

Board of Trustees Meeting

Minutes

Date 7th December 2023
Time 15.30
Venue SUHQ Kevin Gately / Teams

Circulation:~ Anna Taylor, Sophie Clark, Max Pike, Holly Roffe, Vaishnavi Ravi, Enaya Nihal, Emma Birch, Tom Chaloner, Caleb Heather, Jake Thomas, Ben Abrahamson, Shydle John, Praneel Jani, Angella Hill Wilson, John Dubber, Robert Pegg, Harnaik Dhillon

Executive Team in attendance:~ Philip Smith, Tracy Murphy, Mark Crook, Louise Marjoram, Steve Russell, George Dowding.

Apologies for Absence
Robert Pegg, Shydle John

Declarations of Conflicts of Interest
No declarations of interest declared.

2.1 Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting, dated 12th October 23, are approved as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

2.2 Matters Arising
No further matters arising raised

2.3 Chairs & Full-Time officer Update

The Chair and Full-time officer reports are taken as read; each officer highlighted significant pieces of work.

AT has been working to improve the Bus service with regards to reliability and pricing, we have had a bus survey out with Students over the last few weeks and have received 600+ plus responses. Together with **SC** and **EH** we have been focusing on housing and accommodation both on and off campus, we now have 5 workstreams set up with the University working collaboratively forming coordination groups to work on the Cost-of-living issues.

EB has been working on the Sports Officer Bursary, and has obtained funding from the University through the Innovation fund for a Warwick Sportswear for all fund, as well as working on the 16days activism against Gender Violence campaign with **EH**.

VR has been concentrating on the PGR collective on Postgrad working conditions and will be involved in the GTA frame work review, and has also organised a very successful Postgraduate fair in the atrium.

HR has been working in collaboration with the University on Training on Disabilities and Neurodivergence, meeting regarding Lecture capture and exam timetabling and also starting a newsletter for our Academic Reps.

MP has been working through the existing Society and New society applications, raising the profile of the societies with a new Instagram account.

EN has undertaken work on the 'Safer at Work Campaign', and recently led on a collaborative safe for work survey which has had over 1200 respondents, leading a conversation on Wellbeing, support and community safety, as well as being an event organisers for 16 days of campaign events.

Finally **SC** has been working with Campaign groups to raise a stronger understanding of SU funding and supporting existing work with regards to arms trade and divestment, pushing the conversation around sustainable food strategies as well as the Universities Climate commitments.

2.4 CEO Report

PS introduced the CEO report, highlighting a good financial start to the year and positive Student engagement. We have had some challenging times and there will be more to come, including from the University regarding our Governance Regeneration work, questioning whether we have met their expectations, which may require us to clarify or adjust the expectations they have.

PEOPLE AND DEVELOPMENT

TM highlighted the tangible benefits from work carried out by the Learning and Development team, including training, Lunch & Learns, and work regarding our Values, etc, we have had only one resignation in the last 6 months which has resulted in a large saving in recruitment costs and significant drop in expenditure on legal fees for advice and disputes.

On behalf of the Students' Union Natasha Patel, Learning and Development Manager, won an award at the Charity Consortium for Outstanding Learning Culture.

COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING

GD discussed the Student feedback Survey, which is a large piece of research working together with the University, and includes KPI for overall Satisfaction with the SU. Last year we were up by 19% points taking us to 67%, this year we have seen a further increase of 5 points to 72% of students stating they are happy with their SU.

OPERATIONS

With long-term sickness and vacancies within a small team, this has had a detrimental effect, but the team are working hard to maintain standards and sales.

JD thanked the Leadership and their teams for a positive start and good direction of travel.

Process for Handling Motions.

The process of how we get Motions to ASV and managing member expectations was raised, ensuring we have discussions with students during the process.

PS provided generalised suggestions for the process; the suggestions are intentionally supportive to help Motion proposers get what they intended from the process.

