

Minutes

Quorum

At 5.15pm, quorum (100 members) was not met.

At 5.45pm, quorum (100 members) was not met but 13 members (inc the Vice-President) were present, in line with Bye Law C the meeting was considered quorate

Meeting is quorate

1. Welcome & Apologies

- a. All members present were welcomed to the meeting. GM apologised for the error on the agenda as prior ASM date was 30th March 2023 not March 2022 as shown on the original agenda (March 30th was the rescheduled date from 23rd March 2023 as quoracy was not met).

Apologies:

SU President (due to illness).

Chair of Student Council (disrupted transports – Storm Bert).

2. Previous Students' Meeting

- a. Approval of minutes of ASM 30th March 2023
Minutes approved
- b. Matters arising
None raised

3. Reports

- a. Trustees Report – given by the Vice President on behalf of the sabbatical team and Board.

Sabbatical Report ASM 25/11/2024

Last academic year finished strong. With a highlight being our largest summer ball to date with over 2200 attendees – word to the wise, tickets will be going on sale Jan 6th for this summer!

The academic year 24/25 started with a small cut in our block grant funding, which was recovered through support of the Welcome Week Arrivals Crew and Here to help ambassadors to bring us back to prior year levels.

Across welcome week we delivered: 56 events during the main welcome week period, across events the 11 events when door entry was used, we engaged nearly 70% of all first year, and 2100 unique students across all levels. Number that we know are the envy of many across the south coast.

During welcome week we ran a new year new idea campaign this, as well as ongoing ideas and comments have guided us in the events we have run. A short list includes:

- Abba Nights- We welcomed ABBA Inferno into Zee Bar
- Clothes swap (Izzy is running one in December)
- Mature, LGBTQ+ and International student meets
- Drag Night
- Silent disco with UV Vk
- Sip and paint (as part of Black History Month)

To name a few

We have over 1400 members in SU Activities and individual club memberships remain strong, especially in sport. We are proud to have maintained our memberships costs under £100 for all bar one club. We are one of a few Unions who have managed to maintain this. That said, looking ahead we are aware that there will be an increase in our BUCS affiliation fees next year that will need to be accounted for. All our clubs and societies are student led – we would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for all the amazing hard work you are doing behind the scenes to make all these different events and activities happen.

The Course Rep programme has been revitalised, there are over 300 students representing the student body academically, and whose feedback is invaluable. When taking into consideration our course reps, committee members and officers we have over 700 volunteers helping to deliver the student experience – which is amazing and will help us close the feedback loop to you, the student body.

Following a small restructure during the summer we reduced our staff team down to 10FTE. This academic year we have employed 100 members of student staff across all areas, many of whom have continual employment with ourselves supporting the bars, shop and marketing.

Sabbatical officers are continuing with campaigns: Black History Month; Trans day of remembrance Vigil; On going cost of living crisis, student representation. As well as future campaigns such as LGBTQ+ month and disability awareness month.

We continue to recycle the student pound, where all money spent within our commercial outlets is put back into the student experience. The Shop, The Hub and Zee Bar are all trading as expected – we continue to have the cheapest meal deal on campus, we are expanding our offering in Bognor and are continually reviewing what happens in Zee. If we don't continue to make changes to our operations, our facilities / venues may, in line with national trends may be at risk of closing due to financial pressures.

We are proud of all our students supporting the Movember campaign who to date have raised over £17k – this is a phenomenal achievement – it will be amazing to see if the team can reach the new target of £21600.

We are looking forward to the festive period, and Semester two, there will be lots to look forward to, please do not forget about the summer ball ticket launch – this will be one not to miss!

And to finish, as ever, please do continue to share your thoughts, concerns, successes and ideas with us. Without your input, without hearing from you directly we cannot act. Use our feedback form, email us, come and have a chat – we are here for you, the student body. If we don't know about it, we can't do anything about it!

