

## Trustee Board Meeting Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025, 16:00– 18:00 Mandela Room, Guild of Students

## **Present**

Ruth Pipkin, External Trustee (RP) (Chair)

Syed Sadath, Guild President (President)

Alex Keen, Education Officer (EO)

Lara Parker, Sports Officer (SO)

Ravikiran Rajashekar, International Officer (IO)

Hope Aquilina, Welfare & Community Officer (WCO)

Devansh Jhamnani, Activities & Employability Officer (AEO)

Ritakshi Maheshwari, Postgraduate Officer (PGO)

Simone Hawley, BAME Student Trustee (SH)

Dionne Enam Williams, Undergraduate Student Trustee (DW)

Mikey Brown, Postgraduate Student Trustee (MB)

Mitali Gohel, External Trustee (MG)

Helen Stone, External Trustee (HS)

Penelope Hackett, External Trustee (PH)

Erica Conway, University Representative Trustee (EC) (joined 19:00)

Harshitha Naidu, International Student Trustee (HN) (joined 18:11)

## 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)

James Lindsay, Director of Community & Representation (JL)

Chike Dike, Executive Assistant (CD) (note taker)

## **Apologies**

Emma Wedge, External Trustee (EW)

Johnny Davis, External Trustee (JD)

The Chair welcomed attendees and the meeting began at 18:00. All attendees were introduced.

No	Item for Discussion	Notes	Action
		The Chair presented the minutes of the previous meeting, dated 24 <sup>th</sup> March 2025, for the Board's approval.	Noted
1a	Minutes of Previous Meeting (24.03.2025)	PH noted that a question was asked during the Income Generation Update about the term time trading and asked that it be added to the minutes.	CD
		The Board approved the Trustee Board minutes pending the amendment.	Approved

		The Chair noted the action tracker.	Noted
2a	Matters Arising	NB noted that the outstanding action will be picked up with PH.	NB
		•	The Board noted the Action Tracker.
2b	Declarations of	The Chair asked Trustees to declare any possible conflict of interest relating to the items on the meeting's agenda.	Noted  Noted  Noted  Noted  Approved  Noted  Approved  Approved
	Interest	No interests were declared.	Noted
		The WCO presented the minutes of the HR Committee Meeting, dated 8 <sup>th</sup> April 2025, for the Board's approval.	Noted
3	HR Committee Minutes (08.04.25)	The WCO noted that the incoming Officers' contract, Code of Conduct, Handbook and policies were approved subject to legal review, and a number of Staff policy changes were approved.	Noted
		The Board approved the HR Committee Minutes.	Approved
		The SO presented the minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting, dated 3rd April 2025, for the Board's approval.	Noted
4	Finance Committee Minutes (03.04.25)	The SO noted that closing the gap between student pay and the national living wage was discussed and the Committee agreed to revisit this at future meetings.	Noted
		The Board approved the Finance Committee Minutes.	Approved
		The SO presented the minutes of the Engagement Committee Meeting, dated 29 <sup>th</sup> April 2025, for the Board's approval.	Noted
5	Engagement Committee Minutes (29.04.25)	The SO noted that the Systems Team presented data around student recruitment which the Committee found insightful.	Noted
		The Board approved the Engagement Committee Minutes.	Approved
6		NB presented the Budget 2025/26 for the Board's approval.	Noted
		NB noted that the draft budget has previously been approved by the Finance Committee.	Noted
		NB noted the draft budget reports a net Income position of £9.4k which is an improvement on the 2024/25 forecast.	Noted
	Budget 2025/26	NB noted the total movement for 2025/26 finance year end as of October 2024 is £317k.	Noted
		NB noted that the draft budget assumes a net strategy allocation of £230k.	Noted
		HN joined the meeting at 18:11.	Noted

