

Trustee Board Meeting

Monday 9th January 2023,

Hybrid Meeting (The Exchange/Zoom) 15:20 – 17:20

Present

Robert Smeath, External Trustee **(RS)** **(Chair)**
 Acacia Matthews, Guild President **(President)**
 Vanessa Chigarero, Education Officer **(EO)**
 Florence Craddock, Sports Officer **(SO)**
 Tinajie (Alice) Liu, International Officer **(IO)**
 Reeve Isaacs-Smith, Welfare & Community Officer **(WCO)**
 Benjamin Lockley, Postgraduate Officer **(PGO)**
 Akram Nazir, Undergraduate Student Trustee **(AN)**
 Ian Pain, External Trustee **(IP)**
 Erica Conway, University Representative Trustee **(EC)**
 Alicia Wickert, Postgraduate Student Trustee **(AW)**
 Yinbo Yu, External Trustee **(YY)**
 Johnny Davis, External Trustee **(JD)**
 Emma Wedge, External Trustee **(EW)**
 Isobel Lawson, Activities & Employability Officer **(AEO)**
 Mitali Gohel, External Trustee **(MG)** (Online via Zoom)

In attendance

Jo Thomas, Chief Executive **(JT)**
 Nick Bailey, Head of Finance **(NB)**
 Adam Sheridan, Director of Engagement **(AS)**
 Emily Badger, Director of Operations **(EB)**
 Sam Jones, Executive Assistant **(SJ)** (note taker)
 Kassie Chana, Student Community Welfare Manager **(KC)** (Agenda Item 1 only)
 Claire Maitland, Student Community Welfare Manager **(CM)** (Agenda Item 1 only)
 Scott Dawson, Student Voice and Representation Manager **(SD)** (Agenda Items 1, 2, 9 and 16 only)

Apologies

Kantai Melau, International Student Trustee **(KM)**
 Serabi Opiyo, BAME Student Trustee **(SEO)**

The Chair welcomed all attendees and the meeting began at 15:30.

