

Minutes of the CUSU Board of Trustees, 15/03/18

Meeting of:	CUSU Trustee Board
Location:	CUSU Offices, 17 Mill Lane
Date/Time:	6pm, 24 April 2018
In Attendance:	Trustees: Chair, Daisy Eyre (DE); Martha Krish (MK); Lola Olufemi (LO); Hannah Thackwray (HT); Florence Oulds (FO); Gareth Marlow (GM); Olivia Hylton-Pennant (OHP).
Apologies:	Hachimi Maiga (HM); Daniel Dennis (DD); Helen Jennings (HJ).
Invitees in attendance:	Mark McCormack (MM). Micha Frazer-Carroll (MFC).

A. Board Administration

- i) **Introductions and apologies for absence** – HM and DD sent apologies.

- ii) **Conflicts of interest** – Gareth Marlow referenced a standing conflict relating to a University department.

iii) Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

Meeting to review the new Sabbatical Team and discuss the draft strategy is now organised. January FinCom minutes were noted.

Have still to meet with TCS still regarding matters discussed in the previous meeting; may not be expected until exams are finished for the student volunteers.

iv) Starring and ordering of items for decision/discussion; deferring of items until next Board.

None, as set.

B. Organisation Updates

i) Organisational Updates from President and General Manager

Organisation has begun its Freshers preparations; many enquiries are being fielded. Additional staff support is being allocated to support Freshers interest and capacity is being monitored against business interest and planning needs.

Big Cambridge Survey - last year's survey attracted decent sample rate albeit one incomparable with previous years. The survey presents challenges internally in how to ready and prepare such a large dataset, and then utilise in the most useful and efficient ways. A communications plan is in place and it will be a top priority of the Membership Team throughout Easter Term.

Website – currently in a one-year contract extension with NUS for the existing off-the-shelf web platform we use. Members/the press have been critical of the site. Higher expectations now existed regarding the Union’s web provision; the NUS platform has helped us get to this. Following a period of consultation, Membership Team are leading a plan for a new site where we move away from NUS’ platform to something simpler and cheaper. This will not change too much about most users’ interactions with the site; in particular, in year-one of the change the new site will be modelled on the old, save for the Union’s hosting elsewhere. By year-two we aim to be better placed to source a permanent solution, either built for us or using a standard platform with bespoke elements.

Main driver for the interim change is flexibility and cost: the NUS platform has some limitations to how we want to use the site, and we are not currently using the full capabilities of their platform. Their platform may be better suited to larger unions. The platform has recently been taken on by a new enterprise and many changes are afoot that look to respond to some of the platform’s limitations for CUSU.

Audit – the audit is still not ready for sign-off. It is likely we will miss the Charity Commission deadline. The trustees recognised that late account filing was a public showing of the charity’s challenges with its accounting whilst also recognising the extent of changes taking place internally that were necessary for more confident and timely financial reporting in the future. The trustees asked for an explanation for the delay; about the internal changes taking place; asked for further detail about the audit process; and how the process could be smoother in future. MM responded:

- The auditors continued to work on the charity’s audit, and this was taking much longer than initially envisioned.
- A consideration was the extent of change in the finance function. Constant presence in the Accounts Clerk role had been lacking since January 2017, with the role vacant between June and December. In this time successive temporary staff was necessary, however this has meant to inconsistent practices in bookkeeping and accounting.
- The incoming role-holder has done well to review previous practices and is in the process of re-designing the accounting practices of the charity; this has been occurring whilst the audit is taking place and on the back of induction and keeping up the day-to-day.
- With so much change in the finance function, the auditors were taking extra care to review the financial position and practices in place, which would have longer-term benefits for the charity’s financial management.
- With changes to internal practices, reporting and consistent staffing it is expected that the audit will be on time next year and much smoother. Additional staff were being employed already to support the following year’s audit whilst the current audit is being completed; this was to prevent risk of a ‘chicken-egg’ scenario with one delayed audit leads into another. We will be changing the way we manage the accounting and we are undertaking things that will make financial reporting much easier to do and, ultimately, easier to audit. Further, with big changes to the charity’s funding structure occurring from July, credit control and bank reconciliations are expected to become more straightforward and easier.

