



## **ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING MINUTES 2016**

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 18th February 2016  
at 5:15 in the Anson Rooms - University of Bristol Students' Union

### **Present:**

Jacques Le Chevallier	<i>Chair of Student Council</i>
Zher Rem Tan	<i>Chairs aide - DSC Member</i>
Alice Teale	<i>Help desk - DSC Member</i>

### **Full-time Elected Officers**

Thomas Phipps	<i>Union Affairs Officer</i>
Max Austin	<i>Undergraduate Education Officer</i>
Laura Ho	<i>Postgraduate Education Officer</i>
Jamie Cross	<i>Equality, Liberation &amp; Access Officer</i>
Steph Harris	<i>Sport &amp; Development Officer</i>
Sarah Redrup	<i>Student Living Officer</i>

### **In attendance**

Izzy Green	<i>Minutes, Bristol SU Staff</i>
Sam Ward	<i>Minutes, Bristol SU Staff</i>
Dani Glazzard	<i>Bristol SU Staff</i>
Ann O'Malley	<i>Bristol SU Staff</i>
Ryan Bird	<i>Bristol SU Staff</i>

There were 370 voting members in attendance and 3 observers

### **1. Introduction to the Meeting**

The Chair called the meeting to order at ---17:56--- and announced that the meeting was **quorate** [and later became inquorate]

The Chair ran through the order of the meeting and explained who the AMM is, including DSC, what happens throughout the meeting and the process of speaking for and against motions and amendments.



Jamie Cross covered the Safe Space Policy and asked for people to respect others rights to speak, not threaten others and not make personal attacks.

**Voting Pad Practice vote was taken, members were asked “Which officer role would you be most likely to stand for?”**

**There was an issue with the software counting the votes.**

**The Chair moved onto affiliations in the meantime whilst technical issues were being fixed**

## **2. Approval of Bristol SU's Affiliations**

Jamie Cross

Explained this year's affiliations and proposed that all affiliation are voted on in one go:

- NUS
- British Universities and Colleges (BUCS)
- Advice UK
- Student Minds (eating disorder support group)
- National Nightline
- Voscur

Chair asked for voting, affiliations **PASSED**

**Chair called for approval of Minutes of last year AMM 2015**

**Minutes APPROVED**

## **3. Democracy Review**

Tom Phipps - Union Affairs Officer called to the stage to present the democracy review.

Tom explained his ambition for the year to review Bristol SU's democratic structures and gave an overview of what we will be covered.

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He explained that the review found that students found the democratic structures difficult to navigate. Explained how students were consulted via standing committee, student councils, executive committees meetings, a student leader survey and consultation with 200+ randomly selected students on campus. Findings of the consultation were explained.

Tom explained the Networks model and its aim to have a more community organising system. Networks would be the primary means of taking action and raising issues, the chairs of which would replace part-time officers, and would be open to any student to attend. The aim was to address students only wanting to be involved in issues they find personally interesting or relevant.

Officer committee would replace standing committee, student council would remain largely the same in terms of membership, and would aim to increase quoracy, as well as reduce the number of student councils, from 5 to 2. Agenda items can be raised by Officers, through the networks or by a petition from 25 students. All student votes would replace a referenda and these would be used instead of AMM. Tom covered the makeup of the Networks proposed.

Chair asked for questions on the technical side of the Model proposed.

**Student asked:** How will the societies and sports exec fit into the new model?  
Tom replied: Networks would decide on the best model for allocations of funding and decisions related to that Network, whether to be escalated or decided by the chair.

**Student asked:** to clarify what was in the networks?  
Tom: Read out the different Networks and what they were made of.

**Student asked:** how voting system would ensure people engaged and were informed when voting?  
Tom: More about good democratic practice, encouraging debate and campaigning through campaign teams and debates organised by Bristol SU.

**Speech For:** Tom Phipps  
Was frustrated with lack of engagement, disempowered by inquorate meetings. Feels confident that research is indepth as well as consultation. Students only want to be involved on issues they care about, Network Model enables this at a lower and informal level. Network model ensures that

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officers are properly scrutinised, which they are not felt to be within the existing structures. Students found democratic structures hard to navigate. Waste of resources and student hours on inquorate student council meetings.

### **Speech Against:**

Abolition of AMM and EMM, reduction of powers at Student Council and restriction on who can submit motions to Student Council. No democratic procedure in Networks and decisions made undemocratically and informally. Restrictions on 'ordinary members'. Referenda are discouraged. Referenced Leeds and there abolition of Student Council.

