



TRUSTEE COUNCIL MEETINGS

Minutes for the Twenty-third Trustee Council meeting held on Thursday the 16th of February in The Olive Garnett Building, Froebel College.

Present Jack De France, George Cole, Marie Johansen, Ian Robinson, Tessa Willy, Andy Smith, Hameed Mozaffari, Brian Stewart

In Attendance Matt Wall, Kennedy Small

Apologies David Martin

Minutes: Minutes from the last Trustee Meeting were approved by those present.

Matters Arising:

The Action Points from the previous meeting will now be addressed in several of the agenda items for the present meeting.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

1: Trustee Meeting Dates

Jack De France

Jack apologised for the confusion surrounding the current meeting as there were some dates sent out conflicting with the originally proposed date for this current meeting. A number of dates were discussed so as to avoid this confusion for future meetings and to make sure everyone is aware of the proposed dates as far ahead in advance as possible. Once formalised by those present, Jack will then circulate an email letting Board members know when the Trustee meeting will be taking place as far as December 2018.

2: Summer Ball Budget – Papers Attached

Steve Molyneaux

Last year we were able to save money on the Summer Ball by sending a tender publication to production houses in order to get the best price we could. This meant we shaved £3,000 off the production costs from last year and we are hoping to do the same this year.

The sales strategy is slightly different this year as we now have an online platform from which to sell tickets. We are still conscious that keeping the face to face contact is vital to our sales and this was demonstrated when we sold 1,800 tickets on the first day of sales last year, however with this new online platform it will allow students who are on

placement or away on study abroad schemes to still buy the tickets. We will decide nearer the time just how many we want to sell via the online method.

The only concern with ticket sales this year is that there is a slightly shorter time period in which to sell them. We aren't too worried about this though as the online element will hopefully help our sales massively and it will also mean that there aren't massive amounts of cash in the offices at one time.

There is a slight saving in the headline act this year with £5,000 being taken off from last year and bringing the cost down to £25,000 where it normally lies. In the documentation you can see that we saved on our support act last year, however this was due to The Enemy pulling out and us replacing them with Becky Hill who didn't cost as much.

The marquees are another area where we save as we split the cost with Sport Roehampton who have use of them in the week leading up to the Summer Ball.

Charwells have agreed to fund the artists riders which is normally a cost incurred by the SU so this is a massive help when trying to reduce costs. There is also an £11,000 contribution from the University which is normally divided up between a couple of production guys who can create promotional material that the Uni can use when advertising to potential students, as well as money towards the marquees and the bar costs.

The cost of the tickets for the staff party, hosted by Froebel College on the same night as the Ball and housed on the same grounds, does not feature in the "break even costs" as it is a separate entity.

As an addition to this year's Ball, we launched a V.I.P scheme back in January, aimed at giving students with fantastic attendance or good grades the chance to attend the Summer Ball with added perks. We are planning on giving these 100 students their own enclosed area at the Ball with use of a private bar, food provisions and their own portaloos. The aim is to target students who aren't normally part of our event demographic and to hopefully give them positive lasting memories of their time at Roehampton. This area would also be funded by Chartwells.

Hameed asked how we can insure that students who receive these V.I.P tickets don't then sell them on to other students. Steve answered that the tickets will clearly state that they are non-transferable and that there will be a list of names assigned to each ticket so hopefully this will eradicate this problem.

Steve anticipates a small dropout rate but if it's the case that this is more significant then we will have to reassess the whole area as we don't want to provide the space for only 20 people to make use of it, for example. There could be a situation in place where there's a waiting list of people just in case lots of people did drop out but this will be decided and confirmed nearer the time once we know numbers.

George asked if those people selected for V.I.P tickets were able to bring a guest as it may be that they are commuting in and don't have a friendship base on campus. Steve agreed that if this was the case then they will be assigned a guest ticket nearer the time. Ian asked a question as to whether the capacity had changed from last year and Steve noted that we always have the provisions to accommodate 2,375 people on the site and as a result we normally don't sell over the 2,300 ticket mark. Ian also went on to ask as to whether we'd thought about selling the tickets earlier to avoid the shorter time period this time around and Steve mentioned that he likes to have a full line up in place before we release any of the promotional material or the tickets so students know exactly what they

are paying the money for. In terms of building the hype around the Ball, there will be promotional material in the bar, as well as information on our website over the Easter Holidays reminding students that the Summer Ball is coming up very soon.

George also noted that it was beneficial having the line up announced and tickets on sale after the Easter break as it meant that the majority of student would have their loans in for the Summer Term and this would enable them to buy tickets more easily than if the tickets had gone on sale towards the end of the Spring term as many people would not have £50 to spend at that time.

