

University of Derby Students' Union
Trustee Board Summary Sheet

Agenda Reference:	TB/
Title of Report:	Minutes of Board meeting – 28/01/25
Written By:	Hayley Pratt – HR & Admin Assistant
Presented By:	Tony Atherton - Chair
Action Requested:	Approval

Trustee Board Meeting Tuesday 28th January 2025 – 5pm – Room W1 and Teams

Attendance	P/A
Trustee Board	
Tony Atherton (TA) Chair	P
Nicola Hartley (NH) External Trustee	P
Rosie Smith (RS) for the Head of Financial Accounting for the University External Trustee	P
Bradie McDaid (BM) External Trustee	P
Andy Winter (AW) External Trustee	P
Holly Lloyd (HL) (President)	A
Gabriela Gretkowska (GG) (VP Activities)	P
Pournami Padmanabhan (PP) (VP Education)	P
Jack McGuinness (JM) (VP Welfare)	P
Pieter Van Ellewee (PV-E) Student Trustee	P
Kiara Henry (KH) Student Trustee	P
Aliyu Baba (AB) Student Trustee	A
Union staff	
Emma Taylor-Large (ET-L) Union CEO	P
Martin Beaumont (MB) Head of Operations	P
Kay Jones (KJ) Head of Finance	P
Cassie O'Boyle (CO) Head of Membership	P
Hayley Pratt (HP) HR & Admin Assistant (taking minutes)	P

1. Welcome and Apologies - HL

TA, Chair of Trustee Board welcomed all to this meeting. There is an assumption that everyone has read the papers for today's meeting, giving the opportunity for questions to be asked with clarification given as required.

Apologies/absentees & conflict of interest.

Apologies received from HL and AB.

2. To approve the minutes of the Board Meeting held on 29/10/24

Minutes from the last meeting **agreed** as a true and accurate record.

3. Matters Arising

No matters arising.

TO NOTE:

4.1 Auditors' Presentation

Nicola Adams from BHP was welcomed to the meeting.

Key points:

- We have passed the audit without any material adjustments being made; this is a good result.
- It's been a big year for change, some of the report is historic rather than showing where we are now.
- No issues have been identified regarding fraud or risks.

Key changes:

- Income – there has been a growth in revenue from retail and catering.
- Costs – in 2024 there was a decrease due to staff changes.
- Debtors and creditors are similar to the years previous.
- These changes mean a £50k surplus before any adjustment has been made for the pension scheme.

Recommendations for internal controls:

- Moving forward we now have a more robust staffing structure so therefore are in a better position.

Overall, a very good result. Thanks to KJ and her team. **Action: Ready to sign off. BHP to liaise with KJ to do this.**

4.2 Theft Update – MB

MB gave an update on the theft of money from the Finance Office safe. Nothing new to report since ARC; the University are still investigating.

Procedures internally since the incident have been changed with regards to storage of keys and locks have been changed.

At no point was any staff member of the Union under suspicion. We need to await a formal outcome from the University.

JM asked if there was an opportunity for the University to support us with the losses. TA explained that we will await the formal outcome but the main thing is we have all learnt from this.

4.3 First 90 Days Reflection – CO

CO gave a presentation regarding her reflections and insights on her first 3-4 months at the Union. This can be summarised as follows:

Key Priorities For The First 90 Days

- Develop and deliver to a comprehensive learning plan (spent time getting to know everyone first and observing current practice)
- Share learning reflections with key stakeholders
- Bring the team to a shared commitment moving forward

Initial Reflections One Month In

- Tied to how we do things rather than why
- We have a team who deeply care
- Our lines of decision making are not clear for students and some staff
- We've got barriers with data to overcome
- Student engagement is hard but we can do it

From these reflections, top three things to do:

- Getting data right is the top priority
- Need to develop a theory of change for membership
- Need a clear culture; way of working and collaborating

Achievements To Date

- Refocus on collaborative projects
- Hosted away day
- Reviewed KPIs and confirmed 6 core projects for 2024/25
- Launched project management software
- Established new ways of working moving forward, focused on project management

Six Core Projects

- Student Voice Review
- Elections
- Process & Funding Review
- Data & Insight
- Core Communities
- Go Out & Talk Days

Five Things I Learned – Where Am I At Now?

- The university is very supportive
- Some people might not be on the right bus or in the right seat
- Some expenditure doesn't align with future priorities
- Our new projects are experiments
- Change is hard but our students deserve it

The presentation was very well received. Following a question from AW, CO shared that the data sharing agreement with the university will help to start removing the barriers we currently have with our data.

AW left the meeting at 17:50.

Other comments:

- BM agreed it is vital to bring a theory of change.
- NH commented that it was a great presentation, well considered.
- GG asked what the biggest barrier to change was, CO replied it was people and that we need a strategy in place to ensure we have the right resources in place.
- JM asked about the people on the right seat in the bus and how we are supporting with this. CO explained again how People are the biggest investment and the hardest to manage but she has SLT's support and the Strategy Day will help too.

4.4 External Speaker Policy – ET-L

ET-L provided an update, commenting that in light of legislative changes she is working on amendments to the draft before sharing it. It will then go to ARC for approval.

ET-L noted that this was a low risk area for us as a Union but welcomes comments and feedback once the changes have been made.

Action – ET-L to share revised External Speaker Policy with board members.

4.5 KPI Update – CO

CO provided an overview having assumed the papers have been read.

Overall, three areas are off track because we don't have the accurate data to report on them.

