

Trustee Board Minutes

From meeting held on Monday 10th May 2021
Online Meeting (Zoom)

Present

Robert Smeath, External Trustee **(RS)** (Chair)
Tobiloba Adeyemi, President **(President)** (Vice-chair)
Rebecca Cutler, Postgraduate Officer **(PGO)**
Jules Singh, Education Officer **(EO)**
Amie Raphael, Activities and Employability Officer **(AEO)**
Charlotte Minter, Welfare and Community Officer **(WCO)**
Rob Hegarty, Sports Officer **(SO)** (Arrived at 18:40)
Wei-Lun Chen, International Officer **(IO)**
Maya Davey, Student Trustee **(MD)**
Sarah Aray, International Student Trustee **(SA)**
Tom Goodman, Student Trustee (Postgraduate) **(TG)**
Rosa Alaluf, Student Trustee **(RA)**
Johnny Davis, External Trustee **(JD)**
Wyn Williams, External Trustee **(WW)**
Ian Pain, External Trustee **(IP)**
Emma Wedge, External Trustee **(EW)**
Erica Conway, University Representative Trustee **(EC)**
Henrietta Brealey, External Trustee **(HB)**

In attendance

Jo Thomas, Chief Executive **(JT)**
Nick Bailey, Head of Finance **(NB)** (Agenda Items 1 – 7 only)
Lucy Gill, Student Voice & Representation Manager **(LG)** (Agenda items 8 & 9 only)
Linzi Sandbrook, Communications & Marketing Manager **(LS)** (Agenda Item 10 only)
Emily Badger, Director of Operations **(EB)** (Agenda Items 10 & 11 only)
Sam Jones, Interim Executive Assistant **(SJ)** (note taker)

Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone, and the meeting commenced at 18:00

No	ITEM FOR DISCUSSION	NOTES	ACTION
1a	Minutes of last meeting (11.01.21)	<p>The Chair presented the Trustee Board minutes, dated 1st March 2021 for the Board's approval.</p> <p>EC noted her conflict as University of Birmingham Finance Director in relation to discussions on the Guild's funding proposals to the University. SJ to update previous minutes</p> <p>The Board approved the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>SJ</p> <p>Approved</p>
1b	Minutes of Extraordinary Trustee Board Meeting	<p>The Chair presented the minutes of the Trustee Board Extraordinary Meeting, dated 12th April 2021 for the Board's approval.</p>	<p>Noted</p>