### **Speech For: Jamie Cross**

Acknowledged support of those present for AMM, and the worry at its removal. Need to commit to a model that enables this. Quoracy is rare. Networks would include students in enforcing their policy in which members would vote. Networks are about students working together on the ground on issues that they're passionate about. Networks won't be chaired by full-time officers, and chairs will ensure all voices are heard, and Networks are the way to do that, not just those who turn up on the day. Networks are a much better way forward.

### **Speech Against:**

Issue lies in removing voting bodies rather than the addition of Networks. Lack of democratic process. Not making informed decisions, means increasing power in hands of elected officers from the hands of regular students. Quoracy is a problem, which is an issue with the structure of the union, once gone it will be difficult to bring back. Badly publicised.

Chair opened the floor to questions

**Question 1:** Current committees making decisions about funding grants include members without vested interest. With a change to a Network, it will just be those with issues relevant to their group who are likely to attend which reduces the objectivism of the decision.

**Question 2:** A small dedicated committee can do far more than a large meeting. Networks can do more in terms of accountability than Student Councils and AMM.

**Replied from Against:** problem is they're getting rid of AMM and creating more barriers at Student Councils. Lack of attendance is due to the reputation of the SU not producing results for motions and policy

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**Tom replied:** 50-100 different issues between Union Policy, FTO and PTO manifestos. Networks will allow students to make sure policy is put into action. We have too much policy and must prioritise.

The chair explained how voting would happen, going through the following steps:

- a. A vote on the principle of the new model for SU democracy
- b. A vote on changes to the bylaws to establish the new model [requires two thirds majority to pass]
- c. A vote on the proposed new appendix to the byelaws that outlines 'Areas of Responsibility' for Bristol SU Networks

**Votes:**

a) PASS - 64% For, 36% - Against

**Amendment proposed by Simon Butler, and presented by Laura Ho**

Speech for: Laura Ho

Wants to reduce petition number of students required from 25 to 10

Quoracy was not met on the votes after this point.

Vote on the amendment:

**69% voted for amendment to Byelaw**

Vote to approve the proposed bylaws as amended and accept the Networks Model:

Suggestion was made to vote by hand rather than electronically, which was accepted

Vote was counted by hand.

**VOTE - In favour but did not reach 2/3rd majority.**

Principle was passed so will be worked on.

#### **4. Pro-VC Nick Lieven giving update on University's Strategy**

**Nick Lieven** : going to give an Update on the strategic consultation done before christmas, focusing on issues relevant to students. Revealed issues that came up as valued by students. Revealed areas that students would most like to see changed, signposting to Epigram and the Consultation website for additional information and feedback.

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Strategy document was circulated to all staff and students on the 11th February. Questioned how many in attendance had read the documents. Response was small but expected. Outlined core sections of the strategy.

Introduced the Bristol Futures Curriculum. Outlined a Taught Graduate portfolio that would be developed with PGT courses to accommodate the specialisation in Masters courses. Stated that a diverse range of opinions needed to be sought, as reflected by the diversity of students in attendance. Additional focuses on innovation and student wellbeing. Described intended changes to the Campus infrastructure and Tyndall's Avenue, with the intention of developing a student 'hub'. Current issue reflected by the lack of a University 'centre'.

**Question from Sarah Redrup:** Within the strategy document, there is a lack of reference to mental health and that the sections on well being are insufficient.

Acknowledged by NL.

**Question by student:** Queried the salary of the Pro-VC, and whether such a salary was justified in relation to less well-paid members of staff

Response from NL: Unsure of the difference in salary. Nick explained he was in work 8am - midnight day before.

**Question by student:** Requested a move to democratic discussion.

Response from Chair that the University and the Union should be allowed to present.

**Question:** Regarding contact hours, which are not addressed in the University strategy

**Response:** Differences in course types . Cited a different style of learning in different disciplines, and noted that the learning intensity rather than time is more important.

Call to move to the proposed motions.

## 5. Motions

### a. **Motion 1:** Stand Up to Racism National Demo

Proposer: Noha Abu El Magd

Speech for: Noha Abu El Magd - see motion

Speech against: none

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**Motion PASSED**

b. **Motion 2:** Move Bristol SU to Campus!

Proposer: Max Austin

Speech For: Max Austin - see motion

Speech Against: none

Question: Which parts of the SU would be on campus.

Answer: Representation and Just Ask would be on campus with easy accessibility, as well as Central Services.

