

**St George's Students' Union
Trustee Board Minutes
Minutes of the 2nd Trustee Board Meeting 2016-17
Thursday 9th February 2017**

1. Present:

John McDonagh	JM	Interim SGSU Finance Manager
Ian Spires	IS	External Trustee
Matthew Bull	MB	SGUL Facilities Manager
Derek Banister	DB	Director of Estates and Facilities
Aileen O'Brien	AOB	Dean for Students
Roger Horton	RH	External Trustee
Gillian Gibson	GG	Incoming COO
Steven Gilbert	SG	Ex-president
Ishaan Bhide	IB	SU VP Finance and Student Activities 2016-17
Tanisha Amin	TA	SU VP Education and Welfare 2016-17
Francesca Harris	FH	SU General Secretary 2016-17
Corey Briffa	CB	SU President 2016-17
Na'im Merchant	NM	Student Trustee 2016-17
Ruben Thumbadoo	RT	Student Trustee 2016-17
Saeed Azizi	SA	Student Trustee 2016-17
Mark Lubbock	ML	External Trustee

2. Apologies:

Kea Horvers	KH	External Trustee
Judith Ibison	Jl	Deputy Dean for Students

3. Minutes from the previous meeting

The minutes were PASSED

4. Welcome

CB welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced those present.

5. Financial Statement – Reserved Business

6. SU Gym Provision Report – CB/DB/MB

DB: We set the task of speaking to two external gym providers – TLC and the Gym Group. Negotiations for contract with TLC, more stable and better fit. Tried to contact gym group but haven't received another offer. Matt, Corey and D visited TLC last week. Provided their first formal offer for the student's initial introductory rate of £19.99 per month, excluding the contribution the university will make which hasn't been discussed with TLC yet. £19.99 base don 1000 members, staff or

student. General membership levels have been around 600, currently around 350-400. Offering staff membership £25 per month. Sticking point at the moment is only offering this for an initial 12-month period. After 12 months the price goes up by about £10 per month. On year 2 if based on the 600 membership additional 6000 cost. Next stage is to have a further look at negotiations on agreeing a longer contract term at same price and what effect does that have, adjusting staff prices for the students? Not idea but brought to discussion

AOB: What is the general public price?

DB: £40 per month. Half price introductory. I think because gym group just opened and lost trade which they thought would come back but it hasn't yet. They maybe think if still hasn't come back in a year then they might give us another year. Think should be trying to get it longer term, to offset the 6000

AOB: Did they say they wouldn't ever ask a full public rate, always have some sort of special relationship.

DB: We are pushing for it

CB: It would be an exclusive contract between us and TLS so we couldn't go elsewhere in that time. 19.99 only for students currently signed up to RLSC. We need to increase those people signed up to get their details. We have work to do on this.

DB: Then it would be the £24.99 a month and think that's when we should use the £30,000 subsidy to get it back down

JM: When we look at these deals we set expectations with the students of what their price is going to look like. Needs to be thought given to that if it did increase in a few years the SU would get flack for this but really is due to the TLC so should be considered

RH: Do you think longer bid would be appropriate?

DB: When we spoke to gym group maximum deal would be 4 years didn't want to commit to any longer. They want certainty of membership numbers.

RH: A longer bid at higher price might be an advantage

RT: Next year we have incoming students here for 3/4/5 years who will continue the membership for that time and will guarantee have those people as members

DB: We are trying to get the student cost below the £20 threshold. If willing to do £22 per month for a longer contract may help negotiation

RH: It gives them more certainty too

DB: That's for the next discussion if we upped the contract to 2/3 years how much money looking to make

CB: The services they offer are much greater than we currently offer and the gym group also

DB: It is all in the price haven't looked down to break down the cost for separate fee for pool or gym, just a price for all facilities

RH: Does the £19.99 deal apply initially to staff and students?

DB: they said for first 1000 members, think its for us to decide how we assign that – have to be signed up to RLSC at the moment

AOB: It would be ridiculous to have consultants paying the same

RH: Staff would be probably willing to pay more if students pay less

DB: That would be part of negotiations

AOB: I worry about insurance and being trapped in

CB: This comes into how feasible we thin the Sanjay deal is and currently not very

DB: Sanjay is waiting for a contract from trust to have funds to pay rental costs

AOB: IT doesn't feel like much is moving from that

DB: That's the current position with negotiations for everything in the trust, everything seems to be coming to a stand still

AOB: We still have RL as a back up to return to.

DB: There is a plan B but we need to put something in the contract and negotiations. We will talk to the legal team.

RH: Is the £30,000 contribution from SGUL likely to be ongoing or a one off?

