

Trustee Board Meeting Monday 24th March 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)

Mikey Brown, Postgraduate Student Trustee (MB)

Johnny Davis, External Trustee (JD)

Helen Stone, External Trustee (HS)

Emma Wedge, External Trustee (EW)

Penelope Hackett, External Trustee (PH)

Harshitha Naidu, International Student Trustee (HN)

In attendance

Jo Thomas, Chief Executive (JT)

Nick Bailey, Director of Finance & Systems (NB)

James Lindsay, Director of Community & Representation (JL)

Adam Sheridan, Director of Engagement (AS)

Emily Badger, Director of Operations (EB)

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

Elliott Packham, Systems Development Manager (EP) (Agenda Item 6 only)

Joe Argylle, Senior Commercial Manager (JA) (Agenda Item 8a only)

Apologies

Erica Conway, University Representative Trustee (EC)

Mitali Gohel, External Trustee (MG)

Dionne Enam Williams, Undergraduate Student Trustee (DW)

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

No	Item for Discussion	Notes	Action
1	Minutes of Previous Meeting (13.01.2025)	The Chair presented the minutes of the previous meeting, dated 13 th January 2025, for the Board's approval (please note that this item was taken after agenda item 8b). PH highlighted the second paragraph of page 7 and noted the need for rewording to reflect the motion's proposal to pressure the University to cut its links from organisation that invest in arms trade. PH also suggested removing or putting an asterisk on the word 'alleged' on in the seventh paragraph. JT and CD to review and reword.	Noted Noted

		The Board engroved the Trustee Board minutes	JT, CD
		The Board approved the Trustee Board minutes.	
			Approved
		The Chair noted the action tracker.	Noted
2a	Matters Arising	JT noted that we are awaiting a current draft of the Memorandum of Understanding from the University and once a final version has been received, that action will be resolved.	Noted
		The Board noted the Action Tracker.	Noted
2b	Declarations of Interest	The Chair asked Trustees to declare any possible conflict of interest relating to the items on the meeting's agenda.	Noted
		No interests were declared.	Noted
		WCO presented the minutes of the HR Committee Meeting, dated 12 th February 2025, for the Board's approval.	Noted
3	HR Committee Minutes (12.02.25)	NB noted that the wording in fourth paragraph of the Gender Pay Gap Report item needs to be reworded to reflect that majority of student staff are female.	CD
		WCO noted that main points discussed in the meeting were a Quality Marks review paper, and the Gender Pay Gap Report.	Noted
		The Board approved the HR Committee Minutes.	Approved
4	Audit & Risk Committee Minutes (06.02.25)	EO presented the minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee Meeting, dated 6 th February 2025, for the Board's approval. EO noted that all the items for approval were approved during the meeting, including the Risk Register, Safeguarding Policy, PCI PSS	Noted Noted
	,	Policy and Auditor extension request.	
		The Board approved the Audit & Risk Committee Minutes.	Approved
	Engagement Committee Minutes (18.02.25)	AEO presented the minutes of the Engagement Committee Meeting, dated 18 th February 2025, for the Board's approval.	Noted
5		AEO noted that the discussions in the meeting were mainly around Engagement Participation and an Officer Elections update.	Noted
		The Board approved the Engagement Committee Minutes.	Approved
	Strategy Aim 1: Engagement & Participation Update	EP joined the meeting at 19:31.	Noted
6		EP presented the Strategy Aim 1: Engagement & Participation Update for the Board's information (please note that this item was taken after agenda item 7).	Noted
		EP noted that this report had been previously presented to Engagement Committee and outlines the Guild's current position and progress of Aim 1 strategic objectives.	Note d
			Noted

