

**Trustee Board Minutes**

**Held on 26th September 2019 at 4.20 p.m.**

**By Videoconference (07C03, H215, MD122 and BA-02-003)**

**Present:**

Andrew McAnallen, President (Chair) David Longstaff, Chief Executive

Robert Stewart, Lay Trustee (Deputy Chair) Colin Campbell, Operations Director

Ashley Neill, Lay Trustee Clodagh Kennedy, Finance Director

Jim Coyle, Lay Trustee Avril Honan, Membership Director

Nicole Parkinson-Kelly, Vice President Education

Chris Chambers, Vice President Sports & Wellbeing

Collette Cassidy, Vice President, Magee

Thomas Logue, Student Trustee

Christopher McLarnon, Student Trustee

**In Attendance:**

Shauna Murphy, Vice President, Belfast, Owen McCloskey, Vice President Coleraine, David McHendry, KKP Consultants (in-part), Aaron Ward, Lay Trustee, Cathal Conway, Student Trustee and Jackie Taggart, Note Taker

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| **Meeting Notes** | **Action** | **Update** |
| **Agenda item 1: Welcome.**  The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of this academic year, and everyone introduced themselves. |  |  |
| **Agenda item 2: Apologies**  Apologies were received from Kirsten Watters, Lay Trustee. |  |  |
| **Agenda item 3:** **Declaration of Interest:**  There were none. |  |  |
| **Agenda item 4 – Sports Review Update:**  DMcH gave an update on various consultation meetings that had been held. He cited Belfast Campus as being the key challenge due to the sports facilities available in the City. Jordanstown could not be replicated there, and there will be a need for students to travel between Belfast and Jordanstown for training facilities. 20% of students are engaged in sport and the remaining 80% should be accommodated for integration and wellbeing purposes. Funding is confusing and the true cost of sport needs to be identified. Sport to be self-financing presents a real challenge with the 80/20% split. The investment in the 20% needs to be refocused on the student experience and wellbeing. CCh felt that transport between Jordanstown and Belfast was not an issue as team members were prepared to travel to train and the issue is the social sport platform. Campus and City sports facilities were discussed. It was felt that social recreational sport being part of wider campus development which is integrated into campus life is the way forward. By the end of October, if consultation is complete, a report will be written, and the next phase will commence. DL reminded the Board that CCh and he both sit on the Steering Group and recommendations will come back for digestion and comment to the Board. DMcH left the meeting. |  |  |
| **Agenda item 5: Starred Items:**  There were no starred items. |  |  |
| **Agenda item 6: Minutes:**  Minutes of the meeting of 30th May 2019 were approved. |  |  |
| **Agenda item 7: Matters Arising:**  There were no matters arising. |  |  |
| **Agenda item 8: Chair’s Communication:**  AMcA gave an update and said that in July when the Officers commenced their term, they travelled to Athlone for training organised by USI which presented a valuable opportunity to network. Officers prioritised campaigns reduced to 5 instead of 8 which are Mood (student wellbeing, promoting positive mental health); Broke not Broken (Housing Rights); Lead the Change (Leadership campaign; No Grey Zone: (Promoting positive sexual consent clarity) and Climate Energy (Lifestyle changes). Officers and staff attended the global climate strike. SUT+ was held in Jordanstown campus. This was the 2nd year we were recommended as a host venue. We welcomed three international student presidents, attended Pride Parades in Belfast, Londonderry, Newry and Cork, met with VP Academic Affairs and Robert Murtagh re campaigns. Refurbishment is ongoing of Jordanstown and Belfast spaces. In August we attended at University of Limerick. Get Sussed is networking over 4 campuses. Some Officers met with the Secretary of State on his birthday and gave him a card with a paper on Brexit attached and spoke of our concerns. There was a decrease in the number of RoI students enrolling in UU this year. Over the past few weeks, all the team have been busy with Welcome and Freshers Weeks which have gone well this year. Membership Cards have been picked up well and feedback is positive. |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 9: Chief Executive’s Report:**  DL presented a paper and informed of a SharePoint/Intranet site which will help staff engage in what Officers/wider organisation are doing; Relationship with Value Cabs on a scheme of Ride Now Pay Later for students who run out of money to get home safe has been developed. There is a maximum levy cost of £20, it operates for the greater Belfast area and students have to give up their student cards to get the free lift and there is joint branding. Membership: 7,000 students now have membership