



YOUR IDEAS OUR PLAN

2016-19

HELLO!

Christ Church Students' Union exists solely to provide representation and other services to the 17,000 students studying at Canterbury Christ Church University. Your Ideas, Our Plan 2016-19 was a year in the making, involving over 1,500 students, staff and stakeholders with one objective - how we can shape what we do and how we do this to better serve and represent our members.

The University and Students' Union increasingly operates in a marketised higher education context, which is influenced by surveys, league tables and benchmarking. Expectations of students are, rightly so, ever increasing. To support our plans until 2019 and beyond we must develop and grow as a Students' Union for the benefit of our current and future Members. We will do this by being financially sustainable, developing a high performance culture amongst our people, demonstrating our impact and value, and forming beneficial partnerships.

The individual and collective wants and needs of students studying at Canterbury Christ Church University have evolved rapidly over the past five years. Your Ideas, Our Plan has been thoroughly researched and consulted upon from the current membership, but it has also drawn on other sources to ensure it is a future-proof and flexible as possible to adapt to the dynamic landscape we operate in.

What hasn't changed in the past five years, or since the Union was founded in 1963, is that we are run by students, for students. We are excited about our shared future and we are all looking forward to making a bigger and better impact.

David Hannaway, Union President 2016/17
Ben MacPhee, Managing Director



OUR MISSION

to better student life and enrich student experiences

OUR VISION

to empower, encourage and embrace every student

OUR VALUES

Student-led & democratic, Inclusive

Dependable & Professional, Supportive,

Partnership, Respect, Fun

OUR AMBITION

is to play a central role in the lives of students and will do this through facilitating activities which are student-led; both to improve student experiences as well as ensure graduates are highly employable and equipped for future success