Steve is mindful that to students £50 is a lot of money, however he is pleased that he has managed to keep this ticket price constant over the years and that this has had a positive impact on the Ball as a whole.

Matt added that the University immensely value us for this event and it's a good selling point for them in their publication material. We've also removed some funding that we'd normally allocate for the Summer Ball and put it into other areas so he's pleased that we've still managed to break even, even with this loss of money to the event. George mentioned about the money from the National Student Survey and Matt answered that the money the Uni give us from the students completing this has been put back into academic representation.

Tess asked if there were any issues surrounding the NSS this year as many Universities had chosen to boycott it. In response, Marie said that we chose not to boycott it and even without the University emailing third year students about it, we recorded the highest number of responses and were able to get some invaluable information from it. The positives in running the campaign far outweighed the negatives and Matt added that the majority of Student Union's boycotting the survey were part of Russell group Universities and that for us, it wasn't a battle we needed to fight.

In terms of the Summer Ball, Jack noted that any questions or comments surrounding the event itself or the budget should be directed to Steve.

3: Volunteering Strategy – Papers Attached **Iain Pullar**

With Iain being unwell on the day of the meeting the strategy was presented by Matt and Jack.

The document itself was devised by Iain, our Membership Services Manager as well as our Volunteering and Societies interns. With Iain leaving us in March it meant that the strategy had to be looked at in terms of potential staffing changes to the SU. Within Iain's 18 months of being at Roehampton, the membership aspects of the Student Union have seen huge development and it gives us the ability to put a plan in place for the next 4 years. The SU will likely take on two new permanent members of staff who will focus on the volunteering and societies aspects so the Membership Services Manager role can be run at a more tactical strategic level.

At this point Jack mentioned to the Council members that our societies are thriving at the moment and that we are doing as much as we can to make them successful with the resources that we have. We have also set up committees within various categories and are encouraging students to lead and teach other students for future development. Jack also

noted that they are thinking of rebranding the volunteering aspect as it was thought that this word put a lot of students off and that they also didn't realise what constituted volunteering, such as Programme reps.

Matt added that the University also runs a volunteering scheme and that sometimes it's a battle to direct students to the right opportunities. By restructuring the model to just push all traffic through one portal run by the Students' Union, then hopefully we can engage with more students and find the right opportunities for them.

Jack noted that the document was very similar to the draft that he's had some input into but is conscious that this document was created by a team of people who were aware that they were leaving soon, so feels that it was slightly rushed in order to present it today.

Those gathered were asked if they had any questions surrounding the strategy and Hameed asked what the SU were planning to do in order to maintain engagement after the first few weeks of term are over. He mentioned the "Give It A Go" schemes that other Universities offer which aim to maintain the commitment and engagement after the excitement of the first few weeks.

Jack responded that the idea of the sub committees within each area was to make sure that the engagement is student-led so that we don't always have to prompt them to arrange various things within their remit.

Matt added that by moving towards a staff model for the areas of societies and volunteering, this will provide stability looking ahead.

Tess asked when this draft will be confirmed and Jack responded that it'll probably be finalised once there is a new Membership Services Manager in place as it would be nice to get their input on this so they can have some ownership over it.

Ian was concerned that it didn't feel like we were aiming to measure anything tangible with this proposal. He mentioned the MSL system we now have in place and how it allows us to collect data on various things so it would be beneficial to use this within the strategy to measure the growth over time. He also mentioned focussing on two or three points within each area that we can look at and measure to get a good idea of how we then move forward with this.

Action point – to review when new staff are in place and had time to construct Activities strategy

4: Chief Executive Update

Matt Wall

With the new semester programme in place it means we have less contact hours with the students and this could pose a problem for our commercial revenue.

The Election Nominations period has been extended to almost 2 months and this has allowed us to promote the positions available fully with the hope that more students are aware of this and decide to run. Ideally we're hoping for 10% of our student population which would be 85 candidates.

There has also been a great response on the student feedback survey that was sent out with just under 800 students completing it and 6,000 individual pieces of data to collate.

Tess asked if there was to be a formal report published around the findings and Matt confirmed that this would be the case and they are just analysing the surveys now.

George also added that there is also a weekly meeting that senior members of staff within the SU sit in that discussed various things that may occur from week to week so this is a good way to tackle things as they come up and make sure everyone is on the same page. The main issues to come out of the survey so far centre around finance, courses and accommodation and the invaluable information this has provided means that it's definitely something that we will look to repeat next year.

We have trained just under 80% of all Programme Reps and this is a huge achievement so thank you to Marie for facilitating this.

Matt would also like to thank Jack for the work he's put into the SUC meetings in creating a more robust model moving forward.