	(12.04.21)	<p>SJ noted that the Board had approved the UEB paper by email resolution, by majority.</p> <p>EC noted her conflict as University of Birmingham Finance in relation to discussions on the Guild's funding proposals to the University.</p> <p>The Board approved the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
2	Matters Arising	<p>The Chair noted one action outstanding from the previous meeting.</p> <p>NB updated the Board in relation to an outstanding action to determine the Guild's eligibility to access the furlough scheme. NB noted that the Guild, along with the rest of the Students' Union sector had been accessing the furlough scheme based on published advice to Student's Unions by NUS.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
3	HR Committee Minutes (30.04.21)	<p>The WCO presented the HR Committee Minutes, dated 30th April 2021 for the Board's approval.</p> <p>The WCO noted discussions at HR committee on COVID-19 lateral flow testing for staff and students. EC noted that the University was currently encouraging staff to take up free COVID-19 lateral flow testing, and that it was not possible to enforce testing of staff under current regulations.</p> <p>The Board approved the HR Committee Minutes.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
4	Finance Committee Minutes (27.04.21)	<p>The President presented the Finance Committee Minutes, dated 27th April 2021 for the Board's approval.</p> <p>RS noted that the Guild's budget approval timeline had changed since the last Board meeting due to a request from the University for the Guild to present a 12-month budget proposal rather than the previously planned 5-year request.</p> <p>The Board approved the Finance Committee Minutes.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
5	Officer Action Plans	<p>The Officer Team presented the Action Plans for the Board's Information.</p> <p>The President noted that the Officer team had recently met for an away day to plan manifesto activity for the rest of their time in office.</p> <p>The President noted ongoing work to progress the Guild's Black Voices Campaign within the Guild's democratic processes, for continuation for future years. The President noted plans to present a report on the progress of the campaign to the July Board meeting. The President noted further planned outreach and events for the campaign as COVID-19 restrictions eased.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>The AEO noted ongoing work on Student Group Committee inductions and training, the inclusive digital plan, the Guild's transparency survey, refreshed handover documents and committee handbooks, and First Aid training funding. The AEO noted that the Guild's Collaboration Forum for societies had been established, as well as society-led club nights as COVID restrictions eased.</p> <p>The EO noted ongoing work on expanding capacity in campus study space, which had been an issue due to COVID-19 and social distancing requirements. The EO noted live Q&A's held with college Directors of Education, and additional support established for students financially via the COVID response fund. The EO noted ongoing work on support for migrant students in collaboration with the University.</p> <p>The IO noted ongoing work to support international students starting later in the year due to travel restrictions, the University EDI work streams on international student engagement, and International Employability in collaboration with Careers Network. The IO noted plans for in-person events during the summer period.</p> <p>The PGO noted collaboration with new appointees in the University's senior team with portfolios covering Postgraduate students. The PGO noted ongoing work to update the Guild's signposting for Postgraduate students to support services via the Guild website. The PGO noted that data from the postgraduate 'Speak Week' survey had now been shared with the University for review. The PGO noted plans for a summer events series for Postgraduates, hosted with the Westmere school.</p> <p>The WCO noted ongoing work to expand the reach of the 'Not On' campaign, in light of national issues around violence against women. The WCO noted a stronger working relationships on the campaign with the University, supported by the Guild's Liberation Officers. The WCO noted planning for sexual consent education for future student cohorts in campus accommodation. The WCO noted the University's transition to an external counselling service, offering 24/7 support and provisions for other languages. The WCO noted ongoing work to increase diversity in the Guild's student staff team, and sign post students to the University's hardship fund.</p> <p>The Board noted the Officer Action Plans.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
6	Management Accounts	<p>NB presented the March 2021 Management Accounts for the Board's Approval.</p> <p>NB noted an updated net income of £163.1k, a positive variance of £89.4k compared to forecast, largely due to significant savings made due to the closure of the building between January and April 2021, and the Guild's continued accessing of the Job retention (furlough) scheme during this period.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>NB noted significant savings on Facilities and Venues teams' salaries due to the continued utilisation of the furlough scheme. NB noted additional savings across all departments due to reductions in planned in-person activity, most significantly in the Student Voice team due to the holding of the Officer elections online.</p> <p>NB noted that the Guild's total in-year income from furlough scheme claims now stood at £273.4k, a positive variance of £12.1k compared to the forecast.</p> <p>NB noted that the Guild's cash balance at the end of March stood at £2.412m, slightly reduced from £2.529m in July 2020.</p> <p>The SO arrived at 18:40.</p> <p>NB noted that £86k of the positive £89k variance would significantly help to reduce the last year-end forecast completed reporting negative £170k. It was anticipated that this could be reduced further from surpluses generated from commercial events planned for the summer, moving the Guild closer to a break-even position.</p> <p>RS noted the benefit of reducing the Guild's budgeted net expenditure position as much as possible. RS noted that the Guild's expected commercial revenues during the summer period would be dependent on COVID-19 restrictions easing. NB noted that the Guild's current commercial operations were sufficient to cover only student staffing costs in the Venues team, however additional revenues were expected for larger commercial events after the 21st June 2021. JT noted continued growth of licenced trade outdoors, as well as planned reopening indoors for Joes bar from the 17th May.</p> <p>NB noted that the Guild's first three planned licenced events in June had sold out quickly and significant revenues were expected. NB noted that these events required minimal outlay to host beyond salaried staff hours. The SO noted significant over-demand for 'sports night' club nights.</p> <p>JT noted a positive working relationship with University Campus Services to deliver commercial services as student footfall on campus picked up during the summer graduation period.</p> <p>EW asked about the Guild's communications to the wider Selly Oak community around the reopening of large commercial events. JT noted that communications around these events were under review and were being discussed with the University.</p> <p>The Board approved the Management Accounts.</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</p> <p>Noted</p>
7	University Funding Request Update	JT presented the University Funding Request Update for the Board's Information.	Noted

