

YUSU AGM - 9 May 2017
YourSpace, The University of York Students' Centre

The Chair, Jack Harvey Policy Coordinator, confirmed that the quorum of at least ten members was present.

1) Approval of Previous Minutes

Printed copies of the minutes were made available in the room. The chair invited anyone that had not yet read them to do so.

2) Report from Trustees on the Union's activity

Chair of the Trustee Board, Millie Beach, gave a presentation reporting on the Union's impact through the period since the last meeting. Millie highlighted that YUSU had been through a period of change that had continued from 2015-16 which was the first full year of delivery of the YUSU strategic plan. She established that this was building on a solid foundation and that the current 2016/17 year had seen significant strides in the development of the 2020 strategic goals focussed on: representation, communities, opportunities and wellbeing.

Millie highlighted that YUSU has set a series of Key Performance Indicators to help measure, monitor and assess progress of delivering the strategic plan. Progress across these areas was reported on.

3) Annual Accounts

The Chair of the Trustees received the annual accounts (2015-16) noting the accounts have been audited by our external auditors BHP, reviewed and approved by the Trustee Board and submitted to the Charities Commission. Copies of the accounts were made available.

She reported the accounts are YUSU's first consolidated financial statements prepared under new reporting standards known as the SORP, a statement of recommended practice for accounting and reporting. The annual accounts are the consolidated position for the year which includes YUSU and Commercial Services trading.

She highlighted:

- YUSU has continued to increase overall turnover; this is up by 37% from 2011.
- Overall incoming resources increased by £301k within the year, or 6%.
- Overall expenditure increased also within the year by £202k, or 4%.
- This has resulted in an overall surplus of £68.5k (compared to a deficit of £30k in 2015).
- We reported a deficit of £38k at last year's AGM – this £30k figure mentioned above differs because the accounts have been 'restated' in line with reporting requirements (under SOPR 2015 and FRS 102). As part of the new reporting requirements accounting policies/ reporting has now changed – the changes are all set out on page 44 of the accounts, should students have any questions about this.
- Year on year comparison shows increases across major areas with; block grant increasing 3.8% (up £40k to £1.09m); charitable activities increasing 6.2% (up £114k to £1.97m); trading activities increasing 9.2% (up £162k to £1.9m).

Looking at outgoing resources, she drew members' attention to the following:

- Overall, costs have increased in the region of 100k from last year's budget.

- Events spending has increased from 68k to £110k – alongside an increase expenditure on marketing; both areas in which we have increased the scope and scale of activity for students, and increased income alongside expenditure. Particular areas to highlight include extra resource for additional IT and design support and events co-ordination support.
- Societies grant expenditure has increased by £16k with sports clubs reducing by £60k due to an away Roses.

Looking ahead, she noted

- That continued support is required from The University as a key funder (YUSU remains one of poorest funded SU in the country).
- The level of reserves has been reviewed by the Trustee Board on a risk management basis, resulting in a target of one to three months of operational costs being deemed appropriate. At the time of the financial year end the accounts were closed towards the bottom of the target range – improving this has been a focus this year.
- In the year ahead, YUSU will transition to incorporation, the key element here is that this change of structure will mitigate risks associated with being an unincorporated organisation.
- And of course, Brexit, looming, brings significant economic uncertainty with likely implications for student numbers. The new HE Act passed into law very recently which will of course have implications for university regulation and fee levels. We are in a period of ongoing change, the role of the sabb team is to ensure students' voices remain high on the agenda.

4) Current Affiliations

The Chair of the Trustees noted current affiliations:

- NUS affiliation with a cost £46,943 in the 2015-16 year. The Chair noted changes to the way that this is calculated have been agreed, which will mean it is likely to reduce in future years.
- BUCS affiliation with a cost of £11,548.