Call to vote now

**Motion PASSED**

c. **Motion 3:** University wide Referendum on Safe Space Policy

Proposer: Ben Kew

Speech For: Ben Kew - see motion

Speech Against: Alex Rees

Floor asked for Questions by the Chair

Student: Why is a referendum suitable for a safe space policy which is intended to protect minorities. Referendum isn't suitable for a matter where minorities will be most heavily affected. Voices of minorities will be squashed.

Ben Kew: I don't see that as an argument against a referendum, can argue that about any democratic process. Non-judgemental and non-threatening is up to debate. Fear that referendum will end in safe-space being abolished.

Alex: Need to facilitate proper democratic discussion in order to determine a referendum.

Point from the floor that proponents of the safe space policy were the ones interrupted the speaker. Stated that there could be a balanced approach.

Ben: Students are able to non-attend. Empty rooms are a statement. The Safe Space policy can become too all-encompassing. People need to decide on the issue.

Alex: Acknowledged that the issue is split along partisan lines, and that current debate is on the referendum rather than the policy itself.

Referenced a consultation by Bristol SU currently in progress.

Question from Ben: Ben Kew and some in attendance do not understand Safe Space policy.



Ben Kew response: Freedom of expression is the core of debate and student experience. Safe Space policy constricts this. Crucial element is that there should be a choice among students.

Alex: Unitary decision reached by discussion is better this is a petty cultural division. Please oppose this motion.

Chair calls for a vote:

**Motions FAILED**

d. **Motion 4:** Lobbying the University to Accept the Bristol Pound

Proposer: Alistair Thomas

Speech For: Alistair Thomas - see motion

Speech Against - none

Question: How would the Union accepting the Bristol pound benefit local business beyond raising awareness?

Reply: That is the point to get other more actively engaged in using the Bristol Pound

Question: What is the Bristol Pound?

Reply: it is basically already in circulation to encourage local trade

Question: I have never been issued with a Bristol Pound, and use non-local businesses. This motion is a waste of time.

Reply: This doesn't really help towards a sustainable society which is what we are working towards.

Question: The Bristol Pound is making sure money is circulated and kept in Bristol rather than going into London.

Move to a vote

**Motion PASSED**

**POINT OF INFORMATION from Steph Harris**

Bristol SU is a Charity and has charitable objects to which we are beholden by law. Money or resource must fit into these objects, and is unlawful to spend money on anything outside of these objects. Motions that go outside this and pass, means Bristol SU cannot complete every action.

e. **Motion 5:** Support the campaign against immigration detention and the #SurroundYarlsWood protest



Proposer: Amy Finch

Speech For: Hannah Dualeh - see motion

Speech Against: none

Questions: Comment whether we have the right as body to allocate funds

Reply: we all have a part to play in the violation of human rights.

Chair: any student can come to AMM and ask for funds for up to £500 for a campaign

Question: What would the alternative to border control be, open borders?

Reply: in these detention centres there is well documented human rights abuses and a UN investigator was barred from investigation into these detention centres

Question: Comment; voting on the principle and not the economics as they are all reviewed by Trustee Board.

**Motion PASSED**

f. **Motion 6:** Divesting from Israel's Illegal Occupation of the West Bank

Proposer: Daniel Wernberg

Speech For: Daniel Wernberg - see motion

Speech Against:

Motion is well-intentioned. Link between Israeli-Palestinian economies and the impact of removing and boycotting industry in the West Bank. Implications upon Palestinian people and families of loss of jobs.

Boycotting not the solution to the issue, as opposed to campaigning and being vocal. Motion is a step in the wrong direction.

Speech For:

Israeli occupation (checkpoints, etc.) destroying Palestinian economy, and Israelis. Reports by WHO on unsustainable conditions in West Bank. War crimes and UN violations committed by Israel's government impacting all Palestinians living under that occupation. Motion seeks to awaken moral shame in Israel and a statement towards basic Palestinian rights and a declaration of support for Palestinian people.

Speech Against: Jonathan

Motion goes against the values of the debate. Boycotting one party does not contribute to resolving the issue. Agrees in opposing Israeli conduct, but proposes alternative motion encourages dialogue and



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promotes peace rather than a blame culture. Current motion sets on a pathway to perpetual division.

Question from the floor:

40-50 years haven't given much results. Direct action should be taken

Response from Jonathan: The only way that we can win in Israel is through dialogue and negotiation.

Response from Daniel: Separate issues. University supporting companies putting money in the hands of Israeli government. Leftwing governments have also built as many settlements as the Lightwing government. Motion targets boycotting of West Bank issues rather than wider Israel-Palestine conflict, and is a display of solidarity.

Question: Motion is against countries occupying other lands. What about other countries doing similar (China, Turkey)? Why focus on one country?

