



Trustee Board Meeting

Monday 13th May 2024, 18:10– 20:25
Hybrid – Online/Mandela Room, Guild of Students

Present

Ruth Pipkin, External Trustee **(RP)** (Chair)
 Amira Campbell, Guild President **(President)**
 Joseph Hill, Education Officer **(EO)**
 Catherine Hardiman, Sports Officer (Online) **(SO)**
 Tianjie (Alice) Liu, International Officer **(IO)**
 Dean Turner, Welfare & Community Officer **(WCO)**
 Harry Brooks, Activities & Employability Officer **(AEO)**
 Benjamin Lockley, Postgraduate Officer **(PGO)**
 Simone Hawley, BAME Student Trustee **(SH)**
 Mikey Brown, Postgraduate Student Trustee **(MB)**
 Johnny Davis, External Trustee **(JD)**
 Helen Stone, External Trustee **(HS)**
 Emma Wedge, External Trustee (Online) **(EW)**
 Erica Conway, University Representative Trustee **(EC)** (left at 20:00)

In attendance

Jo Thomas, Chief Executive **(JT)**
 Emily Badger, Director of Operations **(EB)**
 Nick Bailey, Director of Finance & Systems **(NB)**
 James Lindsay, Director of Community & Representation **(JL)**
 Adam Sheridan, Director of Engagement **(AS)**
 Timothy Owen, University of Birmingham, Accommodation **(TO)** (for agenda item 6 only))
 Michelle Berry, Consultant (Online) **(MBE)** (for agenda items 9 & 10 only))
 Mandeep Kooner, Complaints & Incidents Coordinator **(MK)** (note taker)

Apologies

Dionne Enam Williams, Undergraduate Student Trustee **(DW)**
 Yinbo Yu, External Trustee **(YY)**
 Mitali Gohel, External Trustee **(MG)**
 Shruti Kohinkar, International Student Trustee **(SK)**

The Chair welcomed attendees and the meeting began at 18:10.

No	Item for Discussion	Notes	Action
1a	Minutes of Previous Meeting (04.03.2024)	The Chair presented the minutes of the previous meeting, dated 4th March 2024, for the Board's approval. The President noted an amendment to include 'duty of care' in relation to student protestors. The PGO requested an amendment regarding their comments on the Reception Refresh Project	Noted MK MK

		The Board approved the Trustee Board minutes pending the amendments.	Approved
1b	Minutes of Previous Meeting (Revised) (23.10.2023)	The Chair presented the revised minutes of the previous meeting, dated 23rd October 2023, for the Board's approval. The Board approved the Trustee Board minutes.	Noted Approved
2a	Matters Arising	The Chair noted all actions have been completed. JT asked the Chair if the Board Away Day in September 2024, could accommodate Freedom of Speech Training. The Chair advised Freedom of Speech training is to be added to the Trustee Board Away Day.	Noted Noted JT
2b	Declarations of Interest	The Chair asked Trustees to declare any possible conflict of interest relating to the items on the meeting's agenda. All 7 Officer Trustees and staff present declared a conflict of interest for agenda item 11 regarding the budget and staff pay.	Noted Noted
3	HR Committee Minutes (09.04.24)	The WCO presented the HR Committee minutes, dated 9th April 2024, for the Board's Approval. The Board approved the HR Committee Minutes.	Noted Approved
4	Finance Committee Minutes (28.03.24 and 29.04.24)	The President presented the Finance Committee Minutes, dated 28th March and 29th April 2024, for the Board's Approval. The Board approved the Finance Committee Minutes. SH noted an amendment on Page 4 – MK to check with EB	Noted Approved MK
5	Engagement Committee Minutes (23.04.24)	The AEO presented the Engagement Committee Minutes, dated the 23rd April 2024, for the Board's Approval. The Board approved the Engagement Committee Minutes. The Chair acknowledged the success of the Guild Awards 2024.	Noted Approved Noted
6	Residence Life Strategy	JL & TO presented the Residence Life Strategy for the Board's approval. JD acknowledged a really good presentation and asked if JL's Team will have separate branding for their functions and would they be different. JL stated that the branding will be aligned and will be part of the Residence Life brand, therefore no separate logos or branding. JD stated that the team layer is an important pillar of the Residence Life Strategy. JL stated all roles will be paid roles with student staff, creating paid employment, working with Student Groups, working with UoB Sport and with alternative opportunities available.	Noted Noted Noted

