



TRUSTEE BOARD

Minutes

Date	11/06/20
Time	16:00
Location	Online via Microsoft Teams
Members	Molli Cleaver (MC), Zeid Sharif (ZS), Gemma King (GK), Fifi Bangham (FB), Daisy O'Connor (DO), Jack Maddock (JM), Josh Yelland (JY), Lillie-Mae Firmin (LF), Will Page (WP), Serhan Wade (SW), Frances McConnell (FM), Mark Stoddart (MS)
In Attendance	Ryan Bird (RB), Richard Lines (RL), James Wilson (JW), Caitlin Pilkington (CP), Sheldon Allen (SA), Mike Phillips (MP), Rachel Wates (RW), Bandy Karki (BK), Rachel Osborne (RO), George Ingram (GI), Alex Rose (AR), Kyle Smith (KS)
Apologies	-
Chair	Molli Cleaver
Secretary	Kyle Smith

Agenda Point	Minutes
1.1 Welcome and introduction	MC welcomed the board, and reminded all attendees that only current board members have voting rights and the ability to attend closed business. Attendees went through and introduced themselves.
1.2 Apologies	No apologies were noted.
1.3 Minutes of the last meeting	Minutes of the last meeting were approved with no questions or comments.
1.4 Matters arising	No matters arising to note.
2.1 Strategy update	MC handed over to RB for the strategy update. RB has prepared a short term strategy plan and would value input from the board regarding how to advance with the Strategic Operating Plan (SOP). Changes in senior leadership and the COVID-19 situation means the SOP has not yet been fully implemented. In the midst of the current environment, RB feels it is not the right time to launch a long term strategy, and so instead is proposing a short term interim plan for the foreseeable future. The attached paper provides an outline to RB's strategy plans; RB has prioritised using more accessible, student-friendly language to increase RUSU's transparency to its student members. JM noted that the strategy looks very useful and is a sensible approach based upon the current situation. JM feels whilst it is useful to look to the long term, a short term approach may be more suitable at this current time.



	<p>FM agreed and comments that RB has done a good job by keeping the essence of the SOP but making it more accessible for students. FM suggested that it may be worth rewording the change section to emphasise positive change.</p> <p>MS asked regarding environmental sustainability – is the aim to influence the University rather than just RUSU? RB notes the current SOP is very heavily RUSU oriented, but a lot of the work the organisation is doing is more focused on the broader university environment. MC noted that most sustainability work done in RUSU has to come through the University, and most students do not necessarily differentiate between RUSU and the University.</p> <p>JM asked if this strategy plan is to be approved at this stage. RB comments that if members are happy to approve, RB can take this up with managers now and start work on it sooner. Equally members can wait if they want more time to read over it.</p> <p>Members approved RB's strategy plan and were happy for RB to continue working on it further.</p> <p>FM mentioned that the planning timeline refers to an end of June/early July approval of the annual plan. RB commented he would be working on improving these principles and he can move forward with this now.</p> <p>RW asked for clarification regarding the triangle structure of the organisation. RB noted he will provide a more in depth explanation of this structure during officer training, but for now the triangle provides a basis for the organisation to operate from.</p> <p>MC thanked RB for his work on the strategy.</p>
2.2 Governance	<p>MC passed over to JM for an update on governance. JM stated that since the last Trustee Board meeting, he has been working on and reviewing the Union's governance by using a number of established resources. This work is ongoing and JM hopes to share more over the coming months. There will be a good amount of discussion coming from it with opportunities to note areas to focus on. JM invited any questions or comments.</p> <p>MC asked JM if he will need any input from current officers. JM will take some time to think about it and get back to MC.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">JM to update Trustees on governance review at future meeting.
2.3 Risk register review	<p>MC handed back to RB for a review of the risk register.</p> <p>RB wanted to go through the register in more detail in light of the current environment. The register is now organised into strategic risks, which Trustees should regularly be made aware of, mission critical risks, which are managed by the day to day management team, and service delivery risks, which are lower level risks managed by</p>

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Action: JM to update Trustees on governance review at future meeting.
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Action: RB/RL to take incorporate comments from Board members and to consider more detail surrounding safeguarding of students at events.



departmental/line managers. The register describes the types of risks RUSU may face, their severity, and prospective counter measures.

