

Impact report 2019/20

Strath Union

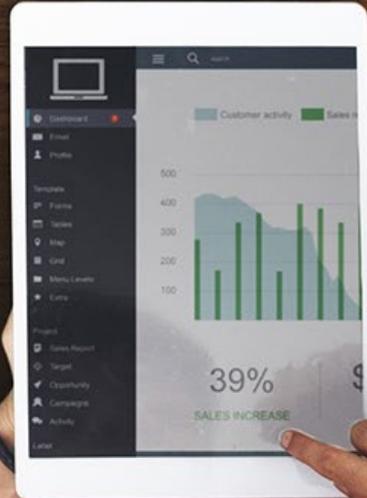
1st August 2019 - 31st July 2020



Strathclyde  
Students'  
Union

# Contents

- 01 [Overview](#)
- 02 [About Strath Union](#)
- 03 [Message from the Student Presidents](#)
- 04 [Representing your Voice](#)
- 07 [Giving you Opportunities](#)
- 12 [Building your Community](#)
- 14 [Advice Hub](#)
- 15 [Food & Drink](#)
- 16 [Your Future Union](#)
- 18 [Acknowledgements](#)



# STRATH UNION EST. 1964

**200+**  
Clubs & Societies

**750**  
Class Reps

Reps Elections moved to Strath App

**20k+**  
volunteering hours were logged

**24**  
free courses

Skills Development

Volunteering

**12.5k**  
online views of the STAR Awards

**54**  
vacancies listed on our website

Student Jobs

**awarded**  
NUS Green Impact Award at 'Excellence' level

Sustainability

**£14k+**  
funding from the Energy Saving Trust

**Net Zero**  
carbon target at the University

**£82.5k**  
Saved students

Advice Hub

**£9k+**  
support through the Emergency Fund

**2.6k+**  
members

Sports Union

**53**  
sports clubs

**18**  
Strath Active session hours per week

**341**  
volunteers in club sport committee

**3k+**  
votes in the Student Elections

Noting

First female president to be elected in over a decade!

**27.7k+**  
followers on social media

Engagement

**137,9k+**  
website sessions &  
**317k+**  
users

**Abolished**  
Zero Marks for late submissions and Set Monday coursework deadlines

**Wednesday afternoons**  
free for sport

**Guaranteed pay** for all PhD students

**Rent Freeze**  
in the halls of residence for the 2019/20 session

Student Executive Officers

**Microwaves**  
in the Library

Secured **500k** investment for mental health counselling

**30k+**  
games of pool

Commercial

**£640k+**  
worth of food and drink in the Union

## About us..

We are the beating heart of democracy on our campus and exist to represent the views of all 24,000 members through our participation at all levels of University decision making from staff student liaison committees, our ten senators on University Senate to our two representatives on University Court and everything in between.

As well as representing our members' interests, we also run over 200 Clubs and Societies and over 50 Sports Clubs competing at the highest levels of British Universities and Colleges Sport. We provide volunteering and employment opportunities, advice and welfare services delivered via our Advice Hub as well as training and development workshops and seminars for our members. We run campaigns and organise student activity on and off the campus and host weekly events that take place in our various venues, from pub quizzes and karaoke to salsa dancing and debates.

***"Being part of the Union will be the best decision you'll ever make at University!"***

We are the place where lifelong friendships are formed, where our members can access unique events and opportunities unavailable elsewhere, where students can raise money for charitable and worthwhile causes and where you can gather together with your friends to socialise and discuss the big issues of the day.

In 2018 the board developed a four-year strategic plan which emphasised the mission of the Students' Union, which is to **"represent, support and enhance the lives of all Strathclyders to ensure they maximise their student experience whilst creating life changing opportunities!"**

We achieve this mission by living out our values, which are to be:

- **Representative**  
Listening to our students, taking action and affecting change.
- **Innovative**  
Bold and resourceful, constantly striving to enhance our members experience.
- **Fun**  
The beating heart of the student body and an enjoyable experience for everyone.
- **Inclusive**  
Every student counts, everyone has a voice. Equality of opportunity for all.
- **Engaging**  
All students are aware of their membership of the Union and the services available to them.



