



TRUSTEE COUNCIL MEETINGS

Minutes for the Twentieth Trustee Council meeting held on Tuesday the 21st of June, 2016 in The Hive Cafe, Digby College.

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

In Attendance Matt Wall, Kate Griffiths, Kennedy Small, Jack De France

1: Apologies Adam Askew, David Martin

2: Minutes: Minutes from the last Trustee Meeting were approved.

3: Matters Arising:

A discussions about Pensions should be brought to this meeting following an update from the University (point 11 in today's agenda).

A risk register, suggested by David, to be reviewed. Matt has yet to meet with David to discuss this.

4: Away Day Update and Actions

Matt Wall

Firstly, Matt wanted to extend his thanks to all those involved with the away day as a lot of useful ideas will now be taken forward.

Actions:

- Adam Askew – one of our external trustees – is stepping down in September so that we don't lose both Adam and Andy at the same time.
- A Co-Chair would be advisable to add support to Siobhan, who has done a brilliant job of chairing the meetings for the last 2 years. Andy asked where we'd look for a replacement and Matt suggested the "Give Something Back" network which is specifically focussed around Trustee Recruitment. Tess wondered whether it would be beneficial to recruit within our organisation, but also noted that it may give us more variety if we opened out the recruitment process. In response to Marie's question as to whether or not this had a deadline, Matt answered that he hoped to have the position filled by Christmas, if not sooner.

- To implement a discussion point for each meeting, with more focus paid to this topic and Sabb reports to be condensed in order to allow more time for discussion of this topic.
- A formal 360 appraisal for the Chief Executive in order to gain feedback from both colleagues within the SU as well as other members of staff within the University.
- Sabbs and Trustees pairing up to complement their strengths and for the Trustees to provide guidance in their area of expertise. Matt to meet up individually with Trustees for informal catch ups outside of the scheduled meetings.

5: RSU and Sabb Update

Matt Wall, Siobhan Kelly, Marie Johansen and George Cole

Matt and the Sabb team put forward a Block Grant proposal to the University for the total amount of £595,000. This was due to the combination of a lot of individual projects throughout the year which required additional funding, separate from the original Block Grant, which we had to state written cases for on each occasion. However, it is felt that by portioning up the money we receive, the University is able to clearly see where that money is going. We have managed to secure £9,000 for more BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) based activities, as the BME Conference Siobhan ran this year was a great success. £15,000 has also been secured for Society funding.

We held an exam de-stress week, in which we put on various activities for the students, including a puppy parlour, which, naturally, went down very well! The puppies came from a company who use events like ours to socialise the pups so they are used to human contact before they are eventually sold.

The RSU Awards were a great success with nearly 200 students and staff buying tickets to attend. We are also hoping to integrate this event into the University awards scheme and combine the two.

The Summer Ball sold out in record time and the event itself made a profit so we were able to put this money into other projects. From the feedback we have been getting, both from students and staff who worked the event, it has been heralded as the best Summer Ball yet and everything went really smoothly.

The College Cup Finale was a great success and as it's the last event that we put on for students, it wraps the term up nicely so everyone leaves on a high. This year Froebel were victorious and were presented with the College Cup at the end of the day.

Elected Part Time Officers, as well as members of SU staff all went away for a couple of days on a "Leadership Residential" which gave them all a chance to get to know one another, as well as plan for the upcoming academic year. They participated in team building exercises and it was a really good opportunity for targets to be set and action plans put in place so they have a clear indication of what they'd like to see throughout the year.

