



# UEA Students' Union

Trustee Board Meeting

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2024; 1300

The Waterfront Studio

## Minutes

### ATTENDANCE

Present: Nathan Wyatt (NW, Interim Chair), Olivia Hunt (OH), Rebekah Temple-Fielder (RTF), Mark Etkind (ME), Ali Shaker (AS), Kat Iliopoulou (KI), Peter Robertson (PR), Simon George (SG), Anwar Azari (AA), Yinbo Yu (YY)

Apologies: Bhaskar Bukkanahalli-Shivanna, Chris Kershaw, Nora Loga, Peter Mason

Attending: Jumara Stone (JS, Chief Executive Officer), Magda de Soissons (MS, Democracy and Representation Coordinator), Tim Cave (TC, Director of Finance – part attendance), Yusra Khan (YK, Director of Engagement – part attendance), Richard Hunter (RH, Director of Operations – part attendance)

### ADMINISTRATION

#### **TB 016      Statements from the Interim Chair**

NW opened the meeting and thanked everyone for coming.

NW welcomed Yinbo Yu back to the SU after their tenure as an Officer in 2014, who will hopefully be our new chair of the trustee board in a few minutes time.

NW asks YY to leave the room for the vote.

NW initiates the vote by raise of hands and asks for any questions.

ME asks if they will be a trustee and a chair. NW clarifies they will count as one of the six external trustees.

YY is elected unanimously by all present.

NW asks OH to leave the room, for the election of deputy chair of the trustee board.

NW ask for questions or concerns.

OH is elected as Deputy Chair of the Trustee board for the UEA Union of Students by unanimous vote.

### **TB 017      Quorum, Apologies and Confidentiality**

NW noted quoracy was met with 10 voting members present and reminded about confidentiality.

Apologies were received from Bhaskar Bukkanahalli-Shivanna, Chris Kershaw, Nora Loga and Peter Mason.

### **TB 018      Declaration of Interest**

RTF noted that she sits on UEA Senate.

ME states he is standing a member of UJS National Council, he likely will not get it but just to let them know. If he does, he will let the Board know and appropriate paperwork will be filled out.

### **TB 019      Minutes of the previous meeting**

NW takes minutes as read.

OH mentions that she has spoken to LB about anonymizing a name in one comment from last board meeting before publication on the website.

The Board unanimously approves the minutes of the previous meeting.

### **TB 020      Election of the sub-committee**

Election of members to Risk and Finance Committee is discussed. Whether or not this is going to be pushed to the next meeting is discussed.

OH states that she has attended two finance meetings, the last one being risk, and most of the session was Tim Cave talking through the finances. Whilst helpful and informative, there was not much space for debate or making any decisions. She poses the question to is it valuable or needed? If they could instead join the preboard that might be more useful and discussions might be made there anyway.

PR asks if the Finance committee have any vested powers, as just because it's not being used right now doesn't mean that it shouldn't exist. It may be used in the

future. If it is functioning properly, it should take a deep dive into things that can't be discussed in the appropriate amount of depth at board, for example tidying up an audit before it comes to the trustee board. He says there is space for the finance boards to fulfill a function.

NW asks about updating the term of reference.

OH asks if it could be attended by RH as well, as Tim can't answer all questions. It is a bit of a 'what if' space in its current form.

KI states that normally the budget will be pre-approved, the risk register is getting reviewed, and the audit not ready yet. KI states that she agrees that it is needed in some form, it probably just needs editing.

NW asks for an action regarding this.

OH asks for clarification of the student trustees and their space in their them.

NW states that they could hold space but not voting power.

KI states that Tim holds a lot of the knowledge; when he goes, this will have to be shared to ensure the knowledge does not leave with him. The committee could be an important space for this shared knowledge.

JS states that at Suffolk board and preboard were the only committees.

NW and OH mention the student trustees have an open invite but that it will be updated after a chat at the next board in February.

Item	Action Requested	Date	Assigned
TB020	To talk to Nick Smith regarding Suffolk Trustee Board and pre-board as a sub-committee.	Feb TB	CEO

## PERFORMANCE

### TB 022 Officer Updates

#### Undergraduate Officer

A lot of her work recently has been around lecture capture. The policy has now gone to the learning and teaching committee, they are just awaiting a timeline. Lecturers have difficulty with the idea that it has to be up within 24 hours as that means they have to edit it within 24 hours and this is considered unrealistic with other workload.

RTF has also been working on the extenuating circumstances situation. 90% of dissertations this year had an extension put on them – she is looking into this. The self cert extension of 10 days has been extended.

The new academic rep system has now been in place for three months. Bar one school it has been received warmly, and they are working with that school and their convenor to resolve this.

#### Activities and Opportunities Officer

OH states she has been up to quite a lot. The student pop-up market was a great success with over 30 entrepreneurs, and there are already requests for another one to be held. They held a society quiz night that was quite successful and there again has been calls for it to run again. She has been involved in the complaints procedure revamp, which as far as she knows is basically now ready. She has also been involved with a value of statement piece of work with UEA sport; she is also putting together a sponsorship document, helping students in the cost-of-living crisis gain support outside of their committees having to do all the work with applications, etc. Also, with Mark from Sport she has put together a proposal for SSPAC with a transition for sport document. Overall, she has nearly completely all her manifesto points.

#### Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer

NW states he has set up community pantry, the launch went well, and the equivalent of 1000 meals were taken in 24 hours which is great but also highlights the need the currently faces students, unfortunately. There has been support from JSoc, he thanks them, for their help with Mitzvah bags. There have been hampers made by a Christian society. There are also donations from students coming directly to the Community Pantry. He also notes that himself and RTF attended university council which went well.