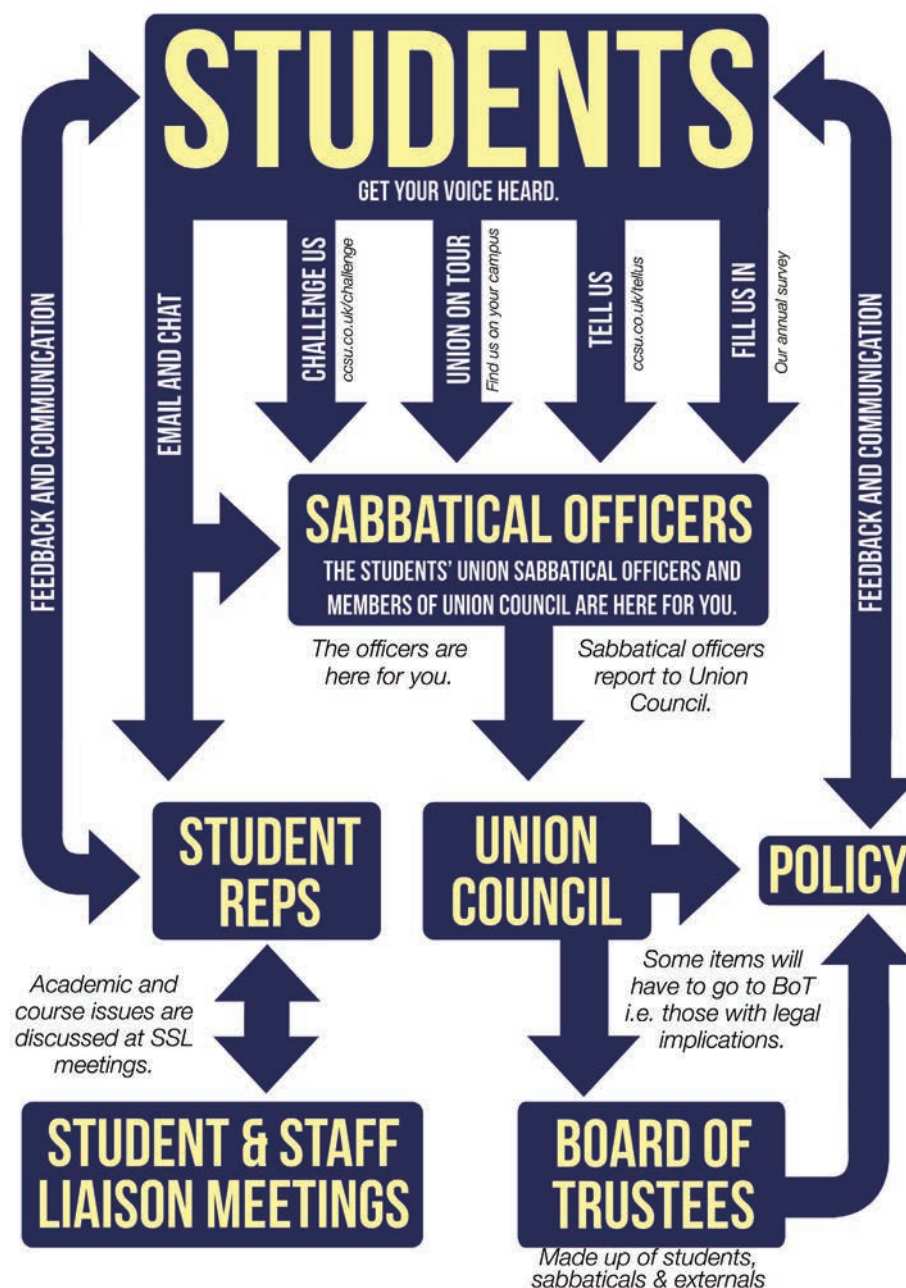
Students celebrate
One World Week

STUDENT VOICE

Representing our Members is at the core of what we do, and we want to enhance our reach, depth and impact in this. Listening to and amplifying the student voice was recognised throughout the consultation as an important area to focus on - students told us they didn't know how to get their voice heard. This theme aims to increase engagement with our democratic systems.



