

REFERENDUM NOTIFICATION

BY ORDER OF THE RETURNING OFFICER (on 16 January 2023)

REFERENDUM PROPOSALS:

- ***PROPOSAL ONE: QUB Should Pay Its Fair Share towards Students' Cost of Survival***
- ***PROPOSAL TWO: Oppose Increases in Student Tuition and Accommodation Fees***
- ***PROPOSAL THREE: QUB Should Invest its Substantial Financial Assets in Student-Owned Co-Operatives***

The Students' Union Council, at its meeting on 13 January 2023, approved proposals to call Referendums to seek the opinion of the membership of the Students' Union on the the above matters.

Referendum Details

In accordance with the Rules, this official notification shall be treated as comparable to the receipt of a signed referendum petition from the membership and shall be used to calculate the date of the Referendum.

The full Rules and Regulations for the referendum shall be available from the Returning Officer (su.voice@qub.ac.uk) and are on the Students' Union website. (www.q-su.org)

A referendum shall take place, by a secret ballot on QUBSU.org, of all student members, on from Tuesday 24 January 2023 (8.00 a.m.) to Thursday 26 January (8.00 p.m.) to determine the opinion of the membership on the following proposals:

PROPOSAL ONE

QUB Should Pay Its Fair Share towards Students' Cost of Survival

In the current economic situation, the already vulnerable state that students are in has worsened.

Queen's needs to address this economic crisis seriously and give students what they need for basic survival.

Students **demand** that:

- QUB works with Translink to subsidise the cost of transport for students.
- QUB works with local eateries to subsidise the cost of food for students.
- QUB works with placement institutions to provide bursaries for placement students and cover placement travel costs.
- QUB to extend its staff Cost of Living payment to all student workers.
- QUB to work with energy distributors to provide a discount for students.

If these demands are not met, the Students' Union may use radical political action to challenge senior University management, which may include demonstrations, acts of civil disobedience and accommodation rent strikes, until these demands are met.

PROPOSAL TWO

Oppose Increases in Student Tuition and Accommodation Fees

The University has recently approved increases to international, postgraduate and GB tuition fees – to take effect in the next academic year.

The University has also approved increases to QUB Accommodation Fees from next year.

Students **demand** that:

- Increases to Student Tuition and QUB Accommodation Fees be reversed now, especially as students struggle to survive financially during a cost-of-living crisis.

If these demands are not met, the Students' Union may use radical political action to challenge senior University management, which may include demonstrations, acts of civil disobedience and accommodation rent strikes, until these demands are met.

PROPOSAL THREE

QUB Should Invest its Substantial Financial Assets in Student-Owned Co-Operatives

Students are suffering in this cost-of-living crisis, exposed and vulnerable to exploitation from those profiting from the difficulties of others. Landlords can increase rent, energy companies can raise prices, food suppliers can charge more for basics necessities. Their profits increase while students suffer.

Energy, food, and housing resources are not controlled institutions that prioritise student welfare.

Students **demand**:

- That QUB use its substantial financial assets, investments, and estate (property) to help build resilience to student vulnerability by establishing assets that help provide energy, food, and housing to students.
- These assets should be democratically organised and run by students to ensure student welfare is prioritised.

QUB should prioritise the following actions:

- The University and partner with co-operative investors to buy properties off landlords in Belfast that have had their HMO licenses revoked and create student co-operatives from them.
- Use the land held by QUB to host democratically owned food production (greenhouses, gardens, etc.) for use by students.
- Use the buildings owned by QUB to host democratically owned food storage and distribution (food banks) run by students.

- Use its access to resources and institutional wealth to create democratically owned energy production facilities that can subsidise energy costs for students.
- The Students' Union to administrate and coordinate the democratic decision-making and administration of these co-operative resources.

If these demands are not met, the Students' Union may use radical political action to challenge senior University management, which may include demonstrations, acts of civil disobedience and accommodation rent strikes, until these demands are met.

Excerpt from the Minutes of the Friday 13 January 2023 Special Meeting of the Students' Union Council.

(SUC/M/23/1)

10. Motions

Polling on any of the proposals detailed below shall be scheduled to open on Tuesday 24 January 2023 and close on Thursday 26 January 2023.