***"The Union went into this new year with momentum from the previous year's successes, culminating in winning the Student union of the year 2019 at the NUS Scotland awards."***

*At the halfway stage of our strategic plan it is evident that progress has been made across the organisation and that the level of ambition has increased as the Officers and Staff work towards delivering the strategy as well as their own objectives.*

*It would be remiss to look back on the last year without mentioning COVID-19 and the impact that had on the Union's ability to deliver on all of its activities. The Union's response to supporting students and staff during this time reflected our values and our intentions to ensure that no student or member of staff was left behind or forgotten through all the changes as people transitioned to working from home and life under 'lockdown'. The pandemic hit the Union towards the end of the second semester, at a time when there would have been considerable activity focussed on celebrating the successes and achievements of our members. Graduation Balls and events all had to be cancelled and the Union was involved in supporting our members to recover funds that had been paid for trips and other social events.*

*Building community is one of our strategic objectives and it's vital that we remain connected and engaged with our membership through these challenging times. Brighter days are coming and we look forward to welcoming our students back to campus when they do."*

**Strathclyde Students' Union is the democratic and representative body for all matriculated University of Strathclyde students.**



*“Strath Union has supported students since 1964, but as the coronavirus pandemic hit Scotland in the Spring of 2020 our role became more important than ever.”*

*Immediately, the Union sprung into action and secured a no-detriment policy for Strathclyde students, hardship funding to support those who lost jobs and worked with the University to release students from their halls contracts.”*

President 2018/20  
**Matt Crilly**

*“What a year it’s been and what a time to become President of the Union!”*

*By the time I started the Union building was already closed and all activities had moved online. I’ve spent my time working to ensure the University was responding to the needs and challenges faced by students having to study from home and ensuring that we had a robust no detriment policy in place. As we looked ahead to Freshers’ 2020 I knew it was going to be different, but we adapted and worked to put on a fully online Welcome month for students. We are the first officer team not to have set foot in the same room during our term - never mind setting foot into the Union! Yet every day we have set up to work, in our bedrooms and kitchens, pulled out some great wins for students and tried to support them as much as possible through all of this.”*

President 2020/21  
**Kayla Burns**



# Representing your voice

## Student Executive

Every year, six full-time Student Executive Officers (Student Exec) are elected to represent your voice at the University. The Student Exec organise and run campaigns on your behalf and hold the University to account, at various committees, on decisions which may impact you during your time as a student at Strathclyde.



President  
**Matt Crilly**

Where are they now?  
President at NUS Scotland



Vice President Education  
**Eyrarn Ahadzic**

Where are they now?  
Exploring student representation and higher education governance in Ghana



Vice President Community  
**Kayla Burns**

Where are they now?  
Strath Union President



Vice President Sports  
**Maddy Watson**

Where are they now?  
Studying MSc Sports Management at University of Stirling



Vice President Welfare  
**John Agbonrofo**

Where are they now?  
Caring for a relative



Vice President Inclusion  
**Rachel Cairns**

Where are they now?  
Vice President Inclusion at Strath Union



- Net zero carbon target at the University.

- Review of December exam diet.

- Abolishment of set Monday coursework deadlines.

- Abolishment of Zero Marks for late submissions.

- Wednesday afternoons free for sports.



- Microwaves in the library.

- £500k worth of new space and facilities in the new Union.

- Free rooms in halls for students fleeing domestic violence or homelessness.

- Significant future further investment in halls to improve living standards.

- First family-friendly study space is being created in the library.



- Review of race inequality at Strathclyde.

- Review of accessibility for disabled students.

- New rape crisis counselling provision.

- Emergency counselling provision.



- Abolishment of graduation fees (£1mil+).

- £125k hardship funding for students in need.

- 500k mental health counselling investment.

- Rent freeze for students in Halls.

- Guaranteed pay for all PhD students.

