



## **ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING MINUTES 2017**

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 23rd February 2017  
at 5:15 in the Anson Rooms - University of Bristol Students' Union

### Present:

Chanté Joseph	Chair of Student Council
Shubham Singh	Democratic Standards Committee
Kerensa Phelps	Democratic Standards Committee

### Full time Officers:

Hannah Dualeh	Equality, Liberation and Access Officer
Jamie Cross	Union Affairs Officer
John House	Sport and Student Development Officer
Laura Ho	Postgraduate Education officer
Stephen Le Fanu	Student Living Officer
Zoe Backhouse	Undergraduate Education Officer

Alice Phillips                      Minutes

There were 127 members in attendance.

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

Shubham Singh (DSC) welcomed everyone to the meeting at 17:34. The Chair of Student Council, Chanté Joseph entered to 'Crazy in Love'.

Chante introduced the meeting, explained how voting and motions work at the SU, and outlined how all members should respect each other at the meeting.

Chante announced the meeting was not quorate and decisions would be ratified at the next Student Council on the 21<sup>st</sup> March.

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

Jamie Cross explained this year's affiliations:

- NUS
- Advice UK
- National Nightline
- Voscur

The Chair asked the meeting to vote, affiliations **PASSED**.

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### 3. Updates from Officers

#### Jamie Cross, Union Affairs Officer

- The democracy review has now passed and networks will be embedded from next year.
- In terms of voter registration Jamie has been looking at the system currently used by the University of Sheffield.
- Jamie has also engaged with the NUS democracy review alongside the full time officer team – submitting a through response and proposing a motion to national conference.
- Jamie has continued to make the case for a second SU space on campus with the University.
- Jamie has raised room bookings with the University and they are now looking at how to make it easier for groups to book rooms.
- Jamie has also been working on improving Trans students' experiences at Bristol.
- Jamie has been working on making the SU for everyone – PGs had a special pass to welcome fair and there was a bigger site to let more people access the fair. The Balloon bar is also being reviewed to make it more sustainable.

No questions for Jamie

#### John House, Sport and Student Development Officer

- John has been looking at the cost of sport at Bristol, making it more affordable and more flexible. In April the SU and SEH will be releasing a new sports funding structure.
- John has worked to build a new student led brand #WeAreBristol for Bristol sport, so get tweeting on that hashtag.
- John pledged to introduce a new opportunities hub on the website – this is halfway through as it has taken up a lot of staff time!
- John has been reviewing the grants system for clubs.
- Training for clubs is much improved, though John can't take all the credit as the Development team has done 97% of the work.
- Bristol Varsity is bigger and better as promised – there are now more events, and there will be more students involved.
- John sent out a big thank you to all the Bristol SU staff.

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Question 1:

You said you were looking at grants, could you elaborate on this?

John:

A little but not too much at the moment! Basically we have a system at the SU for allocating grants but Sport and Health at the University don't have much of a system. So we are looking to create a formula based on a number of factors which we will be unveiling in April.

## 5. Motions

### **Motion 1:** Trump the Ban

Proposed by: Mason Anmar

Speech for: Mason Anmar

Speech against: None

Question 1:

What is meant in terms of direct action – is there particular things in that category that could be potentially controversial? Is it just protesting?

MA:

There wasn't much specific about that, but if say there was a national demo the SU could send a coach down to London.

Question 2:

The motion mentions a number of societies, presumably that's support under certain conditions rather than support for anything they do?

MA:

It would have to be directly for a University group of people, like the BME Network or the Islamic Society.

Question 3:

What exactly is meant by £300, for each group or in total?

MA:

Yes £300 in total rather than per person. If we did go to a demo it could cover the cost of coaches and that sort of stuff.

Question 4:

How do you think action points 1-3 relate to students or SUs? Do you think they are consistent with the SU's charitable objectives? Is this something that the SU could

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spend money on? Does it cross over to political lobbying that the SU shouldn't be engaging with?

MA:

I think this is something the SU could do, we have had demos before. I know we're not in America right now and it doesn't affect Muslim students here right now but this is happening and as a student body it is our responsibility to decide what direction we want to go in and I don't want us to be going in a direction that doesn't go against Trump.