		NB noted that the draft budget assumes £100k holding position in capital expenditure.	Noted
		PH asked about the vacancy provisions and asked if there is danger that that slippage can impact the strategy. NB noted that there is a risk however historically we have generated vacancy savings from staff turnover and confirmed that we do not delay recruitment to meet vacancy savings.	Noted
		The Board approved the Budget 2025/26.	Approved
		NB presented the Management Accounts (March 2025) for the Board's approval.	Noted
		NB noted that this report outlines the Guild's Income and Expenditure Summary for the eight-month period ending in March. NB noted a net income of £55.6k which is £9k ahead of forecast.	Noted
		NB noted the Venues department reported a net surplus of £142k, which is below the forecast of £160k.	Noted
		NB noted an error which resulted in an overstatement of gross profit which was identified in stock balances for Venues for December 2024 and noted that this has been corrected.	Noted
7	Management Accounts (March 2025)	NB noted that we have £4m total cash and investments, with 84% of this distributed within investments and 16.3% within current accounts.	Noted
	2025)	NB noted there has been a drop in received interest compared to last year due to a drop in investment returns.	Noted
		NB noted we are likely to exceed the forecast surplus for Graduation Ball, adding that we have sold 3,600 tickets so far.	Noted
		PH asked if there is a waterfall graph for year-on-year budgets, and NB confirmed we can action this request to compare to last year.	NB
		The Chair asked if the issue with the stock balance is for the stock check and asked for assurance if it was an anomaly. NB confirmed the issue was an oversight and an anomaly.	Noted
		The Board approved the Management Accounts (March 2025).	Approved
	Income Generation	AS presented the Income Generation Update for the Board's approval.	Noted
8	Update	The Board approved the Income Generation Update.	Approved
9		JT presented the Memorandum of Understanding, for the Board's	Noted
	Manager	approval.	
	Memorandum of Understanding	JT noted the Financial Memorandum, Code of Practice, Intellectual Property License and Data Share Agreement attached.	Noted

		IT noted the small working group comprised of DU TW and TO' which	Noted	
		JT noted the small working group comprised of PH, EW and EO', which had provided useful and supportive feedback and contributions to the Memorandum of Understanding as part of the process.	Noted	
		PH noted point 3.6 for possible further review. JT to review.	JT	
		PH noted point 21.6 on dispute resolution and noted that it is stated in the case of a lack of agreement, the case would come to Trustees. PH asked if that would be a conflict of interest for the Trustees in that scenario. JT noted that if a lack of agreement were to get to that level, the understanding was that the matter would likely go to an external body.	Noted	
		EC joined the meeting at 19:00.	Noted	
		The Board approved the Memorandum of Understanding pending the amendment.	Approved	
		The Officer Team presented the Officer Action Plans for the Board's information.	Noted	
			<u>President:</u> noted that the West Midlands conference has been completed and ongoing work on podcast project and International Student Forum.	Noted
		Activities & Employability Officer: noted completion of the Global networking event and ongoing work on student success stories podcast and project with Worklink.	Noted	
		Welfare & Community Officer: noted completion of housing project, ongoing review of the housing hub and work with MP which has included a collaborative statement on how the MP and Guild are working together to make Selly Oak better. The WCO noted attendance to Parliament to represent Birmingham students.	Noted	
10	Officer Action Plans	Postgraduate Officer: noted completion of Post Graduate dedicated space in Aston Webb and ongoing work on language barrier project in collaboration with BIA to promote their language services and workshops.	Noted	
		<u>Education Officer</u> : noted the completion of the Student Engagement with Research project by hosting the Research Showcase.	Noted	
		International Officer: noted ongoing work on a Food Festival event and Language Cafe.	Noted	
		<b>Sports Officer:</b> noted the completion of the Sports Access Fund of awarding and ongoing work on feedback/review and Club Executive.	Noted	
		MG noted that Officers presentation progress could be improved and encouraged the Officers to use numbers to quantify their impact to properly track progress.	Noted	