cards as part of a three-year plan culminating in loyalty branding, access to extra facilities and benefits. Staff Policies: Will launch on SharePoint. Staff Review and PDP Process as part of the All-Staff December meeting: This is top-down driven with Core Objectives, Operating Plan and Strategic Directions. A steer from Trustees was required on a case where a Club Member punched an opposing player with significant physical and psychological impact and received a suspended sentence. This could not have been pre-conceived although there is a civil claim against us, the individual and the University. Legal advice has to come from the South of Ireland, and we have to instruct Junior Counsel. Would ask for approval of up to £5,000 to cover initial conversations. RS congratulated the SU on the new branding and membership cards. DL explained the findings on the Student Experience Survey and how they are actioned. The Board approved the core objectives for 2019/20 and ring-fencing £5,000.  **Note:** RS left the meeting and asked for apologies to be noted for this. |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 10: Management Accounts:**  CK gave a summary of the accounts, which are on budget, up to 31st July 2019 and said they were subject to potential change by the Auditors. They had reverted to 12-month cycles. She spoke of the decrease in Magee Shop profits and increase in catering payroll costs. It was a difficult year with outsourcing also which did not go ahead. Admin salaries and wages were less as two posts have not been recruited. The Acting CEO had been paid by Consultancy budget. The PPI levy was reduced by £19,000. Membership Services brought in additional income. Motor and travel expenses rise resulted from a change in our structure where we are recruiting overall positions so there is a lot more travel and one pool car is off the road. It is more costly when staff use their own vehicles. Cleaning costs had a rate increase and we have had more night events. We pulled back £7.500 in Legal and Consultancy. OMcC queried the travel costs and CK reminded that this was based on individual mileage and not the running cost. TL suggested using Skype instead of travelling. | . |  |
| **Agenda Item 11: Audit – Trustees Report:**  CK explained that the structure of the audited accounts has a section for a Trustee Report for which she has compiled a template, and Trustees can add their own piece. Our accounts will go to the Charity Commission as a showcase to see what you are doing. | Any input to Trustee Report to be forwarded to CK before 31st October |  |
| **Agenda Item 12: Letter of Support, Coleraine Club**:  CK explained that the Club did not have a good year financially, with the reduction of a redundancy payment, and the Auditors will not sign the accounts without a letter of support. As it is a going concern, the Students’ Union gives a Letter of Support each year. We are a registered charity and there may be a question as to whether the SU should be supporting the Club. The Bar provides a social space for students which would make it justifiable, and we are looking at different ways to negate the loss. CC referred the Board to the Business Plan on SharePoint and explained that when the SU catered in South Buildings, we were able to sell hot food, but when we moved to the main building, restrictions were placed on the menu. We have had an on-going battle with the University on this, but now have written confirmation that we can expand our menu to a limited hot food offering and the Hospitality Manager feels confident that evening trade will bring in more revenue on these. Set-up costs are not included due to depreciation over 3-5 years. It was felt that students are unaware that the money they spend is going back into UUSU and this knowledge might increase sales. Bar Committee must be notified of any changes for its approval. More student staff could be employed to decrease the Hospitality Manager’s number of working hours. CC confirmed that we have advertised for student staff and they get paid an enhanced rate to work evenings and to be a keyholder. During interviews, student staff who can work late and extra nights can be identified. OMcC said that this will have to be passed through Bar Committee and tie in with the Letter of Support to show Trustees that we are dealing with the deficit. DL felt that, with marketing, we can get potential customers past Mount Charles’ outlet. We are relatively close to unpicking this. Already prepared food was suggested as a time-saver, as was vegetarian and vegan options, and there is scope for marketing. AN felt concern that the under-writing was closer to £15,000 as the revenue from the Golf tournament had been included in the figures. Additional menu costs would pose a challenge and she would be reluctant to offer support and we should think about not being in this