5) Governance Changes

- The Chair of the Trustees reported that during Spring Term students voted in a referendum to back plans to change YUSU's legal structure. This means that during summer 2017 the Students' Union will transition to become a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee (GLC). This structure is a common form for unions.
- The change will not alter the way that YUSU works on a day to day basis – students are unlikely to see a difference - but it will create a separate legal identity for YUSU which is distinct from the Board of Trustees. The Trustee Board is YUSU's main governing body, under the existing legal model, the Board remains personally responsible for YUSU's obligations such as contracts and potential debts. Incorporation mitigates Trustees' potential personal liability and means the Union can own assets and enter into contracts in its own right.
- Subject to legal transfers of YUSU's assets and liabilities, she reported YUSU is aiming to incorporate at the end of July.
- The next major milestone in the process will be the receipt of YUSU's new charity number.
- YUSU's existing constitution is set to be replaced with a fit for purpose set of 'Articles' which will be the main governing document for the new entity.
- For students, the next stage of this process will see the Bye-laws brought up to date to align with the new Articles.

6) Officer Question Time

The Chair invited Officers to report on their terms of Office and take questions.

6.1 Isaac Beevor, York Sport President

IB reported back on his highlights, drawing students' attention to the following:

- Team of the Week – Pleased with the level of engagement. In fact we have started to do 'Highly Commended' results to recognise other achievements. Our highest total was six applications for one week, which was really positive. They all get some Merrell merchandise and most of the posts get well over 2,000 engagement.
- Sports Person of the Month - We have had one release which got 8,000 people engaged on Facebook alone. Really good way of celebrating success and promoting the York Sport Union, as well as the individual and their club.
- Accreditation Scheme - Really positive about this. Scheme based around Community, Inclusivity and Development. Really hope this makes clubs more outward facing and looking to get involved in volunteering, fundraising and EO stuff. Had feedback from clubs and the main concerns going forward are real rewards for this scheme and application process.
- This BUCS Girl Can Week - had a variety of events on. Every day profiles featured York Women in Sport, these got really good reach on social media. Also had an Equal Opportunities session on Women in Sport on the Monday which saw 15 clubs attend and Women Only Gym Hours for the first time on the Wednesday with a total of eight Women using the gym in these hours.
- Introduction to Coaching and Refereeing - Had a total of 26 people over the night. 19 for the RFU and seven for the FA (which was a bit disappointing). Looking to have courses next term and just waiting on YSJ to see how their Intro Evening goes. Both the RFU and FA seem happy to continue this on for future years, perhaps starting earlier in the year to have the first course done by the End of Term One.
- Naked Calendar - We have raised about £700 so far on the Naked Calendar. Mostly due to £300 worth of sponsorship from Adam Jay.
- Roses - Plans in place and look to get that underway. It's a whole team effort but it is looking really cool
- College Varsity - Had meeting with Durham. Hopefully this will be a really good event but the issues going forward are how to get people going away.
- College Sport - working towards that and want to message captains to get players names so we have real numbers. Have done this so far with one sport.

6.2 Dom Smithies, Community and Wellbeing Officer

DS reported he had:

- Worked to improve social media outreach, engaging with students through my channels rather than just using them as streams to post in.
- Ensured that I'm accountable & transparent by writing weekly updates of what I'm doing, who I'm with and where I am as well as a termly report (in both a long & detailed format and a shorter format that's more accessible).
- Attended as many events I was invited to as I possibly could. Supported students and Officers in their projects & activities to the best of my ability Consent, Health, Reporting & Recording, Sabbsolutely Fabulous, Faith and Colleges have been a major focus.

