

# Silwood Park Student Union Management Group Report

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**Fran Sconce, Silwood Park Student Union President**

## **Background**

Silwood Park Student Union is a management group comprising of the Silwood Exec (550) which runs different activities at Silwood, and Silwood Vans (593) which runs the Silwood minibus. We are also a constituent union of the RCSU.

Silwood Park Campus hosts several Masters courses as part of the Life Sciences Department. For the 2011/2012 academic year there are 131 Masters students (up from 116 in 2012/2011) studying on campus. There are also 60 PhD students working in the research groups based at Silwood. 110 students live on campus in Halls, others live in the surrounding area and some also commute from London.

Our Union has a President, Treasurer and Secretary who hold these roles for both the Management Group and Silwood Exec. Silwood Exec also has a Welfare Rep, a Sports Rep, a Green Rep, Ents Reps, International Student Reps and coordinators for the various activities at Silwood. Silwood Vans has a coordinator who oversees minibus bookings, carries out maintenance checks and organises weekly shopping trips. The Union also works with the course reps and the Silwood GSA reps to provide educational support and the Silwood Halls wardens to provide welfare support.

Our student body is made up predominantly of Masters students, therefore our Union's working year closely follows the academic year of October to October, which may differ to that of other Imperial College Union clubs and societies. The new committee this year was elected on October 13 2011.

As a campus with a small community and one main social area, students are perhaps much closer to academic staff than at South Kensington. Several members of staff are involved in coordinating Union activities and many regularly take part in activities and events. Staff are also likely to be present at Silwood for much longer than students, so they provide some consistency to our Union.

As a Union we also represent the needs of Silwood students within College Management on campus. The Union president attends Silwood Park Management and Silwood Park Health and Safety meetings, giving updates on student activities and raising any issues.

## **Facilities**

The Silwood Park Manor House is managed by Estates, but is owned by the Imperial College Trust, which allows Silwood students to use it for activities and events. This space is used almost every day of the week and it is particularly vital for us as there is no other area at Silwood where we can hold large events.

The Union has two rooms in the Manor House and an outside shed which are lockable and we use as storage space. We will be tidying these out and conducting an inventory on these before the beginning of the Spring term.

We also have a games room with Pool, Table Tennis, Fozzball and Darts and a social room with sofas and a TV. These are next to the Silwood Bar and a regularly used in evenings. We will be tidying and reorganising these areas before the beginning of the Spring term.

## Activities

Continuing activities this year are Allotments, Ents, Football, Cricket, Green, Chickens, Squash and Tennis. New activities this year are Music, Basketball, Climbing, Taekwondo, Touch Rugby, Yoga, Choir, Dance, Film, Spanish, Table Tennis, Photography and Wild Food.

## Finance

Following the budget submitted earlier this year by Mark Ramsden and Jen Zanin, Silwood Exec has a grant allocation of £4043.86 for 2011/2012. Activity coordinators were asked to submit budgets in a meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> October and the grant was then allocated across the different activities as follows:

Activity	Grant allocated	Current SGI	Comments
Allotments	£185	54.17	Long standing activity.
Music	£20	-	This is for music stands.
Ents	£330	503.77	Tickets will subsidise Ents.
Football	£200	773.76	Long standing club.
Cricket	£980	527.3	Full amount requested not allocated, SGI and subs will make up £400 difference.
Green	£48	-	Will be for Green Week.
Chickens	£500	12.5	Long standing club .
Basketball	No funds requested	-	Balls available.
Climbing	£674	-	This will be mostly invested in equipment available in future years.
Squash	No funds requested	-	Rackets and balls available.
Tae Kwon Do	£133	-	Accepted as is.
Tennis	No funds requested	-	Rackets and balls available.
Touch rugby	£20	-	This will pay for two balls.
Yoga	No funds requested	-	14 yoga mats available.
Choir	No funds requested	-	Piano available
Dance	No funds requested	-	
Film	No funds requested	-	Projector available.
Spanish	No funds requested	-	
Table Tennis	No funds requested	-	
Photography	£120	-	This will be for printing.
Pub games equipment	No funds allocated	200	£200 of SGI to be used.
Wild food	£20	-	This will be for books.
Contingency	£193	-	Remains as is.
General	£613.86	83.33	Remains as is.

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We are preparing an application to the Harlington Trust for funds for a new sound system, the current one is a mixture of old bits of equipment and caused issues at several events last year. We need a sound system for several events each term, and for the Music group practices. We have been consulting with the Music group at Silwood and DramSoc and Jazz & Rock at South Kensington as to what equipment would be most suitable for our needs. We plan to submit this application by the end of this term.

## Constitution

The Silwood Exec Constitution and Code of Conduct were updated by Mark Ramsden and Jen Zanin and were approved by members in a General Meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2011. Copies were submitted to Imperial College Union and are available on our website.

This year I would like to formalise the Management Group structure with a standing order, consult the students on this with our AGM in the spring term and bring this to CSB later in the term.

As we provide a welfare and social role to Silwood students it is important that our membership is free to all at Silwood. At CSB on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2011 it was proposed that Silwood be made a DepSoc, however as a constituent Union of RCSU it was decided that this was not appropriate. Instead all students registered with Imperial College as studying at Silwood Park Campus will automatically be members of the club, membership will then be updated automatically at the beginning of the new academic year with the new student intake.

