

# Trustee Board Minutes (Virtual Extraordinary Meeting)

From meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2020

## Present

Robert Smeath, External Trustee (Chair) **(RS)**  
 Joshua Williams, President **(President)**  
 Amanda Sefton, Education Officer **(EO)**  
 Ryan Ginger, Activities and Employability Officer **(AEO)**  
 Amelia Gibbins, Welfare and Community Officer **(WCO)**  
 Josh Dooler, Sports Officer **(SO)**  
 Joanne Park, International Officer **(IO)**  
 Tobiloba Adeyemi, Postgraduate Officer **(PGO)**  
 Alice Tucker, Student Trustee (Undergraduate) **(AT)**  
 Rosa Alaluf, Student Trustee **(RA)**  
 Tom Goodman, Student Trustee (Postgraduate) **(TG)**  
 Christian Oko, Student Trustee (International) **(CO)**  
 Johnny Davis, External Trustee **(JD)**  
 Henrietta Brealey, External Trustee **(HB)**  
 Wyn Williams, External Trustee **(WW)**  
 Chris Davies, External Trustee **(CD)**  
 Erica Conway, University Representative Trustee **(EC)**

## In attendance

Jo Thomas, Chief Executive **(JT)**  
 Nick Bailey, Finance Manager **(NB)**  
 Sam Jones, Interim Executive Assistant **(SJ)** (note taker)

**The Chair welcomed everyone and the meeting commenced at 18:15.**

ITEM	NOTES	ACTION
<b>CEO Update to Trustee Board</b>	<p>This Extraordinary Trustee Board meeting was held virtually via Zoom, and was called in response to the current COVID-19 outbreak. RS thanked everyone for attending during difficult times and welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>JT updated the Board on the Guild's response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in the UK. JT noted that the Guild had been developing its plans for COVID-19 contingency for several weeks in response to changing government advice. JT noted that the Guild Emergency Management Group (GEMT) had been meeting regularly to make urgent decisions, and had implemented a managed closure of the building, with all staff now working from home. JT noted that the Guild had worked in every respect to support students, support staff to continue working as best as possible, and protect jobs.</p> <p>JT noted that the Comms and Marketing team had been working closely with the Officer team to implement advice and respond to urgent student queries. JT noted that the Officer team were leading on the Guild's 'Virtual</p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>

