



Association étudiante de l'Université McGill

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

Students' Society of McGill University

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SSMU LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PUBLIC MINUTES

March 20, 2025

The regular bi-monthly Legislative Council Meeting of the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) will be held in Leacock 232 on Thursday, March 20, 2025, at 18:00.

1. Call to Order: **18:12**

The Speaker calls the meeting to order at 18:12.

2. Land Acknowledgement

The Speaker presents the Land Acknowledgement.

The SSMU acknowledges that McGill University is situated on the traditional and unceded territory of the Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee nations. The SSMU recognizes and respects these nations as the true and constant custodians of the lands and waters on which we meet today. Further, the SSMU commits to and respects the traditional laws and customs of these territories.

L'ÉUM reconnaît que l'Université McGill est située sur le territoire traditionnel et non cédé des nations Anishinaabeg et Haudenosaunee. L'ÉUM reconnaît et respecte ces nations comme les véritables et constants gardiens des terres et des eaux sur lesquelles nous nous rencontrons aujourd'hui. En outre, l'ÉUM s'engage à respecter les lois et coutumes traditionnelles de ces territoires.

3. Attendance

The Speaker takes attendance.

Present: Councillors Chen, Weissman, Renaud, Tick, McKay, El Murr, Punjabi, Bérubé, Li, Crema Black, Soh, Kohler, Zhao, Kumar, Gowdy, Director Abu Alkhair, President Taylor, VPs Zahidah, Solomon, Berglas.

Absent: Councillors Kalaga, Hamele, Kim, Nounke, Engo, Farhat, VP Jolicoeur.



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4. Adoption of the Agenda – **ADOPTED**

The agenda is distributed.

Director Abu Alkhair adds Discussion Item 19b and Announcement 6b.

Councillor Renaud adds Notice 18e.

Councillor Zhao states that he wants to know how 4 Floors went.

The Speaker notes that Councillor Zhao can ask about this in the Question Period or add an associated discussion item.

Councillor Zhao adds Discussion Item 19c.

VP Solomon asks if the Steering Committee will report on the addition of the Notice, per the standing rules.

The Speaker answers yes, after the Committee convenes to review it.

Councillor El Murr asks if he can amend the confidential agenda right now.

The Speaker answers no. He entertains a recess to review the Notice.

The Speaker states that the Steering Committee has approved Notice 18e for the agenda, but notes that the consultations must be completed before it is added as a motion.

Seeing no opposition, Notice 18e is added to the agenda.

Seeing no further changes, the agenda is adopted.

5. Minutes for Approval

- a. [SSMU Legislative Council Public Minutes 2025 -02-27](#) – **APPROVED**

The minutes are distributed.

Seeing no changes or opposition, the minutes are approved.

6. Announcements



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a. Welcome to the Internal Counsel & Corporate Secretary!

The Internal Counsel, Alison Glaser, introduces herself to the Council. She states that she is taking over the governance functions and acting as SSMU's internal counsel. She has been in her new position for two weeks, and the work is some of the most interesting work she has done in her career. Councillors can feel free to visit her in the President's old office, if they have any questions about contract review and procedures. She is a neutral party, because her client is the SSMU; any decision she suggests is in the SSMU's best interest.

The Speaker states that the Internal Counsel can be reached at governance@ssmu.ca.

b. SSMU Awards Committee (Director Abu Alkhair)

Director Abu Alkhair states that the SSMU Awards are coming up, and volunteers are needed to review applications. SSPN usually does this review, but they are not able to this year so the Executives need help reviewing the applications.

VP Zahidah states that each award has its own criteria. There is a meeting tomorrow afternoon to review the nominations, if anyone is interested in choosing the winners.

Councillor Zhao asks where the meeting is, and if nominations have already been sent.

VP Zahidah answers that the nomination form is open until tomorrow, which is why they are meeting tomorrow. There are not many nominations for councillors and senators, so VP Zahidah encourages councillors to nominate their colleagues. The meeting will be held in the SSMU Boardroom and the attendees will debate the nominations.

Councillor Zhao asks where the nomination form is.

