Minutes of the CUSU Board of Trustees, 12th July, 2017.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Meeting of:</th>
<th>CUSU Trustee Board</th>
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<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>CUSU Offices, 17 Mill Lane</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date/Time:</td>
<td>6pm, 12th July 2017</td>
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<td>In Attendance:</td>
<td>Trustees: Chair, Roberta Huldisch (RH); Éireann Attridge (ÉA); Jessica Wing (JW); Audrey Sebatindira (AS); Page Nyame-Satterthwaite (PNS); Hannah Thackray (HT); Gareth Marlow (GM).</td>
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<td>Apologies:</td>
<td>Hachimi Maiga (HM); Peter Juhasz (PJ); Amatey Doku (AD) (resigned 30 June 2017).</td>
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<td>Invitees in attendance:</td>
<td>Daisy Eyre (DE); Micha Frazer-Carroll; Florence Oulds (FO); Olivia Hylton-Pennant (OHP); Helen Jennings (HJ); Daniel Dennis (DD); Martha Krish (MK); Lola Olufemi (LO); Mark McCormack (MM); Jennifer Payne (JP).</td>
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A. Board Administration

1. Introductions
   Due to the new Members of the Board present and prospective trustees in attendance, all trustees introduced themselves to the group.

2. Apologies for absence
   As above.

3. Conflicts of interest
   GM again announced a standing conflict due to work commitments engaging with a University Department. No action would be needed at this point.

4. Minutes of the last meeting
   Minutes of June 2017 meeting were approved with no corrections/amendments. Matters Arising would be reported upon in the business of the meeting.

5. Starring and ordering or items for decision/discussion; deferring of items until next Board. None.

B. Organisational Updates

   i) Organisational developments and risk
   MM updated the Board, and items were discussed by the Board.
   MM reported to Board on transitional arrangements for staffing vacancies over the Summer period. Recruitment had begun for vacant positions; staff were in place for imminent
projects; and a temporary bookkeeper had been employed. The Board considered risks associated with vacancies during the Summer period, in particular, those that had the potential to affect: sales and revenue-generation activity; smooth financial operations; and planning for projects, such as the Freshers Fair and Shadowing Scheme ahead of the new academic term.

The Board recognised and thanked the staff team for their hard work during a period of staff turnover and welcomed ongoing recruitment to fill posts and current and future temporary placements to support organisational capacity. The Board also noted operational changes, reported by the General Manager, in financial processes that had supported transparent and compliant behaviour in the Union’s finance function during a period of reduced capacity.

The Board were notified that, due to turnover of personnel, the Union had needed to quickly amend bank signatories and experienced a short period without access to its online bank facility. This period occurred during the monthly payroll run and the University of Cambridge had offered assistance with a temporary solution.

Board asked about the timeline of recruitment activities, in particular that of the Chief Accounts Clerk. Recruitment was underway and the Chief Accounts Clerk role had been offered to a candidate; a temp was in place until mid-August and it was foreseen that a further temp would be required for 1-2 months from August until the position was filled permanently. If the candidate declined the offer, recruitment would be re-initiated and a temporary placement would continue for longer, subject to other solutions that might be explored.

**ii) Fundraising & Services update**

JP presented a tabled paper to Board. JP reviewed the Fundraising, Services and Business operations of the recently closed financial year, 2016-17. The year had been a year in transition due to shortage of staff in the team prior to JP’s appointment in September 2016; unforeseen absence and a vacancy later in the year; and a need to review and improve systems.

Major initiatives had incorporated the Union’s successful joint bid for University funds with the Graduate Union; an improved service provision at the Union’s Reception; and negotiation of larger income-streams, such as licencing and advertising contracts.

Board were updated on the planned changes to service hours at Reception over the Summer, as well as staffing arrangements in the Team during a busy Summer of sales activity. A service and sales strategy was outlined and accepted by Board; over a third of the annual sales target had already been reached.

Board acknowledged the hard work of JP and her team and commended the early sales activity for the 2017-18 year, which looked promising; the emergence of parallel income streams, such as across print and digital areas, offered encouragement at a time when business marketing needs were changing. Board asked about income-generation confidence for the coming year; JP was quietly confident and the budget set had sought to be realistic in a difficult climate where the Union was challenged to generate high levels of funds; even with more effective systems and processes in place as the Union were getting to, there was still lots of work to do to meet the targets.
iii) SUAS (Advice Service) update

Board noted the update from SUAS.

iv) Review of Management Accounts

MM introduced the management accounts. As noted earlier in the meeting the Board again noted that CUSU were experiencing a shortage of capacity in financial administration due to unforeseen absence followed by a vacancy. The Board accepted that financial information presented may not be fully accurate, but had sought to be as clear and conservative in forecast as possible in order to afford a more risk-averse approach.

The accounts currently forecasted a year-end loss of £52k, which was better than had been forecast in April. Income variances included changing arrangements concerning the Union’s historic publications contract that occurred in the year and the receipt of an underspend in University funds from the previous year (restricted). Increased expenditure had occurred in the Union’s governance costs (relating to new constitution) and the NUS affiliation fee.

The Board discussed the 2015-16 audited accounts, which remained outstanding. The auditors had recently requested additional information, which included risk statements and key performance indicators, but were ready to be signed imminently. RH confirmed that, should the accounts be received within the week, RH would sign on behalf of the organisation in AD’s absence. Following this, DE would sign on behalf of the Board.

