

## What is the issue you want to change?

On two occasions now, students have voted in favour of external members. Firstly, when the question of membership fee was raised and again when the question of whether they should exist was raised. The Officers continue to act in a way that is inconsistent with these votes.

The Guild Beliefs and Commitments state "any major changes require consultation with the wider student body, not just the Guild Officers" - this did not happen. The decision to remove external members was taken entirely by the Officers and Trustees with an active effort made to prevent student consultation. This is especially true for the Activities Committee which would have been the perfect opportunity to get student opinion on such a change. Instead, the committee were dismissed with vagaries indicating that they were "working on it" - the opposite of removing external members entirely.

During the previous ASM, it was stated "spending money on non UoB students (External Members) was illegal, " yet many other SUs operate a form of external members. Not to mention that under charity law, charities are explicitly allowed to spend money where doing so furthers their charitable objectives, which external members clearly do for student groups.

Let's take a look at the January trustee board meeting: "YY noted the importance of communicating clearly with acutely affected societies and mitigating any negative effects" - this didn't happen "The PGO noted the importance of clearly communicating safeguarding and conduct concerns as the main reason behind any withdrawal of external memberships." - yikes also didn't happen.

The Guild website is also still out of date, months later, stating the reason for external memberships being closed as being administrative backlog which is obviously not the case.

All of this added to the fact that none of the Trustees seem to have realised that removing external members does absolutely nothing to protect students from misconduct. The Guild building is still open to the public and so there is no increased physical safety. Most societies also run events that are not member-only so individuals who would have otherwise been external members can still come to events, just without a title. The only thing removing external members does is reduce the information the Guild has about potential perpetrators.

To be clear - no one is saying the current structure is perfect but the way that this change has come about has been disrespectful at best and downright hostile at worst. I think the majority of students would be in favour of a change of structure if they actually got a say in how it happened and what it might look like.

Anyways, that's enough rambling - to summarise - the Officers and Trustees need to apologise and bring back external memberships while they work on a real plan that can be discussed and voted on so that positive change can be made as opposed to steamrolling the democratic structure and reputation of the Guild.

### **What solutions or actions do you have?**

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### **How will you know your idea is a success?**

How will you know your idea is a success? An apology is issued, external memberships are re-opened and an actual plan on how to reform external members is created and presented to the student body.