He notes CK and BBS can't be here. CK has been looking at his byelaws, BBS had his Diwali event. They had 300 people and 500 sparklers given away in the Square.

RTF notes it was lovely and something to add on to the rolling agenda.

JS notes that the Diwali event has led to conversations with the University about multicultural events in the city, trialling with Eid and possibly Lunar New Year.

YY asks for anything the board needs to know from the University Council meeting.

NW answers he is unsure of what he is allowed to say. He states that the university is not in great shape; but from a Union perspective the cuts aren't coming from departments that should directly affect the student experience, although very sad, nonetheless. The cuts this time are less contentious than before.

RTF states they haven't been asked to align; the channels of communication have been open on both sides and she met with John Schloss who told them the same day he told their team, which was very much appreciated. RTF notes that they have been invited to the table this time round.

JS agrees that they have been communicating better this time round. The head of the student experience has been in touch. They are trying to be respectful of what the UEA community is going through without fanning any fires.

RTF notes that CK has set up a WhatsApp chat for students affected by the job losses, and there is a plan in place.

JS states that last time this happened UEA was one of the first that this happened to. Unfortunately, now all universities are struggling and facing job losses.

YY agrees that it is a struggle across the sector at the minute.

## **TB 023      Union Council Update**

OH states that it was an interesting union council; the vibe seemed a little 'rude and offish' at points. Four motions came to the session. OH mentions her and CK's motion about training was interesting; it passed with an amendment. They mention the plant-based food motion that did not pass but may come to a referendum in the New Year.

NW mentions his motion that came through with Thea Glover (Part-Time Officer, LGBTQ+ Trans and Non-Binary Place) for a Gender Expression Fund. He states students can apply for £50 to help buy things like binders, packers, and travel to therapy. £500 is secured for this; the motion was to codify it for future years. It went through UC unopposed.

OH mentions that no one stood against it, which was positive.

OH states that the last motion was about renaming the Welfare Officer title to make sure that welfare is being looked after by trained professionals in advice rather than a disproportionate load of disclosures falling on the WFD Officer. She explains this was also to put more of a focus on culture. The FTO team has spent a

lot of time thinking about this, but this is where it ended up. It went through with no challenge.

NW states that the motion won't change the role, except that the next officer won't hopefully get lots of disclosures from students through mediums like Instagram. He could see how that would have a negative impact on another officer, whilst he is OK.

OH states that the job roles need to be edited and gone through; for example, OH's job description still states that she is a publisher of the Student newspaper which has not been the case for several years.

RTF links this back to the need to see job descriptions before starting the job, having accepted the job in March and then not seeing the job description until August.

AA states that the Officer should still touch base with the head of welfare, it is important to have an advocate for student welfare, still.

NW thanks him for his contribution. He states the tie between his role and Advice will still be strong.

AA states he does like the job title, however.

OH states it is still being investigated, but now hopefully student welfare should be a shared responsibility rather than leaving it all to one person.

YY asks if the job descriptions being reformed will be aligned with other changes.

PR states that lots of other SUs are looking at reforming officers' job descriptions.

JS states that the Sabbatical officers this year are overachievers, they are already looking ahead; getting an external like Radar to come in and map things out would be good and useful.

OH states that they are thinking of removing an officer role to bring it down to four, PG might be brought into Education. She doesn't want to rush this, however, as this is a very changeable year for the UEA community already and this decision would need to be made in consultation with students, especially when regarding the relationships with Postgrad students after the Scholars Bar scandal.

RTF agrees that it would not be fair to do without student consultation and gives an example of a referendum at Sheffield. Whilst this could be a board decision, she believes it shouldn't be. However, the cuts currently facing the university are

definitely an issue and now may not be the right time. Moving PG under the umbrella would not be suitable now and not give the PGs the support they need currently as it may still be seen to be under the undergrad officers' remit.

YY asks if this would have to be done by referendum.

RT agrees that it would need to be yes.

JS states the phase 2 strategy will be done by June.

AA states that when removing a sabbatical officer, it unequivocally has to go through the students. He understands the need to consult with a governing body as well but emphasises the need for it to go through the students.

NW states this is very early days; it is only being discussed at this point. He states that you could test it with the name change of his role, which gives them a year to see how it goes before making any changes.

RT states that some parts of NW's role didn't fit with the rest of the sector anyway; the change opens it up to a wider demographic. Currently, they are not looking at cutting another officer. It is a matter of what if all the money goes, somewhat of a doomsday plan, to save money internally alongside other things.

KI states it will be interesting to see how this is communicated to the students. She knows it is a lot for one person but there should be emphasis put on where else students can go to for help to make sure people are not being left unsure of where to go or how to talk to.

NW states that he will be discussing plans in January for social media coverage etc.

OH notes that her role also has had disclosures; all officers have had them. They are a face to speak to; the shared responsibility between the officers and more direction to advice should be beneficial for both the WFD Officer and students.

NW agrees.

JS notes for the minutes that she doesn't want to speak for CK, but she has had a couple of students approach her about democracy not being done properly at UEA. She wants to assure people that there are no underhanded changes coming, and that there have been conversations that mean students don't feel safe- she is unsure where it's coming from. From a strategic point of view, something will need to be done about this to make students feel safer on this and have confidence in their democracy.

YY states that Concrete articles highlight undermining trust in the union and miscommunication. He asks if we can change the name rather than just communicating only that, could we be using the opportunity to reach out and connect with students. He thinks with the recent scandal this is especially important.