No	Item for Discussion	Notes	Action
1	Community Wardens Strategy Update	<p>CM and KC joined the meeting at 15:30</p> <p>CM and KC delivered a presentation on the Community Wardens Strategy Update.</p> <p>KC updated the Board on the structure of the Community Wardens team and the remit of each staff role. CM noted that the department operated across three schemes, employing more than 230 student staff and 10 core staff roles.</p> <p>KC updated on the role of the Community Wardens team in promoting sustainability and community cohesion in the local Selly Oak area, and</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>providing advice and support for students to secure safe housing while at University which was value for money.</p> <p>CM updated the Board on review and research work undertaken on the Community Wardens strategy over the last 12-months, including comparisons with schemes in operation at other UK institutions, analysis of outputs from the Guild's annual survey and consideration of new opportunities for recognition in the University's communications. CM noted further planned work to expand housing support for students, including through the Guild's 'Renter's Union' launched in 2021, and potential community organising support for students in the community.</p> <p>KC presented the revised Community Wardens engagement model, focusing on strengthening stakeholder links and raising the profile of the scheme in the local area, in line with the Guild's Strategic Plan.</p> <p>CM updated the Board on plans to revise and expand the Community Wardens' 'Don't Rush to Rent' scheme, and collaborate with the 'Hall Reps' scheme to support students making the transition between University accommodation and private sector housing in the community.</p> <p>KC updated on expanded services to help students settle into living alongside other resident's in the local area via direct outreach, reduce issues with waste through more student education and continue collaboration with West Midlands Police and the Campus Police team to prevent avoidable crime including the continued promotion of safety. CM updated on plans to continue supporting students in crisis through the 'Community Pantry' scheme and deliver more sustainability projects including the 'Pass It On' scheme as students between accommodation.</p> <p>CM noted KPI's for future year's in the Guild's Strategic Plan for the scheme including growing student and community engagement, transitioning to use of MSL for data tracking and other opportunities for digitising services.</p> <p>CM noted that future progress on the Community Wardens' Scheme would be shared presented to Engagement Committee.</p> <p>JD asked about the scheme's 'Get Settled' stage of the scheme engagement cycle, suggesting that the wording of the branding could be revised. CM/KC to review.</p> <p>JD asked about the Guild's engagement with non-students in the local area. KC noted the aim to avoid negative perceptions of students in the community and promote a more positive view of students via a number of new community service projects. JD noted the importance of the Scheme's aim's contributing to the University's overall aims for the community. RS noted the importance of the Guild's taking the lead on engagement with the local community, in the absence of any significant University activity.</p> <p>EW noted the value of the scheme taking a proactive, positive stance on students becoming considerate citizens of the community. EW asked about the funding model for the scheme going forwards.</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>CM/KC</p> <p>Noted</p>
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		<p>The WCO noted the hard work of KC/CM and the Community Welfare team to deliver the revised strategy.</p> <p>The Board approved the Community Wardens Strategy Update.</p> <p>CM and KC left the meeting at 16:00.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
2	Minutes of Previous Meeting (31.10.22)	<p>The Chair presented the minutes of the previous meeting, dated the 31st October 2022, for the Board's approval.</p> <p>The Board approved the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
3	Matters Arising	<p>The Chair presented the Trustee Board Action Tracker, for the Board's information.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the one outstanding item on the action's tracker had been completed.</p> <p>The Trustee Board noted the Trustee Board Action Tracker.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
4	Finance Committee Minutes (15.12.22)	<p>The President presented the Finance Committee Minutes, dated the 15th December 2022 for the Board's Approval.</p> <p>The Board approved the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
5	HR Committee Minutes (10.11.22)	<p>The WCO presented the HR Committee Minutes, dated the 10th November 2022, for the Committee's Approval.</p> <p>The WCO noted detailed discussions at the most recent HR Committee meeting regarding staffing levels and recruitment to the HR and Venues teams.</p> <p>The Chair suggested that the Board ask HR Committee to review the recruitment levels in the Venues and HR departments, and report back to the Board at a future meeting. SJ to include on agenda.</p> <p>The Board approved the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>SJ</p> <p>Approved</p>
6	CEO Report	<p>JT presented the CEO Report, for the Board's Information.</p> <p>JT noted significant internal movement of staff within the organisation, noting that this was positive to see and reflected well on the Guild's wellbeing and staff support work.</p> <p>JT updated the Board on recent developments with planned industrial action by the UCU trade union, noting that an assessment and marking boycott by union members was now a significant possibility and could lead to delays in student's graduating.</p> <p>JT updated the Board on continuing developments with National Union of Students (NUS) in relation to an independent report on Anti-Semitism</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>within the organisation, which was due to be published shortly. EW asked about the Guild's plans to review the findings and act. The President noted the importance discussing the outcomes with Jewish and Muslim students and groups at the University, and carefully reviewing any next steps. EW asked about the appetite in the SU sector for proposing reforms of the NUS. JT updated the Board on a recent meeting between NUS and a number of SU Chief Executives which had been very open and considered, including discussions about 'digital footprints' for future incoming Officers. The President noted that the Officer team had recently met with NUS's Vice-President for Higher Education, which was currently acting chair of the NUS UK Board, which had increased the confidence of the Officer Team the NUS's ambition to action any required changes. The PGO noted their concern about the scale of reform required and the political will within the NUS to do so.