One area, related to advice services, is off track because expectations were for growth but due to being a staff member short the team is under capacity so cannot therefore grow and meet that expectation.

Everything else is currently on track to achieve, so a positive outlook.

4.6 Strategy Planning Day – ET-L

ET-L confirmed this will be on 18/02/25.

The aim is to help us decide where we want to be and what we want to be aiming for as a Union. We will be joined by University Governors, whilst the Deputy Provost for Learning & Teaching will give a presentation; this will help us to see how we can align with the University's goals and move the Union forward.

TA explained this is a day to come and be involved. Be ready to shape the new vision.

Everyone is very much looking forward to this.

TO DISCUSS:

5.1 Reforecast - KJ

KJ commented that we are in a good position as we have just passed the audit.

It was agreed for KJ to go straight into the recommendations as the finance paper had been read.

Recommendations

- Confirm the level of assurance obtained on current financial performance across the areas presented.

RS asked if we will really end up in a deficit position given we are so underspent year-to-date.

KJ give assurance that managers had worked through the forecast in detail and updated the forecast twice following November and December accounts. MB noted that they may have budget set poorly with timing of spend not reflecting the reality but supported KJ that managers do believe they will spend in the coming months. KJ informed everyone that we will keep re-visiting the forecast to try to mitigate the deficit by year-end.

RS commented that we need to put attention on finances at the Strategy Day and question the loss making areas. ET-L replied that this will be a part of the Day, so we can make informed decisions on how we spend money going forward.

MB made the point that the commercial business is growing, just not at the rate that we thought. Also made the point that Base Camp was never a decision made to drive profit; instead it was a service space which has definitely enhanced staff and student experiences. MB concluded that we need to question whether or not we need all our current retail outlets going forward, but this is a difficult decision to make until we know the impact of any changes the university may be making.

TA concluded that assurance was obtained.

- Formally agree that the Union meets the Auditor's going concern test that the Union has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

KJ noted that as a Board we have just listened to the Audit Summary and agreed the accounts that this recommendation is agreed and complete.

- Acknowledge the update on the Reserve Policy and provide any feedback to consider for Final 2025 version that will be brought to Board in April 2025.

KJ finished by saying that we spent a lot of time at January's ARC meeting going through the Reserve Policy bringing it up to date to reflect our current and future needs. An interim DRAFT policy is in the appendix and a FINAL policy will be worked and come back to April's meeting for approval.

RS left the meeting at 18:30.

5.2 Partnership Agreement – ET-L

ET-L has shared proposed amendments with the Board. There is a meeting with the university on 29/01/25 to discuss this so the Agreement can be finalised and then approval to be sought at the end of March.

ET-L made the point that the last year this was looked at was 2021 and going forward it will be an annual occurrence.

Comments received:

NH – looks very comprehensive

TA – agrees with amendments.

MB – we will be seeking a rent reduction so that we can lower prices to help students out; in the current climate this is the only way to drive sales but we will not be seeking this to increase profits.

Board agreed that the amended Agreement can be taken to the university for discussion.

Action: ET-L to take the amended Partnership Agreement to the university with MB, KJ and RS on 29/01/25.

5.3 Maternity Policy – MB

Following previous circulation of the maternity leave options, MB explained that an amendment has been made, after discussions with NH, so the Union can offer a better package to help support staff and encourage retention.

This is based on the fact that the vast majority of roles would be covered with internal job share arrangements rather than sourcing additional maternity cover. The suggested policy is:

6 weeks at 90% pay

18 weeks at 50% pay

15 weeks at Statutory Maternity Pay

BM and NH showed their support. All approved and agreed on the change.

Action: MB to revise policy and issue it electronically to Board Members to be ratified.

KH and PV-E left the meeting at 18:40.

5.4 ASM Proposals – CO

CO explained that these will be digitally sent at a later date to be ratified but the proposal on Elections needed to be agreed on at this meeting.

The Elections Proposal has been revised to:

- Remove a set date for elections as we need more flexibility to set our own dates Officer Trustees
- Remove the “three hours before” time limit for when complaints can be made
- Provide clear guidelines for Officer Trustees if they are running for election

All Board Members were happy to agree this.

Action: CO to take the revised proposal to ASM on 04/02/25.

5.5 AOB

KJ raised that the SUSS Pension buy out is still on our radar. The liability has reduced in September 2024 from the figure at January 2024 and buying out in one go will save us approximately £20k

each year in our operational budget. MB highlighted reserves to considered too with this and said we will need 30 minutes at April's Board to go through the detail.

NH unfortunately has decided to hand in her notice, due to work commitments. She will stay on as long as necessary and will help to find a replacement. TA expressed appreciation for all she has done and echoed everyone's thoughts in expressing how much she will be missed.

Meeting ended at 19:00

Trustee Board Meeting Action Summary 28/01/25

No	ACTION	ACTION OWNER	DUE DATE	STATUS OF THIS ACTION
1	Action: Audit ready to sign off. BHP to liaise with KJ to do this.	KJ	31/01/25	
2	Action – ET-L to share revised External Speaker Policy with board members.	ET-L	04/02/25	
3	Action: ET-L to take the amended Partnership Agreement to the university with MB, KJ and RS	ET-L	29/01/25	
4	Action: MB to revise Maternity Policy and issue it electronically to Board Members to be ratified.	MB	29/01/25	
5	Action - CO to take the revised Election proposal to ASM	CO	04/02/25	
6	Action – MB and KJ to continue SUSS Pension exit work and update board accordingly.	KJ	29/04/25	