JS asks whether YY means Concrete Confessions or Concrete the student newspaper?

YY meant concrete articles and asks what Concrete Confessions is.

JS and NW explain to YY that Concrete Confessions is an online Facebook page, which has been going for several years. Some harmful debate came about around Scholars for example that escalated into near-bullying of the new Officers.

ME states that from a student perspective that this big decision that board made without any student consultation wasn't received well; most students don't know the Union exists, some do but don't know the background as it happens behind closed doors. ME states that for example there is concern that no minutes have been published from board since 2019, meetings aren't open, and this can be seen as "an illusion" of democracy. More work can be done to make this transparent and that needs to be done for students to feel trust in their democracy.

JS accepts that minutes need to be done and apologises, she had taken them off the website when she entered the job to anonymise some legal aspects.

Item	Action Requested	Date	Assigned
TB023	To upload all minutes from previous Board meetings by the end of January.	January	CEO/LB

## **TB 024     LGBTQ+ Bar Report**

JS gives updates for the new bar, "Dorothy's" as it is now called. This was consulted on with students – Dorothy's was picked as the name which students wanted.

Andy has given some updates. NW had a birthday party at Dorothy's which made £1300 over an evening. This has given the bar team evidence that external bookings work, and this will be put out as an option. This helps UEA with their Civic agenda and also means that money to support the bar will not be taken from students who don't have much to spend.



JS has been speaking to Phil Steele, to look at how UEA can use the space without a hire charge, trying to work collaboratively with UEA.

ME asks for clarification on difficulties; e.g. the name change, the sports night smoking area. He asks why they weren't seen before, in a team that works in the same office?

JS states that currently a lot of departments work in silo; she is working on this culture. E.g. departments make a decision that affects another one unexpectedly. This is being looked at; she reckons there will be another 6-9 months of this whilst the culture change is done.

The name change is also on JS, as marketing was taken too early. Teams working with each other will be an issue for a bit longer.

NW states the name Bonnaroo was picked but deemed unsuitable as it could be pronounced rudely (NW flagged this). The naming process was then taken to students, and this dragged out the process. There were reasons it took a little while. There are plans for a soft relaunch for the space.

JS states that the feedback in the summer was fair feedback; that is on her. What is nice now is that mature students have realised they are not kicked out of the space, they can still use the space and do frequently at lunchtimes and evenings as an LGBTQ+ inclusive space.

JS notes for the minutes that BBS has put a lot of work into the Scholar's Lounge, it gets used frequently and is bigger and bit more private. She states it was a hard summer, and there was a bit of a baptism by fire for the new Officers, we just now need a creative scheme to get it making money.

PR asks what the graph is; he doesn't understand the data. He asks why year on year it doesn't look great. One of the issues he has is that we have some lovely wide aims to do some stuff, but when it doesn't quite work, there are reasons brought out as to why it's not. If they had said we were expecting a dip in profit, but a big benefit for the culture of the space that would be different, and that there is an issue with the data there. What are its aims? The data needs to include not just profit to make sure that if somewhere is precious to students that is included in the discussions.

RTF states that the report doesn't tell us too much about the bar- there are only three bullet points on Dorothy's. It needs to be clearer as to whether this is Dorothy's or the bars in general. This may be the struggle with the data.

PR states that it might be one for finance committee- what is the head spend? People are shifting to longer drinks and nursing them for longer all over the UK- what is the behaviour in Dorothy's? This is exactly what the finance committee should be looking at there. So that when it comes to here it is clear and readable data.

ME states that when this was projected it said it would make more money (x3). This has not been the case; there wasn't really a justification other than to open the space to more people means more money. He agrees with the need for data on cultural benefits and students benefits. If that is the case, the change can be justified.

JS agrees and states it is an action to make sure the data is clear and reflects cultural benefits, too.

Item	Action Requested	Date	Assigned
TB024	To make sure data is clear and reflects cultural benefits.	N/A	CEO

## **TB 025      Staff Survey**

JS states the staff survey was carried out after being requested at the last trustee board meeting. Something she learned from the process was that some staff felt unsafe filling it in, with worries that it may not be completely anonymous, this reflects as a wider culture she is trying to change after the uncertainty of the last few years. Some changes are starting to be implemented; MML is being reduced after being suggested, more training for managers is being put in, for example. SLT has decided that now they are in a safer position they are encouraging conflict conversations to be held in a healthy way between staff rather than being brought to them every time. People can be encouraged to discuss this with each other.

AA asks what channels are available for staff to talk to SLT without coming through their managers. Sometimes in organisations some staff may feel they don't have the confidence of their line managers. If they are able to speak to SLT directly staff will feel listened to and valued. This is vital in organisations. SLT may also not hear good ideas. The creation of a space, e.g. monthly coffee sessions, could create open communication and remove middle management for a bit to let all the grades speak.

YY asks if this would look like a town hall meeting type thing.

AA agrees yes and thinks it could be beneficial.

NW states this might be bringing back the staff forum.

AA asks that it be more of an informal space.

PR states that he agrees that informal routes will be beneficial. Talking to Junior staff is important and it's important that SLT can be approached (whilst still maintaining professional boundaries).

OH wonders whether the next time the feedback is done it can be truly anonymous, as Jazz from HR could see the names.

JS states she wasn't aware HR could see them.

OH states yes, she thinks HR could see the names. OH states that there was a big part of the survey that stated no opinion which may not actually be the case because of this.

JS says this might be to do with staff turnover, and comparative statements not being relevant to new staff.