VP Zahidah notes that it has been on every listserv since February, and it is on the SSMU website and Instagram page. It is also on the SSPN Instagram page.

7. For Discussion

a. Midnight Kitchen Discretionary Funding (Councillor Abu Alkhair)

Director Abu Alkhair states that discretionary funding needs to be approved by referendum, and allows for 20% of the budget to be used for discretionary funding, as long as the funds abide by the group's mandate. He and the VP Finance met with Midnight Kitchen, but he wanted to bring this to the Council



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to ensure the right decision is made. He invited the Midnight Kitchen members to the meeting to discuss their side of the story.

Member Eglylma states that they work for Midnight Kitchen, and there have been no updates to their discretionary funding requests since August. Their requests were eventually declined with no explanation. Discretionary funding is important because it creates links between McGill students and the wider community. They focus on growing their operations sustainably. Midnight Kitchen was affected by the SSMU building closure and then the pandemic, and they began recently serving in-person again on a smaller scale. For a lot of their employees, Midnight Kitchen is their only job, and they give a lot of attention to it. Midnight Kitchen needs to balance student and staff needs with programming needs. Their goal is food sovereignty, so they should have control over their discretionary funding.

Member Gilday states that Midnight Kitchen makes nutritious meals for as many students as possible, and they are gluten free, vegan, and allergen-free. They try to make the meals as accessible as possible. They have a small kitchen, and they do a lot considering this challenge and their few staff members. They pay only \$19 per hour, which is hardly sufficient to live on, and their employees are very passionate about the program. It serves the most vulnerable people in Montreal and students, and creates a lot of community links. This is important for McGill, because it is often siloed compared to the rest of the city. It would not be feasible to make more meals because they do not have the capacity to do so, so they need support. They run programs on their own mostly, without much funding from SSMU, which should be noted. Their programs include gift boxes, emergency gift cards, and similar programs on the Macdonald campus. Macdonald campus students do not pay the Midnight Kitchen fee because they do not benefit from their downtown services, so Midnight Kitchen supports the Macdonald campus initiative. They have an educational garden and host educational events. Midnight Kitchen hopes to open more positions for students next year; the pandemic changed how their operations worked. They are trying to get back to their pre-pandemic operations.

Director Abu Alkhair states that the Internal Regulations of Student Groups prevent services from seeking discretionary funding of more than 20% of their budget, unless it is approved by referendum. The funding also has to be in line with the service's mandate and serve SSMU members. What he understood is that Midnight Kitchen should serve McGill students rather than groups outside McGill, and they should be serving 5 meals per week rather than only 2.

Member Gilday states that Midnight Kitchen sends in a service report each year, which they had assumed would update their mandate. Their mandate has not been updated, and is from before the pandemic.

Member Delabie states that the UGE has experienced frustrations with discretionary funding as well.



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VP Berglas states that discretionary funding is a normal part of services, and it seems like Director Abu Alkhair has little understanding of what this funding is. It is inappropriate that Midnight Kitchen was prevented from providing these funds to community groups for months with no explanation. They motion to suspend the rules to add Motion 15a.

VP Zahidah asks for more context on the discussion item as she is confused.

VP Berglas states that discretionary funding is provided to services to allow them to donate to community initiatives, up to 20% of their budget. For example, Queer McGill gives money to queer groups in Montreal. This money is earmarked for this purpose, and a lot of community groups rely on it for events in the near future. They are concerned that groups that have applied for discretionary funding from Midnight Kitchen are no longer going to receive that funding.

VP Zahidah states that she would like to second the motion with more context.

The Speaker notes that Executives cannot second motions made by other Executives.

Councillor Renaud seconds Motion 15a.

The Speaker entertains a recess to allow the Steering Committee to review Motion 15a.

The Speaker states that Motion 15a was approved with an amendment.

The motion is not added to the agenda.

VP Berglas states that abstentions should not be counted in the vote, so this vote should have passed.

The Speaker answers that the vote still needs to pass quorum to be approved. Quorum is based on the number of people present, so the vote would require $\frac{2}{3}$ majority of the people present to pass.