JD pointed out that although not fully aware of the democratic processes at Warwick SU, he felt the recommendations set out by **PS** would be helpful in sharpening up the Impact Assessments, having read through the current motions for ratification, he is very concerned for a number of reasons, including legality, possibly libelous or misleading wording, and for these to progress through the process to the point of asking the Board to ratify is putting the Board in an unfair position, tightening up of the process would be extremely helpful.

JD added that there is a challenge in the process at the moment, and would question whether Students are receiving balanced information, he believes it is crucial when Students are being asked to make a democratic decision that they're given balanced and factual information, so that they can see both sides of the argument, and fully understand the implications for the Union prior to making the decision.

BA agreed with **JD** and added that there is a level of misunderstanding with regards to what the SU can and can't do, we are at risk of reputational damage when we reject motions at board level following ASV. We need a clearer understanding for Students' and Staff on the parameters of what the SU can do.

SC suggested that there has been an overall lack of clarity, but would question whether we as a Union should be presenting the facts regarding a motion, as any student has right to put through a motion and frame it as they wish.

AT suggested we will be picking up a number of points with regards to Motions and process later in the meeting, is the Board happy to commence work with the recommendations set out in the CEO paper. Through the Governance and Appointments committee work on Impact assessment will be discussed as an ongoing piece of work. **LM** to prepare a paper of recommendations of change to the Impact Assessment process, and to return to the Board for input and approval.

2.5 Management Accounts - Period 3

MC provided the management accounts for Period 3, and highlighted a number of salient points,

- Clubs and Society grants - process has been completed, we have a total of £168k, with awards of £116k to clubs and £52k to Societies.
- National living wage award will add 30p per hour to our budgeted forecasts and more information will be provided at the next meeting
- We have stopped operating the Launderette, which has been taken back into the University services
- Heat Light and Power has underspent against forecast for quarter one, however we remain cautious on predictions for the rest of the year.
- Overall we are showing a much better position than forecast, primarily due to a prediction of much better performance by trading subsidiaries .
- We do have some outlets below forecast, but this is offset by a very strong contribution from the Dirty Duck.
- Phase one projects from designated reserves have been completed.

JD thanked **MC** for the financial update, and congratulated the team once again for their ongoing work and a really good performance, however he raised one point with regards to control of the Launderette being handed back to the University, **MC** explained that the service is in a University building which will in all probability be part of campus redeveloped, our licence was due to be renewed and the University wouldn't extend it, the University run all additional launderette services on the campus and this one will remain working under their control in the immediate future. **PS** and **MC** are in discussions with the University regarding the loss of income. **JD** expressed that this was a regrettable situation, the University taking away a Union service which has been in place for a large number of years.

TC questioned which of the Commercial outlets are behind their predicted income, **SR** responded that the Dirty Duck has had an incredibly strong start to the year, but we have seen a drop in ticket sales, and reading week was very poor. The Terrace bar has had a particularly poor start, but it desperately needs a refurbishment, and finally the Cost-of-Living restraints may be taking a toll, we will continue to monitor the overall picture and control costs. **PS** added that we will come back to the Board with a Terrace bar refurbishment proposal including costs, with work hopefully being undertaken during the Spring/Easter break.

TC went on to ask what impact has been seen following the refurbishment of the Bread Oven to Food Station, **SR** responded that the turnover has gone up approximately 15% - 20% which we wouldn't have seen if it had remained as the Bread Oven. **PS** added the impact of the Wednesday Market has a big impact on the turnover.

EB questioned the Vegan section within the Food station, which hasn't really been available, **SR** to discuss with his team and feedback.

MC raised the issue of the HMRC dispute, which challenged the VAT on food within SU's with SU's being levied large fines, fortunately we had a statement in writing from HMRC which made us exempt from clawing back historical VAT status. The NUS have been leading a judicial review to overturn the decision to charge VAT, and have been successful at the first hearing requiring HMRC to disclose information which is a positive step, **MC** will keep the Board updated on progress.

2.6 Size and Shape

The Size and Shape conversation was undertaken in camera due to HR implications.