DB: That's based on the deal with Sanjay Sharma – it covers the estates and facilities cost and the £30,000 contribution is year on year.

AOB: Would we be able to subsidise it at all if didn't have the Sanjay Sharma deal?

DB: I think the organisation committed to it as organisation running at a loss so good to give students better facility

RH: Historically we make a loss and never been near the number - if we manage to get 750 members will that increase the price

DB: No I think there's an expectation that we will get members back from the gym group at a higher price offering a membership quota of 750 then probably talk about adjusting the price so students still £19.99 and staff £24 – there is still scope to move this around to meet our needs

CB: We need confirmation that the £30,000 will be there even without Sanjay Sharma deal and what will the outcome be if we don't meet 1000 members and go for a longer deal

DB: Is there negotiation in the price is there a limit we're looking to cap it for the maximum payment for students? Still £19.99 but if it meant could get a 3-year deal would we be happy to go up to 22/23?

CB: I think we could go to £24 if the £4 was subsidised by the £30,000 so students would still be paying £20

SG: £20 is still more than 4 times what we currently pay so it needs to be a good deal

TA: lots of students are already at gym group and might not be swimmers

CB: There is also access to the sports hall, sauna, and other things – it's a better package overall

DB: Is there a minimum term?

JM: Beyond 2

AOB: 3

RH: I have an anxiety that Wandsworth council might privatise the gym in 2 years as rates no longer support it and sell it off and we are stuck

DB: It is currently owned by Wandsworth council and managed by people for places so facilities still retained by Wandsworth so part of the deal might be getting Wandsworth to act as some kind of guarantor – need something in writing from Wandsworth that protects us

JM: What strikes me about the numbers is if there is a big uptake of 1000, even if took a few hundreds of those would the gym be able to give any guarantee that capacity if the students came along wouldn't be conflict with the existing members in terms of capacity

DB: There is always the risk of a capacity issue, down to the opening hours and the hours that staff and students use the facility. At RLSC there's lots of requests to open

it earlier and the TLC opens earlier than RLSC but always going to be the capacity gym group capacity is 6000 and currently at 4000 which might be why don't want to negotiate as their current quota. Distribution of users across the week and hours in the day. Will be peak times in the mornings etc dependent on commuters coming in on way home could be an issue so is something to be mindful of. Need to understand what they feel their maximum capacity is and their membership levels see how big a risk it is should ask the question

IS: Is this whole issue conditional to the subletting or will it happen even if RLSC is vacant?

DB: I think will happen regardless, view in university is that they want the SS deal to happen as will benefit both organisations. He needs this contract from the trust as their senior management team is in transition there is no momentum but discussion needs to start up when new team comes in.

IS: The PR side of this might be quite challenging if we send all students down the road at high prices and the RLSC is empty they might wonder if it was just a plan to free up RLSC

DB: The squash courts will remain so teams wont be affected. Just free weights room and cardio rooms. If the Sanjay deal keeps delaying the the SU could use it temporarily for storage

CB: The PR issue is solved by that the gym is currently not satisfactory

IS: Would the deal still be on the table if we waited to see about the sublet?

DB: This has been on the cards for the last 2 years so it could still be another 2 years

AOB: By that point they might have their members back and not want to do it anymore.

IS: Just looking at it from student point of view - could we wait?

DB: The condition of RL is consistently running at a loss and were not able to provide a service to meet the needs and expectations of the students and this provides a facility with a gym, cross fit studio, really good facility but this comes at a cost

SG: reputation of risk if left early. I that were to be the case would be looking for permission from the student body to do so as leaving an empty gym to go elsewhere with nothing in concrete to go elsewhere

CB: There wouldn't be any gym equipment in there as the equipment is leased

IB: whatever remains would be left to the SU - can you elaborate?

DB: squash courts, sports hall, SU maintains that for groups to use and book those facilities and if the SU wants to charge trust and university staff to sue those facilities then there is the potential for income and it would still need to be used for exams

IB: damages over time and the property has problems with it who pays

DB: There is still budget within E+F for maintenance but just not at the same level as part of it will be vacant

JM: does that mean currently the SU don't manage the courts?

DB: Yes

JM: possibility of charging trust/university are they currently charged for us?

MB: No, external is sometimes charged minimally but not really

IS: This is currently priority with student groups

CB: Yes, but still a substantial amount of time freed from timetable

ML: How long will the heart beats centre be there for?

DB: We would structure the deal in line with the termination of the contract for the gym we go to. There would have to be some break clauses that tie in so that if there were issues with the gym provider we could revert back to the RLSC.

