **What will we do:**

1. The Students' Association should officially support the aims of Extinction Rebellion and declare a climate emergency, to communicate this by publishing a statement publicly.
2. To support the Extinction Rebellion and the student group already on campus where possible.

#### **Background to this:**

1. That, according to the latest IPCC report, we have 12 years to limit the effects of climate change before we enter into a runaway state which poses existential threats to the human race.
2. That Extinction Rebellion, a movement born out of the civil disobedience network Rising Up! Is organising a peaceful rebellion against the government's criminal inaction on climate change, and is calling for students across the country to take a stand.

#### **Beliefs and motivating actions:**

1. That our governments are failing us, and are failing to deal with this existential issue on two levels: firstly that they have failed to bring about the necessary changes to stop this runaway climate change that are only in their power to implement; secondly that environmental organisations have failed to put enough pressure on the governments to bring about these changes.
2. That structural change only really happens when there is civil disobedience and non-violent direct action involved, and that rebellion is justified once the establishment has failed us (agreed by political theorists across the spectrum).
3. That it is a historic institution from which many true campaigners have been born, from which great change has been made, and from which huge change needs to come.
4. That in the last decade, student movements have become watered down due to the effects of social media, student fees, and other external causes, thus campaigning by students has become less effective. Thus we need to bring back a 1968 style student movement for Extinction Rebellion.
5. That by officially supporting Extinction Rebellion, the association is supporting the freedom and rights of students to stand up for what they believe in, it is encouraging students to build the future they so desperately want and need, it is raising awareness

of the utter crisis that this planet is in, and it is taking a lead in the world where its current leaders have failed it.

6. That by officially supporting the Extinction Rebellion, the association will build a fundamental student movement so that other Student Unions and associations may follow, and that it will show to the University that Edinburgh can take the lead in the fight against climate change.

**Submitted with 20 Student Signatures**

## **4. Expenditure Requests**

- i. 'Material Support for Trans/Non-Binary Students'  
Paper E

**What will we do:**

1. Use £1,500 of the Student Council budget to establish a Gender Empowerment Fund, administered by the Students' Association, which trans/non-binary students (self-identified) can use to have gender empowerment items purchased for them.
2. Set up an online form whereby students can submit orders for gender empowerment items, including chest binders, breast forms, gaffs, packers, and similar products, within reasonable prices.
3. Order the requested items at regular intervals, until all funds have been used.
4. Store these items at the Advice Place, in both George Square and KB House, for pickup during their opening hours as appropriate.

**Background to this:**

1. Transgender/non-binary people can often experience dysphoria and other social anxieties, usually due to a sense of incongruence between their own gender identity and the way their physical appearance is interpreted. Gender empowerment items can serve to reduce this dysphoria/anxiety, by altering physical appearance.
2. Trans people, compared to their cisgender counterparts, are disproportionately affected by poor mental health, un/underemployment, low income and harassment. This is often linked to transphobia based on physical appearance. ("Transgender FAQ," GLAAD, April 14, 2017, accessed March 12, 2018, <https://www.glaad.org/transgender/transfaq>.)
3. Gender-empowering items, such as chest binders, breast forms, gaffs, packers, and similar products can be costly for trans/non-binary students to access (costing between £50-£150 depending on the item)
4. It can be difficult for trans/non-binary students to order or buy these items if they are not 'out'.
5. The Students' Association already provides free sanitary products and safer-sex items by recognizing this are necessary items that people should have free access to for their own safety and comfort. Gender empowerment items also fit this description.
6. This is the final Student Council, and funds cannot roll over to the subsequent year, and should instead go towards student welfare.

**Beliefs and motivating actions:**

1. The Students' Association has a duty to support the safety of its students, especially those who are in a marginalized (or Liberation) group, of which trans/non-binary students are a part.
2. Trans and non-binary students often need material support to help them through numerous internal and external pressures of living in a transphobic world – it's a matter of safety and welfare to be able to provide this for trans/non-binary students.
3. Although a one-time pot of money, this could make a huge difference for trans/non-binary students at the University of Edinburgh right now!

**Submitted with 20 Student Signatures**