**Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting held on Monday, 2nd March 2026 at 4.00pm held in Flintoff Meeting Room/Teams**

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**Members Present:**

Avery Greatorex (Chair/Union Rep)
Dani Beckett (Deputy Chair/External Trustee) (online)
David Lo (External Trustee) (online)
Chak Yee (Union Rep)
Abigail Beavan (Union Rep)
Molly Martin (Union Rep)
Camilla Duncan (External Trustee)
Laura Kenny (Student Trustee)
Arjun Kumar (Student Trustee)

**Guests:**

Stef Hartley (Chief Executive)
Graham Wright (Director of Finance & Services)
Hannah Mason (Director of Membership Voice)
Jon Russ (Director of Engagement & Enterprise)
Doreen Walker (Executive Assistant) (online) (minute taker)

| **BT26.105** | **Meeting Administration** | **Action** |
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| | 1.1 Apologies for Absence | |
| | Apologies for absence were received from Emma Sims and Karen Mansfield. | |
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| | 1.2 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest/Register of Interests | |
| | There were no conflicts of interest declared. | |
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| | 1.3 Declaration of Student Status | |
| | AG, MM, AB CY, LK and AK confirmed that they are still students. | |
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| | 1.4 Minutes of Previous Meeting | |
| | The minutes of the meeting held on the 8th December 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record. | |
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| **BT26.106** | **Actions from Previous Meeting** | |
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| | 2.1 Trustees to let DW know if they require further finance training with Graham (min 2.2) | |
| | GW confirmed that AG, CY and LK attended the recent finance training session. He also noted that he can deliver the training again if anyone felt they would benefit from it. Trustees to inform DW if they would like an additional session. | |
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| | 2.2 GW to send the auditors the draft figures for the pension deficit new valuation (min 2.5) | |
| | This item will remain on the agenda as the figures for the pension deficit have not yet been published. | **GW** |
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| | 2.3 <u>Policies document to be circulated to all Trustees outside of the meeting for them to indicate which policies they wished to be involved in reviewing (min 3.6)</u> | |
| | DW confirmed that this has been done. | |
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| | 2.4 <u>Risk Register – SH and HM to discuss adverse publicity section further as the current wording was not considered accurate. Items E1 and E6 also required minor amendments (min 3.8)</u> | |
| | HM has not yet updated the Risk Register. It was noted that E1, E2 and E6 are individual risks, and HM shared with the Senior Leadership Team the incident response plan outlining the actions that would be taken. | |
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| **BT26.107** | **<u>Reports</u>** | |
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| | ***Finance*** | |
| | 3.1 <u>Draft Financial Statements, Trustees Annual Report and Letter of Representation</u> | |
| | GW informed the Board that the Financial Statements have not yet been finalised. He confirmed that a separate meeting will be arranged for the Board to approve the Financial Statements, the Trustees' Annual Report, and the Letter of Representation. The Audit Findings Report will also be considered at this meeting.<br><br>DW will contact the Board to arrange this meeting.<br><br>**Action:**<br>• DW to schedule the additional Board meeting for approval of the Financial Statements, Trustees' Annual Report, Letter of Representation, and Audit Findings Report. | **DW** |
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| | 3.2 <u>Financial Update</u> | |
| | GW presented the financial update and confirmed that the results cover the period up to the end of January 2026. He reported that, overall, the organisation is on target at the bottom line, with most areas performing as expected. However, Lampworks is currently behind budget.<br><br>The balance sheet reflects the organisation's financial position as at the end of January, and it was noted that no capital expenditure has been incurred during this period. | |
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| | 3.3 <u>SUSS Pension Scheme</u> | |
| | GW informed the Trustees that the Union is required to make contributions towards the deficit pension fund. While the fund is performing better overall, a recovery plan remains in place, and contributions are still required. The improved performance has reduced the repayment period by three years, resulting in most Unions seeing a 9% reduction in their required contributions. However, nine Unions, our own included, will see an increase. | |
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| | For us, the annual contribution will rise from £112k to £121k, representing an increase of £9k per year. | |
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| | GW noted that, overall, whilst the deficit has reduced by £300k (significantly improving our balance sheet position), the increase in annual contributions will have a direct negative impact on our cashflow over the remaining | |

years. Our total remaining liability will now be reduced to £915k from the previously forecast £1,122k.

DL asked whether this increased contribution will be included within the block grant application. GW confirmed that it will be included in full and added that it may encourage the University to look more favourable at the proposal to fund the Union exiting from the scheme.

GW reiterated that the pension fund had performed better than anticipated.

3.4 Block Grant Progress Update

GW informed the Trustees that the first informal discussions had taken place with George Charles, the University's Chief Finance Officer. He reported that the conversations had been more positive than in recent years, with no indication that the block grant would be reduced. GW confirmed that work has now begun on preparing the block grant bid.

GW asked the Trustees how ambitious they wished the bid to be, including any projects they may want to propose, and noted the need to consider next year's operational plans, salary inflation, and other cost pressures.

CY asked whether we could submit a bid for a longer-term agreement (e.g., three years) and if this could be incorporated into the proposal.

SH suggested forming a small group of Trustees to support development of both the block grant bid and the social enterprise tender submissions, noting that these pieces of work would need to be handled separately. She proposed that ES and DL join this group. AG recommended including a Student Trustee, and AK volunteered.

It was suggested that the group review previous block grant submissions and consider what investment would be required for a refurbishment of the Social Enterprise areas. DL confirmed he would be happy to review and sense-check the work, although he will be based in London.

