

Board of Trustees Meeting

Minutes

Date 30th May 2024
Time 16.30
Venue SUHQ Kevin Gately / Teams

Circulation: ~ Anna Taylor, Sophie Clark, Max Pike, Holly Roffe, Vaishnavi Ravi, Enaya Nihal, Emma Birch, Tom Chaloner, Caleb Heather, Jake Thomas, Ben Abrahamson, Praneel Jani, Angella Hill Wilson, John Dubber, Robert Pegg, Harnaik Dhillon

Executive Board in attendance: ~ Philip Smith, Mark Crook, Louise Marjoram, George Dowding.

Apologies for Absence

Praneel Jani

Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

MC declared a conflict of interest with regards to SUSS pension scheme.

4.1 Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting, dated 8th February 2024, are approved as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

4.2 Matters Arising

No further matters arising raised

4.3 Chairs & Full-Time officer Update

AT introduced the chair and full-time officers' reports and highlighted a number of points:

- **EB** - working on the 'Sports wear for all', distributing approximately £2k worth of clothing in a bid to make sport more accessible for all. Organisation of Varsity which was expanded this year to include Dance and Cheer leading, resulting in a 33-4 win for University of Warwick.
- **EN** - has been working on a International Students' engagement project, and next steps for International students conference in London, speaking to the Chair of the Migrations and Advisory committee. Also working on a consultation regarding funding for Disabled students.

- **SC** - has been focusing on Liberation Conference which saw over 200 attendees, and 15 speakers. Worked with EN and AT on a Demilitarisation paper.
- **HR** – Working on APP student submission, Autism at Warwick on draft of the Access and participation plan, worked on the ESE strategy, co-led a session on inclusive student experience, and more recently working on a Students Exam feedback survey.
- **AT** – has been attending a large number of committees, the highlights being working on a Governance Review, the University have proposed a new structure for committees which should result in helping with the workload for our officers and involve a greater number of students. Having taken the Demilitarisation paper to the University council, we were pleased with the outcome, and we were able to present the strategic risks.
- **MP** and **EB** have been writing role guides and handover packs. Union awards and Exec welcome which went down well.
- **VR** – Working on Accommodation support for PG students, as housing is currently only available to those Students with Children.

4.4 CEO Report

PS took the report as read, and highlighted a number of points including:

- **PS** drew the Boards attention to the proposed Strategy Timeline, including the Trustee Board training 10th / 11th September 24, to include a review of the 2021 -25 strategy, allowing time for the Board to get to know all the new Trustees.
- Freedom of Speech legislation – The potential risk highlighted at the Audit and Risk meeting, regarding holding a sum of money for centralised security cost and legal advice, as a result of the revised guidance, we are recommending that the Union no longer needs to hold the original sum of restricted reserves in relation to Freedom of Speech.
- The University’s concern regarding the governments proposed plans for International Student recruitment, has been mitigated by the calling of a general election.
- We have had to make a disclosure to the ICO Information Commissioners Office, regarding a minor data breach through the Website, which was addressed and reported.
- Bomb threat - we received a credible bomb threat in SU South, involving a full evacuation and police presence on campus, it was subsequently established to be a hoax

4.5 Management Accounts

4.5a Year to date

Period 8 performance is better than expected, with Operations proactively managing expenditure, in an environment of diminishing expenditure by students in the way they eat, drink, socialize and commercial competition. The operations team are working very hard to ensure students continue to have a positive experience. Energy costs have been falling, also Legal and Recruitment cost have also been below prediction. But as we approach the end of Term three we are in a historical downward trend, with students in exams and leaving campus for the summer.

The board held a lengthy discussion regarding Freedom of Speech (FoS), and funding requirements if Security is required for an event, or the requirement for legal advise should we be challenged on a Fos decision taken.

PS added that the relationship with the University is strong and improving, we are demonstrating we are generating our own income through our trading activity, with a good standard of delivery, good custodians of the grant funds, although we could

explain better the use of the funds and the work we do for Students, but a lot of positive work with the University.

4.5b 5 Year Budget

This is an indicative Budget, as we are still waiting for the confirmation on the Block grant from the University.

The Board are unable to approve the budget at this point, and will kept updated on the progress of discussions with the University following the July Finance meetings, and return to the July meeting with recommendations for the Budget and Pay award.

4.5d Sports and Societies Federation Fee's

Sports Federation Fee's - Sports Officer

The Sports officer presented a comprehensive report and highlighted the main points. The purpose of the paper is a 25% reduction which is an £8 reduction to £24.00 in the fee to lower the price and deliver better value for our members, without compromising the experience of the clubs.