2.7 All Student Vote – Motion Ratification

PS provided guidance notes, Red Amber Green ratings highlighting possible risk for the SU for each motion. **AT** stressed that the ratification of Motions is based purely on the Legal, Reputational or Financial risk to the Union, and this is not the time to re-debate the Motion.

Recommendations: The Board are asked to approve:

1. Getting Asylum Seeker Students the Right to Work.

For 1247 / Against 143 / Abstain 145

This Union resolves:

1. The Vice Presidents for Welfare & Campaign and Democracy & Development will work with the SU to join the campaign as a Lift the Ban Business Ally at the earliest possible opportunity.
2. The Students' Union Officers will be proactive about the participation of the Union in the campaign and encourage the University to do so.
3. The Vice President for Welfare & Campaign will develop welfare and career support schemes for asylum-seeker students and encourage the University to do so.
4. To prove its support for asylum seeker students, the Union should request that the University acquire art pieces on campus that commemorate asylum and asylum seekers.

The Board discussed the motion and the following vote was recorded.

Motion Ratified

2. Warwick SU to re-affiliate to the National Union of Students (NUS) to restore our national voice.

For 866 / Against 217 / Abstain 266

This Union resolves:

1. For the VP Democracy and Development and the President, as quickly as possible, to begin the process to re-affiliate to the NUS, and hold elections for delegates in time to participate in NUS' upcoming 2024 National Conference and Liberation Conference.
2. Warwick SU should always use its voice in NUS and more generally to fight antisemitism and all forms of oppression.

The Board discussed the motion and the following vote result was recorded

Motion Ratified

JD added the issues of including names or comments on individual people, and that we think about this in our Impact Assessment processes.

3. Let's fight for better on-campus accommodation.

For 1259 / Against 91 / Abstain 111

This Union Resolves:

1. Warwick SU fully and unequivocally supports the aims of Warwick Housing Organisation, to campaign for rent reductions, future rent freezes and more accessible accommodation.
2. For the President and the VP Democracy and Development to, at every possible opportunity, lobby the University to freeze rents and bring them back down to pre-COVID levels.

The Board discussed the motion and the following vote result was recorded

Motion Ratified

4. Plant-based Warwick to tackle the climate crisis: for a just transition.

For 774 / Against 518 / Abstain 180

This Union Resolves:

1. For Warwick Students Union to publicly endorse the Plant Based Universities campaign and support student campaigning towards an achievable strategy for affordable, accessible and nutritious plant-based food at Warwick.
2. To mandate the VP for Democracy & Development to start and oversee the transition of all student union outlets to a plant-based food system; to implement at least 50% plant-based food and drink options in SU outlets by the start of the next academic year (2024/25), and 100% by the start of the 2027/28 academic year.
 - a. During this transition period, for all food & drink options in SU outlets to be explicitly labelled as vegan, vegetarian or non-vegetarian on menus;
 - b. To end the plant-based milk surcharge & make plant-based milk the default option offered in SU outlets
3. To mandate the VP for Democracy & Development to start and maintain conversation with the university to transition all university licenced/owned outlets

outside the direct control of Warwick SU to a plant-based food system, lobbying for at least 50% plant-based food & drink options to be in place by the start of the next academic year.

- a. Lobby Rootes Grocery Store to ensure at least 50% of meal deals, mains and snacks sold are plant-based.
- b. Lobby Rootes Grocery Store to ensure at least 50% of drinks sold are plant-based.
4. To mandate the Environment and Ethics Officer to research and decide alternatives to the current animal products in the university's food system, with support from The Warwick Alt Protein Project.
5. To mandate the Students' Union to come out with a statement outlining the transition to an affordable plant-based food system.
6. To work actively with Warwick Enable to ensure plant-based food is accessible to all, ensuring all menu items meet the varied needs of neurodivergent and disabled people.
7. Should the university join us in facilitating this necessary transition, the Plant Based Universities campaign has professional support from catering and nutritional organisations to ensure changes are swift and easy
 - a. Plant-based health professionals will uphold the nutritional standards of food
 - b. Made in Hackney offer training to catering staff, facilitate menu innovation as well as climate footprint calculations and labelling for food items.¹¹