JS states that Jazz has confirmed just now through Teams that she couldn't see the names and it was fully anonymous.

OH apologises and retracts her last statement.

RT asks if all staff even know who all of SLT is.

KI states that this might be an easy win; having easy informal bits of communication, perhaps in Inductions.

JS states that HR is only two people now, whilst they are powerhouses, they have lost roles in the department to save money. Inductions are being reviewed in the new year, as they are not quite up to scratch with clearer 'who does what'.

AA asks if the results of the staff survey will be shared with the staff.

JS states there are no plans to.

AA states that it may be positive to share positive feedback from the survey.

JS states she wanted to; Jazz (People and Culture) said not to, as people will think you are fishing. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

AA asks if the board can share this for you then? Then it is taken out of her hands. An email from the board thanking them for the feedback could increase staff morale [REDACTED] They will also feel more in contact with the board, who will seem less anonymous.

RT states that we don't have to publish everything, but the tops and bottoms or quantitative data.

JS agrees it should come from board- the team is still keeling a little from the last three years.

RT asks if it was worth a poll.

JS says no, it would be half and half.

YY states that a group email would be a great idea.

SG states that staff surveys would be most useful on a regular basis so that you can see the trends in patterns.

It is agreed they should be annual to allow data comparison year on year.

PR states that people would like to know what you are going to do with the feedback- closing the loop makes people think it was worth it.

AA asks that the boards' thanks be added to the email as well.

YY asks if the anonymity issue should be brought up.

JS states it is probably better to let it lie.

## **FINANCE AND LEGAL**

TC joined the meeting.

### **TB 026 Finance Report**

TC states that in the papers there is the impact of the budget and some rumination about structural change and the October accounts. October is good news; we are ahead of trade in October a little. We are ahead on all corners, including the first quarter and the extra task that was put in. They are ahead on staff costs as we are not yet recruited to the full structure and less has been spent on Welcome. It's a no bad news scenario, the cash has gone up almost exactly as

what we thought, about half a million. He believes November will be a little under October but that will be looked at in the next Board meeting.

JS notes that rather than recruiting for the position of Head of People and Culture, to save money they are using Radar (external) to support the existing team which comes with their insurance.

TC states that there is a schedule in the papers which tracks the evolution of the numbers through the Annual Report. What that does as much as anything is shows you the differences between the different moving parts. There is a line on there called 'other' which is the amount the numbers have changed due to the manager accounts. The net total impact on the numbers was [REDACTED] There is rumination about rent; they have agreed with the auditors that the rent will be reduced. The auditors are minded that there shouldn't be no rent, and whilst the university pays the rent bill for Union House, just traditionally the subsidiaries pay one. It's being reduced this year. There is an issue that we are making less profit under the trading companies. When we are thinking about structure and the profits that are made, the contribution of the companies e.g. WF, Student Union Services by the time the management charges have been imply they show a loss but this is not the case. When asking the question are they profitable, you ask if they are bearing their fair share or are they producing profit for the Union.

SG states that any depreciation should not be ignored though.

TC states yes, it is fair to say that the historical spends we've had mean the depreciation charges have had no year on year. Depreciation doesn't impact our reserves, CAPX does. What we are really trying to manage is the reserves, the bottom line as a board. It has a non-cash nature which means it is treated differently.

When the audit is done, they have proposed two moderate adjustments which should increase profit by a little, about [REDACTED] however these might not be bothered with as they are quite small. There is an outstanding trustee report, and we are still waiting for info from UEA about the pension's contributions. This should be put to bed by the end of Feb, in time for the April end of tax year.

TC also brings the boards attention to the Budget recently brought in by the Government. The increase to NI adds about [REDACTED] to our costs overall. Most businesses are facing this, employers of relatively low-wage labour are facing a big swing. The threshold change from [REDACTED] has twice the effect of the rate change effect. Those two things are 'baked-in' so to speak in our Career staff. This

gets trickier for non-career staff, such as bar staff; this goes up for staff above the age of 21. The split currently in age rate is about 50/50 between those above and below 21. For the first time last year, when the minimum wage went up, 11.44 and 10.42 was the first year that there was a pound difference. There is a pipeline issue that this may catch up on the £10 wages. This may eventually look like a two-pound difference; this will need to be looked at as it may be uncomfortable to have two different wage rates for two different ages at such extremes.

YY asks if we are paying minimum wage, not living wage.

TC says yes, we were a living wage employer for a while, during YY's tenure for example. However, this was considered too expensive. This was a little embarrassing in that the Union was lobbying UEA to be a living wage rate employer at the same time.

The Waterfront until April is getting a 75% forgiveness in its rates, this ends in April. We think this will be a 40% forgiveness for next year, so an extra [REDACTED] next year for the base rents for the Waterfront.

TC invites everybody to be clear about what we mean by profitability, are we talking about contribution or numbers appearing the accounts. He gives the following example. We have one chief executive; the price of which is spread around the three companies. The true effect is therefore not clear. Another example is there is no cost of Tim to the Waterfront in the allocation, but they bear a slice of him.

Another example is the Waterfront is often said to not make a profit; it makes a contribution but struggles to make its fair share of contribution. If it was to be removed, we don't know yet what that would look.

Finance, HR, parts of the SLT and Union House itself are central costs which are spread out across the 3 companies. You could postulate that the Venues take the most energy bill; but there is no separate meter and so it is hard to calculate this, and we must take a view of those costs. This is just an example.