CHALLENGE US

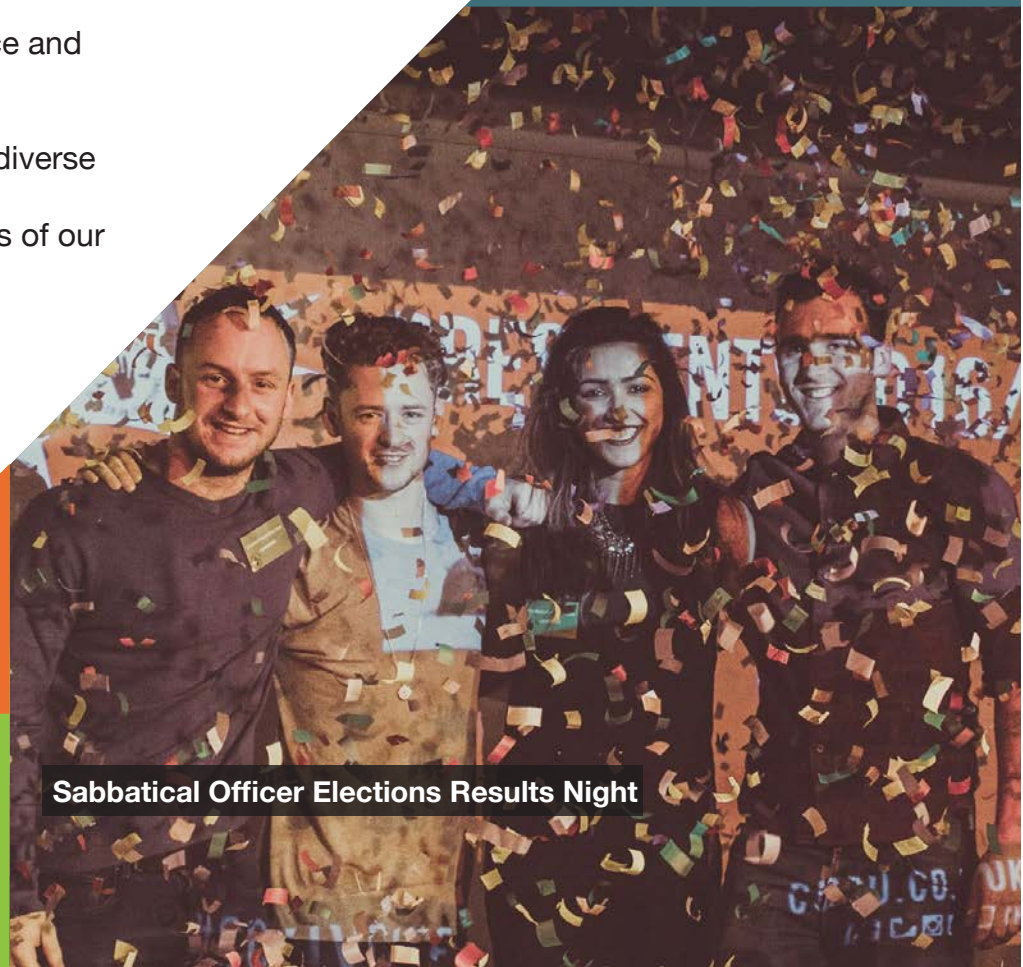


What we heard...

- Throughout the consultation process the Union was widely acknowledged as being the representative voice of Christ Church students.
- During the interviews with University stakeholders many regarded this as being our primary purpose and an area of work that can only come from the Students' Union.
- Students at the World Cafe event and the Union Council focus group expressed an expectation that the Union exists to represent them to the University and local community.
- Students told us via Fill Us In 2015 that Student Voice and Representation are of importance to most Christ Church students.
- The Union currently does not adequately represent the 'harder to reach' groups at non-Canterbury campuses, students on placement and those who commute in.

What will students see?

- Inspiration to engage with democracy by actively promoting its relevance and importance.
- A much greater focus on student-led campaigns.
- The Union reimagining our democratic positions and processes for our diverse student body and for the digital age.
- Tailored engagement according to the specific needs and circumstances of our members.
- Closer partnership work with the University to reimagine our academic representation structure of Student Programme Reps.
- More opportunities for members to provide comprehensive student feedback on student life.



Sabbatical Officer Elections Results Night

SUPPORT

We want to do all we can to ensure all of our Members are healthy, happy and safe, but also informed and empowered to make their own choices. Student wellbeing is fundamental to our values and ethos, in fact this was the biggest overall concern of the students we spoke to as part of our research for the Strategy. Over the next three years we want to develop a more proactive approach to how we support our members before, during, and after their student journeys.



