

Trustee Board Meeting

Monday 8th September 2025, 15:00– 17:35
Mandela Room, Guild of Students

Present

Ruth Pipkin, External Trustee (**RP**) (Chair)
 Antonia Listrat, Guild President (**President**)
 Jacob Dyke, Education Officer (**EO**)
 Abhijeet Patel, Sports Officer (**SO**)
 Simrah Inamdar, International Officer (**IO**)
 Emeline Brown, Activities & Employability Officer (**AEO**)
 Abby Kenrick, Welfare & Community Officer (**WCO**)
 Aliasgar Gandhi, Postgraduate Officer (**PGO**)
 Dionne Enam Williams, Undergraduate Student Trustee (**DW**)
 Helen Stone, External Trustee (**HS**)
 Emma Wedge, External Trustee (**EW**)
 Penelope Hackett, External Trustee (**PH**)
 Mikey Brown, Postgraduate Student Trustee (**MB**)
 Mitali Gohel, External Trustee (**MG**)
 Simone Hawley, BAME Student Trustee (**SH**)
 Mark Price, External Trustee (**MP**)
 Umar Sabir, Undergraduate Student Trustee (**US**)

In attendance

Jo Thomas, Chief Executive (**JT**)
 Adam Sheridan, Director of Engagement (**AS**)
 Nick Bailey, Director of Finance & Systems (**NB**)
 James Lindsay, Director of Community & Representation (**JL**)
 Emily Badger, Director of Operations (**EB**)
 Elliott Packham, Systems Manager (**EP**) Agenda Item 7 only
 Jane Baston, Student Voice & Representation Manager (**JB**) Agenda Item 7 only
 Kassie Chana, Community, Advice & Support Manager (**KC**) Agenda Item 8 only
 Mandeep Kooner, Complaints & Incidents Coordinator (**MK**) (note taker)

Apologies

Harshitha Naidu, International Student Trustee (**HN**)
 Neil Hanley, University Representative Trustee (**NH**)

The Chair welcomed all attendees and introduced the new Trustees. The meeting began at 15:10.

No	Item for Discussion	Notes	Action
1	Minutes of Previous Meeting (07.07.25)	The Chair presented the minutes of the previous meeting, dated 7 th July 2025, for the Board's approval. The Board approved the Trustee Board minutes.	Noted Approved
2a	Matters Arising	The Chair presented the Action Tracker for the Board's information. The Chair noted all actions have been completed.	Noted Noted

		<p>The Chair noted ongoing discussions with the President in relation to the 'Open Letter' received by the Guild.</p> <p>The Board noted the Action Tracker.</p>	Noted
2b	Declarations of Interest	<p>The Chair asked Trustees to declare any possible conflict of interests relating to the items on the meeting's agenda.</p> <p>No conflicts of interests were declared.</p>	Noted
2c	Administration of Committees	<p>The Chair noted reference made in the CEO Report to the administration of committees.</p>	Noted
		<p>JT presented the CEO Report for the Board's information.</p> <p>JT reminded Trustees to respond to the email in respect of declaring any conflict-of-interest declarations and requested all to respond by the deadline.</p> <p>JT noted the recruitment of new Trustees to the Board following Appointments Panel in July including a new University nominated Trustee.</p> <p>JT that there will be a vacancy for Audit & Risk Committee shortly due to an independent colleague completing their term of 6 years. JT requested if any Trustees have any suggestions for a new Committee member with relevant experience to let them know.</p> <p>JT noted planning for Welcome Week is well underway and is further ahead than previous years.</p> <p>JT noted the 4-year Strategy and noted Teams are preparing the departmental plans aligning with the Officer plans.</p>	Noted
3	CEO Report	<p>JT noted the Office for Students have released new Guidance on Freedom of Speech which the University are considering. JT noted the Guild are engaging regularly with colleagues to ensure our processes are both effective in upholding legal duties whilst also not overly onerous for students and student groups.</p> <p>JT noted the ongoing Israel / Palestine conflict. JT noted the campaign group known as #NotMyNUS who circulated a letter to NUS calling for them to take action on a range of demands. JT noted further information was contained within their report.</p> <p>JT noted a letter received from the Charity Commission received in July. JT noted the background context to the letter was unclear and further advice was sought from the Charity Commission.</p> <p>JT noted the Guild reached out to other Students' Unions who confirmed they had not been in receipt of a similar letter.</p> <p>JT noted some Students' Unions recognise groups internally as part of their Students' Union, whilst others treat them separately.</p>	Noted
			Noted