We held an Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the first time in 3 years as Matt felt that it was important for students to see how we as an SU run. Various policies were voted on, including one to protect societies such as the LGBTQ Society or the SWAN Society (Students With Alternative Needs), which allows them to opt out of charging their members membership fees in order to join. We also listened to comments that we were getting regarding how we deliver our social media, and as a result have now added subtitles to all our videos. All voting was done anonymously on electronic key pads that each student was given. Growhampton, who recently celebrated their 2nd birthday, have been working with local schools on various projects with the hope of engaging young people in the benefits of their environment. The University have agreed funding of an additional £50,000 – pending the result of the Referendum – and with Teresa sadly leaving, this will hopefully partly be used to fund someone to take over her role. Brian asked if we should maybe send a joint email to the University on behalf of the Trustees to thank them for the continued support and those present felt like this would be a good idea.

Matt mentioned that the Growhampton project as a whole – including The Hive cafe – has always set out to be self-sustaining and although we are a long way off this at present, we have changed our model to fit in with the University's strategy, so this was seen as a huge positive and something that they are happy to see continue.

We have almost finished recruiting the intern team for next year, with just one role left to fill. These are paid, part time internships and the length of contract will ultimately depend on the work load of each intern. We also have the funding available to open up various roles to current students throughout the year, and this could either be shadowing/work experience roles, or those students could be helping out with Welcome Week for a week or so.

Our Marketing and Communications Manager, Jo, has sadly left us, but she has moved on to Oxford University Students' Union, so we are pleased to see her continuing her journey in Higher Education SUs. She's done some great work in the year that she's been with us, including re branding the SU as a whole and making sure that this brand is easily identifiable throughout all of our social media and publications. Our event photographer and videographer, Jonas has stepped into the Communications role in her absence and we are advertising for a Graphic Designer to join the team to really push our branding.

Jack is currently halfway through his Presidential handover from Siobhan who is sadly leaving us at the end of July. Matt, as well as all those present, wanted to extend their thanks to Siobhan for her dedication and hard work throughout the last two years and gently reminded Jack that he has big shoes to fill!

After raising awareness and campaigning around the issue of gender neutral toilets, the University have proposed that 27 new and existing toilets will now be gender neutral to meet the demand from students.

Digby College President, Ben Patterson, as well as Disabilities officer Anya Watt and student volunteers, have worked hard throughout the year to get the Vatican Garden on Digby completed before the end of the year. This garden is situated opposite the Hive cafe and is a lovely quiet space for students to relax in.

Siobhan mentioned her BME Leaders conference and how it was great to see students engaging with this. It was a huge learning curve for her as nothing like this had been done in the past, but she's hoping that it will be something that can continue throughout the years and flourish year on year.

The off campus accommodation fair was really well attended with around 900 students passing through the fair. It was set up as a way for those students not living on campus for their second and third years to meet local landlords and ask them questions they may have.

Tess suggested that these important events throughout the year be embedded from the outset and to have a calendar set out with important dates for the students to be aware of. It would also be useful to combine these new events with existing events, for example, having the BME Leaders conference during Black History Month to get the most engagement from students.

6: Elections Report

Iain Pullar – Papers Attached.

There were 58 candidates in this year's elections, which is 26 more than last year. 18 positions were contested and we managed to fill 20 out of the 22 roles that we have available – the remaining roles will be voted for in a top-up election that will run in October. We had trialled the electronic voting back in October last year for our Top-up elections then and it worked just as well this time around with the March election. There were 802 extra votes than last year and this is a record turnout which is really encouraging and puts us in the top 15 in the country for voter turnout percentage with 26% of our student body coming out to vote. There were minor rule breaks and two warnings were issued (we work on a three strikes and you're out policy) but these were due to genuine mistakes and there was little malice throughout the election period. The things we can take from this election is that it's important for us as a Students' Union to manage the support of the candidates, both if they've won or lost.

7: WISH Update

Matt Wall

The Students' Union put forward a proposal for a temporary structure in which to base the SU. This was given the OK by Paul O'Prey but unfortunately English Heritage dismissed the idea as it thought it would impinge on too much of the green space on Froebel lawn. There is still a strong desire to push this forward and we are currently looking at other sites around campus on which to base ourselves. The space above the gym in the Olive Garnett building is currently vacant so we will aim to use these rooms as a space for societies or additional meeting rooms for our staff. There's not much cost in developing the space and it would also provide some much needed storage. There was also a proposal to develop Davies car park but this was met with hesitation from the Vice Chancellor as he was worried about the lack of staff car parking spaces on campus if we were to get rid of this.