- Supported the Women's Officers in delivering the consent talks at the start of the year.
- Wrote a blog on the value of this work and outlining next steps in the consent agenda.
- Been working with the University to ensure consent messaging is fully integrated in the Freshers' welcome in the years to come.
- Taken part in the Student Health Needs Assessment Steering Group, working to assess the particular health needs of students across York. Over 900 people participated in the survey alongside this focus groups with student stakeholders and some big group sessions with international students were held.
- The Report will be approved mid-July and distributed to students when they're back in September.
- The big report will cover niche demographic details as well so our liberation networks will have more data than they've ever had before.
- Pushed the NHS for consultation sessions to happen on campus to ensure the student voice was heard in the consultation on the new mental health hospital that's due to replace Bootham.
- Worked closely with Open Door throughout the year. Dispelling myths, passing on feedback, interviewing for some of their new staff, facilitating a focus group to respond to the proposed big changes that'll hopefully be making the service more accessible.
- Highlighted the work of Nightline and Nightsafe, helped them with everything they asked for and promoted the opportunity to volunteer with them.
- Helped with the Class of 2016 Appeal which was raising money for Nightline
- Held the University to account on their mental health spending ensuring it was transparent and being used effectively.
- Wrote blogs and gave information to Nouse so they could report on it.
- Reporting & Recording - Responding to the UUK Report was a big achievement. Universities UK released a report on guidelines to HE institutions for dealing with harassment, sexual violence and reporting. Have held the Uni to account, am part of the working group and pushed for a centralised & online system that was more accessible to students.
- Recruited the Assistant Registrar Promoting Community Cohesion and Respect, Claire Massheder. She's a breath of fresh air and is a massive asset to students in this Uni.
- Facilitated a meeting between Claire and students (Lib Welf) to run through proposed changes and answer questions. Feedback and response was overwhelmingly positive and the comments were all constructive and taken on board.
- Worked with Nouse to get create a Freedom of Information request as well as writing a comment piece on the systems and why they need to change.

The Chair invited questions from the floor:

What would you say that you failed to accomplish?

- My manifesto was ambitious but the General Election and Brexit has meant that some things were not priorities.
- I felt that working on the community agenda was not fully addressed and I hope that the sabbs will take this forward.
- I also wanted to develop more with activism, but didn't get round to doing it.

What is the biggest change you have spearheaded?

- The reporting system and consultation with students. Until taking part in the work I had no idea that so few students reported instances of sexual violence. The new system will be an online system that will be monitored and include a triage system, the pilot gets underway this term.

Will we get a full breakdown of the University mental health budget?

- I can't comment on what the University will or won't do; the University does have a budget but haven't published it; this is really a question for the University, not me.

What will you be handing over to the new sabbatical team in terms of did not attend?

- Open Door will be changing to a new system, an online booking system. They are doing a lot of work towards developing a triage system to make it more accessible. When you get a confirmation to Open Door, it will give information on how to cancel.

What support is the Union trying to put in place for people on LoA, particularly how we support students when they are away.

Millie Beach responded:

- The first thing we must acknowledge is that there are flaws. YUSU conducted research into LoA, and found a key issue was around how we reintegrate students into the Union. I will lobby the University by the end of the year to improve their LoA process. We want to make it so that students still feel that campus and societies are still there for them. The University is open to change its policies.

How much of the Graham report has been implemented?

Dom Smithies stated:

- They [the University] have set up a committee to action the Graham report. They are planning to put together a 12 month action plan, including a mental health committee. They are on track with what they are planning to do. There has been more new Open Door staff. They are working more closely with partner institutions, and have increased attendance on external committees in order to share best practice.

6.3 Tamaki Laycock, Academic Officer

TL reported:

- That the Academic Officer role is the most susceptible to change. NSS and Higher the Education Act have meant that the role has been focussed on communicating these changes to the Academic Reps. The NSS boycott was something that the Sabbs were involved with, and that I took a lead in this.
- I worked with the University on their new timetabling system; the University is redoing their system and will change a variety of items, including exams.
- I have been working with the UoY on the Pedagogy to see how it can be improved for students.
- I have contributed to reducing the number of exams.
- During the year I have hosted open hours for departments and piloted suggestion boxes; there was not much interest so it will be reduced to termly open hours.
- I have been hosting faculty forums, to give feedback to faculties.
- In addition I've focused on awareness raising, including giving feedback through 'how was your contact time'.
- To help improve awareness I've had taken photos of the department reps to make sure that students are familiar with the academic reps.
- The Excellence Awards have been a focus of this term, and there has been a conference element added. It will also be a forum to discuss how we can make the academic experience better.
- Finally I have included the liberation survey as part of my work. The results of this will be presented to the University Teaching Committee.

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The Chair took questions from the floor.

Can you give an update on why is my curriculum white?

YUSU is planning to get more engaged with this. Using the liberation survey will mean that the campaign is rooted in an evidence based approach. I will be meeting with the University soon to ensure that this is taken forward.

Do you know how much the Union spend on promoting the NSS?