## Websites

We run two websites: <http://www.silwoodparkstudentunion.co.uk/> and <http://silfest.co.uk/>

The Union website has information on activities, events, minibus booking, health and welfare support at Silwood and Union committee. The Silfest website is used to promote Silfest each year, with information on bands, tickets and entertainments etc. Currently these websites are not hosted by Imperial College Union servers and we are aware that this is contrary to Union policy. We will work to rectify this by the end of the Spring term.

## Logo

We have been using a logo that is a green version (with a rabbit) of the Imperial College Union one, we now understand that this is contrary to Union branding policy and will no longer use this. We may run a competition next term within Silwood students to design a new logo.

## Events

The Union worked in conjunction with Silwood Halls to run a Welcome Week from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 7th October for new students, this included a Meet & Greet at the weekend, a Quiz Night, a Pub crawl in the surrounding area of Silwood and a 90's Disco night.

Clubs and Societies Board  
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We also held a Halloween party in the Manor House on the 28<sup>th</sup> October and we will put on the Silwood Revue on 15<sup>th</sup> December. Next term there will be a Burns Night and we will start to plan Silfest 2012.

Events are funded mainly by ticketing (except for the Welcome week) and we aim to make a profit for future events and activities. Silfest 2011 made a profit of around £1000, which will go towards the deposit for the stage next year.

## **Student welfare issues**

Mark and Jen highlighted in their report to CSB on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2011 that there is no official welfare or support presence from Imperial College or Imperial College Union at Silwood Park. Often these roles fall to the campus administrator and the Masters courses administrator or committee members of the Student Union. I would highlight this with the services at South Kensington not available to Silwood Park students in person: Careers Advisory Service, Chaplaincy, Disability Advisory Service, English Language Support Programme, International Office, Accommodation Centre, Student Hub, Student advice centre.

I am aware that there is information about all these services distributed to all new students, but much of it is ignored as they feel it does not apply to Silwood. For example most of the International students were unaware of the English Language Support service until quite late into this past term. John Hughes has now visited the campus and met with 10 students wanting support.

I therefore think that we need to improve the Student Induction at Silwood and make sure that information given to students is appropriate to the Silwood campus, especially highlighting that some issues can be dealt with via email. We have more local support information on our website such as the local GP and dentist. I spoke with members of the Student Hub when they visited recently and asked if we could work with them to tailor their information for Silwood students, they are happy to do this and will be updating information leaflets and website text. I would like to do the same when Imperial College Union comes to prepare its information for the 2012/2013 academic year. We are also discussing with the Silwood GSA reps and academic staff at Silwood how the educational induction can be improved, likewise with the Silwood Halls wardens. As regards to accommodation, there is an office at Silwood which manages the halls, but they have little help for those looking for private accommodation (especially those who were unable to find rooms in halls). I plan therefore to gather a contact list of local Landlords, who could register with the Imperial Home Solutions website to advertise properties available.

There was some debate this year about the medical room at Silwood. Currently it is an upstairs room in the Manor House and is cold, damp and in some disrepair. The current GP (based at the Kings Corner practice nearby to Silwood) who visits one morning a week, is retiring at Christmas 2011 and his replacement is not happy with the state of the room. Another room was investigated on the ground floor of the Manor House however the Imperial College Fund were not happy another room being taken up. Silwood Estates then agreed that a room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Hamilton Building can be used, there is a modern room, recently refurbished, with access via a lift. This is currently being prepared for its new use and will be active from January 2012. The counsellor, who

is also based at Kings Corner, has said that she will also be happy to visit Silwood for appointments with students if requested.

## President's Aims for the year

When elected in October I had four main areas that I wanted to focus on for the year:

- Promoting Silwood within Imperial College Union – issues and needs are raised
  - I am attending Union meetings when possible and am in contact with the Sabbatical Officers.
  - We are trying to bring our Management Group in to line with others within the Imperial College Union and are aiming to follow Union policy more closely.
- Making organising events and trips easier at Silwood
  - I have prepared a 'Running an Event at Silwood' guide. This describes how to book rooms, food and drink, health and safety etc. It is available on our website.
  - Minibus hire prices are on the website, we hope to use electronic invoicing soon.
  - When we have done our storeroom inventory an equipment list will go up on our website.
- Promoting Natural History - as a Biology based campus I think this is really important
  - From the spring we will be encouraging staff and students to make a note of the wildlife they see around campus, records will be collated to give us a picture of the wildlife year at Silwood.
  - In conjunction with National Insect Week 2012 we are planning a BioBlitz event at Silwood, which will involve Silwood students, staff and hopefully lots of public participation.
- Promoting sustainable living - again as a Biology based campus this should be second nature
  - Working together with the Green club at Silwood.
  - We have had meetings with the Silwood Catering Services and Buildings managers on how things can be more sustainable.
  - We are planning a Silwood Green Week next term - February 6<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>, this will include a themed quiz, film and seminars. A Green fair on the Wednesday afternoon and a themed Debate.  
(We would have liked to coordinate this with that in November at South Kensington, but there was unfortunately not enough time to organise it.)

Overall, I just want to say that we really appreciate any help and advice from other Management Groups and the Sabbatical officers and staff at South Kensington.