As nothing will be developed in time for the next academic year 2016/2017, during Fresher's Week we hope to create a "Fresher's Village" on Froebel lawn, where we, along with other services will be located to enable students to access everything from one central place.

8: Draft 4 Year Outline Strategy

Matt Wall

Matt is keen to get some sign off on this now so an operational plan can be put in place. Development of a framework to specify what makes a good SU will be key to this and at present, Matt believes that we are potentially 3 years away from achieving the ideal Student Union.

Part of the feedback that we've received came from the Leadership residential, where we got to hear student views and thoughts as to what can be improved for the future. It was also noted that the strategy came across as too professional so students had a hard time connecting with what exactly we were proposing. Matt is keen to hear Trustee members thoughts regarding the proposal and if it needs any amendments or tweaks.

Jack noted that he thought the term "empowering students" should be included in the "Mission" and Matt answered that the "Mission" shouldn't change but the vision could.

Action Point – Matt to look into the wording of the Mission statement

Jack also asked if there were other "Motto's" put forward before the current one was decided upon. Matt replied that it had come through the branding organically and that an alternative had been put to the Comms team but they were already settled on this particular motto. Jack proposed an alternative of "RSU – Here With You" as he felt that the Students' Union should be seen to be on a level with the students. Matt noted that the temporary structure could lead to a change in branding so this Motto could change in the future.

Those present felt that wording is vital in conveying the message we want to promote and that the Mission should be broad enough to cover longevity.

Siobhan also noted that the Vision doesn't read right and that this should be looked at more closely. Jack added that he thought it wasn't ambitious enough and he wanted something that would make students proud of their Student Union. George observed that the term "inclusive" means different things and it is not the same as "engaging" and to follow on from this, Jack also noted that "diverse and united" could also mean "inclusive".

Tess added that you can't create a diverse body when you start with one to begin with and Matt pointed out that we can offer diversity through activity, and it doesn't just refer to the liberation aspect.

George noted that we can't change who comes here but we can affect who leaves here and we hope that our students would gain some positive attributes while they're here.

Jack questioned what was meant by the statistic stating that the hope was to have 80% of our students engaging with us fully by 2020. Jack asked what qualified as “full engagement” and how this could be measured. Tess also noted that 80% was a rather specific figure and that this should be looked at and changed if necessary. Siobhan asked those present if they could send any feedback they have regarding the outline strategy to either herself or Matt for consideration, but generally it was noted that people are happy with this outline, if there are little tweaks made.

Action Point – Bring back the completed strategy outline for the next meeting.

9: Matrix of Responsibility

Siobhan Kelly – Papers Attached

It was thought that both Adam and David should be present when discussing this as it’s all very new and unfamiliar to those present.

Action Point – to bring this back to the next meeting with a discussion involving all Trustees.

10: Finance and Pension Update

Kennedy Small

At present staff at the University have a 15.5% stakeholder pension scheme in place and Ken believes that a People’s Pension would be the best option for us. The money deducted from your salary will not be taxed and it’s also accumulative, so the more you build up, the more you’ll have in the end. The University will manage the pensions for us – potentially costing £46,000 – but this is not a cost that will be taken up by us. We as a Students’ Union, should not be seen as a second class pension option by the University and that we should get the same deals as their employees.

Ken would highly recommend opting in to the pension scheme but obviously employees can choose not to take it up.

A.O.B

A huge thank you to Siobhan for all her hard work and dedication throughout the past two years. Jack has big shoes to fill and she will be greatly missed by all those present.

Action Point – Send a Doodle round for dates for next meeting

Date of Next Meeting - TBC