



TRUSTEE COUNCIL MEETINGS

Minutes for the Seventeenth Trustee Council meeting held on Tuesday the 1st of September, 2015, in The Hive Cafe, Digby College.

Present Siobhan Kelly, George Cole, Marie Johansen, Andy Smith, Adam Askew, Tessa Willy, Brian Stewart

In Attendance Matt Wall, Kate Griffiths

1: Apologies Kennedy Small, David Martin

- **2: Minutes:** New Council members were introduced and the minutes for the sixteenth Trustee Board were approved.

- **3: Matters Arising:**

Action points from the last meeting have been resolved.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

4: Review of last academic year – Matt Wall

There have been significant developments of the staffing within the RSU with two new sabbatical officers joining the team as well as a revised internship programme and new members of full time staff.

With our Academic Advisor, Gemma Foley, going on maternity leave, it prompted a re-think of our structure and what services we needed from our Sabb team. The position of VP Education came as a result of this. Marie, who was elected back in March has been working in conjunction with Matthew Hurst, who came in to cover Gemma's maternity leave as the – newly renamed - Student Voice Co-ordinator.

Our events last term provided us with more income than we've ever had so Matt wanted to thank Steve for all the work and effort he's put in to building successful profitable events for students. We were nominated at the recent NUS awards in the "Best One-Off Event" category for the Summer Ball. Although we didn't win, it shows that we are being recognised for all the hard work we're putting in. The Summer Ball itself is never a hugely profitable event but the tickets always sell out and it is by far the most popular and eagerly anticipated event that we host.

Our society numbers are still high and Hannah Brown our Activities intern has been receiving emails from students wanting to set up more societies so this is always encouraging.

Sadly, Michael Diss has now left us but during his time with us he was in charge of running the College Cup and he sometimes found it difficult to motivate students to attend the events that he was putting on.

Claire Hudson, who was our Creative Communications Co-ordinator, sadly left us in March and we had a re-think of the role as well as adding an intern position to help out Claire's replacement when in post. A number of the team put in a significant effort to pick up any of the jobs that would have normally fallen under Claire's remit during the time when the post was vacant. We have now re-named the role "Marketing and Communications Manager" and a lady called Jo Gregory-Brough is now looking after that side of things for us.

Growhampton has been a major area of development for us since the last trustee meeting. We received £65,000 from the University as well as a crowd funder total of £25,000, kindly donated by those people who love the Hive and want to see it continue after the success of the last couple of years. This money that was raised allowed us to buy another shipping container and expand the seating area three times over. We are hoping that by being able to house more people it will increase the profit of the Hive by anywhere from £15,000 to £45,000. As a thank you to everyone who has donated money, their names now appear on the side of the cafe. Tess asked if this initiative would be something we could do again and Matt said that he was keen for it to happen again but this time we'd target a different audience.

Wandsworth Council have also given us £15,000 to go towards an outreach programme in which we are planning to buy a vehicle which will travel round to local schools to teach children about sustainability as well as being a catering vehicle to take our produce into the local community.

Adam mentioned that getting the Council on board will give us a much needed boost and they're currently looking for outreach programmes that will help the NUS save £1 Billion on costs incurred by treating people who are obese or have a poor diet and a lack of education surrounding nutrition.

Having initially found it difficult to contact Justine Greening – our local MP – Tess mentioned that she'd try and get in contact as it's a project Justine would be very interested in.

Action Point – Tess to follow up with Justine Greening

New Team Members –

Jo Gregory-Brough is our new Marketing and Communications Co-ordinator and she has given us a great social media platform as well as developing the website. Iain Pullar is our new Membership Services Manager and his role will be to build a strong knowledge base for the interns as well as some full time members of staff.

Matthew Hurst has taken over from Gemma Foley, who is on maternity leave, as the Student Voice Co-ordinator as is dealing with appeals and course terminations

as well as offering academic advice and supporting Marie with the Programme Rep scheme.

We also have three extra interns with us this year, taking our total up to six. They are in place to focus on project work and kick start developments within the SU. Anneka and Hannah are our three month interns, financed by Santander. Anneka is helping Steve with events and trying to promote as many non-alcoholic events as possible throughout the year and Hannah, who is based in the Growhampton office, is helping out the guys with the various projects that they've got going on – one of which being the introduction of chicks to our SU family! They are also planning to trial a "Summer School" initiative with the kids from the local area and the introduction day they did a couple of weeks ago proved very successful. A Part Time Officer Bootcamp was arranged before the Summer holidays and this gave elected officers an opportunity for training that will take them through to the next academic year. There will also be a top up election in the coming year to fill the four positions that we were unable to fill in the elections back in March. Siobhan mentioned that we are thinking of trialling an online voting platform in the coming months to try and get our voter numbers up and make voting more accessible to everyone.