nus
extra

ADVICE CENTRE
STUDENTS'
UNION



Housing Advice Fayre

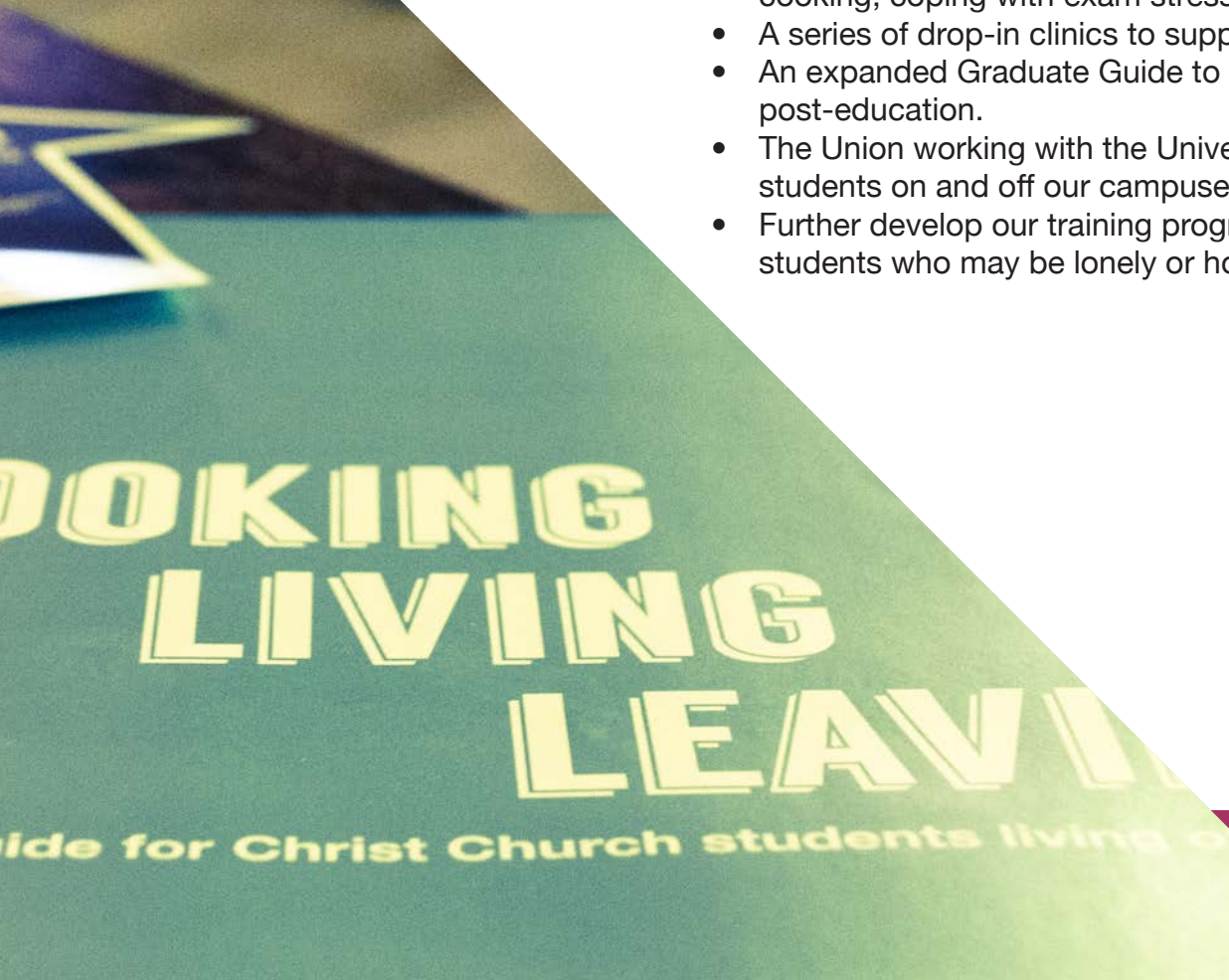
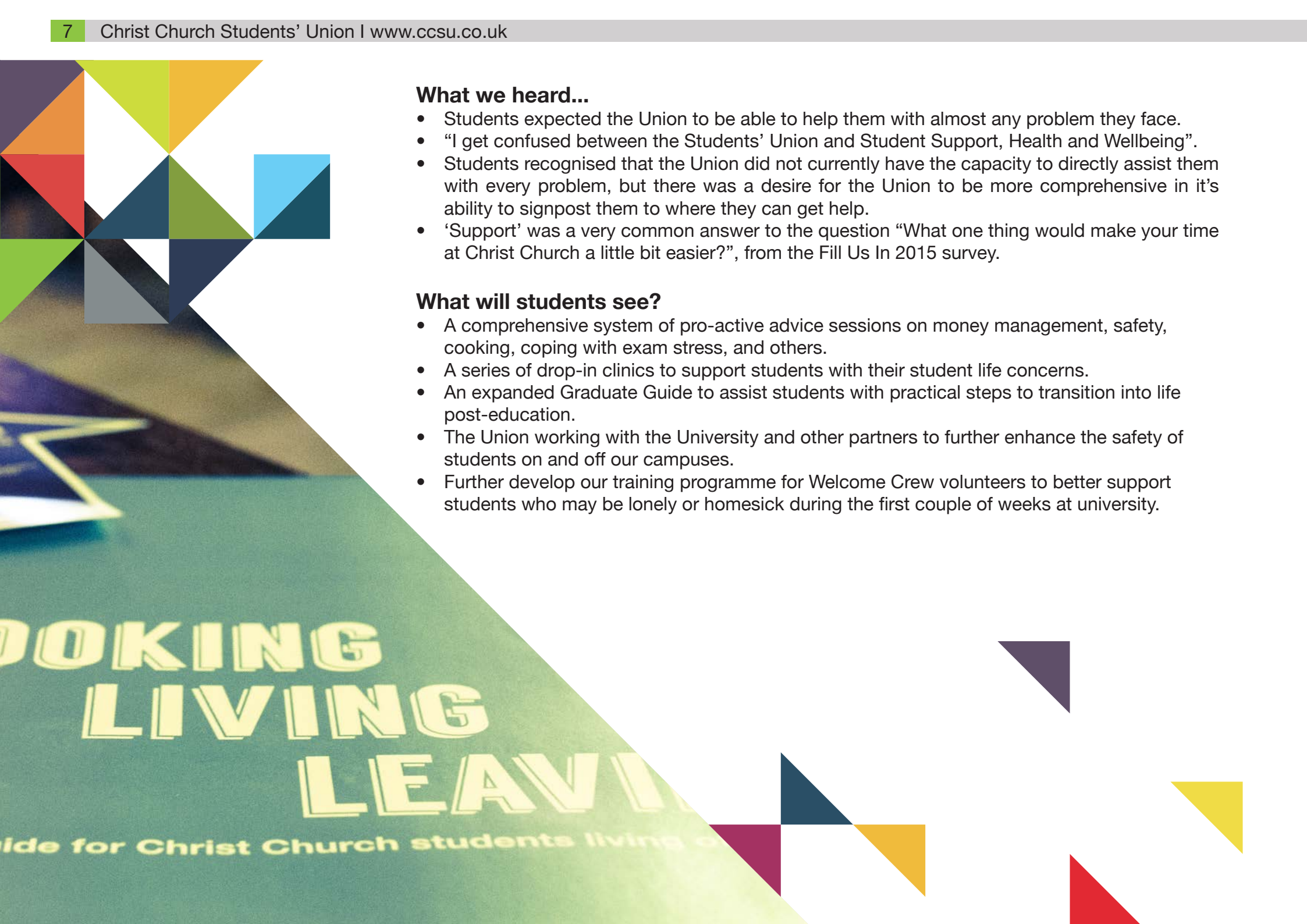
A one-stop gu