ML: So if there's a problem with gym can go back to RL so would then need investment

DB: Yes, and that's the sticking point at the moment, capital investment to bring it up to standard

CB: We will continue, get answers to questions and then bring them back to the next meeting

7. Strategic Development - CB

CB: The goal of the diagnostic has changed. It is now quite a big and broad brief so we don't know how they will do it in 2 days. They are coming in March and I will put forward some names and will let you know the date of the meetings. We have sent all the information off, hopefully a nice diagnostic report will be produced and we will see where improvements can be made.

JM: This is a great opportunity for us as an SU to have an independent review to see where we can improve and there could be a case where they find things that we need to

improve that will have a bottom line impact. This could be in the next stages of discussions with the university about the subvention.

8. Reports from Senior Officers

Events Zone report – CB

RT: how were your zone appraisals?

CB: They were good and I am happy with all of my zone zone apart from tech as following the change of officers one of them was particularly absent for a period of time. This appears to have been a teething problem and soon as she has had training it should be fine.

Student Participation Zone report – TA

SG: How do you think the Campaigns Officers have got on?

TA: We have had ongoing trouble of them not meeting deadlines. I had an urgent meeting to speak to them so hopefully this wont come up again in the next campaign. If they treat the next week the same way a this, then Corey and I will take it away from them as we want an institute wide response. Serious meetings.

NMer: Do you think this week went well?

TA: As opposed to well advertised campaign it was more like a series of pop up stalls - the advertising not enough in advance.

CB: This came out in the appraisal.

TA: Yes but it didn't change in time for campaign unfortunately.

CB: There is a fine line when they're volunteers

ML: Investigation into sexual violence and harassment is included in your report, what is happening with this?

TA: The NUS has done reports on campuses across the UK and a final year here has done survey and we've got lots of responses which we need to respond to but the results are not analysed yet.

AOB: I have been talking to Tanisha about how we don't really have an induction about many things including this. It seems we would like to put some kind of e-learning package about general health and safety and email communication including harassment, consent, alcohol, e+d, prevent etc – we would make this compulsory so that students can't start their course until they have done it – we have looked at some packages.

Representation Zone report – IB

SG: The heritage officers are doing quite little, is it time to revisit dissolution of their role?

IB: They have achieved more than last year, I have put them in touch with archivist and have acquired space for SU but there's a fair question there and there's not much scope for much more except a few events so something to visit at AGM.

CB: They're doing a job that no one else would do if they weren't there and they're volunteers not really a negative

SG: Are the 2 remaining sports officers keeping up with duties?

IB: They are doing well

RT: We are in a similar position with tech, they were forced to step down because it was constitutional and yet we are allowing sports officers to remain in similar vain where one has resigned but not constitutionally. From Tuesday when everyone knows she's not doing it so she has technically resigned - any student can see even if this is not technically in paper.

CB: From our point of view we are 6 months through is it worth taking the time out to re-elect when actually could be doing more to put SU in a better position. I would say we have 2 people who know what they're doing and the sports officer role isn't something you can just step into, putting in someone new might be detrimental.

RT: as a trustee meeting now can we say we accept that decision and go forward with it and then no one can argue. We should move to make it constitutional.

SA: Should the constitution be changed somehow to make this easier in the future as opposed to being forced to open up elections again.

AP: Student trustees to look into changing constitution with regards to resignations.

NMer: The societies officers did not stay for all of AGM. The charities officers were also notably absent during a critical period of adjourning the meeting. Has this been mentioned to them as it was disruptive?

IB: I haven't but can do. It's not mandatory so I don't feel it is appropriate to do much more than to mention that it was noted that they left. It is a personal choice if they want to stay or not.

Communications Zone report – FH

No questions were asked. Thanks given by CB for hard work.

9. Commercial Update – CB (Paper G)

Verbal summary received

10. SGSU Shop Tills Report (Paper H)

- Trustee board **AGREED** to invest capital budget in order to update the shop and bar tills.

11. Second Floor Redevelopment – CB (Paper I)

CB: I am working with Derek to come up that second floor needs refurbishment and can see plans and project timelines etc provided by Derek. This is up for discussion - any queries?

DB: I have been speaking to Corey and the SU team around the current bar space, can we carryout some works to improve the use of the bar to create a more flexible space that can be sub-divided, furniture that can be moved around, space can have different uses and also be able to improve the uses numbers during the day. There are also problems on the first floor outside the library, some activities outside the library could be moved to the bar? We could also look at improving the storage facilities, look at updating the office area, look at relocating the music room as currently it is directly above the quiet space in the library move it to the Eddies area, increase size of HGR, and look to upgrade the toilet facilities. We could have separate toilets for the SU and for the boardrooms. Also discussions on the ground floor getting some additional retail providers to be tied into retail on second floor as Mitie are looking to terminate their lease this September.