position next year. CC confirmed that the figures were based on South Buildings sales. AW suggested asking students what they wanted on the lunch menu thereby creating a bit of involvement and ownership but being careful not to open it up to things that we cannot provide. Marketing and promotion could be used, perhaps letting people know they are supporting the SU by wording on receipts. DL pointed out that during any consultation period, there will be a considerable amount of time elapsing where we may loose potential profitability. It was suggested deferring this until December, although the second semester will be less profitable, but equipment could potentially be bought for less money or a lower cost option was identified. DL pointed out that we should be clear that tough decisions need to be taken at some point if the trend continues.  The Letter of Support was approved. | OMcC to call Bar Committee meeting.  CC to look at a lower cost alternative.  CK will bring signed Letter of Support for audit. |  |
| **Agenda Items 13 Operating Plan and 14 Risk Register:**  DL informed the Board that these had both been updated and asked the Board for questions. There were none. |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 15: Commercial Services Update:**  DL gave the Board the background to tendering to outsource the commercial services. There had been four interested parties, but some dropped out and they were the ones we were most interested in therefore we made the decision to pull back from the tender and rethinking is currently taking place. It was not prudent to re-enter the market quickly. There are Brexit and economy concerns over the coming years which put potential partners off. Jordanstown Catering has two years maximum trade left and we will have a potential redundancy situation with staff. Coleraine and Magee could be a combined package. Coleraine Catering makes money, but the Bar does not. Local businesses prove challenging for Magee which does not do well. We are working with Campus Life to explore possible hospitality bookings. We are attempting to unpick the of the liquor licence that Mountcharles holds. The University wants to control the licence and we are currently lobbying to add additional spaces where we can sell alcohol, and the University will make us an agent of sale which gives us a stake in this. Clothing merchandise sold from Magee Shop is always popular and we would like to hold on to that. |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 16: Strategic Plan:**  DL gave a presentation and summarised that we are growing in the right direction, with good awareness of the core services. We have reduced top line risks and been re-awarded Green Impact Status. When we focus on what we want to deliver, represent or support, we achieve really high standards. Proposed requirements are to address dependencies, reduce reliance on the block grant, and address income generation in the coming years and he gave a timeline for his suggestions. JC asked for the definition of an elite Students’ Union and DL explained. AN felt this was ambitious and is interested to see it when it is “fleshed out” a little. She warned of being careful regarding representing the student voice and other areas of involvement, but agreed we are going in the right direction. DL agreed as to choosing the right campaigns where the student voice is not being heard. He said there were pieces of research that can be purchased that SUs buy into to get comparisons and, although this is a very expensive option, driving greater income will give more scope for Trustees to have more monetary decisions. AW felt this had strong evaluation and was an ambitious plan which was clear on purpose, mission and values. |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 17: UUSU Values:**  DL updated the Board that Officers and Staff wanted to move away from stale corporate values and have a statement to contextualise the words. There is no concern with showing them to students to see if they are what they feel and what they represent. This was approved. |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 18: Good Relations Update:**  AMcA advised that an Equality Commission pro-forma had been drafted as to how we employ the bi-lingual policy which mandated us to work with the University to explore bilingual signs in the University in English and Irish. We worked hard to remove religious belief as a major conflict and also articulated against the racial group category. This has been sent to the Equality Commission and an EQIA will commence. When it is returned, we will work with the University to analyse the findings of it and work out recommendations on the best course of action. The next meeting should take place in October. | AMcA to give an update at the next meeting. |  |
| **Date of Next Meeting: 27th November 2019** |  |  |