</p> <p>EC requested the rationale for the Guild's continued membership of the NUS at a future Board meeting. RS noted the value of reviewing the reputation, and value for money of the Guild's continued membership of NUS. EW noted the importance of assessing the value for money and whether the NUS remained the best membership organisation to affiliate to. SJ to include on the agenda.</p> <p>YY asked about the process for reviewing the Guild's membership of NUS. JT noted that a change to the Guild's current membership of NUS would be required to be put to the Guild's membership in a referendum.</p> <p>JT noted that in the Guild's recent staff survey, 89% of staff had responded that they felt proud to work for the organisation. EC noted that the level of positive staff engagement was stunning and reflected very positively on the organisation.</p> <p>The Board noted the CEO Report.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>SJ</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
7	Management Accounts	<p>NB presented the Management Accounts, for the Board's Approval.</p> <p>NB noted that the Management Accounts were reporting a small £2k negative variance as compared to Forecast 1 of the annual budget which had been discussed at the Board meeting in October. NB noted that, since the accounts had been completed, the Guild had since recorded a positive uplift of £35k compared to budget, resulting in a net contribution to the Guild's free unrestricted reserved of circa £33k.</p> <p>The Board approved the Management Accounts.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
8	External Memberships	<p>AS presented the External Memberships paper, for the Board's approval.</p> <p>AS noted that Guild had for many years, provided for non-students to register with the Guild as 'External Members', to benefit from some of the Guild's services and join as members of student groups.</p> <p>AS noted that the large majority of external members were understood to join in order to participate in student group activity, rather than make</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>use of the Guild’s services directly. AS noted that, as non-students, the Guild did not have recourse to the same disciplinary actions for external members as it did for registered students through working with the University’s Student Conduct processes. AS noted that over the last 12-months, several significant conduct incidents had been recorded involving Guild registered external members.</p> <p>The President noted that, in comparison to other Students’ Unions, many did not offer external membership, and of those that did, almost all charged a significant fee for annual membership. The President noted that the Guild’s offer of external membership, free of charge to anyone, was particularly generous. AS noted that following the introduction of a £25 charge for external membership annually during the 2021/22 academic year, an All Student Vote mandate had removed charges for external membership, which the Guild was currently mandated to continue.</p> <p>AS noted the resource implications of the Guild supporting non-students to take part in social activities free of charge. The President noted possible ‘ultra-vires’ implications for the Guild continuing to provide services free of charge to large numbers of non-students, with the Guild at risk of operating outside its charitable objectives.</p> <p>The President noted several options available to the Board, including a recommendation to close for new applications for external membership, pending a review of the provisions for membership in the Guild’s Bye-laws.</p> <p>JD noted possible negative impacts on the engagement for alumni from the withdrawal of external membership. RS suggested working with the University’s Development & Alumni relations team (DARO) to find alternative ways for alumni to engagement with student groups outside of the external memberships model. AS noted the Guild’s existing relationship with DARO which would be built upon.</p> <p>The WCO noted a risk of the loss of significant engagement from alumni who had provided expertise to groups. AS noted that a small number of specialist groups with a small membership. YY noted the importance of communicating clearly with acutely affected societies and mitigating any negative effects.</p> <p>The PGO noted the importance of clearly communicating safeguarding and conduct concerns as the main reason behind any withdrawal of external memberships.</p> <p>The Board discussed the possibility of continuing to offer a form of continuing membership for recent graduates of the University of Birmingham.</p> <p>RS suggested reviewing an implementation plan on the withdrawal of external membership at the March Board Meeting. AS to oversee work on the withdrawal of external membership.</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>AS</p>
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		The Board approved the External Memberships paper, agreeing to progress with option 2 as outlined in the paper.	Approved
9	TEF Student Submission	<p>Note: Agenda Item 9 was taken out of order, between Agenda Items 1 and 2.</p> <p>The EO and SD presented the TEF Student Submission, for the Board's Information.</p> <p>SD provided the Board with context on the role of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), a national framework which contributed to University accreditation with the Office for Students and the level of tuition fee funding that University's were able to charge. SD noted that, in parallel to the University, the Guild had prepared a student submission to the TEF with data and feedback collected via the Student Rep System and prepared by the Officer Team.</p> <p>SD noted the key outputs from the Guild's TEF Student Submission, noting areas of focus on teaching and learning provision, academic support, employability & skills development, and specific support for students with disabilities.</p> <p>The EO noted that the Guild's submission would be shared and discussed with the University, but would remain independent.</p> <p>The Board noted the TEF Student Submission.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