RB notes the document should be reviewed fully annually at Trustee Board but looked at more frequently by the Finance Committee. RB will go through this document in more detail in the future with new trustees.

RB welcomes any comments or feedback.

JY asked regarding the nursery's risk score. RB clarified the nursery is a high risk area regardless, but the current situation of campus closure has lead the nursery to be RUSU's highest financial risk. Under more normal circumstances risks would primarily just encompass safeguarding and similar risks.

MS liked the document. MS asked about safeguarding students when they come to RUSU for an event, and whether this should be added to the register. MS also asked if the register should include the potential risks of trading and working with third parties. RB noted the first point has been considered, as has the second, although these could be made clearer if needed. RL suggested reviewing the safeguarding students risk alongside RB for the future.

FM agreed with Mark and likes the document. FM suggested moving bullets 4-6 to the next line on page 17. FM further noted, in regards to governance risk and underperformance, there may be a conflict of interest in the Trustees having ownership of the register despite Trustee underperformance being on the document. FM noted she would follow up the meeting with an email to RB and JM noting some minor amendments.

MP agreed with the previous comments, and added that the training is there to help protect the charity by maintaining evidence that the organisation is providing staff & students with the knowledge to prevent future risks. MP noted to follow up the meeting with some feedback.

JM reiterated that it would make sense for Finance Committee to monitor the register more frequently with Trustee Board maintaining overall ownership. MS agreed with this.

DO emphasised that points 17 and 18 could be clarified further, with 18 focusing more on charities, and 17 focusing more on contractors.

MC shared a document the current FTO team have been working on encompassing expected risks for the coming year, which should help guide the risk register and the new team. MC will go through these in more depth with the new officers. Trustee Board members were invited to provide any additional risks relating to this document.

RW asked regarding the stance on the political situation in China and Hong Kong, and the fallout from an incident regarding the incoming International Students' Officer. ZS responded that he will bring up the International Students' Part-time Officer in more detail under AOB. In regards to Hong Kong and China, RUSU does not currently hold an



	<p>official stance, and any stance would be for next year's FTO team to decide.</p> <p>RB added that many of the things within the document shared by MC will mostly concern RUSU's reputation with the University and the student body.</p> <p>RW asked regarding resits and their costs. FB clarified that resits are uncapped and free if students have gone through the SIT process, but if students do not it will be charged as normal.</p> <p>JM asked regarding the issues listed on the document. MC noted it is more for guidance and to help raise potential issues the new officer team may face in advance.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>RB/RL to take and incorporate comments from Board members and to consider more detail surrounding safeguarding of students at events.</u>
2.4 'Big 3' review	<p>At the beginning of the academic year, the current FTO team set out 3 realistic targets to steer their work for the year. MC took the opportunity to review these targets alongside the current FTO team.</p> <p>ZS started by talking about how the team have worked on embracing different cultures. International Showcase and the Cultural Show took place, more events have been created this year, and more food tasting sessions have continued to expand the menus on campus. Mind The Gap was worked on by ZS and FB and this work is being written up in the hope next year's team will continue work on it. #NeverOK has gone well this year, and a RUSU officer will now be a co-chair of the committee.</p> <p>Some Part-time Officers were really engaged this year, and ZS highlighted the outgoing International Students' Officer, LGBTQ+ Officer, and Disabled Students' Officer, all of whom have worked really hard on a variety of events and campaigns.</p> <p>GK followed up by talking about how the team have worked on engaging the student community. GK and DO have created a Facebook page for commuting students, and MC and DO attended welcome talks for commuting students. On wellbeing, GK has worked on her 1 in 4 campaign this year to help promote student wellbeing, including organising a variety of talks and the welfare directory. GK and DO have completed work on consent training and committee training for sports and societies to help make campus safer. A JCR rebrand has also taken place to help promote positive behaviour at socials and increase engagement with halls JCR. Officers worked on the Be A Mate campaign to help promote alcohol awareness and safe consumption. Encouraged the University to give students in halls a refund for summer term, and the Rent with Confidence scheme is being pushed back by the council due to COVID-19.</p>



