To the students of the University of Plymouth,

Upon my election as chair, and in the campaign for it, I discovered that many students were unaware of the existence of the Council, let alone its duties and proceedings. This council has worked to change that. This council has been steadfast in the belief that UPSU is a student led democracy and all our efforts have been to engage the students in Council decisions and proceedings, and to broadcast this belief across the student population.

The Council is the legislative body of the SU, it creates policies and statements that the Sabbatical Officers (the executive) have to enact. It is answerable to the students through the Accountability Board, who are the elected disciplinary officers.

This Council has enacted three policies:

* Advertising Partnerships: Ending the advertising partnership with Clever Student Lets and enacting discussion before future partnerships are entered, with a capped length of one year.
* Signature Requirements: Lowered the number of signatures required to trigger a student referendum or to resubmit a proposal to Union Council from four hundred to one percent of the student population
* Tuition Fees: Endorse the Sabbatical team and the representatives of the University of Plymouth Students’ Union to vote for any university policy aimed at lowering university fees for the 2020/2021 academic year

This Council, and the Student Voice Team are currently overseeing the 2021 Democratic Review, to instrumentalise the principles that have become recurring topics of the Council meetings. More than anything, this Council believes the we are the Student’s Union. While a seemingly obvious statement, this means we are the union of students, the collective will and wishes of the students, the united demands and requirements and the full spectrum of our diversity.

This Council has continuously remarked the need for the University to be accommodating, accountable and answerable to the students and that is the Union’s duty to do this. While this ambition is somewhat strangled by UK Parliamentary statutes and charity and company law, the democratic processes of the union can be utilised to achieve this University-Union discourse.

The ASM is the chance for the students to take this democracy into its own hands and change the governing documents to make the SU into the accountable and representative body the Council so desires it to be. I would implore all students to go on from the ASM and encourage others to engage with the SU, to vote in elections, to talk to elected officers, course reps and school reps to give the Union of Students the life it needs and empower the democracy outset in our byelaws.

This Council and Student Voice team has fervently fought for you this year. Forums, podcasts, policies, social media outreaches to charities and movements. Pride is not the word I’m looking for, there is so much more deserved by this Council. I believe the people of this Council will fight for you after their term has passed and lay a strong enough foundation and pass it on to you, students, to make the Union right and true to its principles expressed in Council meetings. There are many things we haven’t done, but just you wait.