## **TB 027      Planning financial ideas**

TC states that as a response to the cost changes, there have been ideas by staff invited to be shared in a staff session. Some ideas include a schedule which has been sent- Venues submitted a series of ideas through this form which the Board should have now. Some are more SLT oriented, some are saving ideas. The ones that have real substance are typically not ones that come from the bottom so to

speak. However, some like being better at housekeeping are useful, encouraging staff to manage it like it's our own money. There are some specific ideas about how bar staff training and recruitment could be done earlier, which means we have staff recruited at the beginning rather than midway into the term. Another suggestion was about reducing security presence at low-risk events. Another included looking at actively getting a naming rights deal on the LCR, delaying the opening times of clubs by half an hour saving us █████ a year for example. A complicated one was suggested; the UEA is reintroducing parking fees during gigs. The car park has been free for gigs for a while- there is a proposal that some of the car parking fee could be shared during gigs. It forms a list which we as a team should look through and start putting a schedule on. This can be turned into workflows.

JS states that the reason this was put out to staff was to create a space where every option can be explored; if the board must make difficult decisions like cuts later down the line this means that all other options have been explored first.

AA states that this is what he meant earlier about speaking to staff- they say they aren't talking to staff, but this indicates they are.

YY states he really appreciates that risks are included in this document. He would like to see more of this from the Board.

TC left the meeting.

RH joined the meeting.

## **TB 028      Waterfront Plan**

RH explained they are here to discuss the continuing of the lease for the next 10 years that the council has offered us on the Waterfront (WF).

RH states that we are stronger with the Waterfront than without. Of course there are issues; it has dropped off a little, people are wanting different things, income is an issue, students are not going out as much and wanting more destination events and one-offs. This is a country-wide issue.

RH states this year there has been a bit of a return to how students used to behave; there is an increase in students going out again. The new income streams discussed for down here had not begun due to staffing, this is now in place. He argues there has not been enough time to demonstrate that they can do this. The UEA is making noises about taking over operations; this may not include the Waterfront. He states they may not understand the relationship between

promoters and club promoters at the LCR and the WF for example, they can be moved up and down between the venues and this flexibility is a big draw. The reputation of the WF also gives us credibility; flexibility and credibility in reputation mean we can get top acts. If we lost the Waterfront, it may be hard to be seen as a serious entity and so gigs at the LCR may drop. There is also the risk that if we don't have it, Epic Studios may get it, this may squeeze us even more as they then have our advantage as competitors.

RH states that when you begin to lose parts of operations this can lead to further issues; he saw this at Sheffield Hallam and bit by bit it went downhill to the point where they don't even have a bar anymore.

There is no other venue like the WF within 100km- except possibly the Junction in Cambridge, which provides slightly different services. It would be a massive loss on a cultural level for Norwich and across the country. The other main issue would be our Box Office, which a few years ago was valued at about 1 million. If we lost the WF, that is 185 odd shows a year that would be lost. Traffic to the website would be massively down, and that would reduce the box office value. The WF has made a big contribution in booking fees this year. RH states that whilst there are a lot of figures on the doc; there are still 18 months left on the lease, there is a lot that can be done in this time even if it was to be lost. If we lose the WF at this point, there's no coming back from that. It will be a big hit for the Union. RH states in his opinion you would be losing a lot and not gaining a great deal. They have had minor discussions with a third party who have expressed more than just an interest in partnering to run the venues, but it would have to be both venues, not just the LCR. He knows people see the worth, he knows that it could work, and we can make it work. People don't get what the value of the WF is at the minute, no one has gone into enough depth to see the true value in the WF. Even if decided, we would have to run it for 18 months more due to Adrien Flux naming rights contract for example.

JS states that there is scope for the WF to do more weddings, events etc. They are also looking at offering the WF as part of a Civic partnership through the UEA, and are currently in discussion with Joanna Semlyn. There have also been discussions about NUA, not having a designated gig space, and the possibility of sharing the space there.

Reputationally, the WF is a pillar of Norwich, it has done so much for Norwich. Compared to Scholars this is huge; the board would have to be prepared for the reputational damage the Union would take if we lost it. She would like to look



slightly further ahead, and doesn't want a panic situation like decision surrounding the food during Covid.

TC adds to answer a question that comes out of the finance committee as well- the astute amongst you will notice that the actual contribution was 107 last year, shows you that structurally that we made profit on the bar here. They may not also make money on every event but it's a way of making money on a bar. Staff costs have gone up this year, due to a new staff member who is supposed to be creating new business opportunities; at the moment the figures show a projected budget of 40 but this is not the full picture. The true read is somewhere between 40-100k. It would not be made up in staff reduction as it is all intertwined. It has its own audit, rent, rates, power bill and these are fixed costs which should not be changing very much.

NW takes this to the trustees.

YY thanks RH and JS for the presentation. It was heartfelt and clearly passionate. What YY is missing is if we renew the lease how many years are we talking about.

RH explained the lease would renew for 10 years.

YY states there seems to be two choices here; renewing the lease or leaving. He would like some more information on both choices. If we were not to renew the lease, he sees a lot of risk but there must also be a cost which would be good to see so the board could make a more informed choice.

ME states that he is pleased to hear there have been chats with NUA; lots of NUA students come here anyway as they don't have a club. Could they have a shared lease? He also asks if there has been any look into letting people host balls here for societies once the kitchen is finished for example? It would be easier to navigate that with the SU rather than Assembly House where lots of balls are currently held for example.

JS states she met with the co-president of Jewish Society, who didn't know they could have the WF. If we have success stories, absolutely it would be a great idea to let them know they can use it. It needs to be a little bit more up to spec before that though, so to speak.