	<p>MC followed by clarifying that voting screens are on pause due to COVID-19. The Mojors renovation is also on pause following the University's decision to put all capital projects on pause due to COVID, as are glass pods. The canopy idea suggested at the start of the year didn't happen as the team decided to focus their efforts on the Mojors project. A substantial amount of work has gone in to the Sustainability Policy to look at the sourcing of sustainable merchandise, and the Venue Manager has looked at sourcing more merchandise from Fairtrade suppliers.</p> <p>FB updated Trustee Board that some work relating to study space is currently on pause due to COVID. However, furniture for a number of extra study spaces has been ordered and much of this has been installed/is being installed within the next few weeks.</p> <p>In regards to wellbeing, DO raised that she worked on the Good Lad and consent initiatives with sports committees. DO has also worked on the Knights Pride campaign as well as the Buddy Scheme, both of which have been really positive. DO had been planning an event to allow different sports and societies to try each other's activities. 3G pitch is paused due to COVID-19, but was at a standstill regardless due to the stance of the council. DO has encouraged the use of Olio throughout the year, but more work is required to convince the University to use it. This Girl Can campaign was paused due to the fact that over 50% of participants in RUSU's sports identify as female, and so wasn't a priority.</p> <p>RB praised the current officer team and believes they have done a very good job, especially despite considering the current COVID-19 situation.</p>
<p>3.1 Officer Trustee Reports</p>	<p>DO updated the Trustee Board with her trustee report. DO has been busy despite the lack of sports taking place on campus. Committee training is underway via Microsoft Teams and most committees have begun the training. DO has made progress on a funding boost for sports and societies if they receive an unexpected boost in membership, and the University's alumni department has agreed to fund this. In light of the Black Lives Matter movement, DO has facilitated BAME/Black Students Reps in sports and societies. DO has asked students what they are concerned about regarding moving out, and supporting these students is an ongoing project alongside the advice team. DO has been working on a scheme titled 'Supporting our Students' and plans have been made to increase the longevity of this scheme.</p> <p>No questions or comments on DO's report.</p> <p>FB takes her report as read. Relax with RUSU has now finished and GK and FB would suggest reusing the model for next year – it worked well as an online campaign. FB has been working on a student support welfare and academic support group alongside the University. A number of positive changes have been made regarding study space.</p> <p>No questions or comments on FB's report.</p>



GK takes her report as read. The University are now hosting the welfare directory on Me@Reading, and GK has shared her mental health support survey with University staff members to lobby the University to increase support for students' mental health and welfare. GK hopes to bring the report to relevant committees in her last weeks. Events Rep applications have been received, but applications are still short for Halls Reps, which are part of the JCR rebrand. GK held a 'COVID survival for millennials' workshop which was well received.

No questions or comments on GK's report.

ZS takes his report as read. ZS worked on a number of videos to commemorate IDAHOBIT, and ZS recommends carrying it on throughout the year and not just focusing on specific remembrance days or history events. ZS has been working on supporting the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement by providing a statement, writing to the Reading East MP Matt Rodda, providing information on how to be an ally, and by creating a BLM working group to get student leadership on how RUSU can best support the movement. The group are creating a platform to allow students to anonymously feed in to the working group.

SA asked regarding the MP's response, and whether this could be made accessible to students. ZS agreed this would be a good idea and will share the letter with the student body.

RW asked if any other MPs responded, but ZS clarified he only wrote to Matt Rodda. Parliamentary protocol prevents MPs from replying to people outside of their own constituency.