Councillor Crema Black states that they do not have sufficient information to vote on this. It sounds to her like there are rules that prevent SSMU from providing funding to Midnight Kitchen. She asks what the rules say and how they apply to the situation.

The Speaker states that the motion can be revisited after more discussion.

VP Zahidah states that she hoped the motion would be approved so that they could debate it, but she is happy to discuss it now too if that aligns with Robert's Rules.



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Member Eglylma states that they were under the impression that everyone would be informed of the situation. Midnight Kitchen's discretionary funding program was approved by referendum in 2021. Groups can apply for up to \$350 of funding as long as they align with Midnight Kitchen's mandate of food accessibility, social justice, and education. They prioritize local groups and groups that would otherwise have trouble accessing funding. McGill students are involved in all of their donations.

Member Gilday reads impact statements from groups in the community about their frustrations in collecting discretionary funding from Midnight Kitchen.

Councillor Weissman states that subsidized services cannot issue discretionary funding unless approved by referendum. He asks what the original referendum question included.

President Taylor answers that Midnight Kitchen was approved with a mandate to provide 5 meals per week. The fee is now \$10 per student per semester, which equals \$320,000 per year. Discretionary funding was approved in 2021, to provide 20% of its budget to projects in line with its mandate for groups that do not have easy access to funding. Because they have not been reaching their mandate of providing meals, which the fee is for, their ability to provide discretionary funding is being called into question.

VP Zahidah states that discretionary funding, in the amount of 20% of a service's budget, allows the service to choose where to donate money. Midnight Kitchen seeks to provide food security and education to as many people as possible, so she is confused about the issue of discretionary funding because this would complement their mandate. It is the Legislative Council's duty to ensure that their mandate is fulfilled. The service is not bound to only providing services to McGill students, as their mandate seeks to impact as many people as possible. She asks for clarification on the understanding that the service should only be for McGill students.

Councillor El Murr asks for Director Abu Alkhair to explain the situation.

Director Abu Alkhair states that the IRs of Student Groups mandate services to serve SSMU members, thus he understood that discretionary funding would be for McGill groups only. VP Berglas has explained that this is not the case, though.

President Taylor states that Midnight Kitchen's fee allows a service to use the funds it collects from the fees, while a constitution clarifies a service's mandate. Students approved increased funding to Midnight Kitchen for discretionary funding given that they were fulfilling their mandate of providing meals, and the concern is that this is not being followed while discretionary funding is being spent in other places. Thus, Midnight Kitchen is not meeting its mandate to provide 5 meals per week. Services



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should try to meet their mandates, and if they do not, they are not utilizing their funding correctly. Midnight Kitchen needs to fulfil its initial mandate before it can fulfil subsidiary ones.

The Speaker notes that the speaking time will be reduced to 1 minute to account for the amount of remaining business.

VP Solomon asks if it would be possible to present Midnight Kitchen's mandate. He wonders whether there is a degree of complexity that some people were not prepared for, which would have made the conversation more streamlined. This conversation should be postponed so that Councillors can inform themselves on the situation and so that questions can be addressed and debate can occur. The research process should not occur during the meeting, to respect the time of Councillors and guests.

Councillor Bérubé asks where the discretionary funding will go if it is not dispersed.

Member Eglyma states that Midnight Kitchen is fulfilling its updated mandate. Questions should be raised during service review. They are often compared to other services with larger infrastructure. Money is not the issue, and discretionary funding does not take away from the work they do. They want to work with SSMU to overcome limitations and provide more meals.

Councillor Renaud motions to postpone the discussion to the next meeting.

Councillor Kumar seconds.

Seeing no opposition, the discussion item is postponed.

8. Confidential Session:

- a. There will be a confidential session this evening.

VP Zahidah motions to suspend the rules to move her report and the discussion on 4 Floors up the agenda.

Seeing no opposition, the agenda items are moved.