		<p>EC noted their conflict of interest as the University of Birmingham Finance Director.</p> <p>JT updated the Board on recent developments with the Guild's funding request to the University since the Extraordinary Trustee Board meeting on the 12th of April. JT noted that since that meeting the Guild had been asked to submit a one-year budget application instead of the expected five year budget proposal, due to the ongoing Commercial and Campus Life reviews, which the University viewed as necessary to resolve prior to a longer-term funding settlement.</p> <p>JT noted ongoing work to finalise a one-year budget proposal. NB noted several options discussed by the Guild's Senior Management Team for budget proposals to the University. NB noted the request to develop a range of options for budget proposals and noted that the University had asked for a 'mission critical' budget proposal for the next 12-months.</p> <p>NB noted a planned extraordinary Finance Committee meeting scheduled for Monday 24th May to approve the Guild's budget proposal.</p> <p>RS noted the importance of retaining previous work on the Guild's five-year financial plan. JD noted the Guild's difficult position and suggested seeking a 'no detriment' budget settlement with the University, protecting core services. JD noted that the Guild should seek a 'holding' budget for the next 12 months as preferable to a 'mission critical' budget. WW note that the Guild's previous planned budget ask had already sought to retain current service levels, and that it would be difficult to build back in the future.</p> <p>EW noted the Guild's planned ambitious five-year KPI's, and the detriment to the student experience of a reduced budget and service losses.</p> <p>JT noted that of the Guild's strategic first year budget proposal, £95k of the total £615k was an enabler for UoB IT Services to progress the Guild's IT transition if approved.</p> <p>JT updated the Board on the University's ongoing commercial review together with Campus Services via the Russell Partnership. JT noted that the figures presented had been ambitious, and the Guild was developing a range of other proposal for further consideration. JT noted that it had been requested that the commercial review should be concluded by December 2021.</p> <p>EC noted that the University continued to plan and aim for a five-year budget settlement for the Guild, from 2022/23.</p> <p>EW asked about the Guild's planned budget position for the end-of-year. RS noted their reluctance to plan for a deficit budget. RS noted the importance of resolving the Guild's budget difficulties in the current discussions. TG noted the importance of making the Guild's 'baseline' ask clear and non-negotiable. EW noted the</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</p>
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		<p>possibility of deferring planned capital investment for 12-months to reduce the top-line budget proposal.</p> <p>The PGO noted the impact of uncertainty on the organisation arising from a shorter-term budget scenario. The PGO noted the value of communicating the Guild's financial plans clearly to staff. RS noted the increased impact of budget uncertainty on the Guild as a smaller organisation.</p> <p>RS noted that Trustees were welcome to attend the planned Extraordinary Finance Committee meeting on the 24th May 2021.</p> <p>The Board agreed to delegate the approval of the Guild's revised financial proposal to Finance Committee.</p> <p>The Committee noted the University Funding Request Update.</p> <p>NB left the meeting at 19:15.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
8	Byelaw Amendments	<p>LG presented the amendments to the Guild's Byelaws, for the Board's approval.</p> <p>LG updated the Board on a number of amendments to the Guild's Byelaws, including changes to Byelaw 5 following a review of one year of operation of the revised Member's Democratic Process. LG noted amendments to Byelaw 10 in relation to the Officer disciplinary process, and minor amendments to Byelaw 6 in relation to the processes of 'Decision Making Committees'.</p> <p>LG noted that a number of additional minor amendments had been recently received from the University's legal services team which were valuable and would be responded to shortly. LG noted that further minor amendments may be approved by Chair's action.</p> <p>EC noted difficulties earlier in the year with the interpretation of the outcome of a 'Referendum'. JT noted that the provisions for 'Referendums' had been amended in the Byelaws to make outcomes clearer in future.</p> <p>The Board approved the Byelaw Amendments. The Board approved Chair's action for further minor amendments to the Byelaws.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
9a	Officer Elections 2021 Report	<p>LG presented the Officer Elections 2021 Report 2021 for the Board's information.</p> <p>LG noted that due to COVID-19 the Guild's main Officer Elections had been held fully online due to the national COVID-19 lockdown in February 2021.</p> <p>LG noted that 89 candidate applications had been received, however the Guild had seen a drop-out rate of candidates prior to the start of campaigning, with 60 candidates on the final</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>ballot. LG noted survey results suggesting the mental health impact of COVID-19 as a factor in lower retention rates.</p> <p>LG noted a total of 6228 student voters, casting 60,935 individual votes down from 9,070 cotes in 2020. LG noted that a similar trend had been seen across the sector, with candidates at all Student's Unions unable to undertake face-to-face campaigning activity.</p> <p>LG noted significant additional support from the University communications teams and individual colleges which had been very valuable. LG noted that MDS students had recorded the highest turnout by college for the first time, while engagement from Postgraduate and International students had decreased.</p> <p>LG noted ongoing work to review which elements to retain in an online format for future years, as well as new ways to engage with remote learning students. EW noted the benefit of retaining a 'hybrid' model for future activity in strengthening engagement hard-to-reach groups.</p> <p>LG noted that the Guild had received one complaint on the elections results, which had not been upheld.