



# Trustee Board Meeting

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025, 16:00– 18:00  
Chatwin Room, Old Joint Stock

## Present

Ruth Pipkin, External Trustee **(RP)** (Chair)  
 Alex Keen, Education Officer **(EO)**  
 Lara Parker, Sports Officer **(SO)**  
 Ravikiran Rajashekar, International Officer **(IO)**  
 Devansh Jhamnani, Activities & Employability Officer **(AEO)**  
 Ritakshi Maheshwari, Postgraduate Officer **(PGO)**  
 Simone Hawley, BAME Student Trustee **(SH)**  
 Dionne Enam Williams, Undergraduate Student Trustee **(DW)** (left at 18:03)  
 Mikey Brown, Postgraduate Student Trustee **(MB)**  
 Mitali Gohel, External Trustee **(MG)**  
 Johnny Davis, External Trustee **(JD)**  
 Helen Stone, External Trustee **(HS)**  
 Emma Wedge, External Trustee **(EW)**  
 Penelope Hackett, External Trustee **(PH)**

## In attendance

Jo Thomas, Chief Executive **(JT)**  
 Nick Bailey, Director of Finance & Systems **(NB)**  
 Adam Sheridan, Director of Engagement **(AS)**  
 Emily Badger, Director of Operations **(EB)**  
 Chike Dike, Executive Assistant **(CD)** (note taker)  
 Zoe Revell, Research Director, Red Brick Research **(ZR)** (agenda item 10 only)

## Apologies

Erica Conway, University Representative Trustee **(EC)**  
 Syed Sadath, Guild President **(President)**  
 Harshitha Naidu, International Student Trustee **(HN)**  
 Hope Aquilina, Welfare & Community Officer **(WCO)**

The Chair welcomed attendees and the meeting began at 16:00. All attendees were introduced.

No	Item for Discussion	Notes	Action
1a	Minutes of Previous Meeting (28.10.2024)	<p>The Chair presented the minutes of the previous meeting, dated 28<sup>th</sup> October 2024, for the Board's approval.</p> <p>It was noted that there were 2 individuals recorded with the initials 'MG', and this would be amended.</p> <p><b>The Board approved the Trustee Board minutes.</b></p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>CD</b></p> <p><b>Approved</b></p>
2a	Matters Arising	<p>The Chair noted the action tracker.</p> <p>JT updated that action 2 on the action tracker is now complete.</p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>

		<p>The Chair noted outstanding actions will be brought to future Board meetings.</p> <p><b>The Board noted the Action Tracker.</b></p>	<b>Noted</b>
2b	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	<p>The Chair asked Trustees to declare any possible conflict of interest relating to the items on the meeting's agenda.</p> <p>SH declared a conflict of interest in this meeting as they had recently taken up teaching responsibilities for the University as a staff member.</p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>
3	<b>HR Committee Minutes (07.11.24)</b>	<p>The IO presented the HR Committee Minutes for approval.</p> <p><b>The Board approved the HR Committee minutes.</b></p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>
4	<b>Finance Committee Minutes (12.12.24)</b>	<p>The SO presented the Finance Committee Minutes for approval.</p> <p><b>The Board approved the Finance Committee minutes.</b></p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>
5	<b>Engagement Committee Minutes (12.11.24)</b>	<p>The AEO presented the Engagement Committee Minutes for approval.</p> <p><b>The Board approved the Engagement minutes.</b></p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>
6	<b>CEO Report</b>	<p>JT presented the CEO Report, for the Board's information.</p> <p>JT noted that the annual Guild Survey had been conducted. JT noted that for the second year, the Guild delivered a very successful two-day conference hosted for NUS (Strategy Exchange), which received great feedback.</p> <p>JT welcomed the new members of the Board who have been appointed.</p> <p>JT noted the Memorandum of Understanding shared between the University and Guild is being worked on and the document will be coming to a future Board meeting for sign off. JT asked if any of the Board members would be able to review this work in advance. PH, EW and EO volunteered.</p> <p>JT noted the move to a paid part time officer model which so far, has worked very well, and noted that unfortunately two officers have resigned due to other pressures.</p> <p><b>The Board noted the CEO Report.</b></p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>PH, EW, EO</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>
7	<b>Officer Action Plans</b>	<p>The Officer Team presented updates on their Action Plans, for the Board's information.</p> <p>The AEO noted plans to create a video podcast to discuss how to get a part time job and motivate students, a PHD research study project, and an alumni networking event in collaboration with the Careers department.</p> <p>The PGO noted work on a PG wellbeing event, dedicated postgraduate space at the University, and a speed friending event in March.</p> <p>MG noted that historically students have limited support after they graduate and recommended trying to gather some data around the</p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>