9. Report of the VP Internal

VP Zahidah states that she met with the Union for Gender Empowerment on the timelines and plans for gender-neutral washrooms, which are not moving forward due to the administration's process for work orders. She also judged a 3-minute thesis competition. The communications department is deciding on themes for next year's handbook, so those with suggestions should communicate them to



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her. The department has also hired a handbook editor and they are looking to increase the budget for printing handbooks. The Gerts Cafe signage was ordered and set up. All social media posts are doing well, and VP Zahidah highlights the menstrual health product pickup and MASIC posts. She organized 4 Floors, and it was a success despite some issues including issues with Zeffy, the portable bars, double standards on ID checks by security, and coat check. The deposits for Faculty Olympics have been received and the DJ and photographer has been booked. All student services needed will be in attendance, and they are looking into hiring private security for future SSMU events. Harm reduction training was planned and tickets for FACO are being sold. The decisions on the SSMU Awards will be made tomorrow, and the trophies will be ordered on Monday. VP Zahidah is looking for a good caterer and asks for recommendations. Decorations were completed, and the graphics including menus and advertisements are being developed.

Councillor Renaud notifies the Speaker that the Council can see his Zoom private messages.

The Speaker states that there is a Councillor using an account with an old name by accident because the Zoom accounts name does not always update. He asks for that person to change their Zoom name.

Director Abu Alkhair asks if he should give a verbal report on clubs since there is no Clubs councillor.

The Speaker answers that he can present one this meeting or at the next meeting. The report should not have been included on the agenda since there is no councillor in that position.

10. For Discussion

a. 4 Floors (Councillor Zhao)

Councillor Zhao asks if there is a feedback form available for 4 Floors, as this was brought up at the SUS General Council.

VP Zahidah states that there is no feedback form, but there is a general feedback form on the SSMU website that people have been using for 4 Floors. Councillors can submit feedback to her as they please.

11. [Report of the Steering Committee \(3\)](#)

The Speaker presents the report of the Steering Committee. They met on Monday and had various discussions over Google Chats. They met with the movers of a potential strike motion, and they are figuring out the logistics of a Special General Assembly. The committee reviewed the Notices being presented tonight, and the Internal Counsel was present. The Speaker reminds everyone to send their



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reports on time, and presents those presenting at the next meeting. He notes that there was a confidential session this evening. The Speaker stands for questions.

12. Executive Reports (3)

a. [President](#)

President Taylor presents his report. He states that they reached quorum on the Executive elections after struggling for a few days to reach it. Future elections will include incentives for students to vote. The Internal Counsel started last week. The Executive Committee and Board of Directors public reports are included in President Taylor's report for those interested. The Nominating Committee is seeking a Board of Director member at large and is processing the Alumni and International Student Representative positions. The Consultation Policy Motion is on the agenda for tonight as a notice, as is the Motion to amend the IRs of Elections & Referenda, although this might not be done this academic year. Negotiations for the Management Agreement will start soon, and hopefully a new agreement will be signed by the end of the month to allow food services in the SSMU building. SHHS is interested in the space, but because students are not happy with their food so this will be negotiated. The Board of Governors met on February 6, and President Taylor can answer any related questions. Floor Fellows are not returning, because of their similarity to Frosh leaders and fraternity members and related issues. Residence facilitators will replace Floor Fellows, as this is the most accessible replacement and the RFs can be trained to respond to issues. The relationships between students and RFs will be different than those with Floor Fellows because the RFs will not live in residence. The Dean of Students and faculty presidents have been meeting, although they have been poorly attended. President Taylor is trying to involve the Legislative Council more in the day-to-day affairs of the SSMU, as was done in the past. The Presidents' Roundtable is attended partially, but it is easy to keep things up to date. He is also working on the Space Agreement. Gerts is doing well, and because it is open every day, it is hard to give staff the time to settle into their new roles. So, they are trying to maintain the current operations and then working on improvements in the summer.

The Speaker notes that if any other Councillors leave the meeting they will lose quorum.

13. Reports by Councillors (6)

a. [PT/OT \(POTUS\)](#) — **POSTPONED**

The PT/OT report is postponed because Councillor Farhat is absent.

b. [Environment](#)



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Councillor Punjabi presents the Environment Report. She states that host MESSy Mondays every Monday. Their annual gala is at the end of the month, and all events are shared through Instagram. Councillor Punjabi invites Councillors to read through the rest of her report.