		EP highlighted a success in Aim 2: Representation with the number of	
		votes received for the 2025 Officer Elections exceeding the target and with an outcome of 9346.	Noted
		EP noted that the target for number of Student Group members is 13k, highlighting that we are currently at 12,800 and are likely to hit the 13k target.	Noted
		EP noted that we currently have 3919 student volunteering at the Guild and are on track to hit our target of 5000.	Noted
		EP noted that year on year, university population has been fairly consistent until a sharp increase recorded this year and highlighted that the growth is coming from students who are based on the Birmingham campus. EP noted that further enquiry into the growth shows majority of growth coming from international students on campus and added that the sharpest increase in population has come from PGT international students accounting for majority of the university growth. EP noted that the majority of international students are from China and India, highlighting that there has been an increase of Chinese students studying at Birmingham this year and a decline in Indian students.	Noted
		EP noted this has prompted us to think about how we widen engagement with Chinese students and noted that these discussions are taking place at management level.	Noted
		EP noted that the engagement with Chinese students between 2023 and 2024 increased by 8.4%, however when adjusted for the overall university population growth, our engagement percentage is negative.	Noted
		EW asked how the international student growth compares to pre-covid and if there was a deliberate attempt by the University to increase Chinese student numbers. EP noted we review into how it compares to pre-covid numbers, and JL added that the market for international student recruitment is much tougher currently compared to pre-covid.	Noted
		MB asked if the Guild has the expertise to look into engaging this cohort of students, flagging that language is a barrier. JT noted that something that has been raised in discussions with managers is that if we create a number Chinese student- specific events, we run the risk of not giving them the opportunity to socialise with other students. JT noted finding the right balance would be key and the way forward would be to look at what we do and how we can tweak it to be more appealing to Chinese students.	Noted
		EW noted it would be important to understand the motivation of Chinese students and if their priority is to engage with the student experience or if it is to get a degree and return home.	Noted
		The Board noted the Strategy Aim 1: Engagement & Participation Update.	
7	CEO Report	JT presented the CEO Report, for the Board's information (please note that this item was taken after agenda item 5).	Noted
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	JT noted that at the last meeting there was a lengthy discussion around the Palestinian Solidarity Idea and a draft board response is attached as an appendix.	Noted
	The Board approved the idea, as outlined in the paper for publication.	Noted
	JT noted that the University is doing well with recruitment and are scoping out additional teaching spaces across campus. JT noted that they are looking at two spaces in the Guild building.	Noted
	SH noted that the proposal is positive and will improve student footfall. SO noted that it is positive opportunity, but it would be important to address any disruption for Student Groups as they are some of the most active students at the Guild.	Noted
	MB asked how the space would work logistically, EB noted we are looking at movable seating and our internal operations to make sure the space is reset for Student Groups to use.	Noted
	The Chair supported the projects as an exciting opportunity, and noted we will need to be clear about our financial requirements from the University. EB confirmed that the University will be providing the capital.	Noted
	The Board approved the Teaching Spaces proposal.	Approved
	The Board noted the CEO Report.	Noted
In	JA joined the meeting at 18:02 (please note that this item was taken first on the agenda).	Noted
Generation	AS presented the Income Generation Project, for the Board's approval.	Noted
,,,,,,,	The Board approved the Income Generation Project.	Approved
	AS presented the Income Generation Update, for the Board's information (please note that this item was taken second on the agenda).	Noted
Income Generation Update	AS noted the commercial development updates including visits to the British & International Franchise Exhibition and Warwick, York and Hull Students' Unions with the Business Development Manager to obtain ideas and information on best practice.	Noted
	The Board noted the Income Generation Update.	Noted
	JT presented the Byelaws 2025, for the Board's Approval.	Noted
Byelaws 2025	JT noted that minor changes have been made to the Byelaws which are currently being reviewed by the University.	Noted
		Noted
	Income Generation Update	the Palestinian Solidarity Idea and a draft board response is attached as an appendix. The Board approved the idea, as outlined in the paper for publication. JT noted that the University is doing well with recruitment and are scoping out additional teaching spaces across campus. JT noted that they are looking at two spaces in the Guild building. SH noted that the proposal is positive and will improve student footfall. SO noted that it is positive opportunity, but it would be important to address any disruption for Student Groups as they are some of the most active students at the Guild. MB asked how the space would work logistically, EB noted we are looking at movable seating and our internal operations to make sure the space is reset for Student Groups to use. The Chair supported the projects as an exciting opportunity, and noted we will need to be clear about our financial requirements from the University. EB confirmed that the University will be providing the capital. The Board approved the Teaching Spaces proposal. The Board noted the CEO Report. JA joined the meeting at 18:02 (please note that this item was taken first on the agenda). AS presented the Income Generation Project, for the Board's approval. The Board approved the Income Generation Update, for the Board's information (please note that this item was taken second on the agenda). AS presented the Income Generation Update, for the Board's information (please note that this item was taken second on the agenda). AS noted the commercial development updates including visits to the British & International Franchise Exhibition and Warwick, York and Hull Students' Unions with the Business Development Manager to obtain ideas and information on best practice. The Board noted the Income Generation Update. JT presented the Byelaws 2025, for the Board's Approval. JT noted that minor changes have been made to the Byelaws which are

