

Trustee Board Minutes

From meeting held on 13th January 2020
 16:00 – 18:00

Present

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

In attendance

Jo Thomas, Chief Executive **(JT)**
 Adam Sheridan, Director of Engagement **(AS)** (agenda Items 1-9 only)
 Emily Badger, Director of Operations **(EB)**
 Nick Bailey, Finance Manager **(NB)** (agenda Items 1-9 only)
 Sarah Edmunds, Director of Support and Development **(SE)** (agenda Items 1-9 only)
 Richard Peachey, 5874 Marketing Consultancy **(RP)** (agenda item 0 only)
 Chris Baker, 5874 Marketing Consultancy **(CB)** (agenda item 0 only)
 Sam Jones, Interim Executive Assistant **(SJ)** (note taker)

Apologies

Joshua Williams, President **(President)**
 Rosa Alaluf, Student Trustee **(RA)**
 Chris Davies, External Trustee **(CD)**
 Joanne Park, International Officer **(IO)**

The Chair welcomed everyone and the meeting commenced at 16:05.

No	ITEM FOR DISCUSSION	NOTES	ACTION
0	New Branding Presentation	RS introduced TG and CO and welcomed them as new members of the Trustee Board.	Noted
		EB introduced Richard Peachey (RP) and Chris Baker (CB) from 5874 marketing consultancy.	Noted
		RP and CB delivered a presentation on the Guild's proposed new branding for the Board's approval.	Noted
		CB noted that aim of the branding review was to refresh the Guild's branding with a clearer, more distinct identity, a refreshed colour	