Trustees asked for a proactive approach to managing communications with members about the audit delay. DE and MM were tasked to discuss membership communications internally.

ii) Management Accounts

Up-to-date Management Accounts were not available for the meeting due to the ongoing audit and organisation's attention to that process. MM reported that he was aware of the year proceeding positively in comparison to budget, partly due to savings from the removed Fundraising and Services Manager position.

C. Items for discussion

i) Review of the audited accounts Trustees Annual Report for 2016/17

The draft annual report was noted and accepted by the trustees. The trustees asked that a press release accompanied the report; the report must follow a statutory framework, which may not be the most accessible format for members, and so efforts to highlight the main aspects members may be interested in may be necessary.

ii) Review of employee satisfaction survey

The trustees noted and accepted a report on employee satisfaction within the charity. Headline findings of the year's employee satisfaction survey were positive. Majority of responses came from staff. Indications are very good, though of course still work to be done.

The comments indicated that employees feel morale was high; they enjoyed their working environment and felt well-informed about things happening in the charity; received praise for their work and the charity contributed positively to health and well-being. MM reported on some of the changes that had taken place in recent years, such as that to internal communications and wider focus on team development.

MM suggested the trustees have an ongoing Staffing Plan so that the trustees could periodically review how staff supports the charity's goals and how the trustees in-turn support the staff team and their development. Successive requests for university funds has accompanied successive changes in the staff resource and structure, which the charity now expected to slow or settle. Therefore the charity's ability to identify emerging needs may be informed by an ongoing plan.

The trustees agreed this would be a helpful document that would promote awareness of the staff team's work and contributions at Board level. The document could be a resource for incoming elected teams and staff also.

ACTION: MM to produce an initial staffing plan to present to the next meeting.

iii) Post-budget staffing changes from the 2018/19 budget

Items referred to changes to the staffing structure arising from the recently approved 2018/19 budget. MM was asked to update the Board on changes to staffing.

The budget had removed one role and required restructure of at least one more, with more casual or part-time roles appointed to support work in some functions. Existing staff were set to be incorporated into additional roles, which allowed a more flexible approach to emerging staffing needs whilst the changes took place. Questions remained over the team structure as, with one manager fewer, two teams were now managed by one manager (the CEO). Some consultation with existing staff had taken place and proposals were likely by the next Board meeting.

It was recognised that the Staffing Plan would likely inform any pressing changes to staffing, especially those resulting from budget reductions.

iv) Board briefing on the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

The trustees noted and accepted a paper introducing the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which was to come into effect in May 2018. MM introduced tasks that had been undertaken so far to ready the charity for the new standards of practice, alongside those still to be completed. We know how and why collecting data: a data audit had taken place, and assessments to demonstrate the charity's bases for data processing were in the process of being completed.

Outstanding work included a review of the email system, legitimate interest assessments and the roll-out of training resources. It is expected that some changes around behavioural practice will take time to embed.

The trustees approved the drafted Privacy Notice for students and a new Data Protection Policy.

ACTION: MM to produce a more comprehensive list of compliance activities completed to bring the charity in-line with GDPR for their review.

v) Update on student trustee recruitment

Two student trustee vacancies were being promoted at the time of the meeting and would be appointed by council following recommendation by a selection group. The vacancies would take office in July.

[E. Any Other Business](#)

University Sports Fair – DE reported that the University has decided to do sports fair on Monday of freshers week. CUSU had been critical of the event and had made University stakeholders aware of the risks to the Union's business and membership activities a competing freshers event may pose. The University Sports representatives have made assurances that the event will not be commercial, and have committed to working constructively with CUSU to ensure the event does not harm the Freshers fair's potential.