- Presentation to Director of Education at Glasgow City Council & every Principal or Vice Principal in the city, to present our free public transport survey findings (we have over 7,000 responses across Glasgow & the West).

- Free funded trip for postgrad international students.

## Achievements:

# Representing your voice

## Strath Reps

In addition to being represented by the Student Exec, your views are respected, listened to and acted on by a vast network known as Strath Reps.

The Student Exec also sits within this network, which consists of:

- PGR Department Reps
- Faculty Reps
- Department Reps
- Programme Reps
- Non-Executive Officers

### What you say...

- 89% know there are elected Union officers
- In this year's National Student Survey 62% of you agreed that the Students' Union effectively represents students' academic interests. **This puts Strath Union significantly above the sector average of 55% in 2020 and in the top 25% of students' unions in the UK!**

**Strath Reps provide essential links between the student body and University staff.**



Your top social media post  
for Representing your voice

## Student Exec's letter to the University re their response to the Coronavirus

### Facebook

- 8,513 people reached
- 1,132 engagements
- 215 reactions
- 10 shares

### Instagram

- 306 likes
- 3,050 people reached
- 3,467 impressions

### Twitter

- 1,035 engagements
- 6,627 impressions
- 30 likes
- 13 retweets



# Giving you opportunities

You make a difference in the local and wider community whilst having fun, meeting new people and developing skills that will set your CV apart... and you still manage to fit all of this around your University schedule!

**200+**  
Clubs & Societies

**282**  
volunteers  
Logging over 20,300 volunteering hours

**24**  
free courses

STRATH  
UNION  
EST

**54**  
vacancies listed  
on our website  
1,088 page views per month on average

**12.5k**  
online views of  
the Star Awards

The Union is your go-to place for volunteering, employability and social opportunities.

## Some of your top achievements...



- **University of Strathclyde Eco Vehicle** creating the most efficient battery-electric car within their category at the 2019 Shell Eco Marathon.



- **Strathclyde Debates Society** finishing 4th at the Debating Open Grand Finals.



- **The Electrical Mechanical Engineering** society running a full day of STEM activities for 60 local school children from the most deprived areas of Glasgow.



- **Strathclyde University Motor Racing Club** winning both rounds of the British University Karting Championships.



- **Strath Speechies** received over 2,600 views on their 'Someone You Loved - Makaton' YouTube video to raise awareness of Makaton as an inclusive form of communication.

## Your top social media post for Giving you Opportunities

# £850 raised for Bluevale Boxing Club

### Facebook

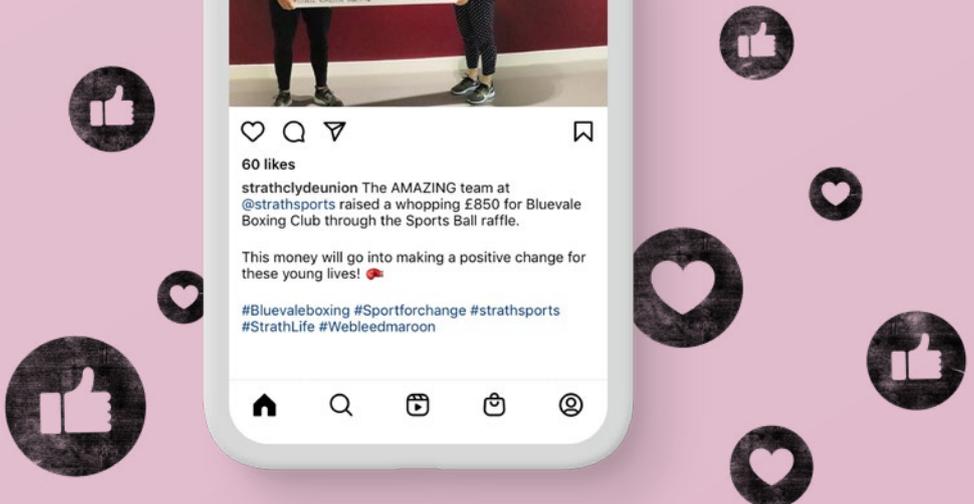
- 2,175 people reached
- 36 engagements
- 7 reactions

