



# **Silwood Park Students' Union Report**

**20/06/2022**

Alex Auyang (President), Lizzie Bru (Vice Chair), Jasmine Hull (Treasurer)

## Overview

The Silwood Park Students' Union represents the students based at the Silwood Park campus of Imperial. The campus is primarily focussed on ecology, evolution, and conservation, with nearly all students and staff working within the Department of Life Sciences.

Because all of the students based at Silwood are either PhD, or one-year master's students that leave in September, this committee still has a few months to go before the end of our year.



## Events

We have continued running near weekly events over the past few months. Since summer began, fortnightly barbeques (funded through the halls fund) have been hosted near the refectory. We also held a themed Chinese barbeque night last week, which was a great success. We are organizing a few more events this year, including a bonfire night, terrarium making, and a sports day.

Planning is underway for Silfest, with the current target date of September 10<sup>th</sup>. We have contacted DramSoc and DJSoc and have been in touch with the Union regarding licenses and running the bar. We are in the process of finding acts, organizing activities, and ironing out the other specifics of the day. Overall, we seem to be on track for a great Silfest this year.



## Claims

The external claims forms for the 2020-2021 year of ChickenSoc have been completed. We have not received confirmation from the staff member who made the claims, but she should be receiving payment soon. Given the necessity and frequency of staff involvement in Silwood societies, there has been discussion of granting honorary membership to those individuals, allowing them to make claims through the normal channels. However, I have not heard back on this front and will have to correspond further to have this arranged.

Many of the students at Silwood are still unable to make claims. Despite correspondence with multiple union staff members, this has remained unresolved for about 6 months. Much of the spending that societies do in Silwood is driven by claims, and without them I fear that we will severely underspend the societies budget before the financial year ends. A long-term solution, which has been discussed but I think hasn't been acted upon, is to provide membership to the Silwood CSP for all students based at Silwood. However, given how busy the activities team is, and the slow progress on manually adding a few students, I am unsure whether this can be done in a timely manner.

## Goals

In my first report, I set out a few goals that I wanted to pursue this year. Here are updates on them.

### **Create separate activities accounts for the societies that exist every year**

The Chicken, Brewing, Garden, Sports, and Beekeeping societies have been made, and funding has been allocated for them next year. I am finalizing constitutions for these societies so they can run elections and receive the grant.

### **Integrate Silwood elections into the Union system**

I haven't done much on this front aside from asking whether it would be possible (and it is). Silwood elections run in October, so there is a bit of time until then. However, I am hoping to get any role revisions in before the change of sabbatical officers, to ensure that any changes are implemented in time.

### **Improve handovers**

I have spoken with my committee about handovers, but there is currently little movement on this front due to impending deadlines. I will provide a handover template to my committee when the time comes, which should improve the frequency and quality of handovers. Given that I *might* run for this role again, I am hoping that this adds an extra level of continuity to the committee.

### **Investigate options for union management of the Silwood bar**

Going into this process, I knew that it wouldn't be resolved within the year. Currently, the Union is more aware of the status of the bar at Silwood, and early talks have been promising. However, there is no timeline for a change in management at the bar. The catering company that runs the bar has been going through some trouble recently, and there has been high staff turnover at the venue. This has made it particularly difficult to get in touch with anyone managing the bar. I hope to press this issue further in the coming years, and hopefully resolve it before the end of my PhD.



### **Obtain additional grant during budgeting**

Our progress on this has far exceeded my expectations. We are receiving roughly 150% of our previous grant next year. I'd like to thank the Silwood Treasurer, Jasmine, and the DPCS, India for their help with this.

I am hoping to write a detailed guide on Silwood budgeting for the committee before I leave, to ensure that someone attends CSPB with a competent budget every year.

### **Set up lines of communication with the department**

This is probably the area where we have made the least headway. Our relationship with the campus services staff has been great, but the department itself often keeps us out of the loop. In future, we may pursue a connection with the faculty itself, like the RCSU, to keep in touch with the staff of the department and/or receive funding.

### **The future of Silwood**

Many of the conversations I have about Silwood are clouded by the presumption that we won't be around for long. While I understand the reasons for this, I feel like it creates a sense of lethargy in many actions regarding the students based here, even within myself. I have the privilege of living outside of Silwood and visiting whenever I please. Most students are less flexible, and their entire experience of Imperial, and the Union, will be at Silwood Park. Despite being surrounded by special, genuinely great things at Silwood, they are constantly undermined by what feels like years of neglect and decay.



The progress we have made this year has been significant, but the underlying issues of Silwood still persist, and will take time to fully understand and address. Whether or not we have this time is unclear, but if we do, I am optimistic about the future of Silwood.

A huge thank you to everyone on my committee, especially Jasmine and Lizzie, for helping me this year. A special thanks to everyone who helped cover the medical fees of our campus cat, Mr. Tinkles, especially our DPW, Nathalie Podder.

Thank you for reading. Feel free to email any questions to [silpres@ic.ac.uk](mailto:silpres@ic.ac.uk) and [aa17717@ic.ac.uk](mailto:aa17717@ic.ac.uk).