What we heard...

- Students expected the Union to be able to help them with almost any problem they face.
- “I get confused between the Students' Union and Student Support, Health and Wellbeing”.
- Students recognised that the Union did not currently have the capacity to directly assist them with every problem, but there was a desire for the Union to be more comprehensive in it's ability to signpost them to where they can get help.
- ‘Support’ was a very common answer to the question “What one thing would make your time at Christ Church a little bit easier?”, from the Fill Us In 2015 survey.

What will students see?

- A comprehensive system of pro-active advice sessions on money management, safety, cooking, coping with exam stress, and others.
- A series of drop-in clinics to support students with their student life concerns.
- An expanded Graduate Guide to assist students with practical steps to transition into life post-education.
- The Union working with the University and other partners to further enhance the safety of students on and off our campuses.
- Further develop our training programme for Welcome Crew volunteers to better support students who may be lonely or homesick during the first couple of weeks at university.



COOKING
LIVING
LEAVING
Guide for Christ Church students living o

OPPORTUNITIES

As important as it is, University can and should be so much more than just degree - the Union is here to create and enhance opportunities for students to fulfil their huge potential. Through representation, volunteering, sports, societies and experiences we will enable students to enrich their lives in a way that is fun, engaging and memorable. As always, this will be in a way which is both student-led and enhances the employability of those who take part.



What we heard...

- 'Employment after studies' was the third most common worry for our students from Fill Us In 2015, a concern for 15% of respondents.
- "I think the Union could provide workshops to help us increase our employability."
- Interviews with key University stakeholders acknowledge the substantial contribution the Union makes toward the student experience, and ensuring parity of such experiences.
- The Union's potential role in the recruitment and retention of students were raised by a number of University stakeholders.
- The Union needs to do more at Broadstairs and Medway to create and enhance communities and own-campus based activity.
- From Fill US In 2015 - "more entertainments and events".



Volunteer Freshers'
Welcome Crew



What will students see?

- The Union promoting itself as a physical and digital hub for almost everything fun and non-academic.
- A focus on enriching student experiences and skills development to enhance post-education employability through excellent and successful student-led societies, sports clubs and volunteering opportunities.
- A new development and support system for the student leaders of clubs and societies.
- An engaging and diverse events programme which has broad appeal and caters for the needs of all, at every campus.
- An enhanced system of reward and recognition for our active members.
- More partnership work with the University to enhance and clarify the volunteering opportunities at Christ Church.

Puppy Day



BELONGING

A Union should bring people together. The sense of belonging to a chosen community, or the ability to create a community, is important to us all and individual characteristics, campus location, mode of study or any other factor should not be seen as a barrier but as diversity to be celebrated.





Graduation Ceremony

What we heard...

- Whilst there has been recognition of the increased staffing levels at Medway and Broadstairs campuses, the Sabbaticals should have more of a presence at those sites.
- The Union's work supporting clubs and societies, as well as The Lounge in Canterbury, are all seen as building and enhancing communities at Christ Church, and this is seen as some of the Union's best work.
- "I feel like the Medway and Broadstairs campus' are left behind with the student social opportunities in Canterbury. There should be more activities for us to get involved in"
- "I think it is important that students feel a part of the Union, rather than obligated to get involved with the Students' Union."

What will students see?

- The Union facilitating the creation of communities via a range of sporting, general interest and academic clubs and societies that is as diverse as our students are.
- Campaigns that help inform our members to be rounded citizens who recognise their responsibility for the community in which they are a part of.
- Sabbaticals and student leaders taking active engagement in the communities in which our students live and forge links with the local residents associations.
- Sabbaticals having regular meetings with local MP's, councils, councillors and the Unitary Authority to ensure students are not a forgotten part of the community and their needs are being actively considered.
- When appropriate, high-profile voter registration and voting campaigns for local and national elections.
- Elected Christ Church student leaders more involved in national politics, campaigns and committees such under NUS and BUCS.
- The Union working with the University to improve existing, or create new, social spaces on each campus and within University accommodation.
- Closer working with GK Unions in Medway to create cross-institution communities, a system of associate membership for clubs and societies, and events in the Student Hub that are open to all.

Men's Basketball Varsity

COMMUNICATION & TRANSPARENCY

It is no good being good if nobody knows it. As a membership organisation it is even more important we are effective at two-way communication with all students at christ church to remain relevant to student life.





What we heard...

- The Union is not always effective at getting our messages and campaigns across.
- Those who are involved in the Union in some way may know some of what we do and why we do it, but this is far from universal.
- The Union does not always 'close the loop' with students feedback.
- The Union on Tour events have been positively received, but all elected officers need to be more visible on every campus.
- The Union needs to be smarter in its approach to, and communication with, influential stakeholders who can help the Union achieve its Mission and objectives.
- The Union needs to actively demonstrate value for money in all that it does.
- The Union needs to be a more transparent organisation, because this is one of our values and we are here for the benefit of our Members.