		<p>support Alumni receive from the University, how that impacts their ability to navigate the job market and presenting that to the Careers Network.</p> <p>The EO noted work on interdisciplinary education and timely communication to students, coordinating events with Disabled Students Association, chairing Surveys Action Group, a response to the NSS survey, and a 'you said we did' campaign.</p> <p>The IO noted plans for a food festival, a biweekly 'Talk with Ravi' wellbeing pop-up, and work with the Careers Network to generate work opportunities internally.</p> <p>SH noted that it could be worth linking in the 'Talk with Ravi' project with personal tutors.</p> <p>The SO noted work to provide apple pay on the website, the Sports Access Fund awarded to over 160 students, and the Club Executive project in collaboration with UB Sport.</p> <p>MG noted some ways in which the reporting for the Officer update could be clearer and help external Trustees better understand the context of the updates and progress and measurable targets. The SO agreed and noted it would be worth the FTOs preparing their action plan updates as a team and keeping in mind Trustees who are external to the organisation will be reading it.</p> <p><b>The Board noted the Officer Action Plans.</b></p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>
8	<b>Management Accounts</b>	<p>NB presented the Management Accounts (October 2024) for the Board's approval.</p> <p>NB noted a Net Income position of £76k which was £44k greater than the approved budget and noted vacancy savings were a key theme for the first quarter, whilst Venues also reported a positive position compared to budget.</p> <p>NB noted cash levels totalled £3.985m at the end of October which was almost identical to the balance brought forward at the start of the year.</p> <p>NB noted in December £1m was moved from current accounts to deposit account investments.</p> <p><b>The Board approved the Management Accounts.</b></p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Approved</b></p>
9	<b>Budget Re-forecast</b>	<p>NB presented the 2024/25 Budget Re-forecast for the Board's approval.</p> <p>NB noted a positive improvement to Net Expenditure of £65k reducing Net Expenditure to £34k. NB noted a positive contribution of £2k to Free Unrestricted Reserves was now forecast,</p> <p>EW noted that we have a forecast surplus which is positive compared to the initial budget position.</p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>

		<p>PH noted a drop in the strategic provision and asked what impact that has had. NB noted that there is nothing hindering us financially from delivering the strategy.</p> <p><b>The Board approved the Budget Re-forecast.</b></p>	<b>Approved</b>
10	<b>Annual Survey Results 2024</b>	<p>ZR joined the meeting at 16:00 (please note this item was moved to the beginning of the agenda).</p> <p>ZR presented the Annual Survey Results 2024, for the Board's information.</p> <p>ZR noted overall satisfaction with Guild was 69%, a slight improvement from last year.</p> <p>ZR noted that this does not necessarily translate into students being promoters of the Guild, highlighting neutrality from students.</p> <p>ZR noted Welcome Week was positively received by students, with a slight increase in non-attendance, reflecting that certain groups are more likely to be non-attenders.</p> <p>ZR noted recommendations include second opportunities for students who miss out on Welcome which could be refreshers activities, follow up and online events.</p> <p>ZR highlighted that students generally agree that the Guild represents their' academic interests, but this does not translate to students feeling like the Guild represents their personal interests.</p> <p>ZR noted recommendations to create personal connections and showing students how the Guild is instrumental to their experience regardless of what type of student they are.</p> <p>ZR noted that most students feel a sense of community, indicating that the Guild has an opportunity to better support underrepresented groups.</p> <p>ZR noted engagement with, and perceptions of the Guild remain consistent from last year and noted that there is a need for the Guild to consider how its provisions are delivered for different types of students.</p> <p>ZR noted that the majority of students indicate they know where the Guild building is and those who use the building had positive feedback, but noted accessibility and other factors may be an issue. Despite this, the Guild building is not students' first choice of where to spend time on campus.</p> <p>ZR noted that some services such as student groups, Joe's Bar and the Community Pantry are synonymous with the Guild and are recognisable services.</p> <p>ZR noted there is no one thing that students want from the Guild, and it can vary based on the profile of the student. It remains important for the Guild to cater for the diverse needs of students.</p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>