RH: if Mitie don't terminate their lease then won't free space concerned about space on plan 'potential area for commercial tenants' – are these SU or SGUL tenants?

DB: The issue we face from Mitie is that they have said they'd like to break in September so the view is looking to provide a similar facility.

RH: Would that involve the refurbishment? We don't know on this timescale who they'd be and their requirements, or who new tenants might be.

DB: We are not looking to refurbish that space ourselves, we have just had bids for the ground floor. We are looking to provide some more food outlets on ground floor opposite the school shop. We had some discussions with some food retailers and their preference would be to be on the ground floor as they don't feel enough footfall to make a profit on the second floor. To try and get someone to take this space we are trying to tie it into the deal on the ground floor so the supplier on the ground floor could use the second floor kitchen facilities to be sold downstairs and also have an outlet on the second floor.

RH: Would the income from that still come to the SU?

DB: Yes. We need to discuss if we want the income purely as rent or as a profit share on their income. I would recommend on rent so you know what you're getting. It needs to be tied in to what the university is doing on the ground floor, need to discuss with them what they want to do and will then update at next meeting. We are not looking to refurbish that space, just to offer to retail provider and they can do what they want with it.

RH: I don't grasp the bit about additional toilet facilities.

DB: On event nights this can cater for 750 people, based on that number there isn't enough toilets. On an SU event night the toilets need to be more robust than they are. There are two distinct uses, boardrooms and SU area so it would be wise to have separate ones.

RH: One that's locked during the evening which is somewhat counter to the spirit of the SU.

CB: It is not going to be locked but more that there would be one cleaned urgently in the morning for boardroom use the next day so that it looks nice for meetings.

SG: In the redevelopment meetings for the sixth floor last year there was a lot of angst getting this done on time. If the finish aim is August 2017 with a buffer of one month this rides very close to Freshers - what is the contingency plan?

DB: We need to look at priority, what can we do within that time and what will drive it is the budget available. Priorities should be the bar area, which is generally a furniture and decoration installation with some lighting, minimal refurbishment is needed there. We need to decide the extent of the works to the bar which is critical and toilet works could probably phase.

SG: In an emergency and we take out the bar and can't have it for 2 months, what is the contingency?

DB: We need to look at extent of the works to work out a contingency. We know dates we need everything up and running and need to be realistic about if some things need to be done at another time so that don't have the risk of not being ready in September

CB: There is always a risk, the question is whether we take it while it is there.

AOB: Some people don't go to counselling because of where it is, has that been considered at all?

CB: This hasn't been considered in the plans.

TA: It is still really oversubscribed.

AOB: Some people have said they won't go because of where you have to wait.

CB: Maybe we could have a different system where they call you when they're free or something so students don't have to wait.

DB: We could move the Grosvener doors so that people can wait a bit more privately.

AOB: This is a good idea.

RT: I agree that everything should be phased but do need a complete back up plan if all went wrong and freshers is where make majority of bar money and if were in position didn't have some second floor facilities this needs to always be in the back of our mind. Student experience but also financially not having the bar opened in freshers would be catastrophic

JM: Plan B needs to find an adequate sized venue to hold freshers events if this was likely to go beyond timelines and the financial implications from the bar would also have to be considered.

DB: Once we have got a budget this will detail the extent of the works and then can put together more detailed project plan which will define the key milestones and can then put together a risk register and identify those risks and look at mitigating actions which will be centred around the bar

AOB: In terms of the project reps says going across institution, we have got IMBE, how will representation from all staff be achieved?

DB: She was assigned by the organisation to assist

CB: She volunteered. She had been working alongside Deborah Bowman and Paul Leech.

AOB: Either should have representation across the staff.

CB: We will have a look at that.

RH: There is no detailed plan, budget, contractor, will this really happen this calendar year or next calendar year?

DB: The bar area can definitely be done, as furniture – 2 phases. Time should be fine but consideration is can we extend the bar in that time. Can probably do one part of the toilets.

CB: The bar will be widened to allow people behind the bar to have a better working experience. Improve service time as well

DB: I don't know how much work that involves

TA: There has been a request from a student that the breastfeeding welfare room should have a bit of attention too as a bit unfair if everything else got a revamp apart from it.

DB – budget and time and constraints but will consider.

JM: It is important that we are dovetailing university expectations with the SU as well, we are currently working on 17/18 budgets.