**The motion passes.**

### **Motion 2: Full-time International Students' Officer**

Proposed by: Laura Ho  
Speech for: Laura Ho  
Speech against: None

Question 1:

What would the officer exactly be doing?

LH:

That wouldn't exactly be for me to decide, each of us are put in position by an election, so they would run on a manifesto. In a broad sense they would be ensuring that international students are being represented, fighting for their rights, improving engagement with SU events etc.

Question 2:

Would there still be a part time position? How would people get engaged if they didn't want to be full time?

LH:

This motion wouldn't change our by-laws that say that Bristol SU has a part-time International Students' Officer. If we decided to get rid of the part-time role we would have to change the by-laws so we would have to come back to a Student Council or an AMM to change that. We have an international students' network so that would probably still be in place.

**The motion passes.**

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## 6. Officer Updates

### **Hannah Dualeh, Equality, Liberation and Access Officer**

- Hannah and Stephen (Student Living Officer) have successfully secured £1000 accommodation bursaries for less well-off students.
- Hannah has also been working on tackling sexual violence on campus, including working with the university to follow university UK's guidance on sexual violence. As part of this the University have submitted a bid to HEFCE for bystander training for students.
- Hannah has been working on introducing anonymous reporting of sexism, racism and other kinds of discrimination –and in light of the recent terrible incidents of racism experienced by students the University are going to look into this.
- Hannah has been invited to sit on a task force to tackle racism in the city with the Mayor, Marvin Rees and the Vice Chancellor of UoB.
- Hannah has also been investigating how to turn Bristol SU into a hate crime reporting centre.
- Hannah has been working on the BME attainment gap – and has secured £5000 for research into BME students' experiences.

No questions for Hannah.

### **Zoe Backhouse, Undergraduate Education Officer**

- Zoe has been working on cutting course costs – including lobbying for hot water points in study spaces, travel costs for Health Sciences and print credits for all students. Two second hand book fairs have been held and the SU is currently developing the website to enable students to sell books online.
- Student Quality Reviewers are now paid by the University which is a big win.
- Students will now get a named date for their feedback so there's no anxious wait in the three week period.
- Zoe led a consultation into student support and personal tutoring. The Students' Union are shaping a £1 million investment into student support in schools.
- Fighting against fee rises has taken up a lot of energy and time this year for Zoe. Zoe has trained reps, engaged with staff and UCU, lobbied senior members of staff, written an open letter with the rest of the team to the University urging them not to participate in the TEF, sent two coaches to

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London for an anti-fees demo in November, spoke in Parliament against fees and recruited students to write to Peers about the HE bill.

- The Boycott the NSS campaign has met its first pledge target and the SU's campaign video has been seen by 30,000 people.

Question 1:

On fighting the fee rises, I have some misgivings on the NSS boycott but I would like to ask you specifically what plans are there if this strategy fails?

ZB:

If Bristol students don't stop fee rises, I assume we will continue to be part of a national campaign against fee rises. We have 400 pledges so far so we have hit our first target of 10% less students filling the survey out.

Question 2:

I was wondering if you could say a bit about academics' support for work against fee rises?

ZB:

We've had overwhelming support from academics, I've had a lecturer ring me up saying thank god students are finally acting against this. As you have seen in Epigram lecturers have been gagged when it comes to supporting the boycott, and I think it has been quite a remarkable year in terms of collaboration between staff and students.

Question 3:

A question for the Chair – you were talking about getting our money's worth from officers, and I'm not sure about that narrative as I think SUs should be a collaborative space.

CJ:

I'm really sorry I didn't mean it like that – I just wanted people to ask questions.

Question 4:

if you don't get the pledges to boycott the NSS this year, are you planning to continue and rerun the campaign as much as you can, or will we change tactics?

ZB:

Well we will see, there is a motion coming up about it soon. We have got 400 pledges and another good thing about the campaign is that the boycott is causing final years to ask questions about whether they want their data to be used to rise fees.

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Question 5:

I just wanted to ask about extenuating circumstances, could you give any more information about this?

ZB:

For those who don't know we did a big report into extenuating circumstances last year, after conducting an extensive research project. So at the moment myself and Laura are looking to carry out those recommendations like making the ECs form better and also making sure that ECs are reviewed through faculty reviews.