- b. Finance Report – given by the General Manager on behalf of the Board:

Finance Report for year ending 31st July 2024 & looking ahead to 2024/25

Our accounts for the financial year ending 31st July 2024 are being drafted by our auditors and the accompanying trustees report is being prepared. The audit field work for the year ending 31st July 2024 was undertaken in September 2024. Our draft out-turn for the year ending 31st July 2024 is expected to be for a surplus of £30,200 compared to a budgeted loss for the year of £19,627. At this stage, we are not anticipating any changes to our draft results although would note the draft result includes assumptions made for revaluation of our pension deficit liability (based on corporate bond rates on 31st July).

Whilst a positive result overall, trustees are mindful that the favourable position was

achieved mainly due to underspends compared to budget within our Sports and Activities and Central Services, and that whilst overall, our commercial activity was broadly in line with budget, trading within Zee Bar continued to be more of a challenge (in line with sector and licensed trade trends).

Final clearance of our accounts is expected to take place within the next 2-3 months after which the accounts will be uploaded to the Charity Commission and Companies House.

Looking at the current year (1st August 2024 to 31st July 2025). Again, this year we are budgeting for a small deficit (£11K). Our budget for the year is optimistic and assumes positive levels of student engagement and participation in both our commercial outlets (Zee, Hub, Shop and on-line) and in our wider SU activities (Sports, Societies and SU led events/activities).

For those of you that are not aware, the Union is a separate legal entity to the University; we are what is known as a charitable company limited by guarantee. Under the Education Act 1994, the University is required to have a students' union, but services provided by Union over and above being a primary representative to the University vary. We are financially separate from the University, and are separately registered with HMRC for things like Tax and VAT.

Our income comes from 3 main sources: Block Grant funding from the University, turnover from our commercial offerings, and membership services income. We spend our money on: Overheads to support the operation of the Union (website, insurance, staff and governance costs), Costs of Trading (costs of stock, equipment, security, licensing H&S, wages and salaries, events costs including marquees etc), Costs of Membership Services (running costs of clubs and societies such as transport, officials/instructors, performance costs, freshers/arrivals week costs, H&S and staffing).

As has been seen on the news, as well as the general cost of living challenges which many of you will be feeling, there are many challenges across the HE sector, be that reduction in student numbers or increased costs being faced, and inevitably this has in some ways flowed through to Unions and we are no different. This year has seen our Block Grant funding reduce slightly from £330,000 to £325,000. In preparation of our budget, Trustees were mindful of keeping increases of costs to you as our members a small as possible, although recognising that some cost increases were inevitable. Both bar/retail and membership prices have been increased slightly for this year, recognising that the underlying costs of operation/delivery have increased. In addition, we have introduced new fundraising targets within our clubs and societies and are in the final stages of setting up a just giving account to enable

easy donations and have established a simple to use fundraising option through Easy Fundraising which allows individuals to nominate the SU as a preferred charity and receive a % of transaction at no additional cost to the user. In addition, we are actively seeking sponsorship for Summer Ball 2024 and are looking at investing our working capital in no risk savings accounts through the Charity Aid Foundation baking platform, which will generate better interest rates than through our own bank/savings account.

To put this into context, we are approximately a £1.2M turnover operation (including our Block Grant Funding of £325K). Our budgeting and financial management needs to be quite tight – for example overall we need our commercial entities to contribute to Union funds so in achieving this we flex our hours and operations whilst still striving to deliver the student experience. We consider and manage club & society income and expenditure carefully – a great example is why we may find it necessary to restrict the number of teams participating in competitive sport or why we arrange shared coaches to sports fixtures; we also rely on ensuring we have collected all membership income prior to committing to expenditure.

At the end of the first quarter, our results showed us slightly ahead of budget at Union level, but notably, trading in Zee Bar (which has traditionally been our main source of income) was slightly behind budget, which is of some concern. The Hub continues to operate at a loss but is considered key to offer a form of social space on BRC – we are currently working with the University to make the venue more accessible during the day as a common room type space. The Shop has introduced an extended range of products (including some great meal deal options including coffee and additional branded merchandise). Any profits generated from our commercial activities in these core areas or through support of our pop-up offerings (such as tasty Tuesday, the forthcoming Christmas Market, or external stalls/events) are reinvested back into the wider student experience.