10	Strategy KPI's & Annual Survey	<p>EB presented the Strategy KPI's & Annual Survey, for the Board's Information.</p> <p>EB noted that the detailed feedback from the Board's Away Day discussions captured earlier that day, would be fed back into the Guild's ongoing work on the strategic plan EB noted planned work to update the Strategic Operating Plan and present to the March Trustee Board meeting following detailed discussions with the Guild's Management Team and Engagement Committee, and following the recent results from the Annual Survey</p> <p>JD asked about the possibility I for repeating the Guild's Survey twice annually, in March and November. EB noted the Guild's previous model of pulse surveys on a more regular basis and to generate more regular outputs. RS noted the importance of engaging the Officer Team with the question setting ahead of future surveys. EB to review and prepare a long term Research plan.</p> <p>The Board noted the Strategy KPI's & Annual Survey.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>EB</p> <p>Noted</p>
11	Good Governance Update	<p>AK presented the Good Governance Update, for the Board's Approval.</p> <p>AK noted that, since the September Board meeting, the Guild's Good Governance Task & Finish Group had met three times to review the output's and 'lowlights' from the Board and Committee Effectiveness surveys conducted in July 2022.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>AK noted a key focus on the Board's EDI demographics data, which had steadily been improving in diversity over the last two years, mapped against the demographics of enrolled students at UoB. AK noted recommended best practice in the Charity Governance Code on increasing diversity in charity governance structures, noting that the group had rejected hard diversity targets for Board recruitment, proposing a range of other recommendations as outlined in the paper, including reviewing EDI data in the Board's sub-committees. AK noted that the overall demographics of the Board were significantly affected by the elected Officer team, who changed annually.</p> <p>AK noted an upcoming tri-lateral governance review, planned in collaboration with Leeds and Kent SU's, including a revised Board effectiveness survey which would shortly be live for Trustees to complete.</p> <p>AK updated the Board on other work of the group, including revised paper guidelines and templates, additional information and training planned for incoming student trustees, and new, more regular communications to the Guild's independent committee members of appropriate skills and expertise.</p> <p>The AEO noted that all EDI information sections of the survey should include a 'prefer not to say' option. SJ noted that the planned question set for the upcoming tri-lateral board effectiveness survey included an updated EDI question set. SJ to circulate question set to AEO.</p> <p>The Board approved the Good Governance Update.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>SJ</p> <p>Noted</p>
12	Officer Action Plans	<p>The President presented the Officer's Action Plans, for the Board's Information.</p> <p>The Action Plans were taken as read. The Officer Team highlights from Semester One, including a new sexual consent course, Direct Debit payments for student gym memberships, the 'Pass It On' homeware re-use scheme for students in accommodation, the re-launch of Postgraduate Society and the PG buddy scheme, Student Rep promotion and branding, successful 'Clothes Swap' events, and three 'Language Café' events.</p> <p>RS noted the continuing hard work of the Officer Team on their ambitious action plans.</p> <p>The Board noted the Officer's Action plans.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
13	Student Staff Living Wage	<p>Note: This agenda item was taken out of order, with Items 12 and 13 reversed.</p> <p>The PGO presented the Student Staff Living Wage paper, for the Board's Approval.</p> <p>The PGO noted that their proposal to mandate the Guild to move forward with adopting the Real Living Wage for student staff had been approved at the All Student Vote. The PGO noted the proposal for the</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>Guild to move towards the Real Living Wage foundation pay levels for student staff over the next five years, regularly reviewed by Finance Committee and reported to the Board annually.</p> <p>EC noted that Real Living Wage foundation accreditation had been difficult for other organisations to meet, particularly in relation to the monitoring of supply chains.</p> <p>EW noted the importance of moving ahead with the Real Living Wage for core staff as well as student staff. JT noted that some core staff pay-grades may be affected by the change.</p> <p>EC suggested passing the review to both HR and Finance Committee's to review. SJ to include on future agendas.</p> <p>JT noted that the move towards the Real Living Wage would contribute to a planned staff pay review in the coming weeks. NB noted that financial planning for staff pay was currently underway, and changes to student staff pay in-relation to the Real Living Wage would be included in the wider pay review.</p> <p>The Board approved the Student Staff Living Wage paper, agreeing to review the proposal in more detail at the HR & Finance Committee meetings.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>SJ</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
14	Democracy Operations Update	<p>Note: Agenda Item 14 was taken out of order, between Agenda Items 1 and 2.</p> <p>SD presented the Democracy Operations Update, for the Board's Information.</p> <p>The paper was taken as read, with no discussions.</p> <p>SD left the meeting at 16:05.</p> <p>The Board noted the Democracy Operations Update.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
15	Health & Safety Policy	<p>EB presented the Health & Safety Policy, for the Board's Approval.</p> <p>EB updated the Board on a planned Safety Review over the coming weeks.</p> <p>The Board approved the Health & Safety Policy, pending further changes at the May Board Meeting.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
16	AOB (Any Other Business)	<p>RS noted the Board's continuing thanks to the Guild's Independent Committee Members for their contribution to the organisation.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
17	Meeting Reflection	<p>No items noted.</p>	<p>Noted</p>

The Chair closed the meeting at 17:20.

Date of Next Meeting: **Monday 6th March 2023, 18:00 – 20:00 in the Mandela Room.**

If you have any queries, please e-mail s.jones@guild.bham.ac.uk