The Board held a discussion regarding the motion and the following vote was recorded

- Pause Ratification
- Ratifying in Part as below

Resolves

- | | |
|------|-------------------------|
| No1 | For - Ratified |
| No 2 | Against - not ratified. |
| No 3 | For - Ratified |
| No 4 | Against - not ratified. |
| No 5 | For - Ratified |
| No 6 | For - Ratified |
| No 7 | Against - not ratified. |

5. Warwick SU to boost voter turnout.

For 1015 / Against 90 / Abstain 227

This Union Resolves:

1. For the VP Democracy and Development, during Freshers week or in the few weeks after it, to run a campaign encouraging students to register to vote
2. Additionally, this campaign should encourage students to bring a valid form of ID to polling stations.
3. This campaign is to include information that in local elections students can vote in both their home and university wards, and encouraging students to register for a postal vote at home
4. In the run up to local elections, for the same campaign to be run
5. In the period before a general election, or in a byelection in the local area (all Coventry seats, Warwick and Leamington, Kenilworth and Southam), for the VP

Democracy and Development, to run a much larger campaign, possibly hiring democracy assistants, encouraging students to register to vote.

6. This policy replaces previous policy on this issue, namely 138 Student Voter Registration
7. For a general election, for the SU to attempt to hold hustings for candidates in both the Coventry South and Warwick and Leamington constituencies.

Although there is a cost implication with the recruitment of Democracy assistants, this has been budgeted for.

Motion Ratified

- 6. Warwick stands in solidarity with Professor Hakim Adi and the campaign to the Save the MRes in the History of Africa and the African Diaspora**
For 746 / Against 122 / Abstain 471

This Union Resolves:

1. To pressure the University to formally consider the adoption of the MRes at Warwick, and raise this matter at the highest levels of the University.
2. To pressure the University to formally consider accommodating the affected MRes students and PhD candidates, and raise this matter at the highest levels of the University.
3. To coordinate with the UCU and the Save the Mres Campaign in building joint solidarity between students and staff to stand with Professor Adi and students affected
4. To pressure the University to offer funding for students of African and African-Caribbean descent to study the MRes in the History of Africa and the African Diaspora and undertake PhD studies on African and African diasporic histories
5. To support student groups who may fundraise for legal action to clarify how the Equality Act 2010 should be applied across universities in the UK with regard to courses disproportionately taken by students with protected characteristics.

Motion Ratified

- 7. Warwick SU to support Muslim, Arab and Palestinian students in face of Islamophobic and racist attacks.**
For 1052 / Against 133 / Abstain 148

This Union resolves:

1. To write a statement condemning the threats of safety to Palestinian, Arabs and Muslims on campus which is rooted in a long history of Islamophobia.
2. The SU to support and not demonise Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims when they have voiced the oppression they and Palestinians have faced, both on campus and in Palestine.
3. To condemn the personal attacks geared to Palestinian, Arabs and Muslim on campus and actively protect their freedom of expression as articulated in international law.

4. The SU to be committed and make clear their support for Palestinian students and those living in occupied Palestine and in Gaza.
5. To support and protect Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims on campus when they're hosting events, demos and other forms of expression which doesn't further endanger their safety and wellbeing but actively supports them.
6. To reaffirm the APG definition of Islamophobia by committing that any form of targeting, doxing and attacks (physical and verbal, both online and in person) on Palestinians, Arabs and Muslim (including student societies/groups) who voice their support on Palestine is Islamophobic and will be taken seriously.