		<p>ZR noted five possible themes to take forward including raising the profile of the Guild, demonstrating personal relevance to students that may be disconnected from the Guild, delivering value, community building and social provision, and helping students manage financial struggles.</p> <p>MG noted that it would be interesting to acquire insights on the students that do not engage and whether they would ever engage with initiatives catered to them.</p> <p>JD asked if the recent turnover in staffing in some key areas has had an impact on engagement. JT agreed that operational matters have likely affected scores in some areas of the survey.</p> <p>ZR noted that neutrality primarily comes from a lack of awareness of the relevance the Guild has to the student experience and a suggested area of focus would be how to challenge this.</p> <p>HS asked if it would be worthwhile to look at physical ways of promoting the Guild with merchandising. JT noted that merchandising is primarily linked to sport and sport teams and the Guild does not have that responsibility. SO added that the only visible University merchandise are sport kits.</p> <p>ZR left the meeting at 16:38.</p> <p><b>The Board noted the Annual Survey Results 2024.</b></p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>
11	<b>Strategic Plan Update</b>	<p>EB presented the Strategic Plan Update, for the Board's information.</p> <p>EB noted that Aim 1 largely remains positive and the main indications for Aim 2 such as election turn out and NSS results are still to report in 2025. Aim 3 targets have fallen behind in Year 3.</p> <p>The Chair asked if there were anything in the KPIs that could be supported by budget uplifts.</p> <p>JD noted that areas such as communications have had a lot of investment and has greatly improved but given the some of the KPIs are not on target, it gives the impression that they have not delivered significant improvements from baselines.</p> <p>JD asked if it would be useful to adjust some of the KPIs and KPTs in this area to reflect this. JT and EB to look at this.</p> <p>EW noted it would be useful to explicitly indicate the baseline, where some of the indicators have come from and show progress which would highlight the strides we have made the last three years.</p> <p>The Chair noted it might be worth discussing our year three of the strategy in more detail at a future meeting given the new engagement data we have available.</p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>JT/EB</b></p> <p><b>EB</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>

		<b>The Board noted the Strategic Plan Update.</b>	
12	<b>Democracy Operations Update</b>	<p>JT presented the Democracy Operations Update for the Boards information and approval (please note that this item was taken after agenda item 7).</p> <p>JT noted the 2 cycles of the Student Vote and Autumn elections and noted the Guild had facilitated and supported the Dubai Student Association elections.</p> <p>JT noted the Palestinian Solidarity idea which out of 1268 votes cast at the All-Student Vote received 1172 votes for, 87 votes against and 9 abstains and has four calls to actions.</p> <p>EO shared a statement on behalf of the President who encouraged the support of this motion as a large majority of students voted in support of it.</p> <p>JD noted a good amount of effort has gone into the motion and due process has been followed.</p> <p>EO noted that the wording in the motion does not allow us to support anything outside our charitable objectives and there is a framework within the motion to ensure that.</p> <p><b>The Board approved the Democracy Operations Update.</b></p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Approved</b></p>
13	<b>Good Governance Update</b>	<p>JT presented the Good Governance Update for the Board's approval.</p> <p>JT noted that the Board Effectiveness Survey will be sent to Board members within the next two months.</p> <p><b>The Board approved the Good Governance Update.</b></p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Approved</b></p>
14	<b>Conflict of Interest Policy</b>	<p>JT presented Conflict of Interest Policy for the Board's approval.</p> <p><b>The Board approved the Conflict of Interest Policy.</b></p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Approved</b></p>
13	<b>AOB (Any Other Business)</b>	No items were discussed.	<b>Noted</b>
14	<b>Meeting Reflection</b>	No items noted.	<b>Noted</b>

The Chair closed the meeting at 20:25.

**Date of Next Meeting: Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025**