	MB asked if Residence Life will become separate to UoB and the Guild of Students and if there are plans for a 1-year strategy and how will this be balanced. JL stated the cost is linked to the grant which will increase at the same rate as rents increase. Noting that recruitment of students will also increase so we will be able to measure success. JL stated that success will be measured over 5 years and each year we will see success based on staffing and grants. TO noted this is an ambitious plan but can be achieved, noting this is not a new partnership with the relationship ongoing for 20 years between UoB and Guild of Students. TO noted that if the project is not successful in 2 years' time, the plans can be adjusted and there will be changes if needed however we are starting from a good position. The IO shared their own experience of living in student accommodation over 3 years, noting this is great for students to have access to activities, The IO further noted that rent is increasing which is difficult for students and commented on the balance to be struck between more activities and lower rent. The IO stated that a key purpose for students living in Halls is to experience and participate in activities. TO noted rents will increase due to utilities and maintenance cost increases and noted that there are other things to consider such as good maintenance, rental strategies and providing a range of different rates. TO noted that University rents are low in comparison to the sector. The IO asked if the offer is realistic. TO advised it will not change the rental strategy noting Residence Life is part of a governance structure and these conversations will continue. The President asked if there will be any rent freezes and will this impact the offer. TO advised there has been a 2-3% increase pa over the last few years. The EO asked for more information regarding the student consultation and if the views from the previous student survey remain relevant. JL confirmed they are still relevant, noting the consultation was at the beginning of the process, and further noted that there had been helpful feedback in the winter and summer surveys conducted. HS noted the new build properties on Bristol Road and asked if we are going to be investing in properties for example at the Vale as it looks quite dated. TO noted the Residence Life Strategy is to support the UoB ambitions for 2030 and further noted new projects which will create new beds. The Board approved the Residence Life Strategy (with the exception of the AEO and IO who did not approve the proposal)	Noted Noted Noted Noted Noted Noted Noted Noted Noted Noted Approved
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		TO left the meeting at 18.35	Noted
7	CEO Report	JT presented the CEO Report, for the Board's information. MB enquired about the changes across the Senior Management structure, how well this was working, and what were the risks and impact. JT advised the Guild were required to implement a solution quickly and effectively in response to the Income Generation plans. Consultation had been undertaken with the relevant teams, the different models had been considered and the distributed model was the preferred option. The distribution of responsibilities and workflow have complimented the Senior Management Team which has allowed the Director of Engagement to solely focus on commercial areas. It was noted that this is a 6-month arrangement. MB enquired if the Guild was undertaking any further consultation with additional teams where there is scope to support income generation and JT advised that this would be an area for the Guild to explore in the coming months and there would be scope to reorganise other areas of the Guild to support income generation. The Board noted the CEO Report.	Noted Noted Noted Noted Noted
8	Management Accounts (March 2024)	NB presented the Management Accounts (March 2024), for the Board's information. NB reported in comparison to Forecast 2, the management accounts for March 2024 report Net Income of £156.3k, positive by £3.7k. NB highlighted that this position does not take account of a currently identified negative variance of £36k which is being reviewed in order to mitigate. Negative variances reported for Venues and Legal/Professional costs were mitigated by savings to IT and additional advertising revenues. NB also updated the Board regarding the Guild's positive cash position as at the end of April 2024. The Board approved the Management Accounts.	Noted Noted Noted Noted Approved
9	Venues External Review	MBe joined the meeting via Teams at 18.59pm. MBe introduced themselves and their role as a consultant and presented the Venues External Review for the Boards approval. MBe noted the Guild is in a strong reserves/cash position and most Students' Unions are also experiencing income challenges. MBe discussed stabilisation and the short to medium term to diversify within the new plans.	Noted Noted Noted Noted

		MBe discussed creating a loyalty scheme across the Guild to encourage continuous footfall.	Noted
		MBe noted that the Guild had done well to maintain an offer with two club nights and that most Students' Unions only offer one and, therefore it is crucial to invest moving forwards. MBe shared that an investment opportunity could be a Coffee Shop but there is more investigatory work to undertake in this area. MBe shared that having a key Senior Manager leading on this area of work will support driving future plans forward.	Noted
		MBe further discussed the report, it's impact and the investment required, requesting the Board to endorse the recommendations on investment.	Noted
		HS noted it was helpful to understand how the Guild is positioned in comparison with other Students' Unions. HS stated that there are a number of food vans across campus which creates competition and MBe noted that there is competition, but it is not considered an issue. MBe stated that only one Students Union is in growth for hot food and most Unions are in decline in this area.	Noted
		IO asked if there are any other ideas for example Bubble Tea which offers different variations of drinks, not just coffee. The IO noted the Guild should explore other options.	Noted
		JD noted they are keen to see this plan move forward.	Noted
		MBe advised that Appendix 3 includes all of the dates and details of the plan which is ready to move forward from September 2024.	Noted
		The PGO requested an update to come back to the July Board Meeting. The Board approved the Venues External Review.	AS Approved
10	Income Generation Update	AS presented the Income Generation Update for the Board's approval.	Noted
		AS noted that the Guild had sold approx. 4,000 Grad Ball tickets to date. AS further noted the update provided by MBe in relation to agenda item 9 and future forecasting.	Noted
		The PGO asked if the Board are going to have a conversation about big acts and AS confirmed they will be looking at mixers and the role of artists.	Noted
		The PGO noted the approach of other Students' Unions to Fresher's week to having open events for everyone.	Noted
		The Board approved the Income Generation Update.	Approved
		MBe left the meeting at 19.50.	Noted