Andy Smith asked whether we pay our members of staff fairly compared to other Student Unions and Matt mentioned that all the interns are paid the London Living Wage but we are working on it in conjunction with the University and this is an ongoing discussion. Andy then asked who was responsible for the applications for funding and Matt mentioned that he encourages all members of staff to apply as they see fit and it's very much down to the students to have their say in where £50,000 of their money is spent each year.

Siobhan wanted to make it more obvious to students and staff where their money was going when they purchased a Feel Good Bakery sandwich from the Hive and whether we could have something in place that highlighted this. Andy then produced some credit card sized flyers detailing what the customers money goes towards so these can now be given out to everyone who buys a sandwich.

Matt highlighted that this has been a very busy period with new members of staff starting as well as the new term coming up so he will bring an updated strategic plan to the next Trustee meeting outlining what we hope to achieve by 2016. He also wants to try and match our strategic plan with the time scale of the University's so we are both aligned.

Adam mentioned that he'd always felt that the strategic plan wasn't suited to the Students' Union and that it would be more beneficial to create a vision piece – an operational plan aligned with our vision/aims for the future.

Action Point – Matt Wall to bring an updated strategic plan that will take us to 2016 to the Trustee Board

- 5: Sabbatical Update

The Sabbs have three main aims for the year;

To focus on the WISH Project and get more student led ideas going forward.

The Democracy Structure change.

Work with NUS on the “Cut The Costs” campaign which will fight against the proposed abolition of maintenance grants by the Government.

The Sabbs continue to have regular meeting with senior management and Marie, our VP Education – a new post this year – is planning on meeting with department heads to find out where we stand academically and focussing on developing the programme rep system to make sure that all subjects are represented.

Tuition fees are currently set at £12,000 for International students, so the Sabbs are planning to review this with the University as those students in question don't feel like they are getting what they pay for.

Alot of times, it's not the quality of teaching that's called in to question, it's the admin surrounding this where we fall down. Tessa, having worked at the University before, noted that the members of staff who she came into contact with were very well received by the students and the quality of their teaching was never called in to question. However, this issue has a huge impact on the National Student Survey so it needs clarification.

George Cole is our new VP Welfare and he works closely with various other departments within the University, as well as the SWO's to provide a support service for all students. He is in close contact with Aleata Alstad-Calkins, our Head of Wellbeing, and there is a clear line of communication to make sure the help is provided quickly and efficiently where needed.

Creating a “Let's Stop....” campaign focussing on a different discriminations each month. Through this, we are linking up with other charities and organisations to really promote our message.

Adam noted that these are tangible projects and really accessible for the students to get involved with. Tessa also added that it was really inclusive and made for a great team dynamic not only among the Sabbs, but also among the other departments within the University.

Adam then asked if any of the Sabbs had received any Formal Youth Worker Training and if not, would this be something we could look into?

Andy mentioned that he has a youth worker on his team who is accredited and can also train people if interested. George noted that this would be something that sports captains, flat reps and maybe even society presidents could also benefit from.

Action Point: Andy to get in touch with Mark about the possibility of training people.

Tessa mentioned that she attended the Stonewall training a while ago and found this very useful. Leading on from this, Matt had a meeting earlier regarding certain “traditions” upheld by students that could be seen as exclusive and maybe offensive to others.

Siobhan wanted to make it clear that we as a Students’ Union should be leading by example and with the help of our part time officers we should be promoting this inclusive attitude.

- 6: National Student Survey – Matt Wall

The National Student Survey is available for all third year, graduation students and is the second biggest survey overall. It not only gives students the opportunity to rate their experience at University, but it also brings into account the Students’ Unions and gives us valuable data to assess our strengths and weaknesses.

This year the results show that the University has taken a big hit – which we were expecting. Some courses are really struggling and with the inclusion of the VP Education role, hopefully these issues can be solved for next year.

Tessa asked why we weren’t surprised that our results were down on last year and Matt noted that it was due to a number of reasons, partly involving management and assessment. We need to focus more on the teaching and leave the research to the Russell Universities. We have noticed that the University is not delivering the same services throughout all the departments and Brian pointed out that more people who are dissatisfied will take the survey compared to people who are satisfied with the service they are getting. There is also the ongoing issue of building works that have affected a lot of the students on Digby Stuart campus especially.