Recommendations

That the Board of Trustees are recommended to:

- approve a reduction of the Sports Federation Fee of 25% with the 2nd option being on the table if the 25% reduction proposal is rejected.
- to review the fee every two years, with a commitment to lowering the fee, an aim which is shared by the Director of Warwick Sport and has been delivered in the Cost of Living Socialisation meetings.

Societies Fees – Societies Officer

The Societies Officer provided the board with a report setting out a reduction in the Societies fees and the phasing out of the Multi Year Membership, as following the membership fee reduction these will no longer be good value for money.

Students feedback that the Socs fee is a barrier to participation, reduction in the federation fee will enhance accessibility, promote inclusivity and promote greater engagement with the Students Union and SU activities.

The Board discussed the proposals and are broadly in favour in a reduction to the Sports federation fee's but would like to have additional information regarding the cost implications, the Finance Director will provide the Board with to model various scenarios taking into consideration suggestions from the Board, and provide the Board with a paper out of cycle.

4.6 Terrace Bar Update

Marketing and Communication Director updated the Board on the progress of the planned Terrace Bar refurbishment, following instruction to an external provider the plans received back were above the suggested budget, **we** have gone back to the company asking them to revise their design and estimated costs. **And** will return to the Board (out of cycle) with more realistic recommendations.

Action – Provide the Board with the Terrace Bar Refurbishment recommendations – via email for approval.

4.7 Staff Engagement Survey

Having completed the staff engagement survey the Board are requested to support taking it forward, to action key elements, talking to our staff members, being transparent about the results, we will return to the Board in July with a fully formed Action plan, which will then be implemented and discussed throughout the organization.

4.8 Trustee Board Guidance – ASV Motions & Impact Assessment

The Board were provided with overall context, the re-writing of the Bylaw is part of a wider piece of work WSU's Board has been required to intervene in a number of All Student Vote (ASV) ratifications at both the December and February Trustee meetings, resulting in amendments to motions already passed.

This process poses a risk to the Board and places a burden on both the individual members and the collective responsibility of the Board, leading to a number of negative responses to the board exercising its legitimate role as the ultimate decision-making body of the Students' Union, and the Board becomes viewed as blocking the student voice. It is essential for the Board to maintain this authority and exercise its legal responsibilities to the charity.

The paper seeks Trustee Board engagement on the following matters:

- To **note** the risks highlighted, relating to ASV motions which contravene charity law
- To **note and approve** the recommendation to delegate authority to senior staff members on the assessment of resolutions
- To **endorse** the byelaw amendments on Impact Assessment as approved through G&A
- To **note** the requirement to obtain as necessary formal advice on any motion, to support legal compliance of the organisation.
- **Consider** whether the Union's existing quoracy levels in ASV's are sufficient to position votes as "the popular will of students"

4.9 Trustee Recruitment / Student Trustee Recruitment

Student Trustee Recruitment

The Board of Trustees have 6 vacancies for Student Trustees as of July 2024, a recruitment process was put in place and we received over 30 applications.

24 Students took part in an assessment process involving two different scenarios.

9 Candidates were taken through to interview stage

8 Interviews were carried out (1 candidate withdrew)

Following confirmation from the successful students that they wish to take up the role, the Board will be asked to ratify the 6 Students as Trustees via email prior to being taken to Student Council for ratification.

the process to recruit the Student Trustees had been very successful, and an improvement on previous recruitment campaigns, both in the number candidates but also the process, this will be taken forward for Student Trustee campaigns in the future.

Lay Trustee Recruitment

We are now in a position to recruit to our one vacancy for the role of Lay trustee, and suggested we focus on a Trustee with a background in Legal or Financial experience.

We hope to be in a position to have a new Lay Trustee on board by the October 24 Board meeting.

4.10 Membership Re-organisation

Following the approval of the Board to recruit two fixed term posts within the Membership team, a re-design of the team was drawn up to provide a better service to our students.

4.11 Committee Updates

Taken as read

4.12 Action Log

Ongoing actions and updated

4.13 Calendar of Meeting 2024/25

The Calendar for meetings 2024/25 was distributed to the Trustees, with a request to feedback any required changes to the dates.

4.14 AOB

The Chair informed the Board that Emma Birch will be stepping down from her role as VP Sports Officer from the 28th June 24, **and** thanked **EB** for all her work and commitment over the last two years.

Next Meeting – 25th July 2024