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		JT requested that the Chair and President be delegated to approve any	
		further amendments following further feedback by the University.	Annroyad
		The Board approved the Byelaws 2025.	Approved
		EB presented the Annual Survey & Strategy Response, for the Board's	Noted
10	Annual Survey & Strategy Response	information.	Noteu
		EB noted that following January Board meeting, the findings from the research were taken away and followed up with extensive work completed with the Management Team.	Noted
		EB noted that presented in the paper is a summary of those discussions, reflections and priorities that have been identified.	Noted
		EB noted that the Strategy is due to come back to the July meeting with the Year 4 Operating plan.	Noted
		The Board noted the Annual Survey & Strategy Response.	Noted
		EB presented the Health & Safety Policy, for the Board's approval.	Noted
11	Health & Safety Policy	EB noted some minor updates have been made to the policy through the Health and Safety Committee, to support the development of a Health and Safety framework.	Noted
		The Board approved the Health & Safety Policy.	Approved
		NB presented the Risk Register Report for the Boards approval.	Noted
12	Risk Register	NB noted the Board last received the Risk Register in September 2024 and the proposed version was approved by the Audit & Risk Committee in February.	Noted
		NB noted that a key change is the review of the residual risks left after consideration of the controls that we have NB noted that the Audit & Risk Committee recommended that the residual risk scores be reviewed and following the completion of this work, we have reduced the residual risks.	Noted
		NB noted that 23 residual risks have been marginally reduced which has increased the scores rated as 'green' from 13 in June 2024 to 36 in 2025.	Noted
		NB noted that these changes better reflect the well- established tracking and reviewing of policies within the Guild's governance cycles.	Noted
		NB to follow up with PH regarding a query about governance processes in the Risk Register.	NB
		The Board approved the Risk Register.	Approved
13	Democracy Operations Update	JL presented the Democracy Operations Update for the Board's	Noted
		information.	
		JL noted that this update covers the period of January to February 2025, prior to elections.	Noted

	JL noted that the All Student Vote 3 took place between 3rd – 7th February and a single item, Pro-Choice policy, was included and the policy reached quorum and has passed.	Noted
	JL noted that the Guild Officer Group has met twice between January and February 2025.	Noted
	The Board noted the Democracy Operations Undate	Noted
		Noted
External Audit extension	NB noted item is seeking approval for the extension of the contract with the auditors for a further two years; this financial year and the next financial year.	Noted
	The Board approved the External Audit extension.	Approval
	NB presented the Delegation of Authority for the Board's approval.	Noted
	NB noted that there have been minor housekeeping changes, and the updated Delegation of Authority was approved by the Audit & Risk Committee in February.	Noted
Delegation of Authority	PH noted some clarifications to be added to the Delegation of Authority. NB to update.	NB
_	PH queried the personal expenses signatories and the Officers who sign them. SO confirmed that the Officers receive training regarding this. NB noted that the two Officers who approve personal expenses are also representatives on Finance Committee.	Noted
		Approved
AOB	Effectiveness and urged the Board to complete the survey.	Noted
(Any Other Business)	CD to recirculate the survey to the Board.	CD
,	The Chair noted that this is JD's last meeting and thanked them for their contribution and presented gifts.	Noted
Meeting Reflection	No items noted.	Noted
	AOB (Any Other Business) Meeting	February and a single item, Pro-Choice policy, was included and the policy reached quorum and has passed. JL noted that the Guild Officer Group has met twice between January and February 2025. The Board noted the Democracy Operations Update. NB presented the External Audit extension for the Boards approval. NB noted item is seeking approval for the extension of the contract with the auditors for a further two years; this financial year and the next financial year. The Board approved the External Audit extension. NB presented the Delegation of Authority for the Board's approval. NB noted that there have been minor housekeeping changes, and the updated Delegation of Authority was approved by the Audit & Risk Committee in February. PH noted some clarifications to be added to the Delegation of Authority. NB to update. PH queried the personal expenses signatories and the Officers who sign them. SO confirmed that the Officers receive training regarding this. NB noted that the two Officers who approve personal expenses are also representatives on Finance Committee. The Board approved the Delegation of Authority. The Chair noted that there have been 8 responses to the Board Effectiveness and urged the Board to complete the survey. CD to recirculate the survey to the Board. The Chair noted that this is JD's last meeting and thanked them for their contribution and presented gifts. No items noted.

The Chair closed the meeting at 20:13.

Date of Next Meeting: Monday 12th May 2025