	<p>Neighbourhood' project to maintain student community, belonging and engagement during the lockdown.</p> <p>JT noted that the Guild had been working closely with the University and following University advice, which had been changing at pace. JT noted that Guild departments were continuing usual communications, including team meetings, remotely and utilising a range of software to communicate, which the Guild was monitoring to ensure data protection compliance. JT noted that laptops had been distributed on a priority basis, however the Guild was investigating procurement of more devices for staff working remotely.</p> <p>JT noted that one Guild staff member had reported an unconfirmed case of COVID-19 and had taken sick leave, and was now back at work. JT noted that several staff members had reported cases in their families including several family members who had sadly passed away. JT noted that the Guild was working to support affected staff members during this difficult time.</p> <p>JT noted that the Finance team had worked hard to maintain the functioning of the Guild's finance system. JT noted that all planned Guild events for term three had been cancelled, as per advice from the University.</p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Noted</b></p>
<p><b>Financial Forecast Update</b></p>	<p>NB presented an update on the Guild's current finances to the Board.</p> <p>NB noted that as result of the expected closure for the rest of term two and into term three, the Guild had revised it's expected income by £774.7k (13.9% of budget), which without action was expected to result in an overall deficit on the Guild's 'free unrestricted reserves of £212.2k.</p> <p>NB noted that as a result of the closure of the building and the current financial pressures, the Guild planned to make use of the Government's Job Retention Scheme (furlough scheme) to 'furlough' a number of staff who would be unable to work due to the closure of the building. JT noted that furloughing staff was being implemented across the SU/HE sector.</p> <p>JT noted the Guild proposal to furlough staff on 100% of salary, with the Guild 'topping up' the government scheme of 80%, initially for a three week period. JT noted that a provisional list of around 25 staff had been identified who be unable to work during the closure.</p> <p>JT noted that the Guild was proposing to also furlough the whole student staff team on 80% salary. JT noted that student staff worked on 'zero hours' contracts, so their furlough pay would be based on previous averaged working hours.</p> <p>The AEO asked what the cost to the Guild would be of 'topping up' student staff furlough pay to 100%. NB noted that the figures were currently unclear due to the work needed to calculate individual student staff averaged hours over the 2019/20 tax year.</p> <p>The President noted a large variance in the number of hours that many student staff worked each month, which may result in student staff not</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>receiving an amount equivalent to the number of hours they would have worked in the coming weeks. The President noted that communications to student staff would be difficult.</p> <p>NB noted while student staff would have their hours calculated based on their previous average hours, this may not reflect the number of hours they had planned to work and some student staff may receive less and some may receive more, however the Guild was bound by the terms of the Government scheme and this was the only realistic option.</p> <p>EC noted that the Guild would be furloughing around 35% of its core staff team. JT noted that the majority of those staff identified were already 'inactive' due to their inability to complete any work while the building was closed. NB noted that this would not equate to 35% of the Guild's monthly salary cost due to pay grades identified for furlough.</p> <p>NB noted that furloughing student staff at 80% of salary would incur no cost to the Guild, as this cost would be covered by the Government scheme. NB noted that the furlough of student staff would save the Guild a projected £128k.</p> <p>The Board discussed the possible impact of the closure on the Guild's reserves. NB noted that the Guild maintained significant financial reserves, however there remained difficulties in balancing the Guild's budget in the long-term, separately to the COVID-19 outbreak.</p> <p>NB updated the Board on initial figures on the Guild's pension liability. NB noted that the SUSS pension AGM had been held prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, which had forecast an increased contribution rate of 15% in 2020/21, and subsequently 5% each year following. NB noted that the Guild's share of the increased liability was still unclear, but was likely to be significant.</p> <p>RS noted that communications on furloughing both core staff and student staff would be a complex issue, but a large amount of Guild activity would not be possible to hold due to the closure of campus. RS noted that 'topping up' core staff furlough pay to 100% would ensure no detriment to core staff financially.</p> <p>JT noted that the planned staff furlough list included the majority of the Venues and Facilities teams who were unable to work remotely, as well as other staff whose workload had reduced significantly.</p> <p>The AEO noted that the some student staff may be caused financial difficulties by being furloughed on 80% of their wages. HB suggested that furloughing student staff on 80% of wages would be a responsible approach as students continued to have access to student loans, and the Guild had a need to ensure its long term financial stability.</p> <p>RS asked about the availability of hardship funds for students affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. SE noted that both the Guild and University had existing student hardships funds, which the University was expanding significantly.</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>
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	<p>CA asked about the University's arrangements for their own staff. EC noted the University was restricted on the number of staff it was able to furlough due to the scheme's provisions. CA noted that the majority of organisations across the charitable sector had plans to make use of the scheme, at the 80% rate.</p> <p>TG noted that the Guild's furlough of student staff at 80% of wages protected a large number of students from redundancy, while balancing the pressure on the Guild's finances.</p> <p>The Board discussed communications to Student and Core staff with regards to furloughing. NB noted that written consent was required to furlough staff, where changes were made. JT noted that the Guild would be having honest conversations with staff and would be open to feedback, but would need to move very quickly. CO noted the need to promote the Guild and Universities hardship funds to affected students.</p> <p>RS noted that the decision to furlough staff was difficult, but was the best option available to the Guild under unique circumstances.</p> <p><b>The Board approved to move forward with the proposed furlough of core staff on 100% of salary, and student staff on 80% of wages, utilising the Government's Job Retention (Furlough) scheme.</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>
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The Chair closed the meeting at 18:50.

Signed .....

Date .....