The 8th of March sees the annual Women's conference and Marie has been taking the lead on this. With over 80 people interested in the event and 20 already signed up we are confident that it will be a success and off the back of this, plus the two successful BAME conferences we held, the University is looking into providing funding for more influential speakers to come on to campus.

The events programme is continuing to look strong. With our new online platform it has given us the ability to put tickets for events online via our website and this has helped students who are on placement or who can't make it into our offices for any reason.

On Friday the 20th of January, the Bop, that we hold in Monte Hall every week, experienced some lighting issues and as a result we had to cancel the event. As this event was part of our re-freshers programme and therefore required students to buy tickets in advance, we then had to transfer all the students' tickets to the Bop the following week. This meant that we had a slight hole in our events budget but we are confident that we can fill this throughout the year. As a result we also invested in new lighting and sound equipment to ensure that this doesn't happen again. Matt stressed that things like this are very rare and that it was a blessing that it happened at the Bop and not at the Summer Ball.

The programme of events that we host under our "alcohol-free" banner are also doing very well and Matt is impressed with the work that has been put into making sure that these are a success.

Re-freshers fair in January was also a great success and was the biggest one to date. Unfortunately there are no statistics on footfall but it was great to see a buzz around campus again and really helped to create that college atmosphere.

The report was paused in order to say goodbye to our Trustee Andy Smith, who is the CEO of the charity Regenerate in the local area and who has sat on the Board of Trustees for 7 years.

Matt wanted to thank Andy for all his hard work during this time and that collaborating with Regenerate has allowed us as an SU to achieve great things, including the Hive Cafe.

Andy also expressed how grateful he was to have the SU's support and that his charity has hugely benefitted from the University being in the local area.

Going back to his report, Matt stated that the Volunteering and RAG ventures were really strong, however, moving away from an internship model would only benefit these areas more.

The Hive Cafe has a similar sales forecast for this year but the structure has changed slightly with a role being removed in favour of the Student Duty Supervisor role.

Growhampton is also going from strength to strength and they are currently looking after our Green Impact Submission, which we are hoping to achieve Gold on this year for the third year running. This might pose some challenges as the criteria has changed from last year but we are positive we can achieve this goal.

The Communications department has been given some extra resources and it means that they are working at a much higher turnover rate for publications, posters etc. However, there is currently a Student Media Intern role which Matt feels isn't a good use of resources, so this will be assessed and Matt may bring a paper to the next Trustee meeting outlining his proposal for this.

There is a new library being built on Digby Stuart College and the old library building will be used to house the Media Culture and Language department so we are looking to work in conjunction with them in order to lessen the load on this internship.

Our Membership Services Manager, Iain, is leaving us in March, just after the elections and Matt is conscious to keep these elections on track and maintain the level of engagement with students. There will be re-recruitment for this role, but only once we've had confirmation of the block grant and decided how it'll be divided up.

We are currently having an appraisal process for the interns and Matt wanted to note that it has been a particularly difficult year for the team in view of personal matters, but that they've managed to pull together and he's proud of the work that the team have put out.

The National Student Survey has also gone really well too and Matt wanted to thank Marie for all her hard work on this. It means that we are able to benchmark ourselves and gives us tangible goals to aim for.

5: University Catering Tendering Update – Papers Attached Matt Wall

Having submitted a proposal from the Students' Union regarding the catering outlets, we were basically told that there was no scope for us to run any more outlets on campus which Matt sees as an opportunity missed by the University. Instead they have asked us to focus on finding ways to increase our commercial revenue which seems paradoxical when they aren't giving us any opportunity to do this through the catering outlets on campus.

Having spoken with Reggie - the Director of Finance - this morning, Matt confirmed that he was opposed to giving us control of the main catering outlet in the new library which will probably see the most traffic of all the outlets.

Jack added that he seemed to think that the proposal we put forward rather fell on deaf ears and that it was more a question of finances rather than the impact on students.

Ian noted that with the catering contract ending, it was a unique opportunity for us to get the foot in the door and it's such a shame this is not the case, especially when the paper is well argued and makes some great points.

Tess asked if we thought that maybe the University had some prior agreements with the external caterers that we weren't aware of and George noted that Reggie's always been precious about the new library and exactly which services will go into it. He is thinking about it with a financial head and what will generate the most revenue for the University. Ian observed that normally contract caterers don't usually generate a large amount of profit for the University and it's usually for the benefit of the supplier. He also felt that it was surely a no brainer using the Students' Union and keeping that money within the University and asked if we had spoken to anyone else in order to garner some support for our proposal.