The work is based on the course reps using the University resources to communicate the NSS. What is important is that students get their feedback to the departments, which is what the NSS provides.

What has been your favourite committee?

Learning Spaces working group allows us to discuss the spaces that are available for students. As part of that I've managed to make the Spring Lane Buildings be painted a different colour; the white background was very distracting and was giving people headaches. Furthermore, this committee has been an avenue to push for General Neutral Toilets and improve accessibility.

6.4 Activities Officer, Alex Lusty

AL reported:

- Give it a Go was well organised by Matt Ingram. I have diversified the programme. I have included RAG and Volunteering. I have put in Give it a Go week which replaced Refreshers. The week was very successful and engaging. One of the events that we had was Jail Break Give it a Go which was very successful.
- Jail Break was successful as it had more applicants and raised the most money for the chosen charity that they have ever received.
- I want to separate societies and media and am on course to do that.
- The Love York Awards were a big focus and I was pleased with the number of nominations.
- As a YUSU trustee, I was pleased with the result which I spearheaded around the incorporation referendum, in addition to my Finance Committee scrutiny role.

Questions were opened to the floor:

Having run a disaffiliation campaign with the NUS last year, how do you feel that you benefitted from attending conference and the training?

I went to SU 2016 and RAG Conference, I didn't run in zones; I don't believe that it was a part of my role as a sabbatical officer to do that.

Why haven't society cards been introduced?

I was told it couldn't happen; some items on my manifesto were unachievable but I tried to work in the spirit of the pledge. What I managed to secure is a discount at Campus Service bars, as well as bespoke society merchandise.

6.5 Millie Beach, President

MB noted:

- That it was too difficult to develop a social media platform. Instead the Love York hashtag and Sabb selfies were introduced and a comms review in place.
- The student noticeboard will be picked up by Alex Urquhart
- I have been involved with a range of projects and campaign work including:
 - The changes to timetabling.

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- Making the case for changes to signage on campus.
- Rent prices for students.
- The Love York project.
- Tackling anti-Semitism and raising awareness of Holocaust Memorial Day.
- The Your Campus Needs You project; this has been a large part of delivering that manifesto pledge.
- I gave some of my budget to the ISA in order to help them with representation during Global Week.
- I worked with Colleges to make sure that non-drinking events and liberation events are prominent.
- The manifesto pledge of the 'How to Guide hasn't been done as work on governance took priority.
- That her failure has been that she has started a lot of projects but didn't finish them.

Questions from the Floor

In light of the Officer elections, there was talk of candidate welfare investigation, what is being done?

We are making steps to improve accessibility and want to get this right.

Elections are hard work, but we do see issues with how candidates approach campaigning. It's important candidates only do what they are comfortable with.

There is currently a lot of Active Policy that has not been worked on. As a Sabb team what have you done to implement policy? In particular the BDS policy.

The BDS policy was passed to a corporate conclusion. This means that we acknowledge the policy decision of members but there are limitations in terms of implementation.

Do you feel that the Incorporation Referendum was clearly communicated to students and what they were voting for?

Do you think it was fair that YUSU asked students standing in the election to support the Incorporation referendum, particularly as you are a trustee?

YUSU made Incorporation as clear and transparent as possible; it was a corporate issue in that it was about the Union's legal model but it will change very little for the students. No one presented themselves to oppose incorporation and reaching quorum for the referendum was a positive achievement.

AL added that he had encouraged candidates to support incorporation, if they were interested.

MB continued, candidates didn't have to engage with it.

What progress is being made with regards to Gender Neutral toilets in Spring Lane?

TL responded that Spring Lane has Gender Neutral Toilets although the ground floor does not have Gender Neutral, to cater to conference audiences.

MB confirmed that the new Piazza building will have some Gender Neutral Toilets.

YUSU has policy on being a Living Wage employer, will YUSU pay contribution to the Part Time Officers.

MB stated that YUSU is appreciative of and value everyone that volunteers with YUSU, however we need to consider where we draw the line between employees and volunteers. In term of the Living Wage, MB stated that she has been lobbying the University to ensure that University Campus Services are Living Wage employers.

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7) Minute Ratification

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.