		<p>scheme and new logo, incorporating the design of the Guild mermaid.</p> <p>RP noted that intention of the branding review was to unify the Guild's individual existing brands into a more cohesive identify which would cover all the Guild's activities.</p> <p>CB noted that over several iterations, the proposed new Guild logo incorporating the mermaid was overwhelmingly preferred.</p> <p>JD noted that the proposed strapline 'Your Voice, Only Louder' focused on the representative aspects of the Guild's activities. RG noted that the Officer team were in agreement for the 'Student Voice' as the core of the new brand, and that the new branding was a significant improvement on the current identity.</p> <p>The Board approved Guild's new branding design.</p> <p>The Board agreed to delegate the implementation of the new branding to the Director of Operations and the Officer team.</p> <p>RP and CB left the room at 16:30.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p> <p>EB</p> <p>Noted</p>
1	Minutes from meeting held 28.10.19	<p>RS presented the Trustee Board minutes from the previous meeting held on 28th October 2019 for the Board's approval.</p> <p>The Board approved the minutes of the previous meeting.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
2	Matters Arising	<p>EC enquired about ongoing discussions with HMRC about the Guild's VAT liabilities. NB noted that a webinar had been arranged with a large number of Student's Unions participating, of which around 80% believed they would be affected by HMRC's decision to charge VAT on Student's Unions catering outlets.</p> <p>NB noted that Exeter Student's Unions VAT tribunal cases were ongoing. NB noted that discussions were ongoing with the University's tax consultants. NB noted that the Guild's possible tax liability would be circa £200k.</p> <p>WW requested that the Guild's commercial strategy be discussed at the March Board meeting. SJ to include on agenda.</p> <p>JT updated the Board on developments with the SUMS review. JT noted that the completed report had been presented to the University Executive Board (UEB) on the 9th December, with no formal response received as of yet. JT noted that the SUMS review panel were meeting the following day, and that the review would be discussed further at the next Registrar's meeting.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>SJ</p> <p>Noted</p>
3	Finance Committee Minutes (28.11.19)	<p>The SO presented the Finance Committee minutes from the meeting held on 28th November 2019 for the Board's approval.</p> <p>The SO noted the following items from the minutes:</p>	<p>Noted</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Trustee and Independent member vacancies on Finance Committee • Green Impact • Management Accounts • Budget Reforecast • SUMS Review • IT Transition Plan • Commercial Task and Finish Group <p>The Board approved the Finance Committee minutes.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
4	HR Committee Minutes (05.12.19)	<p>The WCO presented the HR Committee minutes from the meeting held on 5th December 2019 for the Board's approval.</p> <p>The WCO noted the following items from the minutes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Calendar • People Strategy • Staff Feedback Group • Investors In People <p>TG asked if the Guild had footfall data for the building. The AEO agreed to discuss this query outside the meeting.</p> <p>The Board approved the HR Committee minutes.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
5	Officer Action Plans	<p>The President presented the Officer Action Plans for the Board's information.</p> <p>The PGO noted plans for a skills acquisition programme to help Postgraduates gain employability skills, PG engagement plans with the Library and the Graduate School, a cross-campus cultural events calendar and additional PG study space.</p> <p>The EO noted plans for self-declaration of extenuating circumstances, further year in Industry opportunities, closing the BME attainment gap, student rep master classes, and preparations for the implementation of NATY. The EO noted positive feedback from University staff on the recommendations of the Student Voice report.</p> <p>The AEO noted plans to redraft the Student Groups policy, a student staff perception campaign, a 'Super AGM' and working more closely with the University's careers network team.</p> <p>The SO noted plans for delivering a 'Come Out for Sport' LGBTQ in sport campaign with the LGBTQ Student's officer, more promotion of the BUCS 'Super Series', and a student-facing survey on the impact of sport on the wider student experience at UoB.</p> <p>The WCO noted plans for a campaign around Selly Oak safety and the perceptions of crime in the local area, a consultation on a new mental health charter, and noted that sexual health testing kits were now regularly available in the Guild.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>EC noted that students were vulnerable to certain types of crime such as burglary and theft, and students who came from areas with less crime were not used to this increased risk.</p> <p>The WCO noted that concerns around crime were to a large extent an issue of perception and reporting levels, with a significant amount of crime experienced in the local area by students going unreported. The WCO noted that reporting of crime on Facebook groups was often counterproductive and increased student concerns unduly. The WCO noted that crime statistics in the Selly Oak area were comparable to other student areas in the UK.</p> <p>CO noted the possibility of involving societies in future mental health awareness activity. The WCO noted plans to engage develop more support for mental health societies, with additional training for committee members and a 'supportive societies' label as part of the wider society recognition structure.</p> <p>The Board noted the Officer Action Plans.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
6	Your Ideas and Officer Question Time Report	<p>AS presented the Your Ideas and Officer Question Time Report for the Board's Information.</p> <p>AS noted that the Your Ideas system was now in its 5th year of operation, and the system itself is well established. Each cycle is open for 2 weeks for simultaneous comment and voting.</p> <p>AS noted that in the 1st cycle of Your Ideas in 2019-20, 19 ideas had been submitted, four of which had been approved unanimously by Guild Policy Development Group (GPDG). Of the remaining ideas, three had been unanimously rejected, and twelve had been put online for a student vote, of which none had been passed. AS noted that one student had attended GPDG to present their idea.</p> <p>AS noted that as part of the ongoing democracy review, the Your Ideas system was under review, however no changes had been implemented as of yet.</p> <p>AS noted that in the most recent meeting of Officer Question Time (OQT), issues raised by students included the recent campus industrial action, the progress of the Guild democracy review, and the safety of students and staff at UoB Dubai campus.</p> <p>AS noted that engagement with the Your Idea system and OQT continued to be a concern, and would be addressed as part of the democratic review.</p> <p>The AEO noted that the democracy sub-group had met on the 10th January and agreed on holding a referendum on a new democratic structure during the Guild elections period. The AEO noted that a referendum in term 3 was unlikely to reach a quoracy of circa 2,000 votes.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>The AEO noted that Full-Time Officer team were supportive of the holding of a referendum during the elections period, and while it would require additional staff support, it was the best opportunity for engaging students in the reforms.</p> <p>HB noted concerns that the additional staff resources required for a referendum in the election period would reduce staff capacity for the commercial strategy. HB suggested postponing a referendum until September 2020.</p> <p>The EO noted the need to finalise the democracy review within the academic year to retain student engagement with the review, and complete by the end of the officer team's term.</p> <p>AS noted that the referendum would not have an impact on staff capacity for the commercial strategy, but may dilute communications around for the main Guild elections.</p> <p>TG noted that holding a referendum in the elections period may not allow students sufficient time to understand the proposals. The AEO noted that the timeframe would still allow a short student consultation on the new structure and specific engagement work with societies and student reps.</p> <p>JD noted the need to educate elections candidates on proposals and new structure. The AEO noted plans to deliver a briefing to candidates.</p> <p>WW noted the risk of holding the referendum at too short notice and the proposals subsequently being rejected. JT noted there was a possibility the referendum may not pass, but the proposed timeline was the best option.</p> <p>TG noted the high number of Your Ideas submissions not meeting quoracy. TG suggested Ideas which were close to quoracy could be adopted. AS noted that the quoracy level was restricted by the Bye-Laws.</p> <p>The Board noted the Your Ideas and Officer Question Time Report.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
7	<p>Management Accounts and 2019/2020 Reforecast</p>	<p>NB presented the Management Accounts and 2019/2020 Reforecast for the Board's approval.</p> <p>NB noted that the Guild was reporting net income of £66.8k for the first quarter, compared to budgeted net income of £71.4k, negative by £4.6k, or 6.4%.</p> <p>NB noted that while the net budget shortfall was minimal, the venues department had noted a £61k (29%) deficit compared to budget.. NB noted that the majority of this decrease has been mitigated by net savings across many other departments, most notably Facilities, JSV and Student Voice.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>NB noted that the majority of drop in sales had been due to a fall in sales for 'Fresher's Fest' welcome week club night packages, with sales at £107k, £95k below budget. NB noted that the Guild had seen declining sales for 'Fresher's Fest over the last two years, with sales declining by half.</p> <p>NB noted that significant savings had been generated due to staff cost savings arising from vacancies, which continued to enable the Guild to mitigate the declining commercial outlook.</p> <p>NB noted that the Hall Reps scheme had made significant savings compared to budget of £15.6k.</p> <p>NB noted that the original budget assumed the Guild's cash balances would decrease by £236k during 2019/20, which had now been adjusted by a further £54k to a net reduction of £290k during the year, leaving an expected cash balance of £2.334m at year end.</p> <p>NB noted that the provisional figures from the November accounts were broadly following the current forecast.</p> <p>RS noted that they were nervous of the Guild's reserves falling as low as expected, and suggested the Board should review progress on commercial services at the next meeting. SJ to include in agenda.</p> <p>NB noted that cash in bank was sustainable in the short to medium term, but reflected a declining position over the long term.</p> <p>HB suggested splitting out restricted student groups funds and unrestricted reserves clearly in the accounts. NB noted that roughly two-thirds of the cash in bank was Guild reserves, and the rest student group's cash deposits.</p> <p>HB suggested further discussions on future structures for the Guild. JT noted that discussions on possible changes had been ongoing for some time, and the Guild should be conscious of staff concerns. JT noted the need for prepared proposals for changes in place and ready to implement, and agreed to bring these to the next meeting.</p> <p>NB noted that in several years previously an upturn in commercial performance towards the end of the year had significantly improved the budget position. WW noted a changing commercial market in student's union commercial services with increasing competition.</p> <p>The Board approved the Management Accounts and 2019/2020 Reforecast.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted SJ</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted JT</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
8	Strategic Plan Update	EB presented the Strategic Plan Update for the Board's approval.	Noted