OH states the first conversations they had about the WF she was unsure about where she stood, more leaning towards out. She states she is keen on it now; she says we need to have a breakdown list of everything we're considering as there

are lots of ideas being thrown about. She echoes ME's point that parts of the WF could be more of an events/conference space.

JS states that this floor we are currently on is marked for that; to be redone as events and conferences whilst downstairs stays as gigs and club-nights.

SG asks for clarification on what exactly we are being asked today.

NW states we are being asked to make a decision on renewing the lease as a group.

JS states that the contractors are ready to be brought in in Jan with the money put aside by Board. It would be good to get an idea of what future steps will be before starting the work.

SG asks for clarification on whether this boils down to renewing the lease. He states it will be a [REDACTED] commitment for this organisation dependent on whether we are granted an exit clause. He states that when the Adrien Flux donation is removed, the WF is making a small loss. He asks about the budget, and what point would it have to get to for the decision to be made to walk away. Broader benefits taken into consideration, what point would it have to get to.

RH indicates it would be a slow climb; if it was indicating that it was flatlining year after year that might be the indicator.

SG asks us to be bullish as he said last year in navigating the details of the lease.

JS states we are going to be looking at community funding options. The reason the council won't bring down the rent is because another buyer (anon) is very keen. This could be (informally and with no proof except anecdote) to demolish the WF in place of development.

TC states that if 2 or 3 years into the lease there was an indicator that we wanted to back out, it may be that if there is interest from another party it may not have to be an absolute 10 years if it was not working.

SG asks for a tighter paper on the finances, and suggests thoughts needed to be gathered from the University for example.

JS states she would do this in Jan, and ask if she should pause the renovations then.

AS answers no, there is a lot of potential.

RTF asks what happens if the university does come for the venues, what happens to the WF.

KI asks if it's worth saying to the Uni if they take the LCR they need to take both. She asks a specific question regarding the figures.

TC states this probably indicates an underspending in the budget allocated so far.

KI states that the minute we decide to give this up, the rest goes too. That was the most important point from the presentation that she took away.

JS states that they have already seen it with catering. They have lost the freedom to do certain things.

YY builds on this by saying he would like to see essentially a risk register and an exit strategy. It is important for the board to see this when it comes to that.

AA asks how much the renovations are.

JS states 175k was approved at the last meeting. We have cheap quotes because of security staff with connections etc.

AA thanks them for inviting them. He states in its current form, the WF does smack of student venue. Previously he was always on the fence; he has changed his opinion. He would like to support the SLT in their plans to continue with it; he wants an exit strategy however, and to investigate exit clauses. He's not sure about weddings, but he thinks it would be a good venue to have events/meetings like in a hotel. He sees the opportunities. He states he is in favour of keeping this; the board needs to show faith in their SLT team. He wants to trust them, and he thinks the risks are low. It won't make lots of money; but the risk is quite low.

RH states he is going to be kicking some backsides metaphorically to get things moving here; there is a lot of talent that can be tapped into.

AA states he has been a trustee for some time now; it's nice to see the focus on it now rather than as a background thing.

PR states he is also getting the idea that we want to keep going with this. He wants more details, however he wants financial exposure costs for exiting the lease for example. Does the board want to set perimeters on management for renegotiating the lease? Checking there is no penalty, for example, for leaving as long as there is someone else able to come in. What other factors are we looking at outside of the money? Someone would take on the Waterfront in some way or another; what would make it different from other suppliers for example?

PR asks for clarification as to why SUS and the Waterfront are a separate legal entities.

TC doesn't know it was before his time.

PR wants something done regarding the accounting reports; perhaps a separate accounting structure?

NW takes one more point from TC before moving to a vote.

TC states that we do have to be careful that the only reason that the SU runs the waterfront is to help students and fund the Union. It is part of the Norwich cultural scene, but it is not run for it; the benefits to the cultural scene should be leveraged when seeking outside funding from, for example, the Arts Council.

SG states that grants only come in when people are looking for it actively. This would need to be explored properly.

NW states that the Garage in town got a grant recently for example; the money is there.

SG states that they probably had to tick lots of boxes; this will need to be looked at when going for grants, giving it charitable status and going all the way as a cultural grassroots music venue.

RH states that there hasn't been planning permission but there are ideas for a venue next door.

JS states she is local; there are lots of locals who don't like those plans as they are.

NW moves the meeting to a vote:

Do we continue the renovations with an exit plan, and approve the lease going forward?

ME asks again regarding the joined lease with NUA.

JS states she can have that conversation but it won't happen this side of Christmas.

PR states that the NUA Union isn't focused on commercial so much right now – rather they are focussing on democracy.

JS says she will ask, however.

The vote takes place. It is approved unanimously.

Item	Action Requested	Date	Assigned
TB028	to speak about a break clause in year 2 or 3 to the council. (Can be given to Ian when meet in January)	Feb TB	CEO
TB028	To speak to NUA about a joined lease for the WF	N/A	CEO

There is a short five-minute break.

The meeting resumes.

## **STRATGEY, POLICIES, AND GOVERNANCE**

YK joined the meeting.

### **TB 029      HR policy Review**

JS states the under 18 policy regarding clubs and societies has been updated, relevant especially to society formations. Our Unison rep has seen them and is happy.

ME states that he had some issues with the under 18s policy, he thinks there are too many conditions; an onus lies on society. How will this be communicated/supported?

JS states this will be put into training for societies. This is to protect under 18s entirely in line with our safeguarding responsibilities.

PR asks how many students are under 18 that this will affect?

JS answers that there are around 100 a year.