MC takes her report as read. The JCR rebrand has been going well with a very positive response from the University. Held the first virtual Student Voice with a good level of engagement. Change It! has had a successful year with 10,587 votes on ideas, an increase of over 8,000 on last year, and over 5,000 votes on policy, an increase of over 4,000 on the year before. Letters were sent to MPs last week regarding support for students, with some responses beginning to come back. A template is on the RUSU website to allow students to do this too. Funding will be made available for students to apply for, enabling student-led sustainability projects, and a section of the website is being built to showcase RUSU's sustainability work. MC's Sustainability Policy is close to complete and is awaiting confirmation from Policy & Procedures. MC and FB have finished new candidate's handbooks for the Spring Elections. MC has been doing a lot of work surrounding welcome week and fresher's, and what events RUSU is doing on campus. The University have paused all capital projects to prioritise COVID mitigation, meaning the majority of the £1 Million projects are on hold. RUSU's access to this funding pot is currently under review and will be confirmed by UEB alongside the new officer team.

CP asked regarding fresher's fayres for societies and sports, and whether it will be held virtually or not. DO responded that RUSU are not currently completely sure, and it depends on what guidance the University decides to follow for large gatherings. RL further explained



	<p>that plans are significantly aimed towards a physical fresher's. It is more favourable for student engagement to hold a physical fresher's, but plans have been made in the meantime for digital events and virtual engagement.</p> <p>RW asked regarding the elections handbooks and the rules within them. MC clarified that the current officers are happy with the handbook and have reviewed the election rules, but it will ultimately fall to who sits on the elections committee for the next academic year to review this. FB further notes that this handbook should contain everything candidates need instead of signposting to different areas of the website.</p> <p>SA asked regarding using student input for the election rules. FB responded that a lot of the changes came from student feedback and the rules should reflect this feedback as much as possible.</p>
3.2 CEO Report	<p>MC handed over to RB for the CEO's report. RB noted that his report makes use of a new format and feedback would be useful.</p> <p>COVID-19 is taking up a significant amount of management time. Hoping for consistent access to the RUSU building from mid-July, but general approach is that staff will generally work from home until September. The nursery is set to reopen on the 29th June which is a positive from a financial perspective. Lots of scenario planning going ahead for September and the intake of new students.</p> <p>RB has included some RUSU priorities in the report, with the changeover of officers taking precedence over the next few weeks. RB is continuing to build relationships with key staff and stakeholders. In terms of HR, many staff have been furloughed, and supporting these members of RUSU staff is vital. Finance Committee met recently to predict-review how the current uncertainty will affect RUSU's finances. RB invited any questions and comments.</p> <p>ZS praised the new format and found it easy to read.</p> <p>SA asked regarding the furlough scheme and how RUSU are utilising it, and in particular how might this affect student staff in September. RB notes that not many plans have been made for September-October but it depends on which financial plan RUSU is working towards. The number of student staff job opportunities will likely drop across campus due to the reduced amount of activity, but RB is keen to ensure student staff are supported throughout this time.</p> <p>FM asked regarding the financial scenarios, and clarification between two of the scenarios. Scenario one encompasses not offering commercial services as they are not open, but the third is services open but not bringing in much revenue due to reduced footfall on campus.</p> <p>RB invites members to follow up any questions or comments by getting in touch with him.</p>
4.1 Policy & Procedures	<p>DO and GK mentioned the new BUCS pitch policy. DO noted the idea came through Change It! and wanted to ensure the pitches were</p>