11	2024/25 – Draft Budget	NB presented the 2024/25 Draft Budget for the Board's approval.	Noted
		NB noted that the 2024/25 budget was presented to Finance Committee on 29 th April 2024, but had been subsequently amended for the Trustee Board. The updated budget reported a loss of £98.6k with a charge to Free Unrestricted Reserves of £46.6k, due to reduced expectations for Venues contribution in 2024/25.	Noted
		NB noted that the update, now also included additional capital investment for Joes Bar in line with the Review.	Noted
		The budget also included the utilisation of historical restricted reserves to part fund implementation of the Residence Life Strategy, as detailed in the presentation and budget report.	Noted
		The Board were asked to approve either 1) the budget as presented utilising reserves to fund the charge to Free Unrestricted Reserves or 2) a budget requirement to deliver savings to match the £46.6k charge	Noted
		HS noted they would approve the loss/use of reserves rather than the identification of more savings.	Noted
		The President advised they have the same comments they shared at Finance Committee regarding the student staff pay assumption and in relation to the 5-year plan, acknowledging the risks.	Noted
		HS stated in relation to the political landscape we may need to shift our position. The Chair acknowledged the President's point.	Noted
		NB stated that in April 2025 student staff pay will increase due to NLW and the budget assumption was greater than currently published expectations. The PGO asked if NB could come to a future meeting in the new year with further options regarding the student staff pay, once further information regarding NLW and RLW is available.	NB
		MB stated this budget will allow us to close the gap and in principle makes sense due to the increased assumption in April 2025.	Noted
		NB advised that inflation rates experienced in the last 2 years have changed/reduced and it is hard to predict what level of increase for either NLW or RLW would be implemented for 2025.	Noted
		EC asked if the commercial work was going to have an impact. EC noted they are not forcing a July position as we won't know more than now.	Noted
		The AEO declined to approve the paper due to the lateness of the paper being circulated and they have not had enough time or an opportunity to read the detail.	Noted
		The Board approved the Budget 2024/25.	Approved

12	Long-Term Financial Forecast	EC left the meeting at 20.00.	Noted
		NB presented an update regarding the Long-Term Financial Forecast for the Board to note, including graphical forecasts for reserves and cash.	Noted
		NB noted the presentation is work in progress, representing a steady state / modest growth from this point forward.	Noted
		NB noted the broad assumptions included are as follows:	
		• Venues surplus grows • Net Contribution from advertising at £40k - £60k and Conferencing at £35k - £45k pa • Core Staff COL replicated from 2024/25 at 2% - 3.5% pa and Student Staff COL increases ranging from 3.5% - 5.0% pa • Inflationary/cost increases had been applied ranging 1% - 4% for overheads linked to contracts, although some areas of expenditure assumed to be frozen • Capital assumptions are similar to February 2022 Forecast totalling circa £1m over 6yrs including the Reception space in 2025/26 • Block Grant growth provision assumed to be spent in full	Noted
		NB explained there will be cost increases in the future and we need to understand where we are commercially. NB discussed the graphs within the presentation and explained the key thing to note in the future is the reduction in reserves and cash, based on current assumptions.	Noted
		It was also noted that the Guild were ahead of the February 2022 plan to date due to positive figures reported in 2021/22 and 2022/23 (Commercial and HMRC refund) but this would be eroded by 2026/27.	Noted
		NB advised the next steps, and the following points were discussed:	
		• 24/25 Budget Approval – Two possible recommendations (approve now or with savings adjustments required) • Commercial – Review assumptions for existing activity and introduce forecasts for new commercial activity where information is available • Identify future savings targets (see 24/25 budget paper section 11) including review of Growth Provision usage • Residence Life Review update	Noted
		NB noted for the Board's attention that the unallocated growth position was £1.6 million in the 5-year forecast and this did allow for some flexibility.	Noted
		The Chair requested the 5-year forecast budget to be brought back to the next Board Meeting in July 2024.	NB
		The Board noted the Long-Term Financial Forecast.	Noted

13	Officer Elections Report 2024	The paper was taken as read, with no questions received. The Board noted the Student Voice Report Update.	Noted Noted
14	AOB (Any Other Business)	The President updated the Board regarding the Encampment on the Green Heart which began on Thursday 9th May 2024. The President noted that the Full-Time Officer Team released a statement on the Guild website on Thursday 9th May 2024. The President and Welfare Officer discussed the ongoing dialogue with UoB representatives including Campus Security and the Campers noting the current difficulties and challenges for all involved. The Chair advised that the scheduled Away Day for 1st July will be moved to September 2024 and requested for the next Trustee Board Meeting scheduled 1st July to be moved to 8th July. MK to contact all Trustees to reschedule meeting for Monday 8th July.	Noted Noted Noted MK
19	Meeting Reflection	No items noted.	Noted

The Chair closed the meeting at 20:25.

Date of Next Meeting: Monday 8th July 2024, 18:00 – 20:00, Rosa Parks Room (Guild of Students)