
Minutes of the formal Trustee Board meeting held Thursday 18 March 2021

Present:

Oliver Robinson	SU President & Chair of Trustee Board	He/Him
Atree Ghosh	SU VP Union Development	He/Him
Shannon McCaul	SU VP Societies & Media	She/Her
Amy Merchant	SU VP Welfare	She/Her
Paul McCarthy	SU VP Sport	He/Him
Graeme Osborn	External Trustee & Vice Chair of Trustee Board	He/Him
Amanda Chetwynd	External Trustee	She/Her
Sam Maesschalck	Student Trustee	He/Him
Eloise Frost	Student Trustee	She/Her

In Attendance:

Misbah Ashraf	SU Chief Executive	She/Her
Jane Morgan Jones	SU Financial Controller	She/Her
Alan Reynolds	Audit Manager For Item 2.3 only	
Michael Jayson	Auditor For Item 2.3 only	
Christopher Cottam	Advocacy & Governance Manager Item 4.3 only	He/Him
Darren Axe	Development Manager [Environmental Sustainability]	He/Him
	Climate Emergency item only	

The meeting took place via Microsoft Teams due to the Covid-19 pandemic and led by the Chair of Board. Board acknowledged the meeting would be recorded for minute-taking purposes.

Declarations of Interests | None raised.

Minutes of previous meeting | Board discussed matters arising from the previous meeting and the date of the last published minutes. Minutes to be approved digitally.

Matters for Discussion requiring Formal Approval / Consent

Board acknowledged the items submitted : sport funding and the structures of recreational sport/BUCS/staffing etc. | the FRSC recommendation to make an investment from the Charity [SU] to LUSU Services Company Ltd | the budget forecast | work undertaken on a revised Trustees Code of Conduct | the annual Health & Safety report prior to submission to the University Health & Safety team | work undertaken on Covid-19 risk assessments | updating of risk registers | the [February] management accounts and associated elements.

Matters for Discussion

Chair's report | Board noted that governance and finance had been the main focus | the byelaws, next steps and stakeholder engagement | had engaged in conversation on the Union's block grant, alongside the Chief Executive.

Chief Executive report | highlighted: the amount of work recently undertaken which had included alignment of the block grant with student growth number | that staff wellbeing was low due to Covid-19 and increased workloads due to recent resignations | that Board had a duty of care to staff | an overall review of staff structures/business critical positions/staff workloads would ensue | the Sugar House would re-open once it was financially feasible and government guidelines permitted.

Governance and Democracy Review | paper highlighted: the significant engagement of members on the Articles referendum | the AGM included the general business of the Union and that members should be at liberty to submit motions for discussion | the approval of University Council | the requirement to register with the Charity Commission | the importance of meeting voting requirements and providing evidence of clear support in favour of proposals | open dialogue with the University detailing the processes chosen | clear and transparent messages to members in terms of options and rationale | membership approval of the Chair's preference regarding the methods of appointing new trustees | the ability to commence the recruitment process in the expectation the Articles would be approved and that recruitment processes could not be completed until all other matters were complete.

Board's gratitude was expressed for the paper and vast input received for this meeting.

Elections update | accompanying report noted the number of complaints received in comparison to other elections [potentially due to online campaigning and there being a written record].

External Trustee Recruitment | Board acknowledged the recruitment process had commenced | the risks highlighted by the solicitors | the recommendation around potential suitable candidates being recruited under the current governance methods with Executive Committee ratification | it would feel more comfortable knowing the Charity Commission was aware and satisfied with the actions being taken | that from discussion the debate was around the method of appointment.

Climate Emergency Declaration Response | Board reiterated its appreciation for the work of Green Lancaster | agreed every support should be given within constraints | suggested that sustainability was a value all members should take seriously and embed in everything Board and the Union touched.

The Chair stated that the Green Lancaster project was not traditionally funded by the Union but given its declaration of a climate emergency Board should consider providing support with additional resources | work on the budget

was needed to establish the Union's priorities | a drop in service provision could result if the level of investment remained static and largely depended on the scale and extent of the University's contribution.

Board acknowledged the summary that further clarity on the new strategy and how the Union applied its resources was required | that this was a matter strongly supported by students and agreed that consideration be given on how the Union could move this forward into the following year's budget.

Trustee Board register of attendance | accompanying document noted.

Decisions approved electronically | Decisions approved electronically since the previous meeting were noted.

Minutes to note | Board noted minutes from various sub-committee meetings, an updated cash flow forecast and that an update was required of information provided to FRSC.

Forward Schedule of Business | contents and suggestion to include manifestos of the next officer team noted | proposed changes to schedule invited.

Date of Next Meeting | June meeting date noted.

Other Business | after discussion where Board agreed that whilst it was important to have a policy research role and for the Union to incorporate engagement and support elements into its strategy, it further agreed there was no budget currently available to support further recruitment.

Sugarhouse Preferenda to rename the Sugar House | Board was provided with insight behind the item and acknowledged the headlines; ie no specified timeline / the roles of operational staff once an outcome was reached / preferenda must be initiated through a student jury or the Trustee Board / that an indication from the Executive Committee was that students making the decision was the preference.

Board approved the suggested methodology with the Chair stating that all parties were understanding of the financial restrictions and significant resources required for a rebranding exercise.

Following discussion, Board agreed the VP Union Development should forward name options to Board electronically for a decision, once gathered.

Thanks passed to the student trustee whose term of office was due to expire | all Board members whose term of office was due to expire | to officers for valuable contributions throughout | the external trustee, Mark Alexander, for his service to the Union of the past few years, in particular for the legal advice in the defence of the Sugarhouse during building work taking place in the vicinity.