		<p>EB noted that the year two operating plan was now complete, however several Guild departments were experiencing challenges due to a high number of staff vacancies and staff turnover.</p> <p>EB noted that overall progress on strategic delivery had been steady but remained behind year one targets. However, these trends were in line with previous strategic delivery updates at this point. EB noted that it was not atypical for a new strategy to take time to embed, and an optimum momentum reached.</p> <p>EB noted that the Guild had returned to its previous annual survey model, which had received the highest ever response rate.</p> <p>EB noted that some elements of the strategy, in particular in relation to student engagement remained behind and had been moved to year three.</p> <p>JT noted that the Guild was currently trying to deliver in too many areas and staff capacity had been affected by staff turnover, resulting in difficulties in delivering on the strategy.</p> <p>HB noted that the changes required by the commercial strategy may necessitate a changing focus and structure for the Guild.</p> <p>HB suggested postponing the rebranding programme Guild until any changes had been completed. JD agreed that the rebranding should be postponed, and noted that the SUMS review highlighted the lower level of commercial revenue at the Guild compared to the peer group of Student's Unions. HB noted the need for honest conversations with the University about financial pressures and opportunities for new commercial revenues.</p> <p>RS noted that regardless of the outcome of discussions with the University in relation to the SUMS review, a rebalancing of the Guild's commercial operations would be necessary to increase revenues. RS further suggested reviewing the Guild's financial, strategic and organisation plans and structure at the next meeting. SJ to include on agenda.</p> <p>The Board approved the Strategic Plan Update.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted SJ/JT</p> <p>Approved</p>
9	Delegation of Authority	<p>JT presented the Delegation of Authority for the Board's approval.</p> <p>JT noted that minor changes had been proposed in line with staff changes and the closure of the Guild Lettings service.</p> <p>The Board approved the Delegation of Authority.</p> <p>AS, NB and SE left the room at 17:50.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p> <p>Noted</p>

10	MedSoc Transition	<p>JT presented the MedSoc Transition for the Board's Information, noting that Chairs action had been taken to approve the transition Between meetings, as previously agreed.</p> <p>TG noted several minor typographical errors.</p> <p>TG noted that the proposed MedSoc Constitution allowed the MedSoc Executive to make unilateral changes to their constitution. JT noted that the AEO would sit on the MedSoc Executive, and this matter could be considered in the next review of the constitution.</p> <p>The Board approved the MedSoc Transition Report.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
11	CEO Report	<p>JT presented the CEO Report for the Board's Information.</p> <p>JT noted that there were currently two vacancies on Finance committee, and the Guild was currently out for recruitment for an external trustee with a financial/commercial background.</p> <p>The Board noted the CEO Report.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
12	AOB	No Items noted.	Noted
13	Meeting Reflection	There were no items discussed during the meeting reflection.	Noted

The Chair closed the meeting at 18:00.

Signed

Date