Looking ahead, we are currently entering into discussions with the University around our Block Grant Funding level for the next academic year as understanding this is an important factor in part of our budget planning and preparation. Trustees and the Union Senior Management Team are expecting to start the budgeting and planning process for 25/26 soon after Christmas once we have a better understanding of trading patterns, engagement levels and projected student numbers for next year, all of which may influence the shape and size of our operation next year.

4. Appointments

a. Continued Appointment of TC Group as Auditors

Vote:	For	13	Against	0	Abstentions	0
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b. Appointment of TC Group & Crowe LLP as Corporation Tax & VAT Advisors.

Vote:	For	13	Against		Abstentions	0
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Member Question: Are these local companies or are these white label / National organisations with a strong reputation?

GM – Advised that TC Group recently purchased Knill James and we are in a three year agreement following the tender for audit services.

c. Appointment of Warner Goodman as Legal advisors

Vote:	For	13	Against	0	Abstentions	0
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5. Motions

a. Union affiliations

- i. The SU proposes to remain affiliated to the National Union of Students Charity (NUS Charity).

Vote:	For	13	Against	0	Abstentions	0
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Member Question: Do we have to pay for this?

GM – Yes, there is a charge of £1,610 and for this we get access to the purchasing consortium, access to officer training and election support.

- ii. The SU proposes to remain affiliated to the British Universities and Colleges Sports.

Vote:	For	12	Against	0	Abstentions	1
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Question: Please can there be a request for arguments for and against?

GM – This is very simple, would you like students to continue to have the opportunity to play sport in the national competitions facilitated by BUCS, British Universities and

Colleges Sport, or not? We pay to be affiliated and current year costs are £5,217 for the institution and £2,303 for the teams.

iii. The SU proposes to remain affiliated to WonkHE

Vote:	For	12	Against	1	Abstentions	0
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Question: Is this a service that is informatic only or would there be an opportunity for debate?

GM – There is a charge of £1,230 and for this we get access regular meetings with the Wonkhe team, access to sector research and information/debate and support for our sabbatical officers and senior staff.

6. Any Other Business

Member Question: Are there elements of the SU that are losing money? Can the account be viewed?

GM – yes, there are in effect commercial areas within the SU that loose money but are considered a service – but we do not have an unlimited budget and therefore not all outlets and venues are open all the time. Our accounts are available on both Charity Commission and Companies House websites; accounts for the year ending 23/24 are not yet finalised but will be uploaded soon. Should you wish to have a greater understanding of our more detailed accounts and budget, please email to arrange a meeting and I will be happy to go through in more detail.

7. Date, time and location of Next Meeting – to be scheduled

Meeting closed at 18:18

Member Question: Were there not appointments to be made: Portfolio Officer (asked once the meeting has been closed, 18:19).

GM – No, Nominations for the SU Bye-Elections closed on 11th November 2024. Of the 4 positions advertised, only the Bognor Academic Officer role had candidates and proceeded through voting. Voting closed on 15th November 2024 and Jack Malkin as Academic Officer Bognor Regis Campus.

Member Question: I would like to run for the role and have asked to run. Please can I ask the room if anyone if they would be happy for me to run as Open Portfolio Officer? (asked once the meeting has been closed, 18:20).

GM – This is not how elections are run. As Deputy Returning Officer, I can confirm that our elections were run in line with our Bye-Laws the election process for the AY24/25 has now been completed. Nominations will not reopen

Member Question: Are you therefore happy to run the organisation with one less student officer? (asked once the meeting has been closed, 18:20).

GM – As I have just outlined, and in line with our bye-laws the election process for the AY24/25 bye election has now been completed. Post Christmas we will be looking to open the elections for the 25/26 academic year.