		<p>EW asked what the difference of groups is being affiliated with or not with the Guild and JT confirmed that groups affiliated with the Guild and University are able to use this in their group name. NB noted we have an advice letter from the Lawyers which we can share with Trustees.</p> <p>The President asked to for it to be made clear when reviewing the Policy regarding freedom of expression and students not being limited in their views.</p> <p>JT noted the Charity Commission received a complaint which resulted in the Guild receiving the letter and noted that other Students' Unions have been approached on similar, but slightly different matters.</p> <p>MP noted the recent occupation of the Guild. MP asked if this would have a positive or negative impact on the Guild.</p> <p>The AEO noted on behalf of other Students' Unions at Lead & Change the feedback was very positive about the Guild, and that the Lead & Change event continued at the Vale. The AEO further noted other Officers and Chief Executive's praised the Guild for all of their hard work and support.</p> <p>The IO noted the occupation was about the NUS and not the Guild directly.</p> <p>The Board noted the CEO report.</p>	NB
4	Officer Action Plans	<p>The Chair noted that the Officers had presented their Action Plans for 2025/26 for the Boards information as part of the Away Day.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Officer Team and noted it was good to see their interests and priorities for the year ahead.</p> <p>MG noted the Guild's Strategic Plan and how the Officers Plans could be tracked in the same way to understand the detailed data.</p> <p>MP noted the value in the link between the Strategic Plan and the Officer Plans.</p> <p>MB noted that it will be interesting when hearing about the Strategy and the impact on the Officer Plans, noting it would be a good to track this over the coming years.</p> <p>The Board noted the Officer Action Plans.</p>	Noted
5	Strategy Update - Year 4 (2025/26)	<p>EB presented the Strategy Update Year 4 (2025/26) for the Boards approval.</p> <p>EB noted amendments to some KPIs and consolidation, reordering and movement of some sections, and further noted the four additional metrics and advised an update will be provided in January 2026 which will include the Guild and University KPI's.</p>	Noted

		<p>EB noted the Internal Audit asked about validity of the metrics and advised that any financial reporting should go through the Finance Committee.</p> <p>JL noted Residence Life will present a presentation to the Board later in 2026.</p> <p>EW noted given the Officer plans, cost of living is where we can show operational impact and noted it would be good for the Board and Managers to grow this work.</p> <p>MP also noted it would be good to map out how students are impacted in relation to cost of living and the impact our services are having on students.</p> <p>EB noted the annual survey is pending, and work is being undertaken to finalise questions. EB further noted there is collaboration work being undertaken with the Systems Team which will be presented in January.</p> <p>The Board Approved the Strategy Update – Year 4 (2025/26).</p>	Noted Noted Noted Noted Noted Approved
6	Income Generation Update	<p>AS presented the Income Generation Update for the Boards information.</p> <p>AS noted the paper provides Trustees with an updated Long-Term forecast and 5-Year profit and loss (P&L).</p> <p>The Chair thanked AS for all their hard work on the numerous papers written and presented alongside all of the background work which has been undertaken.</p> <p>The Board noted the Income Generation Update.</p>	Noted Noted Noted Noted
7	NSS Results 2024-2025	<p>JB and EP joined the meeting.</p> <p>The EO, JB & EP presented the NSS Results 2025 for the Boards Information.</p> <p>JB noted the NSS is a survey for all final year undergraduate students and is run by the Office of Students annually and was open from the 8th January to 30th April 2025.</p> <p>JB noted that the University scores have gone up across all themes and noted some areas with lower scores that the University is working on to improve for next year.</p> <p>JB further noted the University aggregated score was above average and the University change in ranking for the Russell Group had moved to 7th position out of 24.</p>	Noted Noted Noted Noted Noted

