

**University of St Andrews
Students' Association**

Minutes of the Students' Association Board Meeting

Held in the Hebdomadar's Room, 17th September 2014, 5:15 pm

Present: Mr C Marks (Chair), Ms F Bell, Mr A Goor, Mr K Grainger, Prof L Milne, Mr L O'Rourke, (Director of Events and Services), Mr O Hajda (Director of Representation), Ms F Morrice (Director of Student Development and Activities), Ms Z Evans, Mr J Tantillo, Ms A Kennedy O'Brien, Ms J Cassidy (arrived 5:45pm)

In attendance by invitation: Ms J Cowan (Management Accountant) Mr Iain Cupples (Secretary to Board), Ms C Miller (Clerk to Board), Mr D Scott (arrived 5:30pm)

1. Chair's Business

1.1 Election of Chair

Mr Marks was elected unopposed.

1.2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr P Mathewson.

1.3 Acceptance of the minutes of the Students' Association Board Meeting of 15th May 2014.

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th May 2014 were accepted.

1.4 Matters Arising

a. Roles of Secretary and Clerk to Board

There appeared to be no major changes necessary. A note would be brought to the next meeting confirming the details.

b. Education and Representation Co-ordinator post.

Mr Cupples and Mr Hajda had worked on redrafting the job description over the summer and had met with Susan Grant, one of the University's HERA analysts, this afternoon to discuss grading. A final job description would now be confirmed at Grade 4. The next major issue was finalising the hours. A paper would go to the staffing committee on 23rd October. Mr Cupples said that, pending a final decision on hours, the intention was that the post holder would work complementary hours to the Student Advocate (Accommodation) and thus share office space.

c. Trademark of crest

This would be discussed under General Manager's business.

2. Finance Committee Business

(In the absence of the President and General Manager, Ms Cowan was invited to present this item.)

The committee had considered a comparison of actual figures for the past financial year to the budget as originally cast at the beginning of that year (not the re-cast budget set during the year) as not all departments had been re-cast.

The Association had recorded losses of £141,000, as compared to a projected £119,000 deficit in the budget. The increased losses could mainly be attributed to delays in the redevelopment project, resulting in late opening of Your Shop and Rectors'. This meant not only lost trading time, but also that these services opened shortly before the Easter break, which was a bad time to launch them. Performance in both outlets was now improving significantly. There had also been an element of uncertainty over how students would react to the old Main Bar closing and the Beer Bar being used as an alternative. Finally, there was some wage pressure, particularly in bars and catering: however, this reflected an effort to offer improved service, particularly table service in Rectors'.

The General Manager would be taking a direct interest in the bars in the year ahead, in an attempt to improve performance in this key area.

Graduation Ball profit was up, though some of the increase in revenue had been spent on improving the event itself.

Societies had again underspent their budget. This reflected a tightening up of grant procedures: societies were now reimbursed for expenditure rather than given a grant cheque. There had also been a very commercially successful Freshers' Fayre last year, which had increased societies' revenue. This year's Fayre had been held in severely restricted space, meaning almost no commercial stalls could be accommodated, and so this would unfortunately not be the case this year. It was hoped that we could build on this success once the redevelopment was complete.

Finally, the Old Union Coffee Bar had again performed poorly. Mr O'Rourke would be bringing a paper to the next Board on options for the OUCB. This would look at issues including opening hours and levels of service, as well as harmonising branding and marketing to make students more aware of the OUCB. Mr Marks remarked that the Finance committee believed it was important to commit to this plan and allow time to see the results.

Ms Cowan then turned to the proposed 2014-15 budget, which had been circulated: the Finance committee recommended that the Board approve this.

Mr Hajda asked if the representation budget included an allowance for the Education and Representation Co-ordinator post. Ms Cowan said that this was allowed for in the increased salary budget for the HR/Advocacy department. Mr Hajda pointed out that, including all costs, a full-time Grade 4 post would cost in excess of £27,000 p.a. and

that the amount allowed was less than this. Mr Marks noted that the previous Board had discussed total costs in the region of £20-25,000 at most for the position, and that it was not yet agreed that the post would be full-time. If it proved that costs for the position could not be met within the budget allowed, the Board would need to consider the implications.

The budget for the year 2014-15 was **approved**.

The Association currently had a £1m investment that was due to mature: the Finance committee had recommended that £750,000 should be reinvested in a 1-year fixed-rate plan. The Board **approved** this decision.

The Finance committee had also recommended approval of the following capital expenditure allowances:

- £12,000 for the new till system.
- A £2,000 contingency for a new A0 printer.
- A £20,000 contingency for other items under £5,000 each, to be used by the General Manager and Management Accountant if needed for urgent replacement of equipment.

These were **approved**.

3. Staffing Update

Mr O'Rourke reported that the Staffing committee had not yet met but there was a meeting scheduled for 23rd October. There had been numerous casual staff hires, as usual for the start of term, and a new supervisor appointed for Rectors', Samantha Robertson. Catering operations had also begun in the Main Bar: the Association was currently advertising for a chef, although no appointment had yet been made.

4. General Manager's Business

Mr Whitton was unable to attend. However, he had forwarded a proposed agreement for licensing the University crest and this had been circulated. Mr Marks asked for comments from the Board.