	<p>booked equally and not on the basis of teams' gender. GK added that a review of P&P was completed and GK will pass these suggestions on, such as using a shared hub for policies and using a full-time member of staff to oversee this.</p> <p>No questions or comments were received.</p>
4.2 Management Committee	<p>DO took minutes as read.</p> <p>No questions or comments were received.</p>
4.3 LARC	<p>ZS took minutes as read. ZS noted that there is a new LGBQ+ Officer and there will be a by-election in Autumn for a new International Students' Part-time Officer.</p>
4.4 Finance Committee	<p>MS talked through the April management accounts with the Trustee Board. Trading activity has suffered from the closure of campus and the figure falls below the original estimate made for the budget.</p> <p>Generally, RUSU are saving money by reducing staff expenditure and the organisation has benefitted from the furlough scheme.</p> <p>A gap is opening on the year-end accounts between expected and actual RUSU trading figures due to COVID. MS notes that in the current situation the numbers are respectable.</p> <p>MS notes that under all financial scenarios RUSU are assuming continued funding from the University, and generally the organisation will rely on the University financially.</p> <p>MS finishes by noting that good management of RUSU's finances has allowed for a strong amount of financial reserves which have helped to support the organisation in this time.</p> <p>MS noted the nursery has been struggling financially and the financial sustainability of the nursery will be reviewed at future meetings.</p> <p>MP asked if the working assumption is under the impression that the block grant will continue from the University. RB notes discussions happened early on with the University regarding the block grant, and the University have been very supportive and identify RUSU as a key part of the student experience. RB does not expect the block grant to be reduced but it is not out of the question.</p>
4.5 Health & Safety	<p>RL noted that H&S is currently dominated by COVID-19. Reawakening plans are in advanced stages with PPE, cleaning regimes, and building capacities being calculated, as well as suitable risk assessments being carried out prior to the reopening of the building. The Advice and Representation team are remaining virtual for now. RUSU are looking at thermal imaging cameras but first want to identify how reliable and cost effective they may be. There may be a priority in using the RUSU building as a way of keeping students on campus.</p> <p>JW asked regarding the provision of testing. RL clarified there have been discussions surrounding a testing area on campus to help instil confidence in people regarding the safety of campus.</p>



	<p>CP asked regarding security and the 1m rule, and the difficulties in monitoring it. RL notes it will have to rely heavily on trust and the organisation will need to remain somewhat flexible.</p>
4.6 Environment Committee	<p>MC took the minutes as read. MC provided a background to the Environment Committee to new members of the Trustee Board.</p> <p>MC will be attending RUSU's Green Impact Audit for the accreditation scheme ran by NUS.</p>
4.7 Appointments Committee	<p>ZS explained a number of recommendations made by appointments committee for next year's committee. ZS thanked everyone who had been involved in the appointments committee process throughout the year, with special mention to LF who has dedicated a lot of time to the committee. ZS suggested making the committee more diverse in the future, as this may help in turn to make Trustee Board more diverse. A guide has been created to help support the future committee in appointing trustees.</p> <p>JM suggested a new arrangement for the next appointments committee and that it may be beneficial to hold off on creating a new committee until this arrangement has been finalised. MC notes the importance in appointing the new committee now to allow for the appointment of a new external trustee over the summer.</p> <p>ZS thinks it would be helpful to have an additional officer on the committee.</p> <p>MC opened the discussion for next year's committee. Trustee Board confirmed that Rachel Osborne will sit on the committee, alongside Jack Maddock and Caitlin Pilkington. GI expressed interest, though JM suggested that an additional member could be added once the new FTO team have had the chance to review the other committees they may have the chance to sit on.</p> <p>RW asked regarding why the organisation has both external trustees and students. MC clarified that the organisation utilises both as students feed in from the student perspective, whilst external trustees typically come from established professional backgrounds to bring skills that the Trustee Board requires.</p>
5 AOB	<p>ZS updated the committee that the incoming International Students' Part-time Officer has resigned, with ZS accepting this resignation.</p> <p>MC expressed her gratitude and extended thanks from the Trustee Board to FM for her continued hard work and support to RUSU.</p> <p>MC further thanked the whole Trustee Board in supporting her as chair throughout the year.</p>



Summary of Actions (2):

- JM to update Trustees on governance review at future meeting.
- RB/RL to take and incorporate comments from Board members and to consider more detail surrounding safeguarding of students at events.