Andy suggested having a mobile office so the Sabbs can base themselves at a different campus each day and matt mentioned that we have a permanent pop up at Whitelands so we make sure that our presence is known there as well.

- 7: WISH Update – Siobhan Kelly

Students were presented with a survey outlining what they’d like to see from the WISH project. An independent body ran the survey and the results were pooled externally, however, we held 20 focus groups on campus, targeting different demographics so we got a complete understanding from all student perspectives. Over 50% of those who completed the survey said they were dissatisfied with the gym facilities and mentioned that the machines should be more user friendly for disabled students. (The gym is run by Nuffield Health.)

73% of all comments mentioned “space” and that it was a prominent issue on campus.

There was also mentions that there was nowhere on campus to buy fresh produce and the amigo shop on Digby was inadequate for most people’s needs.

These findings were presented to the University at the Council Away Day and Reggie Blennerhassett – The Pro-Vice Chancellor and Director of Finance – is keen to move forward with this. We’ll have a greater understanding of time frame

at the end of this year but it all comes under the 3-5 year plan. There is an issue around estates and where the money is going to come from but we as a Students' Union feel strongly that, with the influx of hundreds of new students to campus, there must be facilities provided for them so we will be pushing this issue with senior management.

Matt mentioned the frustrations with how slowly everything is going and drew the Trustees' attention to Exeter Students' Union where they built a brand new hub 4-5 years ago and are already thinking about the next project.

Adam asked what we could do in the interim period and suggested maybe shipping containers such as the ones used to create The Hive Cafe. Matt mentioned that we want buildings that are still going to be relevant in the next 15-20 years but Reggie is taking the lead on this so we are currently waiting for him to report back.

- **8: Bar Agreement – Matt Wall**

David mentioned at the last meeting that we as a Students' Union should be in charge of, and run the Union Bar. We are working on removing the cap on the profit split and as of last year, the bar profits came to £84,000, £23,000 of which we saw as a result of the cap and all of which went back into charitable objectives. Our Events Co-ordinator, Steve Molyneaux, works closely with the bar and is responsible for running and managing the vents that go on there, therefore his wages need to be reflected in the bar profits too.

- **9: Democracy and Feedback Review – Siobhan Kelly**

The Students' Union is accountable for how we deliver services and we have a duty of care to the students. We have decided that SUC will now turn into Student Union General Meetings and will allow students to challenge us and the University on issues they feel passionately about. Anyone can attend and we want to encourage these meetings to ultimately become student led.

This new model of General Meetings is where we should be as a Students' Union and Student Union Councils are notoriously difficult to run well.

Matt mentioned that we have the opportunity to trial this format and learn things to help properly develop the meetings at a later date.

- **10: Strategic Planning – Matt Wall**

This is high on the agenda of the Students' Union and Matt is aware that we are very responsible for plans going forward. It has been 6-9 months in the making and Matt has spent time with the new interns to make sure that they understand the plan and how they fit in and contribute.

Action Point – Set a date and a time scale for this. Could send out a Doodle to check Trustee's availability

- **11: Finance Update (Given by Matt Wall in Kennedy Small's absence)**

We broke the £1 Million point in our annual turnover – this did include the Student Greenfund though which helped to fund the Growhampton project but we're hoping that we still reach this landmark next year without this additional funding. The Hive Cafe, including the recent extension, has cost £95,000 in total but this is not necessarily all taking from the Union's money. Power and water supply for the Hive alone is £15,000.

The profits for the Hive are already up 5% from last year in the first 2 weeks of re-opening with the bigger space and with this additional space we are hoping to put on some more evening events and have it open as a space for society meet ups etc. The surplus at the end of the year is around £23,000.

We have employed a RAG intern to hopefully boost the money we raise for charity this year.

The monthly outgoings in wages alone amount to £430,000 and Ken is slightly concerned about our monthly operating costs which amount to £40,000.

Adam asked if Finance could be placed higher on the agenda for the next meeting as it feels too rushed at the end and it's a major part of how the Student Union is able to operate.

Matt assured the Trustees that there is no immediate worry with our finances but the only problem comes when one of our operational services (such as The Hive) is out of action for any reason.

David talked about risk management in the last meeting and Matt was keen to meet with him in the coming weeks to discuss the work to be done on this.

A.O.B

Student Trustee Recruitment (Post Grad Trustee needed).
Potentially involving a part time officer with the Trustee Board.

Date of Next Meeting – (TBC)