## 7. Motions

### **Motion 3: Fight the HE reforms: Continue to Boycott the National Student Survey**

Speech for: Zack Muddle

Amendment 1: Matthew Broomfield - to hold an open forum in order to discuss alternatives to the NSS boycott.

No speech against.

Question 1:

Would the open forum be discussing replacements for the NSS boycott or discussing other ways as well as the NSS boycott?

MB:

Either, I'm not necessarily against the boycott I just don't think it should be used by itself.

Question 2:

I don't think it is a stand-alone measure, it is a symbolic measure and it is the only measure that students can use. Part of the problem is that students think that the NSS boycott is the only thing we are doing. Could this forum be more of an open forum for ideas rather than being against the boycott?

MB:

Yeah, I mean I thought of a few ideas myself but it would be good to have a forum.

The meeting moves to a vote on the amendment.

### **Amendment passes.**

No speech against the motion as a whole.

### **The motion passes.**

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#### **Motion 4: Combating Antisemitism**

Speech for: Rebecca Filer

Amendment 1: Oliver Harrison - Add 'for similar actions' after 'criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country'

Speech against amendment: Rebecca Filer

Question 1: Can we see the definition again?

Question 2:

Could I just ask if the amendment has been accepted by the Labour party and the government why do we need to change it? It's good enough for them so why isn't it for us.

#### **Amendment proposer:**

I just feel that there is a possible loophole that I feel could lead to criticism of Israel resulting in being accused of being antisemitism.

Question 3:

Just a question for the motion proposer, if the amendment passed would you still want the motion to go ahead?

RF:

I am very keen for the definition to be adopted as a whole, unamended.

Question 4:

I really find it very worrying that we are saying these people have agreed with this thing, what is the point of this meeting if we are just going to accept what other people say.

Question 5: Stephen Le Fanu

I have an alternative amendment, could this be in place of this amendment?

Chante Joseph:

How this would work is if the proposer of the amendment is happy to withdraw theirs and have yours in its place that could work, but otherwise we would need to vote on this amendment.

**The proposer** withdraws their amendment, and Stephen puts forward his amendment.

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Amendment 2: Stephen Le Fanu - to add that two previous pieces of policu still stand, and that students are still able to engage in pro-Palestinian activism if they wish.

Speech against amendment 2: Sally

Question 1:

I find it somewhat cynical that this motion implies that this definition of antisemitism would somehow stop people criticising Israel, because why else would it be put on the end – I find this quite upsetting.

Question 2:

This definition has been used by Central Lancaster University – the university cancelled an event because of this definition. I think this definition could be quite dangerous in terms of pro-Palestinian campaigning on campus.

RF:

I don't know the ins and outs of that event but if a speaker was anti-Semitic then it should be cancelled. Obviously I don't want to stifle debate on Israel/Palestine, there will be people who will be using this definition and would see that it is very reasonable to have a debate on Israel/Palestine. I would not want this debate to be stifled unless there were anti-Semitic speakers, plays etc.

Question 3:

The motion does speak about criticism of Israel in a political way and we do need to take this into account.

Question 4:

I just want to make a distinction about definitions and universities repressing free speech, I think the definition is good, but I would oppose universities using definitions to silence controversial speakers. I think universities using definitions to silence speakers is a completely separate point, and I think the definition is good and we should support it.

Question 5:

I'm agreeing with Rebecca here, she criticises the state of Israel often and the definition says you can criticise Israel, it just says that targeting Israel as a Jewish collectivity is anti-semitic.

**Amendment 2 passes.**

**The motion passes.**

## **8. Updates from officers**

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### **Laura Ho, Postgraduate Education Officer**

- Laura has been working on seeing through the recommendations of the part time students' report that was undertaken last year.
- She has also been working on international students' integration, this has been a tricky one but she has been looking at ways for societies to be more accessible and also implementing a full time international students officer.
- Earlier in the year Laura secured access to the Brambles for PGRs, which is a great space with ping pong tables and comfy sofas.
- Laura has also been looking at getting new Postgraduate spaces as part of redevelopment of Tyndall Avenue.
- Another point on Laura's manifesto was liberation mentoring – again this has been a bit of a struggle but Laura has been chatting to some BME staff to look at this.
- Laura has been looking into fit to sit, a damaging policy sometimes followed by the University, and has been supporting Zoe on the Boycott the NSS campaign.
- Laura has also been working with the PG network on PG wellbeing, and has hosted an LGBT+ PG and Mature event.