	<p>JB noted the College breakdown data which showed a significant increase across all Colleges.</p> <p>EO noted the most and least satisfied subjects showed a significant disparity where students were given an incentive or not to complete the survey across different subject areas and further noted the most satisfied subject was 'Artificial Intelligence' and least satisfied was 'Liberal Arts'.</p> <p>JB noted that the EO is working with the subjects which acquired a low score alongside the Rep System.</p> <p>EP noted the NSS Q25: How well does the Students' Union (association or Guild) represent students' academic interests.</p> <p>EP noted the Guild had increased from 66% on the previous year to 72% this year. EP noted the Guild ranking progression for the Russell Group had moved from 20 on the previous year to 17 this year</p> <p>EP provided the Q25 score breakdown which showed students found the Guild 'most positive at 21.0%' and 'broadly positive at 44.2%'.</p> <p>JB noted the Guild Q25 score across the College's shows that Social Sciences view the Guild most positively whilst the College of Arts and Law view the Guild the least positively. JB noted that across all Colleges the Guilds score has increased.</p> <p>JB noted the section on 'free text comments' noting 40 out of 1933 positive and 29 out of 1885 negative free text comments referenced the Guild of Students, Guild, Reps, Societies or Students' Union.</p> <p>JB noted in relation to social opportunities which included 'social interaction', 'clubs & societies' and 'range of events' all areas had seen an increase in their score overall.</p> <p>EP noted the increase in engagement with the survey, and JB noted the further reasons of engagement, included Rep Engagement, and the You Said We Did campaign.</p> <p>JB noted areas for improvement on the engagement for Q25 and identifying areas for targeted interventions.</p> <p>MG noted this was an incredible result for the Guild and the work undertaken has been appreciated. MG noted the metrics across the Guild and that the results have improved in all areas.</p> <p>MG asked if the Social Sciences score was more positive due to the sentiment of completing the survey or is it based on the number of voters. JB noted the turnout of voters has remained the same at 75%.</p> <p>PH noted the fantastic achievement and queried whether the non-Guild societies skew the NSS results in any way.</p>	Noted
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		<p>MB noted the reflections on bureaucracy and transparency and asked what can be done. JB noted the feedback in relation to Risk Assessments and the students understanding of the process.</p> <p>The President noted a motion regarding Transparency which had been received.</p> <p>The Board noted the NSS Results 2024-2025.</p> <p>JB and EP left the meeting.</p>	Noted
8	Aim 3 - Community & Support Update	<p>KC joined the meeting.</p> <p>WCO, JL & KC presented the Aim 3 - Community & Support Update for the Boards information.</p> <p>JL noted in July 2024, the Board approved a revised approach to Wellbeing at the Guild to work towards achieving Aim 3 of the strategy. The two main areas for development were the creation of a Wellbeing Plan and the development of the staffing structure to deliver this.</p> <p>WCO noted the Guilds current wellbeing offers and cost of living initiatives and noted cost of living is a theme across all Officer plans and Officers were keen to deliver existing and new initiatives.</p> <p>WCO noted the Cost of Living Working Group's aim is to support students affected by the cost-of-living crisis / or those surviving on low incomes to thrive and live well independently, whilst at university.</p> <p>JL noted the Hardship Fund table and that in term 2 it was financed by the Guild, and there had been a significant decrease of 37%.</p> <p>JL noted the Active Sports Fund had seen a decrease of 16% and the Guild is working with Sports & Fitness colleagues and the Sports Officer to review this.</p> <p>JL noted the Community Breakfast has been a highlight for the Guild and the data shows that in both consecutive years 2,423 students have accessed the Community Breakfast.</p> <p>WCO noted the Harm Reduction initiative and that in 2024 the Guild and University agreed to partner to work toward achieving the SOS UK Drugs & Alcohol Impact Framework. WCO further noted this initiative aims to support students by providing knowledge and awareness on the impact of drugs and alcohol. WCO noted the aim is move from a punitive approach in regard to drugs and alcohol use, to a more supportive and progressive approach on campus.</p> <p>WCO noted during 2024/25 the previous WCO led a campaign on Housing. WCO noted a Housing Hub was developed on the website with new information and content to support students.</p> <p>JL noted looking forward there will be a development of a Wellbeing Plan with student insight which will allow informed campaigns.</p>	Noted
			Noted

		<p>JL noted the development of cost-of-living activities and projects to increase engagement and access across the membership.</p> <p>KC noted the Junk Busters initiative which gathers donations of unwanted items to encourage a more sustainable way of living during 'Move Out' period. KC noted approx. £30k has been raised for charity.</p> <p>KC noted the Community Engagement delivers a range of initiative to support student safety. KC noted the Selly Express is a free shuttle bus for students and has supported over 3.5k students.</p> <p>KC noted the Community Ambassadors conduct Welcome Visits and approximately 2000 houses were door knocked, and information shared about the Guild, and safety.</p> <p>JL noted the previous aim was focused on Guild Advice however now that we have a Community, Advice & Support department we are looking to widen the responsibility, and the aim is to have the Community & Support teams working in a collaborative space whilst Guild Advice focusses on casework and support.</p> <p>MB noted the cost of living and the cost of the initiatives such as the Community Pantry & Selly Express and if these were value for money per student who have accessed them.</p> <p>EO asked if there was a correlation between the Community Pantry and Hardship Fund, and JL noted the data is similar year on year. JL noted the Hardship Fund has a very specific criterion.</p> <p>The Board noted the Aim 3 - Community & Support Update.</p> <p>KC left the meeting.</p>	Noted
9	Governance Attendance Report	<p>The CEO presented the Governance Attendance Report for the Boards information.</p> <p>The CEO noted the report updates the Board on meeting attendance at the Guild's Governance committee structure for the 2024/2025 academic year and presents comparisons with trends from previous academic years.</p> <p>The Chair noted they hope to see an increase in attendance at the Board and Committees during this academic year.</p> <p>The Board noted the Governance Attendance Report.</p>	Noted
10	Appointments Panel Annual Report	<p>The CEO presented the Appointments Panel Annual Report for the Boards information.</p> <p>JT noted the Annual Report on appointments made to the Guild's governing committees in the period 2024-25.</p> <p>The Board noted the Appointments Panel Annual Report.</p>	Noted

11	AOB (Any Other Business)	<p>The Chair noted that University colleagues have been invited to attend the Guild during Welcome Week, and noted the invitation is extended to all Trustees.</p> <p>The Chair thanked EC (University Representative Trustee) for their significant contribution to the Board over the past seven years and for being a notable ambassador for the Guild.</p>	Noted
12	Meeting Reflection	No items noted.	Noted

The Chair closed the meeting at 17.37.

Date of Next Meeting: Monday 3rd November 2025