Mr Grainger asked if this agreement was being imposed on other parts of the University. Mr Goor explained that it would apply to other traders in the town who sold branded products, but that the Athletic Union, for example, was considered a part of the University and so did not need to be covered by an agreement such as this. Mr Grainger noted that the Association had a close and unique relationship with the University and so was not like other traders. Mr Goor said that nevertheless, the Association was legally a separate organisation and so an agreement was required.

Mr Scott asked if the notice period could be extended. Mr Goor said that the University could consider that.

Mr Marks asked about the clause concerning similarity of items to those sold by the University. Mr Goor said that there was no intent to stop the Association selling any current lines.

Ms Cowan asked if the agreement covered use of the crest by Societies. Mr Goor said that it would.

Mr Goor stressed that the aim of the agreement was to protect the University's trademarks, avoid damage to the University's image from inappropriate or inferior branded merchandise, and reduce damage to the University and the Association from inferior 'rip-offs' of branded goods stocked by their trading arms. The University had an interest in ensuring the Association's trading was profitable.

Mr Grainger noted that the Board understood and agreed with these intentions, but that signing the agreement bound the Association to the terms as written.

It was **agreed** that further discussions on the agreement were needed: Ms Bell, Ms Cowan, Mr Goor and Mr Whitton would take this forward. Mr Marks noted that the Finance committee felt that regular discussions with the University over commercial services would be beneficial to both parties – this would also be arranged.

The General Manager also wanted to convey thanks to the sabbaticals, including the Athletic Union President, and the volunteers who had worked so hard to produce an outstanding Freshers' Week.

(At this point Mr Marks called a short break to allow introductions, since Ms Cassidy and Mr Scott had arrived late.)

5. President's Business

5.1 Governance Review

(As Mr Mathewson was absent, Mr Tantillo presented this item.)

The Board received a summary of the final Board subcommittee memberships. Mr Cupples confirmed that the Postgraduate Convener and the Athletic Union President had agreed to serve as student representatives on the Audit and Risk committee: however, there was still a need to identify an external Chair for that committee.

It was agreed that the PG Convener and AU President should be invited to attend Board whenever there were agenda items where their contribution would be valuable to the Board.

Mr Hajda expressed the desire to see postgraduate student representation on the Board. The Board agreed this was desirable and that the membership and governance of the Board should be kept under review. Mr Marks raised the issue of quoracy, which had been an issue in the last two meetings due the requirement for a student majority: as a short-term measure it was agreed that student members unable to attend could give a proxy vote to another trustee.

6. Director of Events and Services Business

Mr O'Rourke reported that Freshers' Week had been very successful and all events had sold out. Bar income for the Union building was up on last year's performance, despite reduced capacity and building works. However, bar income for the external Starfields event was down, due to a shift in format to an afternoon event. Customer satisfaction seemed to be high and the events had been well reviewed.

There had been some resistance from returning students to the entry charge levied after 11pm. It had been agreed to drop this charge after Freshers', except for all-building events.

We would be working with an external promoter on Circus Saturdays events through the term. We had agreed stipulations on security costs, entry, content and numbers. Mr O'Rourke suggested that the Association could learn from CS on promotion and he intended to work with the student PR team to do so.

7. Director of Student Development and Activities Business

Ms Morrice reported that the Fresher's Fayre had been very successful despite restrictions on space. The new Freshers' Fund, designed to give funding to societies for events attracting new students, had also been very successful. Ms Morrice wanted to record thanks to the University for their help in finding space for societies in semester 1.

Ms Morrice drew the board's attention to an issue that had come up with one society over ownership of a successful, high-profile event. This suggested a need to safeguard ownership of intellectual property, goodwill, contacts etc. for events run by the Association, subcommittees and societies. Ms Bell and Ms Morrice would look into this, and consider how it might relate to the earlier discussion around University trademark protection.

8. Director of Representation's Business

Mr Hajda said that the sabbatical team were working on improving links with other associations, particularly Glasgow SRC. He was pleased that the University had agreed to extend library opening in response to campaigns for more study space. He would now be focusing on training of various student representatives, all of whom were very keen.

Rectorial elections would be held at the end of October.

9. Redevelopment

Phase 1 and 2 were now complete, although there were some issues to resolve. Phase 3 was around a day and a half behind schedule but the builders believed it would be delivered at the agreed date. The project board was hopeful of approval for Phase 4, which could begin on December 8th, giving a projected end for the entire project at the end of June 2015.

Mr Grainger asked if the project was on budget and it was confirmed that it was.

Professor Milne noted that there had been a small design change to allow for cubicles in the sabbatical office space for private discussions.

Mr Grainger asked when staff would be able to move out of the temporary accommodation – Ms Cowan said that this should be at the end of October.

10. AOCB

Mr Marks offered thanks to the sabbatical team, officers, staff and volunteers for a successful Freshers' Week.

Mr Marks also offered thanks to Mr Grainger, who would be stepping down as a trustee as of the end of this meeting after many years and many helpful contributions on the board and the finance committee. Mr Scott would replace him. There would be a presentation to Mr Grainger at Sandy's Bar after the meeting.

12. Closed business

13. Date of next meeting: 23rd October.