No questions for Laura.

### **Stephen Le Fanu, Student Living Officer**

- Stephen has been working with Zoe on the pastoral review and has been running focus groups on mental health support in halls.
- Stephen will be running the Mind your Head campaign in April, there is a [Facebook group](#) for the campaign so if you would like to get involved then add yourself to the group.
- Stephen has been in conversations about rent setting with the university, and there is a [Facebook group](#) if you would like to find out more.
- Stephen has also been looking at housing co-ops and the possibility of setting one up in Bristol, he recently visited a student housing co-op in Edinburgh.
- Stephen has also been working on accommodation bursaries, and there will be a guarantor scheme soon from the university.
- On sustainability - There will be an exciting announcement on divestment from fossil fuels soon and we are also working on a new farmers market

Question 1:

Will the co-op be just for Bristol students or will it be for UWE students too?

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SLF:

At the moment it's at a very early stage, we've just been talking to the university about the idea. One idea has been a mix of housing, half students, and half city residents.

Question 2:

Could you clarify the stuff on divestment on fossil fuels?

SLF:

The past few years I've been part of the campaign for the university to divest from fossil fuels. This year we've been making more progress and we're pretty close to announcing something but I can't announce it yet!

## 9. Motions

### **Motion 5: Reforming 100% assessed modules**

Speech for: Mason Anmar

No speech against.

Question 1:

Does this include 100% essay units?

MA:

Yes it does include 100% essay units.

Question 2:

Are you suggesting more assessments towards the end of the year as students do better at the end of the year?

MA:

I know a lot of schools have moved towards short fat units rather than long thin ones, this seems like it would probably be a different motion.

Question 3:

There are some courses that have to be 100% exam because there isn't enough time such as engineering or maths.

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MA:

I understand that and why this is a concern. It would be up to the undergraduate education officer next year to put the system in place, this motion is primarily to put this idea in place.

**The motion passes.**

### **Motion 6: Defend migrants and support free movement**

Speech for: Tyrone Falls

No speech against.

Question 1:

I presume that this includes European students and migrants?

TF:

Yes, this is supposed to be about all students who don't hold a UK passport.

Question 1:

It's important to mention that EU students will be affected by Brexit, so it's important that the Students' Union stands against the changes in relation to comprehensive sickness policy that prevents some students from being here.

TF:

It's quite a general motion so I think it would cover that and the idea of the motion is that no group of migrants is more important than any other.

**The motion passes.**

### **Motion 7: Supporting student rent strikes**

Speech by: Tyrone Falls

No speech against.

Question 1:

Why was this motion rejected by the board of trustees?

Lea Hampton O-Neil (student trustee):

There wasn't enough information about how the Union could financially deal with

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having to act as a guarantor.

Question 1: Was it changed?

TF:

There were a few things that were changed. Number 6 relating to a guarantor didn't have 'failing this' and 'helping rent strikers to find a guarantor'. The SU is currently a charity and I think this is bad because it means the Union can't support other groups' struggles, and this is an important part of unionism.

Question 2:

If we implement this motion, how do you think this will not affect the union's status as a charity?

TF:

Me and Stephen le Fanu met up with one of the members of the board of trustees, and they suggested changes and these changes have been made.

**The motion passes.**

### **Motion 14: Bristol University should improve its contribution to Neglected Disease Research**

Speech for: Matt Roberts

Amendment 1: This research should not involve an increase in animal testing carried out by the university.

Speech against: Matt Roberts

**Amendment 1 fails**

**The motion passes**

The Chair **closed AMM 2017 at 8pm.**

**Remaining Motions passed to Student Council:**

- 1) Make it policy to have specific accessibility information for events available upfront
- 2) Commitment to the environment

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- 3) Better careers support for Arts Faculty students
- 4) Fight climate change
- 5) Bring back the Mandela Bar!
- 6) Canteen for lunch breaks

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