### Instagram

- 60 likes
- 1,666 people reached
- 1,838 impressions

### Twitter

- 2,494 engagements
- 32 impressions
- 5 likes
- 1 retweet



## Sports Union

### This year Sports have:

- Completed consultation with University Professional Services, including Strathclyde Sport, Disability & Wellbeing, and the Library, to inform the creation of the first Student Mental Health Agreement between the Union and University, in partnership with National Union of Students Think Positive.
- Secured funding in partnership with the University of Strathclyde Student Engagement Committee, Strathclyde Students' Union and Strathclyde Sport for the 'Active Students Project'. This allowed growth in the team with a new Sport Development Coordinator staff position to take charge of their growing participation programme.
- Offered a variety of courses to upskill our volunteers beyond committee training, such as safeTALK and First Aid.
- Had their best attended Sports Ball so far. 850 guests with 2000 students attempting to buy a ticket - sold out in 16 minutes!
- Had a record number of competitive teams – 62 teams across BUCS and SSS leagues.

### Some top achievements:

**Curling** • Ryan McCormack, Robin McCall and Luke Carson selected to represent Team GB at 2019 World University Winter Games in Krasnoyarsk, Russia, securing the Bronze medal.

**Ice Hockey** • Joshua Grieveson selected to represent Team GB at 2019 World University Winter Games in Krasnoyarsk.

**Badminton** • Alex Dunn and Adam Pringle won gold in the high-profile men's double at the 2020 BUCS Nationals, beating Loughborough. Dunn earlier secured bronze medal in the badminton mixed doubles competition alongside Sarah Sidebottom, adding to his overall medal tally for the championships.

**Swimming** • In the long course championships, Gregor Swinney won silver in the 50m fly and teammate Katie Taylor secured a bronze medal in the 1500m fly.

**Karate** • Performance sport scholar Chris Scott secured silver in the men's Kata division of BUCS Nationals.

**Judo** • Four medals were won in the Kyu Grade events of BUCS Nationals by Emma Ratcliffe, Justyna Kardasz, Alex Donaldson, and Ben Lewis.

**Climbing** • The women's team won a bronze medal for the first time ever after a strong performance from Morna Baillie, Emily Eadie, Lucy Ross and Pippa Watkin.

**National Squads** • 15 University of Strathclyde students were selected to represent Scottish Students at Home Nations competition across various sports, including Cross Country, Shinty, Sailing, and Volleyball.

**BUCS Nationals** • 61 athletes competed, winning 2 gold, 6 silver, and 4 bronze medals, collating a total of 121 BUCS points.

**Partnership working** • local community sports club Bluevale Boxing Club. Sports Union donated £850 to the Club in order to provide children with equipment and skills needed to participate in sport. Partnership between Bluevale, Sports Union and our sports clubs is ongoing.

53  
sports clubs

2.6k+  
members

Strath Active session hours per week  
18

341  
Volunteers in club sport committee positions

We're one of the biggest and most diverse student sport communities in Scotland, catering for all levels of ability from complete beginner to seasoned athlete. We also provide you with the opportunity to represent your University at Scottish, British and World levels.

## Your top social media post for Sport

# Free Wednesdays for Sport policy

### Facebook

- 8,987 people reached
- 1,278 engagements
- 299 reactions
- 12 shares

### Instagram

- 182 likes
- 2,761 people reached
- 3,938 impressions

### Twitter

- 4,221 engagements
- 278 impressions
- 37 likes
- 11 retweets



# Building your community

## Some highlights



• **16 Days of Action** campaign, comprising of '16 Open Letters', 'Fight for the Night' and 'Reportathon', was shortlisted for an NUS Award.



• **Own Voices** exhibition, which showcased and celebrated the work of our Black students.