YY (referring to one of the bullet points) states that he has heard SafeZone has been used by some universities to track attendance. That is not relevant right here, but some students may feel they are being monitored due to one person having to have it downloaded. Who could see where they are?

JS explains that only security can see however we will keep an eye on that though.

OH has concerns over the use of group chats bullet points. Without one, you can't really run a society. This bullet point is therefore problematic and at risk of

excluding members. To say that you are not allowed in a group chat excludes people from the social side.

YK answers that it links in with our duty to safeguard under 18s. It comes from a wider case study about what that means across the country; this has been investigated by Adam. We need to ensure spaces are safe; we cannot do that with group chats. The only way to mitigate that risk is to exclude them from group chats until they are over 18.

JS understands OH's point- but she stands by the point. It opens us up to risk. We cannot monitor it fully, but we need to have something in place.

OH states she is still against it due to inclusivity. Whilst it might work for some clubs with set times, she doesn't see how under 18s could otherwise join clubs which have less of a set schedule, due to important information often being communicated through group chats.

YY states we should look at other SUs policies regarding this.

NW states that on Instagram you can now have a channel; this is not a group chat and can include people in the comms without putting them into the chat.

RTF asks what that means for Teams? That would be a concern for her. Checking with Sport that you can do a discount or a half year membership for those under 18 for the year they turn 18 would be good, so under 18s weren't paying for a full year when they couldn't yet be fully involved. Signposting is particularly important; we don't want to scare them away, but yet they can't be in our spaces just yet.

ME states that there is a lot of liability here. He suggests this moves to the next board, is looked at more closely after talking to committees. He suggests a consultation with committee members before the next board.

AA states isolation can be an issue when left out of group chats. There's got to be a way round it rather than a blanket. He asks if they can assure us there will be some kind of safety or regulation in place.

RTF asks if Into has been spoken to. That is where most of the under 18s are.

YK answers that yes, they have been consulted; that is what fast-tracked this policy.

RTF states that if we have to say you can't join this until January it's not great but better than the disappointment of not.

This discussion topic is being brought to the February board.

The non- under 18s policy (with amendments and details to be discussed at the next board) passes unanimously.

Item	Action Requested	Date	Assigned
TB029	To rewrite the paper with the amendments from above for the next TB meeting.	Feb TB	CEO

### **TB 030      Code of Conduct Process: Supplementary**

JS explains the byelaws are difficult; byelaw 12 in particular is tricky. She is asking to trial term 2 by suspending that byelaw to reduce the number of people knowing confidential info. She asks for a trial period until next year to see how that works. She refers them to the paper.

YK makes the argument for the overhaul of CoC in LB's stead. There has been much work done on this; in regard to access, transparency etc. The foundations have been laid down. We're losing that trust that has been hard won through recent changes again for how long it is taking for things to get done. When flexibility is needed, in students' best interests, the byelaws can be thrown back.

YK explains the byelaws are too prescriptive about who needs to be in a space; it is looking at holding us to account (which they should do!) But when the deadlines are so strict it is causing other issues and hard to get those people into a room within that time frame. 10 working days is quite often not doable due to people not replying, conflict of interest etc. The Byelaws have not taken all this into consideration.

KI asks if this relates to the bar also.

JS answers that this is the case.

KI asks if they can approve a byelaw change.

JS confirms this.

PR asks she is asking them to suspend a byelaw.

JS explains they have enough data to show this is not working. She just wants to see if it works; and then come back.

AA states he is not convinced; he says there are certain things missing. He asks YY if there are supervising trustees here.

PR explains it's historical; this has now moved into more staff-related management.

AA says they are indicating removing the supervising trustee because we have staff who can do it, why remove it when you have the staff anyway who should be doing it

JS explains it is an unnecessary layer.

AA raised the case given the Board of a year; the supervising trustee was not the issue, there were other things at play. For example, a Stage 2 from a while ago was incorrectly identified - I had to push back and take time to explain why it should have been Stage 1. If the student had challenged it, it would have collapsed. Someone needs to see it: I'm not against some of these changes but I don't think it's been thought through properly yet. What he would like to see is a simple process map with lists of stage one and two and lists. This would include forms, etc. He states there are also errors in there: legal definitions that are incorrect etc. That need to be looked at. Removing the supervising trustee is not the solution; it might be more work, personally. Many others could be involved as a trustee; removing it is not the answer. It is useful to have a helicopter view. He sees it as a sticking plaster. He would be happy to help; getting this right is important and not doing so would open us up to possible legal trouble.

YY states his agreement with AA.

NW asks for clarification; we are voting on the removal of the clause from here or removing the supervising trustee? But otherwise voting it through as seen.

RTF asks for how the system would work if the changes JS brought forward were implemented.

JS explains.

RTF asks who sits on the appeals.

JS states currently a university colleague, external and student trustee.

RT states if we remove the students from the student's space then they don't have a student advocate.

JS clarifies that they can bring someone in – FTO or Mum, for example.

AA states that he is in favour of small tweaks, or possibly some major ones after that chat between AA and JS.



It is decided that AA and PR to work with YK on amendments regarding the supervising trustee.

ME states trustee board has already talked about reputation; he notes there is concern in the wider UC community about byelaw changes without being put to Union Council. If this is publicised as a change this could cause damage: it needs to be advertised as a suspension rather than a change and carefully.

AA notes that duty of care is the overriding objective that can override byelaws.

JS states they are in a better position than before; they have a centralised system which has a backup now.

AA raises it was out of hand last year.

Vote to approve in part:

All hands. Passed minus supervising trustee and amendments to be worked out before next Trustee board.