The Board noted that close monitoring, as far as possible, of the Union’s cash position was underway due to a period of uncertainty with bank access; the University’s funding commitment for the 2017-18 was expected in August. The Board asked about the Union’s current cash position and reserves, which was unclear due to changeover of signatories; the General Manager was working to rectify the situation and the incoming President had been added to the bank mandate. The Board requested more accurate information at future meetings regarding the Union’s reserves and cash flow as this was a particular area of risk that would need to be monitored.

New signatories would be added in accordance with the Financial Procedures Manual in due course. Board mandated that a system for new signatories, reviewed annually, should be put in place and monitored; this would be best managed by the new permanent finance role who would also take responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Financial Procedures Manual.

The Board discussed the annual affiliation to the National Union of Students (NUS) and asked the General Manager to explore the possibility of hardship for the current year.

v) Review of lighting issue

In the June 2017 Trustees meeting, concerns were raised that the lighting continued to be unfit for the organisation's needs, and that the issue needed to be prioritised. The current lighting was reported to be uncomfortable for employees, with particular focus on the basement office; employees felt the light was intense and clinical, with some suggesting it contributed to health concerns. The Board received a paper outlining the background to
the issues, work undertaken so far to address the lighting in the Unions’ space, as well as feedback from employees.

Non-employee Trustees enquired of employee-Trustees as to their own experiences of lighting facilities in place. JW stressed that lost-productivity due to poor lighting should be a key concern for the organisation. Consultation indicated that people believed natural daylight would assist people in their work and the Trustees discussed options relating to this option. Board enquired as to the University’s appetite to support some investment in the building for health and safety reason; MM was pessimistic about this.

Board noted that CUSU were unclear as to the length they could be resident in the building, and this could be short-term or long-term.

Board requested aspects of the proposed action timeline be brought forward; MM assured the Board actions would be initiated immediately, however was also pessimistic of response-times from University personnel.

RH thanked everyone who contributed to the review.

For discussion

i) CUSU’s forthcoming strategic plan

MM introduced the item: a schedule for work over the Summer months to bring the next Strategic Plan plan into fruition. MM hoped to solicit the Board’s view on their expectations of the plan and the define Board’s role in monitoring the plan’s delivery. MM had met privately with GM who had advised on steps to take in the process, splitting the strategic development period into key tasks involving the identification of issues and opportunities, data and trend analysis, response formulation [of the organisation] and then objective-setting and action-planning.

MM expected key themes to be those of finance and sustainability, the Union’s communications goals and its relationship with members; and emerging challenges for students at Cambridge.

Board welcomed the introduction and were keen to see how it progressed; the timeline seemed sensible. Board were keen to ensure any Plan allowed the trustees to keep some measure of how the organisation was performing against its expectations. Board asked MM to circulate the previous strategic plan and undertake a review of the strategic plan to present to the next Board of Trustees.

Board acknowledged the benefit of harvesting knowledge and experience from the outgoing elected team alongside the energy and ideas of new officers. Board were keen to keep energy in the strategic conversations internally as they recognised it was hard to initiate momentum during Michaelmas. Board agreed it would be better to have plan during the current year than a grander strategy that loses focus over time; this may mean versions change or adapt over the coming months, but this would be beneficial.
**ACTION:** MM to circulate previous strategic plan and perform a review of the previous plan to help inform the next Plan’s development. For next meeting, MM to produce an up-to-date timeline for next steps after initial work has begun on the plan.

**ii) Consideration of legal advice on recurrent complaint (confidential)**

Board noted legal advice obtained and discussed the options available to them. A paper was provide to Board outlining the context of the issue. Board had received information to respond to the complaint should it choose. The Board was being asked the extent to which the Union wished to engage with the issue; Members discussed reputational risks and financial risks, as well as scenarios where risks may become more or less likely.

**C. For decision**

**i) Re-consideration of subsistence costs as part of finance policy (paper supplied)**

Board received a paper on the item, which followed an item at a previous meeting where the Financial Procedures Manual had been approved with the exception of passages concerning subsistence expenses for employees.

Following questions from the Board, MM clarified the term ‘incidental allowance’ and what it related to.

Regarding a proposed £30 accommodation allowance, trustees discussed this at length considering:
- a) what, if any, social pressures might be created by implementing the allowance;
- b) the extent to which the allowance met its aim to incentivise efficiencies where possible;
- c) the extent to which the allowance disincentivised employees otherwise acting altruistically when booking accommodation;
- d) whether the policy would privilege those with a wider social network; and
- e) whether employees may miss-out on valuable networking if they stayed in other venues to those of peers at other unions [also attending events].

Clarity was sought on whether the incidental overnight allowance should be mutually exclusive from £30 overnight cost. Board asked about any policy for unforeseen circumstances; MM explained would be personal expense reimbursement.

**DECISION:** Board approved the policy. Board asked for the following to be incorporated into their approval of the proposed policy:
- Time limit for claims should be imposed.
- Reporting mechanism should be in place to come back to Board so can be evaluated. Esp for first year.
- Some discretion in the policy might be more inclusive; must trust people to use procedure in good faith.
- Encourage expenses are claimed by end of each month.
• Should include some guidance on how it should be sent. E.g. wherever possible, money for accommodation allowance should go towards people who are letting you stay. Provide receipts.

E. Any Other Business

i) Stolen laptop

JW stated that a work computer, a laptop, had been stolen from the office and explained the circumstances. The Board asked about CCTV for the space; MM advised staff were looking into the matter.

**ACTION:** MM to circulate dates of next meeting.