• Pronoun awareness campaign titled **Ask, Don't Assume.**



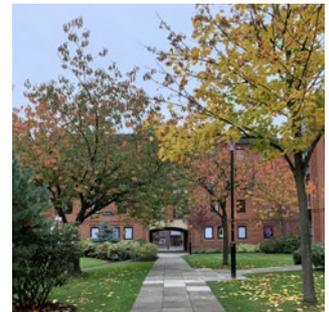
• 300 students attended the **International Food Fair.**

Your community is built upon the strong foundation of equality and diversity. You enjoy cultural celebrations and campaigns that unite all students, creating an environment that is welcoming and inclusive to all.

**76%**  
of you say The Union contributes positively to your University experience



• **Students Against Circuit** campaign, calling for the reduction in price of the student halls' laundry service.



• Halls Reps secured a **rent freeze** on student accommodation.

## Your top social media posts for Building your community

### Brexit

#### Facebook

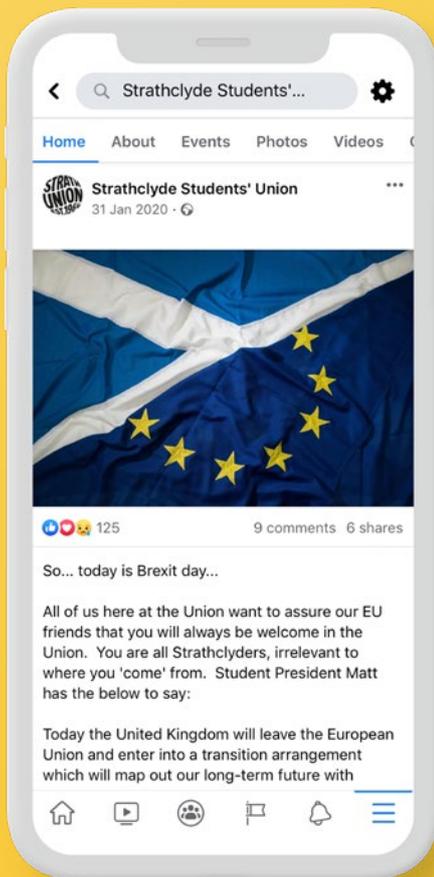
- 6,561 people reached
- 799 engagements
- 159 reactions
- 6 shares

#### Instagram

- 241 likes
- 3,493 people reached
- 3,856 impressions

#### Twitter

- 69 engagements
- 3,548 impressions
- 21 likes
- 7 retweets



### Strath Foodsharing

#### Facebook

- 6,217 people reached
- 333 engagements
- 92 reactions
- 8 shares

#### Instagram

- 51 likes
- 1,404 people reached
- 1,578 impressions

#### Twitter

- 711 engagements
- 12,468 impressions
- 38 likes
- 9 retweets



## Advice Hub

Your Advice Hub is a **free and confidential service** where you can get information and advice on everything related to personal, financial, housing, or academic matters. Run by professional advisers, you can either email, phone, or book an appointment in person or on Zoom via the Union's website or go to one of their drop-in sessions. They also provide free condoms and sanitary products to students all year round.

**Our busy Advice Hub offers information and support to all students on a wide range of topics including: personal, financial, housing or academic issues.**