Jack said that he'd spoken to the Pro Vice Chancellor, Paul O'Prey, but he seemed to back Reggie's decisions surrounding the library catering outlet.

6: Audited Accounts Draft – Paper Tabled

Ken Small

These are the draft accounts for last year. We had a loss of £30,000 from last year. The funding from the Student Green fund ended however we still received £65,000 towards Growhampton for the academic year 2015/16.

We paid £9,576 to clear the society debt that has accumulated over the years.

Trading activities for the Hive cafe went up, as did the commercial income.

The Bar profits have previously been capped at £13,000, however Matt managed to negotiate a deal which saw us receive £15,000 this year. Over time we hope to get this up to £25,000 but Matt noted that the bar had performed poorly over the last few years and so we couldn't get any more profit than the £15,000 we received.

Costs have increased to almost £100,000 and we always struggle with depreciation year on year. The containers used to create the Hive Cafe have a 25% depreciation value each year. Our total cost of depreciation is £67,000.

The payroll costs went up and Matt said that one of the reasons for this was that we didn't anticipate a member of staff going on maternity leave and as they held an academic representation role, it was felt that this needed to be staffed so we paid for a member of staff to take on that role. Essentially we were paying for the role twice that year. The total payroll costs amount to £546,000 and this is up from last year but we've also taken on more part time members of staff in the Hive.

The reserves went down from £246,000 to £215,990 and this meant we held £144,000 in the bank last year.

Our main creditor is the University and they are responsible for our payroll, they pay our salaries and we pay them back. Normally they give us the block grant with time to do this. The block grant for this year is slightly up on what it was last year, going from £377,000 to £389,000. The University also gives us money for our affiliation with NUS as well as a £50,000 pot of money from Student Senate to be allocated wherever students feel it should go.

The £167,023 figure is from the Hive sales although this isn't a good representation as the figure is more like £200,000 but a large chunk is taken due to VAT. There is a VAT consultant coming in during the first week of March so hopefully we can seek some professional advice on how to reduce this going forward.

Ian asked what Ken would like the Trustees to do with the accounts, and if they were to be signed off/approved then he's feel more reassured with David having seen them as this is his area of expertise.

Ken answered that it was more to give Trustees an insight and Ian was keen for a Trustee to meet with the auditors to discuss their findings just so he feels confident when approving the accounts.

Matt noted that he was setting up a finance committee to make sure that David gets a chance to see these accounts.

Jack asked who it was that appointed the auditors and Matt answered that it was more historical than anything as David had worked for Knox Cropper previously and still has a good relationship with them. This is not a conflict of interest as he no longer works for this company.

Ian emphasised that he's be keen for the Trustees to have some form of correspondence with the auditors, even just via email so they can feel confident with the accounts.

Matt also commented that he'd want Jack to sign off on the accounts, as Siobhan had done previously, so felt it was important for him to get a grasp on the accounts in order to feel comfortable approving them.

Ian also pointed out that to table such an important document at the meeting so there isn't a chance to see it prior to the meet wasn't acceptable and that these should be sent out in advance so questions can be raised in the meeting. Ken did note that he had been very unwell for a large period of the financial year, so this is why the accounts have only just been ready to present at this meeting.

The deadline for the accounts to be signed off will be in May. The University also need to see these accounts in order to sign off on the block grant.

Matt just wanted to give the Trustees assurance that the reserve policy that we have should anything drastic happen is three months and this includes staffing costs etc. It is also not a bad thing to be running at a deficit with block grant negotiations on the horizon. However, our resources are stretched and we'd have a £30,000 surplus were it not for depreciation.

7: Management Accounts – Paper Tabled

Ken Small

These accounts are taking into consideration the past 6 months.

There is a £389,000 projection for the block grant and this is not set to change. The Student Senate contribution remains at £50,000, taking into consideration the £21,000 from the NUS, however this figure could go down. We also gain a £11,000 bonus for Freshers Week.

Removing depreciation costs still leaves us with a £20,000 surplus, even with additional costs.

Matt is looking to do some cost saving strategies with Ken.

It was at this point that Ian had to leave and as this meant that Tess was our only remaining external Trustee at the meeting, it was felt that the remaining agenda items could be brought to the next meeting in June.

Those present expressed that they were looking forward to the Away Day in April so these matters can be discussed in detail with more time to do so.

There was also a talk about the difficult balance between getting the papers out in time and the fact that things change so quickly that what was present in the papers might be different come the meeting.

Guy Drury, our new Trustee will be joining the team for the Away Day and Jack noted that he was a perfect fit as he had a wealth of knowledge in the charity sector.

Date of Next Meeting – 13th of June 2017

Kate Griffiths
Secretary
April 2017