What will students see?

- Clear and transparent communications to members about how decisions are made and why, and how to become involved in our democracy.
- The Union creating greater awareness of our brand, our purpose, and our services from pre-registration to graduation and beyond.
- Targeted, meaningful and relevant information that is informed by better use of data, via a variety of platforms that students prefer.
- The Union making better use of existing and new technology to make our internal and external communication effective, exciting and agile.
- Annual 'benefits statements' for our active members that clearly demonstrate where their membership fees go.
- The Union activity demonstrating our positive impact to students and stakeholders.

Annual Members Meeting

OUR ENABLERS

Sustainable

To ensure we are able to deliver our Strategy and build progressive growth to make a bigger impact for our Members we need to be effectively and efficiently run as an independent charity.

Over the next three years we will:

- Ensure financial sustainability by agreeing a stable funding arrangement with the University.
- Be, and be seen to be, good value for money and deliver a great return on investment.
- Map our governance using the NUS Quality Students' Unions framework.
- Increase our sustainability work; working towards shaping student attitudes towards a sustainable future and working with the University to change institutional behaviours and practices to create a more sustainable campus community.
- Work towards achieving Excellent in the NUS Green Impact Award.
- Work with the University towards achieving in the NUS Responsible Futures Initiative.

People and Culture

Great organisations are made by great staff and volunteers - our people are at the heart of Christ Church Students' Union. Great people deserve reward, recognition, development and celebration.

Over the next three years we will:

- Commit to developing a high performance culture where strengths and talents are recognised and everyone is encouraged, empowered and supported to realise their personal and professional goals.
- Invest more in training and developing our staff, student leaders, and student volunteers.
- Work towards becoming our own employer of staff.
- To be, and be seen to be, an excellent employer.

Insight

To be the legitimate voice of students we need to know them almost as well as they know themselves. To do this we have to continually conduct high-quality research and use the findings to drive our future direction and campaigns.

Over the next three years we will:

- Develop a greater, and continually evolving, understanding of what students want and need from us as their Students' Union and from their wider academic and non-academic experience.
- Use robust research to listen to and learn about our members so we can drive improvements in our services and shape our activities and strategy around our members.
- Use insight to discover student issues and concerns as the first stage of making change.
- Gain a greater understanding of the 'value-proposition' of being involved in our activities and democracy to broaden our appeal, engagement and participation.

Technology

The vast majority of students are digital natives. Technology is changing the way we live our lives and the pace of change is unrelenting and failure to totally embrace digital change is not an option – it must be core to everything we do, from communicating, campaigning through to supporting the commercial operations.

We have an opportunity to fully understand our Members; their habits, their needs, wants and the key issues that affect them and to respond to their concerns. By doing all this we can powerfully represent students in a way that any membership organisation would be truly envious of.

Over the next three years we will:

- Create a true 'Digital Democracy' where physical location is not a barrier to engagement.
- Invest in and use technology creatively to ensure that we can realise our ambition to engage every student.

Partnerships

The Union is not an island that can operate on its own, and we shouldn't, as this would be a huge restriction on our success and impact. Our partnerships with the University, local students' unions and other charitable bodies that share our values and objectives will be critical to our future success.

Over the next three years we will:

- Ensure we keep building upon our effective strategic relationship with the University to achieve our Mission, but always ensuring we are a critical friend.
- We will seek out new partnerships which support the delivery of our Strategy, locally, regionally and nationally with the National Union of Students.



The background of the entire page is a complex, abstract geometric pattern. It consists of numerous small triangles of various colors (including shades of green, blue, orange, yellow, purple, and grey) arranged in a way that creates a sense of movement and depth. The pattern is most dense in the upper right and lower right areas, while the lower left corner is a solid green area.

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