It was agreed that AK, CY, DL and ES will form the group, together with JR and SH.

***Strategy, Projects and Impact***

3.5 Social Enterprise Tender

JR explained that this piece of work followed on from the Board away day, where it had been suggested that external support be sought to review the Union's commercial areas. A tender process was undertaken, and six proposals were received, all of which were included in the Board papers.

JR and SH had reviewed the submissions and prepared a list of pros and cons for each company, based on how effectively they felt each proposal met the project brief. JR asked the Board to indicate their preferred consultant based on these recommendations. The Trustees discussed the tenders.

Following a short discussion, the Trustees voted unanimously (9 votes) to appoint Nina & Co. as the preferred consultant.

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| | 3.6 | <u>Progress Update</u> | |
| | | SH provided an overview of the new spreadsheet that has been implemented to track progress across each area of the Union. This replaces the slide format previously used. She noted that this will be a rolling document, accessible to all Trustees, and will be presented at future Board meetings. | |
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| | | SH then guided Trustees through the annual operational plans and the February results. She highlighted that the community building plans are progressing more slowly than anticipated due to some organisational challenges and earlier mistakes in the process. | |
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| | 3.7 | <u>Student Priorities Update</u> | |
| | | JR took his report as read and invited any questions from the Trustees. | |
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| | | He explained that the Union Leadership Team had shortlisted six clear themes, which were then voted on at the first Students' Assembly meeting to identify the three issues that mattered most within their communities. The three highest-voted priorities were:<br><br>• Finance & Cost of Living<br>• Timetabling<br>• Placements | |
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| | | LK asked whether the Board would receive ongoing updates on student priorities. JR confirmed that progress can be reported at each future Board meeting, and he is happy to provide updates to Trustees at any time upon request. | |
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| | | SH suggested that information from the new spreadsheet could be adapted into slides for Board meetings. AG noted that all identified priorities will be addressed. | |
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| | | **Action:** HM and JR to consider how to clearly communicate the priorities and progress. | **HM/JR** |
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| | 3.8 | <u>Union Reps Progress Reports</u> | |
| | | AB took her report as read and highlighted the following key points:<br>• She met with Helen Davenport, Head of Catering, alongside LK, and noted that the meeting went well.<br>• She has been making enquiries regarding the possibility of extending student staff contracts for a limited period post-graduation.<br>• She reported that her biggest challenges have been finding sufficient time to progress actions alongside her studies, identifying the right people to speak to, and navigating accessibility and action planning processes. She noted that she is still learning how these processes work and the timings involved. | |
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| | | CY took his report as read: | |
| | | • Main challenge has been accessing staff availability within the University, which has caused some delays. | |

- Researching laundry costs in private-sector student accommodation and other universities to strengthen the case.
- Exploring opportunities to support a national campaign advocating for healthcare students to be paid while on unpaid placements.

MM gave a verbal update as follows:

- She has been very busy with her course recently, which has limited the time she can dedicate to the Union. However, she has attended several University meetings relating to the Mental Health Charter, suicide prevention, and awareness initiatives.
- She noted low engagement with the mandatory suicide prevention training and is exploring opportunities to work with the Mental Health Team to improve uptake and impact.
- She met with Helen Davenport, Head of Catering at the University, to discuss matters relating to the catering outlet.
- She has been collecting feedback from her school regarding consolidation week.

LK noted that suicide awareness training can be triggering for some individuals, and although the training is mandatory, it does state that attendees may opt out if needed.

AG took her report as read:

- Travelled to the London School of Economics to campaign on behalf of the NUS in the disaffiliation referendum. Unfortunately, the vote was to leave the NUS. Separately, she and CY would be travelling to London for the Don't Freeze the Future campaign on student loans.

3.9 CEO's Report

SH took her report as read and invited any questions from the Trustees. She noted that the Senior Leadership Team had been extremely busy but were managing well. There were no questions regarding her report.

3.10 Licensing Assurance

JR confirmed that the company's licence had been renewed in January and is valid for a further year.

***Governance & Risk***

3.11 SHE Minutes held on the 9th February 2026

SH informed Trustees that no high-risk issues had arisen from the SHE Committee meeting and requested ratification of the minutes. The Board duly ratified them.

3.12 Policies Document

The Policies document was noted. Some Trustees reported that they were unable to access the document. DW and SH will look into this issue. **DW/SH**

3.13 Risk Register

The Risk Register was taken as read. Due to time constraints, Trustees were asked to email any questions regarding the Risk Register directly to SH.

3.14 Recruitment of new Trustees (due to ES leaving and the end of May and KM at Easter)

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| | It was agreed that this item would be carried forward to the additional Board meeting that DW will arrange later in the month. | **DW** |
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| | ***People & Resources*** | |
| | 3.15 People Report | |
| | The People Report was taken as read. Due to time constraints. Trustees were asked to email any questions regarding the report directly to SH. | |
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| **BT26.108** | **Any Other Business** | |
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| | 4.1 Associate Membership for Former Trustees | |
| | AG invited the Board to acknowledge the contributions of Manya Raj and Additi Nema by approving them as Associate Members in recognition of their significant service to the Students' Union. The Trustees voted, and the approval was unanimous. | |
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| **BT26.109** | **Dates of Future Meetings** | |
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| | Tues, 14th April – 5-7pm – Student Assembly Meeting & AMM<br>Mon, 20th April – 4-7pm<br>Mon, 22nd June – 9-5pm – Summer Board away day (incl Board mtg)<br>Mon, 24th Aug – 4-7pm | |