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		PH asked about the women's participation in sport and asked the SO if there were any highlights from the focus groups. The SO confirmed that none of the students raised any of the concerns that might not have been expected.	
		HN asked if the mixed gender swimming pool changing rooms is something that came up as an issue, The SO noted that it was highlighted as a concern that did not necessarily bother the students in the focus group. HN noted that it would be helpful to have some signage	Noted
		at the pool to make new users aware that it is mixed gender area. The SO to action a request for signage in the pool area.	so
		The Board noted the Officer Action Plans.	Noted
		JT presented the CEO Report, for the Board's information.	Noted
		JT noted that a Trustee recruitment process had begun but did not receive any applications that met Guild requirements, and therefore we the recruitment was reopening and working with a recruitment agency.	Noted
		JT noted that we have successfully appointed Independent Persons for Audit & Risk and Finance Committees.	Natad
		JT noted that we have had an Internal Audit visit liked to the strategic KPIs which went well, and the audit report will be presented to the Audit & Risk Committee.	Noted Noted
11	CEO Report	JT noted that planning and preparation is ongoing in advance of the new Officer Team starting on 23 <sup>rd</sup> of June.	Noted
		JT noted a resignation of a long-serving member of staff who will be retiring. The Board passed on their thank for the 25 years of service at the Guild.	Noted
		The Chair asked if the actions that came out of the Audit around the KPIs will be coming back for discussion, JT confirmed it will be included in the strategic operating plan and also be presented at the next Board meeting.	Noted
		The Board noted the CEO Report.	Noted
		JT presented the Officer Elections Report 2025 for the Board's information.	Noted
12	Officer Elections Report 2025	JT noted that over the course of voting which took place between 10th March and 14th March, 9346 unique voters cast 72k individual votes.	Noted
		JT noted that we reverted back to a 5-day voting period and new incentives were trialled.	Noted
			JT noted election data is still being reviewed, and a second paper will be presented to the July Board meeting with those insights.
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		JT noted the comparison with some other Students' Unions, highlighting	Noted
		the Guild had the fourth best voter turnout in the country with 20% of overall student population voting.	
		MB noted that the first day of voting did very well and asked what was to credit for this success. JT noted the communications were very strong this year; the Voice Team completed much promotional work, and the candidates were very keen and campaigned very strongly.	Noted
		The Chair noted that this was brilliant and congratulated the team on the results.	Noted
		The President asked if it was possible to have some data on incentives to see which incentives were more popular, and JT noted that this is being completed and will come to next Board meeting.	Noted JT
		The Board noted the Officer Elections Report 2025.	Noted
		JT presented the Board Effectiveness Survey, for the Board's information.	Noted
		JT noted that Board Effectiveness survey has been run for some years and every 3 years we complete a trilateral review with other Students' Unions.	Noted
		JT noted 77% of the Board completed the survey which is an improvement from last year and further noted a mean average of 91% across all questions which is again an improvement on last year.	Noted Noted
	Board	JT noted the question around skills gaps on the Board, with legal expertise and strategic financial management being highlighted.	.10104
13	Effectiveness Survey	JT noted the Good Governance task and finish group would be instigated to consider the findings in further detail.	Noted
		EC noted the trilateral review is useful and interesting but does not necessarily bring out insights that justify the time and effort that goes into it and suggested that it might be worth reviewing the scope and frequency. JT noted that the 3 years frequency is best practice from the Charity Commission and agreed to review.	Noted
		PH asked if there was a comparison of the low lights from last year, and JT confirmed that all the metrics have risen, and this would be reviewed further in the Good Governance task and finish group.	JT
		The Board noted the Board Effectiveness Survey.	Noted
14		JL presented the Democracy Operations Update, for the Board's information.	Noted
	Democracy Operations Update	JL noted that eight Ideas have been submitted to the Democratic System since March 2025.	Noted
			Noted

		JL noted that the fourth All Students Vote took place between 1st – 4th April, the second Scrutiny Panel meetings of the Academic Year took place on 25th and 26th March and the Guild Officer Group met on 25th March.  The Board noted the Democracy Operations Update.	Noted
15	AOB (Any Other Business)	MB noted the proposed Martyn's Law legislation aimed at protecting public spaces that hold events from terrorism and asked if the Guild is compliant. AS confirmed that we are and are keeping an awareness on any further developments.	Noted
16	Meeting Reflection	No items noted.	Noted

The Chair closed the meeting at 19:58.

Date of Next Meeting: Monday 7th July 2025