12. Risk Register – Reserved Business

13. Financial Improvement Plan (Paper K)

CB – no change.

14. Subvention Proposal – CB (Appendix 1)

CB gave thanks to everyone who took part in writing the proposal. We have asked for an increase of nearly double the amount of subvention we currently get. We gave 3 options: gold, silver, bronze. We suspect that the university won't give us all the money but after meeting on Friday, John, Ishaan and I have a positive outlook. The first line from the principle was 'where can we find them extra money?' so this seems positive! We have made it clear there's a lot of risks without commercial ventures and that the university should be subsidising all charities costs and anything we make from commercial ventures should go towards improving the services we offer and not being reliant on them.

IM: The whole document was prepared within 1.5 weeks which was a short deadline but we managed it!

JM: I think it's a very good document irrespective of the time. It is well laid out with competing arguments. There is more to this than just the subvention grant itself. It includes the SS itself, background information and Corey has highlighted that the amount of subvention grant per student is low. Discussion with the university Corey put these points across. The SU is providing very good services to the student population. In past those services have been provided on a shoestring budget. The subvention grant has not grown in years but we are now putting out there that need to look at the expenditure. Ishaan lead on p14 comparing the original to the new one and a lot of those things incurred are really to drive student experience forward. Ishaan and Corey made strong arguments to the university in the meeting on why this was needed. When going through planning I really hope that the university take this on board. We may not get full amount but substantial amount at least to put us on a stronger footing. Capital elements needed in future such as boat every 4 years,

health and safety etc – I think it is a very comprehensive document. The next question is how will it evolve over time.

SG: What happens now?

CB: John, Ishaan and I have things we need to do so you'll notice throughout the document there is no notice on trading income as we said trading is separate and shouldn't be reliant on the trading arm which is at risk to be subsidising students but we need to work on that as finance director wants to know more information. They want us to consider our trading arm at a conservative amount. We are going to do some work on that. We are having to put together a short document summarising this 30-page document in 4 bullet points! From 22nd February our proposal goes to the Principle and they rank us on 4 levels – lowest level nice to have, next level strategic development, governance then criminal compliance. We are currently in the strategic development level. We have moved up one but are looking to push it up slightly higher still.

RH: I think overall it is a good document. It would have benefitted from statement at the beginning about the structure of the SU. May be misapprehensions. I am surprised by the small increase in student numbers. My gut feeling was that the increase would have been 25% over the years, but it's only 11%. I think we could have made more of that 11% as was actually new courses, HCS, PA, Into – 11% increase on new courses has a much bigger impact on the SU than 11% on existing courses – new regulations, problems, rules, reps. 10 years with no inflationary increase in the grant is absurd, we need to push for it to be reviewed on annual or biannual basis.

CB: Through this have said that it should be reviewed annually which was my recommendation, we didn't want to link to inflation as then they start saying where are inflationary costs.

AOB: There were also risks with linking it to student numbers as these can also go down.

CB: The annual recommendation depends on the sabbatical officers, if they don't bother then they wont.

GG: It will fall under me for continuity to ensure these things are reviewed.

RH: Looking at the relative contribution SGUL make compared to other places, I am surprised that it never gets revisited, because I am not convinced by data.

CB: The data is from annual returns forms from other universities. Did this because the instant argument would be that we aren't comparable to places like Oxford and Imperial. We wanted to make it clear that on average they are a lot higher.

AOB: This is the final document and it can't be changed now.

JM: At some stage I would expect university would make a higher contribution than in the past, there might be a spruce up needed for this document before it is signed so we can take those comment on board.

ML: What is the process from now on?

CB: On February 22nd we will be given a yes or no from Jenny. If it's a yes, then it goes to SPARC and then goes to council and the final decision is made there. We should know what's happening in March and have an answer at end of the planning round in June.

15. AOB

Deputy Chair Appointment – CB/NM

CB: We need to appoint deputy chair. We will vote on any volunteers.

Volunteers: SG, NM, RT

Appointed: NM

Appointment of Appointment Committee – CB/NM

CB: This would be a nice thing to have if we want to appoint people in the future

NM: The board has 2 subcommittees, financial chaired by Ishaan, appointments chaired by ex-officio which is made of 4 people. This subcommittee is in charge of training trustees before the board, making sure they fulfil their terms and ensure you have the skills needed when decide to have you. We need 4 people.

Volunteers: IB, NM, TA and SG (chair)

Length of appointments of each current Trustee – CB/NM

Length of appointments of board to be reported back to next meeting after being discussed at appointments committee.

16. Date of next meeting:

18/05/2017 – 17.30 H2.6

13/07/2017 – 17.30 – H2.6