Response: Personal issue as a Palestinian, encouraged questioner to raise motions for other instances of illegal settlement. Emphasised importance of making statements as key to making Israel listen.

Response Against: Israel is the only state being targeted by these kind of motions. Such actions are too backwards-looking rather than moving forward. Should be listening to each other rather than boycotting.

Question relating to Action 5: Queried whether assumptions how students identify and may perceive specific issues

Response from Daniel: No contradiction between feeling attachment for a country and revulsion towards its policies. Affections towards a country

Response from Against: Feels threatened by the motion as a Jewish student, and Bristol SU should supports students when they feel threatened.

Question: Response to 'why is Israel being targeted'. Cites cases of breaking international law and war crimes as reasons for targeting.

Response Against: Other countries are disobeying international law. Referencing support of countries such as Saudi Arabia who could be labelled similarly.

Response from Daniel: Particularly relevant as the University supports companies supplying/profitting from Israel's occupation, whereas there aren't the same connections with North Korea (for example). That the motion doesn't cover all worldwide issues shouldn't go against it. Focus on one aspect.

Request of Proposition: Which companies that the University supports have links to the West Bank?

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Response from Daniel: Information isn't freely available but would be sought from the University. HP provides University computers and Hitachi equipment in Life Sciences.

Question from Hannah: Individual acts are much stronger. Current motion is a political act against one nation. If motion is relating to general support of human rights, suggested changing wording of motion. If the motion is against one nation then it is not fair to impose on student body.

Response from Daniel: Students a collective body are in a position to make decisions like this. Individual opposition shouldn't affect the aggregate view

Response Against: Individual opposition is important, but the focus of the Union should be the safety and security of students.

**Motion PASSED**

- g. **Motion 7:** Lobby for Postgraduate Research Students to be paid monthly

Proposer: Isabel Nias

Speech For: Laura Ho - see motion

Speech Against: Laura Ho

Being paid in a lump sum allows students from poorer backgrounds to put down lump sum deposits if they are paid quarterly.

Question: possible for students to opt in or opt out and choose to be paid monthly or quarterly?

Laura response: slow on responding, if we wanted a choice it would take longer or feel it would be too much of a faff. Laura willing to lobby for it.

Student: propose amendment to lobby for the option of monthly or quarterly

Vote for amending the motion

**Amendment PASSED**

Vote on motion

**Motion PASSED**

- h. **Motion 8:** Union to Support Britain remaining in the EU

Proposer: Ben Duncan-Duggal

Speech For: Ben Duncan-Duggal - see motion



Amendment:

Speech For: Hen - see amendment

Speech Against: Politicisation of 'Another Europe'. Argued that the Union should not support or suppose campaigns dominated by specific political groups, whereas wider campaigns are cross-party.

Question whether the Union must remain impartial

Clarification from the Chair that the Union must remain party impartial but can support a campaign as it is not linked directly to party

Vote for amending the motion

**Amendment PASSED**

Question from Dan: Would the UK lose equality legislation if it were to leave the EU

Response from Against: Similar rights would like be maintained, but others (such as equal pay) may not be legislated

Question: whether it is fair for the Union to support a certain side based on a motion, while the debate is highly contested nationally

Response from Ben: all members of the Union may attend, and the Union should have a position

Response Against: Those in attendance do not represent the entire student body, citing that he had only found out about AMM an hour before. Suggested delaying a decision now and holding a debate.

Question from Jamie: Bristol SU will not have a vote in the referendum, while individuals will.

Response from Ben: Students have a voice and shouldn't be worried about using it.

Response against: There should be additional debates closer to the referendum

Point Of information from the floor that the School of Modern Languages are running large-scale debates and information opportunities.

**Motion PASSED**

Chair announced that the remaining motions would be taken to Student Council. There will be a two minute break followed by officer updates and close of the AMM.

The Officers' Reports were viewed by the small number of remaining attendees. The Chair invited questions for the FTOs. Compliments were stated from the crowd.



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The Chair made 3 announcements:

- Elections are currently open
- NUS Motions to come to Standing committee - 24th February
- Balloon bar 1st birthday

The Chair **closed AMM 2016.**

Remaining Motions passed to Student Council:

- Motion 9:** STOP TURKEYS WAR ON THE KURDS! Break The Silence!  
Proposer: Zac
- Motion 10:** Re-affirming Commitment to Constructive and Safe Debate on Israel-Palestine  
Proposer: Hannah Rose
- Motion 11:** Give the Student's Union the democratic mandate to back and call for large-scale action such as a general strike from the students  
Proposer: Rosie Shaw

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