If any of the proposals below are approved by Council, they do not become policies of the Students' Union until such time as they are approved by referendum.

10.1 **Referendum Motion: QUB Should Pay Its Fair Share towards Students' Cost of Survival**

The Students' Union shall conduct a referendum to determine the opinion of the membership of the Union on the following proposal:

QUB Should Pay Its Fair Share towards Students' Cost of Survival

In the current economic situation, the already vulnerable state that students are in has worsened.

Queen's needs to address this economic crisis seriously and give students what they need for basic survival.

Students **demand** that:

- QUB works with Translink to subsidise the cost of transport for students.
- QUB works with local eateries to subsidise the cost of food for students.
- QUB works with placement institutions to provide bursaries for placement students and cover placement travel costs.
- QUB to extend its staff Cost of Living payment to all student workers.
- QUB to work with energy distributors to provide a discount for students.

If these demands are not met, the Students' Union may use radical political action to challenge senior University management, which may include demonstrations, acts of civil disobedience and accommodation rent strikes, until these demands are met.

Proposer: Aidan Moran (Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement)

Seconder: Beatrice Titcombe (Student Councillor)

[The motion was debated.]

Following a ballot of those present and voting the result was:

20 For

0 Against

1 Abstention

The proposal was carried.

10.2 **Referendum Motion: Oppose Increases in Student Tuition and Accommodation Fees**

The Students' Union shall conduct a referendum to determine the opinion of the membership of the Union on the following proposal:

Oppose Increases in Student Tuition and Accommodation Fees

The University has recently approved increases to international, postgraduate and GB tuition fees – to take effect in the next academic year.

The University has also approved increases to QUB Accommodation Fees from next year.

Students **demand** that:

- Increases to Student Tuition and QUB Accommodation Fees be reversed now, especially as students struggle to survive financially during a cost-of-living crisis.

If these demands are not met, the Students' Union may use radical political action to challenge senior University management, which may include demonstrations, acts of civil disobedience and accommodation rent strikes, until these demands are met.

Proposer: Aidan Moran (Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement)

Seconder: Beatrice Titcombe (Student Councillor)

[The motion was debated.]

Following a ballot of those present and voting the result was:

21 For
0 Against
0 Abstention

The proposal was carried.

10.3 **Referendum Motion: QUB Should Invest its Substantial Financial Assets in Student-Owned Co-Operatives**

The Students' Union shall conduct a referendum to determine the opinion of the membership of the Union on the following proposal:

QUB Should Invest its Substantial Financial Assets in Student-Owned Co-Operatives

Students are suffering in this cost-of-living crisis, exposed and vulnerable to exploitation from those profiting from the difficulties of others. Landlords can increase rent, energy companies can raise prices, food suppliers can charge more for basics necessities. Their profits increase while students suffer.

Energy, food, and housing resources are not controlled institutions that prioritise student welfare.

Students **demand**:

- That QUB use its substantial financial assets, investments, and estate (property) to help build resilience to student vulnerability by establishing assets that help provide energy, food, and housing to students.
- These assets should be democratically organised and run by students to ensure student welfare is prioritised.

QUB should prioritise the following actions:

- The University and partner with co-operative investors to buy properties off landlords in Belfast that have had their HMO licenses revoked and create student co-operatives from them.

- Use the land held by QUB to host democratically owned food production (greenhouses, gardens, etc.) for use by students.
- Use the buildings owned by QUB to host democratically owned food storage and distribution (food banks) run by students.
- Use its access to resources and institutional wealth to create democratically owned energy production facilities that can subsidise energy costs for students.
- The Students' Union to administrate and coordinate the democratic decision-making and administration of these co-operative resources.

If these demands are not met, the Students' Union may use radical political action to challenge senior University management, which may include demonstrations, acts of civil disobedience and accommodation rent strikes, until these demands are met.

Proposer: Aidan Moran (Student Officer Campaigns and Engagement)

Seconder: Beatrice Titcombe (Student Councillor)

[The motion was debated.]

Following a ballot of those present and voting the result was:

19 For

0 Against

2 Abstention

The proposal was carried.