From September 2019  
to May 2020

Saved students  
**£82.5k**

**£9k+**  
support through the  
Emergency Fund

Answered  
**621**  
enquiries

Death with  
**411**  
new cases

**95**  
calls taken on  
Nightline

**£6.8k+**  
support through the  
Participation Fund

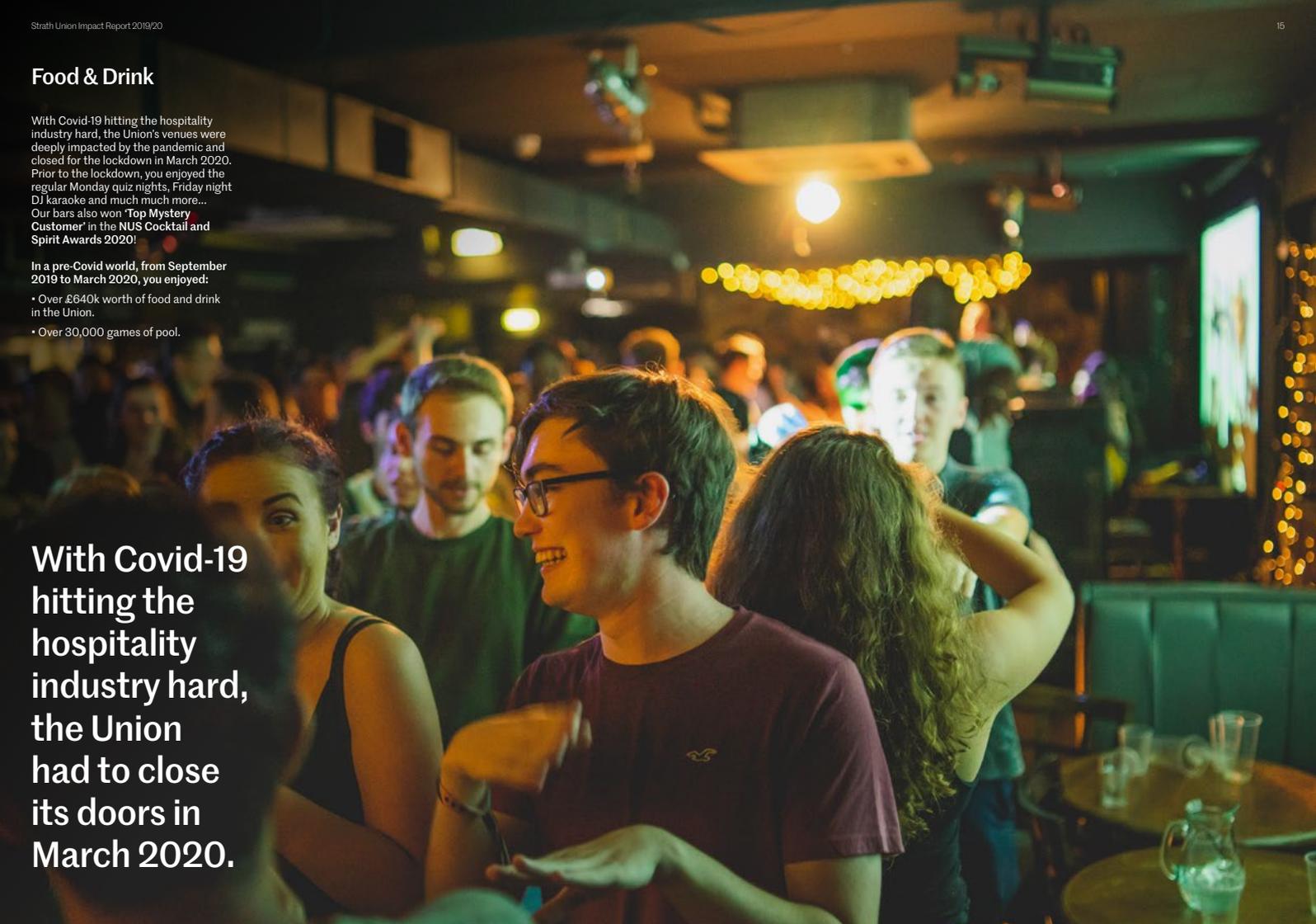


## Food & Drink

With Covid-19 hitting the hospitality industry hard, the Union's venues were deeply impacted by the pandemic and closed for the lockdown in March 2020. Prior to the lockdown, you enjoyed the regular Monday quiz nights, Friday night DJ karaoke and much much more... Our bars also won 'Top Mystery Customer' in the NUS Cocktail and Spirit Awards 2020!

In a pre-Covid world, from September 2019 to March 2020, you enjoyed:

- Over £640k worth of food and drink in the Union.
- Over 30,000 games of pool.