14. Committee Reports (6)

a. [Governance Reform Committee](#)

The Policy & Advocacy Coordinator presents the Governance Reform Committee report. They met on January 17, February 28, and March 14. They welcomed VP Solomon as a new member. The Committee submitted an interim provision on the IRs of Elections & Referenda with changes following review. After the election, the GRC will review the changes and submit amendments to the IRs. They updated the Consultation Policy to make it more accessible to students, given how important consultations are within SSMU. They consulted on updates to the Master Plan, and they are doing more consultations after receiving feedback. The Policy & Advocacy Coordinator reminds everyone to submit their policies to the GRC if they want feedback on it. The GRC wants to review the IRs next year, starting with the ones that were updated the longest ago. They also want to review expired policies and continue to consult on motions.

Councillor Weissman motions to set the time of adjournment to 21:00, as they cannot use the room after that. He suggests that non-urgent discussion items be sent via email and that the Notices be ran through quickly.

Seeing no opposition, the time of adjournment is set to 21:00.

b. [Gender and Sexuality Advocacy Committee](#)

VP Solomon states that he can present the report on behalf of the Gender & Sexuality Commissioner. The Committee met regularly and distributed funding, which they had more of than usual. They also discussed changes to the IRs of Finance because the scope of the Committee has expanded to cover surgeries no longer covered by the gender affirming care insurance plan.

15. Question Period (5)

16. Recess, Consent Items (5)

The Speaker cancels the recess given tonight's time constraints and since there are no motions to be voted on.

17. Motions

18. Notices of Motion



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a. [Notice of Motion Regarding the Creation of SSMU Food Pantry and Amendments to the Food Security Policy](#) (VP Solomon)

VP Solomon presents Notice 18a. He states that the motion discusses past initiatives and the failure of the SSMU grocery program to address food insecurity, because it handed out gift cards and food only once per semester to 100 people, even though the budget could have allowed the program to benefit 200 people. Instead, they have installed a free access food pantry in collaboration with a subsidized food service. They also hired two Food Bank Coordinators to assist. They have been in touch with the administration, and they support the program. The Food Security Policy needs to be updated because it was created when Let's Eat McGill was very popular, which it is no longer. The updated policy incorporates the spirit of that campaign into a clearer and more concise policy. The Community Engagement Commissioner will oversee the Food Bank Coordinators, which are already hired. SHHS has been very hard to work with, as they promised a space and then revoked their promise because they cannot put a fridge in the space they promised. Changes to these policies will allow the food pantry to be maintained in perpetuity. So far, there has been very positive feedback on the food pantry and students are making gradual use of the pantry. People have been paying on a pay-what-you-can basis.

b. [Notice of Motion Regarding the SSMU Policy Against Antisemitism](#) (VP Solomon)

VP Solomon presents Notice 18b. He states that there were concerns raised about the procedures surrounding the adoption of the PAAS, which was adopted in December 2024. There were no breaches of governing documents, but they have decided without admission of fault to restart the adoption process with an updated policy. This is in line with the standing rules and IRs of Governance, and aims to assuage potential procedural concerns. Since the initial adoption, the Policy was shared with Jewish student groups for further consultations, which they have begun to receive. They also received feedback from individual students and through the Legislative Council, which has informed amendments to the policy. Thus, it better reflects the student body. He encourages councillors to review the Policy and discuss it with their constituents and fellow councillors before the next meeting.

Councillor Kohler asks if the motion has legal implications.

VP Solomon states that the Internal Counsel and external lawyers were consulted. Because the allegations against the PAAS were procedural, a quick way to remedy the concerns was to conduct a subsequent vote. He can provide more information after meeting with their legal team.

c. [Notice of Motion Regarding Amendments to the Consultation Policy](#) (President Taylor)



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President Taylor presents Notice 18c. He states that the amendments to the Consultation Policy would clarify and simplify the conditions for consultations, as they were quite complex to follow. For example, consultations could be considered incomplete if not all stakeholders were consulted, even if they would not be affected by the motion. The updated Policy seeks to be an accessible framework to explain how consultations should take place and how they should be included in motions. There will be more discussion on this at the next meeting.