</p> <p>EW asked about controls on candidates breaching budget limits. LG noted one candidate had significantly breached their budget limit, however no further action had been taken by the returning officer as the breach had not impacted the election result.</p> <p>EC noted that the level of turnout had been very positive considering the difficulties of holding an election during the COVID-19 lockdown. EC asked about the number of voting rounds reached in each election. LG noted increased promotion of the Guild's use of the Single-Transferable Vote system, which had seen more voters rank additional candidates than in previous years.</p> <p>IO noted the value of additional guidelines on online campaigning for future years.</p> <p>RA noted the importance of wellbeing support for candidates during online campaigning. RA noted issues with abuse faced by candidates online. RA noted the importance of supporting candidates in future elections facing wellbeing issues and online harassment.</p> <p>JT noted ongoing discussions with the University over online content on social media sites. LG noted ongoing discussions on safeguarding for election candidates. The WCO noted ongoing discussions with Guild Liberation Officers and Associations regarding online abuse. The PGO noted wider issues with online abuse of the Officer team.</p> <p>RS suggested including a further update to a future Board meeting.</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</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>SJ</p>
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		<p>The Board noted the Officer Elections 2021 Report.</p> <p>TG left the meeting at 19:40</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
9b	Democracy Update	<p>LG presented the Democracy Update for the Board's information.</p> <p>LG updated the Board on recent progress in the Guild's democratic processes. LG noted an ongoing review of the Guild's democratic structures, with planned student focus groups on engagement in the democratic structures. The President noted ongoing work on language use in the Guild's democratic structures, including translation of materials.</p> <p>LG noted that a report on the outcomes of the Democracy Review would be presented to the July Trustee Board meeting.</p> <p>The Board noted the Democracy Update.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
10	Communications Strategy & Brand Update	<p>EB delivered a presentation on the Guild's Communications Strategy and Branding for the Board's approval.</p> <p>EB noted that the 1st part of the Guild's revised communications strategy had been presented to the Board in May 2019 following extensive research which had highlighted the need for a refreshed communication strategy and brand voice for the Guild.</p> <p>LS updated the Board on planned next steps for the Guild's Communication Strategy, including a new statement of purpose and objectives for the Guild.</p> <p>LS delivered a presentation to the Board, noting the following points from the Communications Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong focus on Officer-led communications. • A Communications Calendar for use by the wider organisation. • A refreshed brand identify and Guild 'voice'. • A simplified website layout. <p>LS noted plans for a stronger working relationship with the University's communications team moving forwards.</p> <p>IP asked about the Guild's data sharing with the University. EB noted that the Guild had a full data sharing agreement with the University.</p> <p>IP asked about the Guild's plans for 'Guerrilla' marketing. LS noted possibilities to highlight the Guild's work via marketing across campus. IP noted the value of reviewing successful commercial marketing from other providers on campus.</p> <p>IP asked about the Guild's requirements for CRM resource. EB noted plans to utilise the Guild's existing CRM platform to deliver the strategy.</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>RS noted the importance of communicating Officer Team 'wins' and achievements more effectively throughout their time in office. RS noted the importance of handovers with the incoming Officer Team for understanding of how to access the Guild's communication resources.</p> <p>The Board approved the Communications Strategy & Brand Update.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
11	Annual Student Research 2021	<p>EB presented the Annual Student Research 2021 for the Board's information.</p> <p>EB updated the Board on the results on the recent annual student research survey, measuring against the Guild's strategic key performance indicators (KPI's). EB noted gradual declines in the Guild overall KPI's, however a marked improvement in service use satisfaction compared to previous years.</p> <p>EB noted ongoing work to breakdown the results by demographic, to understand variances between student cohorts. EB noted that that final results would be shared with both the management and officer teams, with a view to developing tangible actions which can be implemented from the results.</p> <p>The Board noted the Annual Student Research 2021 Update.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
12	Governance Update	<p>JT presented the Governance Update for the Board's Information.</p> <p>JT updated the Board on the Guild's work on the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion elements of the newly reformed Charity Governance Code. JT noted that plans for a wider discussion on EDI and the next steps for the Guild in implementing the new elements of the Code at the July Trustee Board away day.</p> <p>The Board noted the Governance Update.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
13	CEO Report	<p>JT presented the CEO Report for the Board's Information.</p> <p>The Board noted the CEO Report.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
11	AOB	<p>JT noted that the Guild had been recognised as one of the top 100 small companies to work for in the UK in the 'Times 100 Best Companies to work for' competition, following the recent staff engagement survey. JT noted that the Guild would receive its final place in the Time 100 rankings over the summer.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
12	Meeting Reflection	<p>No items noted.</p>	<p>Noted</p>

The Chair closed the meeting at 20:00.

Signed

Date