**With Covid-19 hitting the hospitality industry hard, the Union had to close its doors in March 2020.**

# Your future Union

## Future plans

COVID has severely hampered plans to celebrate the departure from John Street with an inability to host live events in the building. Any celebrations of the building will have to be undertaken virtually. 2021 is also the centenary year of the Sports Union and there will be an impact on their celebratory plans which will have to be adapted due to the virus.

The focus throughout 2020/21 will be ensuring we have an organisation that is fit for purpose as we transition to our new building. This will mean reviewing how we operate and adapting to meet the needs of students and the geography of the new building. It provides an opportunity to review policies, procedures and handbooks as all aspects of our work will be impacted by moving to a facility that is shared with the University.

The move to creating an anti-racist and anti-oppressive organisation is also an area that the Union recognises it needs to focus on and will be committing to reviewing our policies, procedures and working practices to ensure we are doing everything we can to create a culture that is not oppressive for staff or students.

The move to the new building and the heart of the campus work to transform Rottenrow Gardens will also provide added impetus to the Union's sustainability plans and ambitions to move towards net zero. There will be a strong focus on the Sustainable Development Goals which are complemented by the University's new Centre for Sustainable Development and the Union's drive to include the SDGs across the University curriculum.

Considerable work was undertaken in 2019/20 around creating a new risk management framework, a schedule of delegated authority and around business continuity. These were areas that our internal audit had highlighted and there is further work to be done to embed these systems and processes within the organisation and to further manage and mitigate risk, particularly in an uncertain world. In a post Brexit world we know there will be challenges, particularly on programmes like Erasmus, and engagement from European students and work will be required and work will be required to maintain connections with institutions we have worked with over the years via programmes like Go Global.

With the impact of COVID an ongoing challenge, the Union will be working on a transition plan for the next 12-24 months that will sit alongside the strategic plan but also redirect resources if necessary to those areas that will have the greatest benefit and impact for our members. As always in the student movement, we will rise to meet these challenges.

# 81%

of students say  
you are satisfied with  
Strath Union

Over 600 members. A community of 170+ Clubs and societies. We support our members' lives through volunteering, opportunities in sport. Plus, we host the best nights out on campus! Any student is welcome at Strath Union. Be part of it.



@StrathBars  
#StrathBars  
Great nights  
out happen at  
Strath Union.

# “Meet your Student Exec team 2020/21”

## Some highlights

In 2019/20, Strath Union has:



- Been awarded the 2018/19 NUS Green Impact Award at ‘Excellence’ level, the highest accreditation possible.



- Rented e-bikes out to 40 students.
- Secured £14,405.46 of external funding from the Energy Saving Trust (EST).
- Won Whatuni Local Life Award
- Seen 137,975 users and 317,146 sessions on our dynamic website, where you join your activity of choice.

## Top social media post for your future Union

Facebook

- 6,775 people reached
- 1,331 engagements
- 386 reactions
- 5 shares

Instagram

- 179 likes
- 2,190 people reached
- 2,786 impressions

Twitter

- 676 engagements
- 9,451 impressions
- 16 likes
- 5 retweets

2,782 new followers in 2019/20

**27,758**  
followers across  
all Strath Union  
social channels



# Thank you

***Every year we comment that there are a number of individuals who work tirelessly behind the scenes to make the Union what it is.***

*They support our events, they manage our building, run our venues, ensure payments are made, oversee our health and safety and ensure compliance with the regulations. This year everyone has gone above and beyond in terms of their own roles, but also in looking after each other and our students. Staff have worked through challenging circumstances to continue to support students, with many taking on roles they don't normally do, to ensure that students received a phone call or someone checking in with them.*

***We would like to take this opportunity to extend our thanks to all of you.***

Strath Union is a trading name of The University of Strathclyde Students' Association, a charity registered in Scotland No: SC005914. Registered company in Scotland No: SC588857.

[strathunion.com](http://strathunion.com)  
[@strathunion](https://twitter.com/strathunion)  
[#strathunion](https://www.instagram.com/strathunion)