- d. [Notice of Motion Regarding Changes to the IRs of Student Groups](#) (Director Abu Alkhair)

Director Abu Alkhair presents Motion 18d. He states that this motion includes brief changes to the priority of services hiring. Some services hire employees, and the amended IRs would prioritize unionized employees, SSMU members, McGill students, and then community members, including alumni. The amendments also prevent non-student employees from being voting members or signing authorities on behalf of the services they work for.

- e. [Notice of Motion Regarding Amendments to the Policy on Harmful Military Technology](#) (Councillor Renaud)

Councillor Renaud presents Notice 18e. She would appreciate it if everyone read the motion in depth before the next meeting so that everyone has the relevant context, as this motion is very content dense. This motion would amend the Policy on Harmful Military Technology to remove the moratorium on ancillary fees, which help fund self-funded units of the University like athletics and student services. A moratorium has been in place for many years as part of the Climate Policy, as a pressure tactic to pressure the Board of Governors to divest from fossil fuels and, in recent years, harmful military technology.

VP Solomon states that the moratorium was contentiously added to the Policy on Harmful Military Technology last year. He notes that a moratorium on ancillary fees has worked in the past, but it no longer has such a big impact. The moratorium prevents funding to Athletics, because McGill matched ancillary fees in the past. The athletes have been very resilient despite this lack of funding, and this moratorium should be removed to honour their efforts and to acknowledge that sometimes mistakes are made in policymaking at SSMU. This issue did not get enough speaking time at previous meetings, and there are other ways to pursue action against harmful military technology without moratoria, such as social movements like the Students for Good Jobs Campaign. They should be diligent in their research but acknowledge that this change needs to be made.

Councillor Renaud notes that consultations are not yet complete. She has a consultation form ready to be sent out, if anyone is interested in being consulted. The VP University Affairs will also be sending it



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to various student groups. Otherwise, the motion is complete barring a few minor modifications. Councillor Renaud invites anyone with feedback to message her. She stands for questions on the motion tonight and in the future.

19. For Discussion

a. McGill Libraries Strategic Priorities 2025-2030 Call for Feedback (President Taylor)

President Taylor states that he sent everyone an email asking for their feedback on priorities for libraries, on behalf of McGill. They are looking for feedback on the priorities they have set out. The email was also sent to all faculty presidents.

b. Bookings on campus (Director Abu Alkhair)

Director Abu Alkhair states that many clubs and services have been asking how to book campus buildings. He asks for more information on how clubs can do so, because it has been difficult. Various systems are being updated and vary depending on faculty. Director Abu Alkhair wants to make a sheet available on the SSMU website with information on room bookings.

Councillor Weissman states that AUS only allows their departments to book spaces in the Arts buildings. Any student group can rent out the Arts Lounge for \$25 per event, but they give priority to the AUS departments. It is difficult for AUS to do bookings; Councillor Weissman notes that the AUS VP Internal or President would be the contact people for bookings. The administration is very strict with AUS and makes mistakes often.

Councillor Bérubé states that each faculty has their own bookings system. The law faculty uses a Microsoft Bookings link, for law students and groups only. Law students can book spaces wherever and whenever they want to.

Councillor Kohler states that SUS has an administrator that manages their bookings through the administration. Groups can also book tables and the barbecue that SUS has.

Councillor Gowdy states that Education bookings can be set up by emailing the Education Building Director and Deputy Building Director.

Councillor El Murr states that Engineering spaces can be booked through their room booking Google Form. It is available on the EUS's LinkTree.



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Councillor Renaud states that athletics facility rentals can be booked through the Athletics & Recreations website. Their spaces can be hard to book because of intramural sports, varsity practices, and other events. The Events Manager can also be contacted about bookings.

Councillor Kohler states that the SUS bookings form is on their website, under the service request section.

Director Abu Alkhair thanks everyone for the information.

20. Adjournment: **20:48**

The Speaker declares the meeting adjourned at 20:48.

APPROVED