Motion

Vote to ratify all resolves with the exception of resolve 4 – **Ratified**

Resolve 4 Ratification vote as is in full - 4 votes

Resolve 4 Amended version - suggested amendment *The SU to be committed to make clear their support for Arab, Muslim and Palestinian students at Warwick -*

Ratified

8. Warwick against genocide in Gaza.

For 1059 / Against 200 / Abstain 179

This Union revolves:

1. To publicly call for a ceasefire and a just peace that realises the full rights of the Palestinian people under international law, condemn war crimes in Gaza and lobby for the University to do the same
2. To lobby the university to adopt an ethical investment policy which commits them to not invest in companies that are complicit in human rights abuses including those against the Palestinian people and to break wider ties with such companies
3. To lobby the university to take practical action in solidarity with Palestinian academics and students including developing a scholarship programme for Palestinian students, relationships with Palestinian academics and twinning with Palestinian higher education institutions
4. To publicly set out what actions it has taken to date on the basis of its existing policy, such as Warwick Against the Arms Trade, to end the University's complicity in Israeli apartheid.
5. To support campaigns, protests and actions in solidarity with the Palestinian people and against the ongoing war on Gaza at Warwick including but not limited to:
 - a. Using SU communication channels including all student emails, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter posts to share information about such events and campaigns
 - b. Coordinating transport to the national demonstrations in London organised by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign.
6. To defend academic freedom and provide support to students censored, harassed, and/or disciplined for legitimate expressions of solidarity with the Palestinian people
7. To campaign against all forms of racism including anti-Palestinian racism, antisemitism and islamophobia at Warwick and in wider society

Motion

- Resolves

- No1 For - **ratified**
- No 2 For - **ratified**.
- No 3 For - **ratified**
- No 4 For – **ratified** with the amended wording to, *To publicly set out what actions it has taken to date on the basis of its existing policy, such as Warwick Against the Arms Trade*
- No 5 Against - ratification
- No 6 For - **ratified**
- No 7 For - **ratified**

9. Warwick SU supports a trans-inclusive ban on conversion therapy.

For 1004 / Against 146 / Abstain 210

The Union resolves:

1. For Warwick SU to work with other SUs, including UCLan SU, on the campaign in favour of a ban.
2. For Warwick SU to offer material support to the Trans Students Officer and the LGBTQUA+ Students Officer to work on this campaign.
3. For Warwick SU to publicise and circulate the petition to ban conversion therapy in the UK, and ensure that students are made aware that the practice is not banned, and that they can work to ensure that it is.
4. If Warwick SU rejoins the NUS before such a ban is implemented, to mandate NUS delegates work towards and vote for the NUS to take this campaign on nationally, and at a minimum make a statement on the issue.
5. To make connections with trusted mental health service providers to ensure that the SU is equipped to help assist any survivors of conversion therapy who currently attend Warwick or may do in the future.
6. If such a ban is not included in the 2023 King's Speech, for Warwick SU to issue a statement and call to action in favour of a ban and expressing disappointment in further delay.
7. This could include resources on how to contact your MP, supporting LGBTQ+ charities, and signing a petition.

Motion - Ratified

10. Commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day to stand up to Racism.

For 1088 / Against 92 / Abstain 255

The Union resolves:

1. The Students Union commemorates Holocaust Memorial Day every year.
2. The Students Union, and the VP Welfare and Campaigns, launch a series of events regarding Holocaust Memorial Day to educate members of the Campus community about the dangers of Racism and extremism.

Motion – Ratified

2.8 ED&I

ED&I will be covered at the February Board meeting

2.9 Safeguarding Update

TM provided a brief update with regards to the Safeguarding project, working in collaboration with the University on a workshop, our safe guarding work is continuing a policy is now in place and a Lunch and Learn was held to broaden the staff awareness, which also includes an Evolve training and learning pathway.

2.10 Subcommittee Minutes

Sub committee minutes were provided for the Board for information, if there are any points the Trustees would like to query or raise, please email the relevant Director or **MCC**.

BA raised a query regard the updating of the impact assessment process. **AT** clarified that it was discussed at the last Governance and Appointment meeting and work will commence in conjunction with full time officers team, **EB** suggested it may be beneficial to have a Student or Lay Trustees involved in the Impact Assessment process, **PS** suggested we would work through the recommendations and progress from there.

2.11 Action Log

The Action log will be reviewed and updated

AOB

Next Meeting – 8th February 2024