Item	Action Requested	Date	Assigned
TB030	To put together a working group to work on Bye-Law 12 and the Code of Conduct process.	Feb TB	YY/PR/YB/LB

YK left the meeting.

### **TB 031      Proposal to Reduce Contracted Hours for Sabbatical**

#### **Officers**

OH states they are asking for a reduction of hours to 30 hours a week for full-time sabbatical officers. This will reduce the gap between workload and reality and reduce burnout.

AA raised that when he was president, he never stopped being president. It was a vocation, not really a job. If the officer team have come together and said this is something they would like, he will support it as he wants to support the Officers.

It was asked how they are recorded for their hours.

OH explained they are flexible - but hours are on a whiteboard.

RTF states they are allowed two WFH days a week, with two FTOS in the office everyday out of five. This means if they are the last to fill in the whiteboard you snooze you lose kind of situation.

AA asks if they will be told off for doing more hours.

NW explains no, not realistically. There is a reasonable expectation for things to fall outside of our working hours; they can't really get rid of that. None of them are work-shy on the team; they are just looking for a bit of leniency. With the stringency of the whiteboard for example, sometimes they are just there for the sake of being there. He can see why they are in place but there should be a reasonable expectation that they should have some leniency due to the other responsibilities put on top of them because of this job.

PR states that there is an issue being brought here: they are advocating for themselves when other employees cannot in this space and that needs to be looked at. He would need a paper from JS on the risks to the rest of the organisation; because if you have it, everyone else should to. This would have to be for next year's officer as there is an issue of accountability that the FTOs as employees have access to the trustee board where no one else does. He agrees it is ridiculous the expectations on the Officers for the job at the minute; the burnout must be addressed. He wonders if this is the way to do it though.

OH states that it is a lot of responsibility for relatively little pay, gives fire alarm example.

PR rejects this idea, indicating he has many health and safety qualifications, and they would not be liable for prosecution first, that would be someone else. But, he gets where she is coming from. They have to be careful about the processes however and how this ends up here.

YY raised two points; if they do proceed this, they will open a can of worms that all career staff should be reduced but paid the same. Plus are the hours of 30 actually enough to get the workload of an officer done?

He proposes that it would need to apply to the whole organisation; expanded hours, flexible working policy looked at for example.

JS explained NSC works slightly longer days and then gets a day off in cumulative every other Friday.

YY raised they need to look at other flexible options for everyone rather than just the Officer group.

KI pointed out NW mentioned that sometimes they don't need to be there: there is something there to add into training. FTOs should to an extent be self managing (and sensible) regarding their hours as a group. Empower Officers to recognise

when they need to do 30, they do 30, and 50 they do 50, for example. If the work is done it is done; if it works like that with the other teams for example, why not the Officer.

AA stated during his time as a trustee in different places he has seen three FTOs go completely AWOL. It is useful to have a certain amount of time to have in the office is useful. This is potentially a really exciting project that they could trial; it is for the people to come in the future. It is exciting to think about a hybrid contract who could open it to people who are carers, pregnant/single parents for example. There is something there that could be explored in opening up elections to everyone else who may otherwise feel they cannot run. It may need a paper however.

JS raised they may need some steer on this soon as we are going out to Election soon; it will need to be advertised as such if we wanted to change this for next year.

AA explained he would love to open up this job to people who have never applied before but there are considerations to be made here.

YY states they need to consult with external; need some employment advice here.

Examples around single mothers in Officer positions are discussed from all over the country.

RTF highlights the Career development section: this job doesn't open up what it should do in many ways. Looking at it from a career development point of view, helping officers with their next bit, I think is really important to emphasise. Example of volunteering opp. RTF has recently taken on.

PR asks if they have a volunteer policy.

JS explained it's being renewed/looked at in January.

ME explained his perception amongst some staff and some students and that they get a good deal – 'paid FT and work half the time', that is a concern. He recognises they work very hard but a lot of it is often behind the scenes- if it did pass it would need to be considered in terms of trust and communication once again.

Proposal for the amendments:

YY makes a proposal: postpone this vote with changes to the next Board in February.

PR suggests looking at the volunteering policy, there's study leave to be looked at and tweaked, he asks the officers to go away and have a look at the policy with Radar but I'm not happy voting on something I don't think should be here.

JS proposed to move board meeting from 24th Feb to 3rd.

PR raised this is probably too soon.

JS will go away to talk to Radar. Project for first two weeks of January. This will be discussed in the context of all staff and brought to Chair, and decision will be made without FTOs for fairness.

No vote today.

## **SUNDARIES**

### **TB 032      Any Other Business**

There was no other business brought up.

### **TB 033      Time, Date and Place of the next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2025.

[Full meeting calendar](#)

## **Action Log of this meeting**

Item	Action Requested	Date	Assigned
TB020	To talk to Nick Smith regarding Suffolk Trustee Board and pre-board as a sub-committee.	Feb TB	CEO
TB023	To upload all minutes from previous Board meetings by the end of January.	January	CEO/LB
TB024	To make sure data is clear and reflects cultural benefits.	N/A	CEO
TB028	to speak about a break clause in year 2 or 3 to the council. (Can be given to Ian when meet in January)	Feb TB	CEO

TB028	To speak to NUA about a joined lease for the WF	N/A	CEO
TB029	To rewrite the paper with the amendments from above for the next TB meeting.	Feb TB	CEO
TB030	To put together a working group to work on Bye-Law 12 and the Code of Conduct process.	Feb TB	YY/PR/YB/LB