



# ***Trustee Board Meeting***

TB30/DA/1

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**MARJON STUDENTS' UNION**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2025/26 M2**  
Friday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025, 1400 - 1600  
In Person & Virtual meeting facilitated on Teams  
Room HDC 204

## **MINUTES Confirmed**

### ***Part 1 Administration***

1	Attendance and Apologies
	<p><b>Present:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>DA</b> Dev Aditya (External Trustee &amp; Trustee Board vice Chair)</li><li>• <b>EJ</b> Esther Martin (Marjon SU Deputy President &amp; Trustee)</li><li>• <b>GB</b> Graham Briscoe (External Trustee)</li><li>• <b>PG</b> Paul Guildford (External Trustee)</li><li>• <b>JD</b> Jack Dee (Student Trustee)</li></ul> <p><b>Apologies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>IT</b> Isobella-Skye Taylor (President &amp; Trustee Board Chair)</li><li>• <b>KP</b> Kelly-Louise Preece, External Trustee</li></ul> <p><b>In Attendance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>MD</b> Mick Davies GM-CEO</li></ul>

<b>2</b>	<b>Declaration of Interest:</b>
	There were no further declarations of interest other than those previously recorded.

<b>3</b>	<b>Welcome and introductions from the Chair:</b>
	In the absence of the President, and as acting chair DA welcomed all to the meeting, and confirmed that all papers had been previously circulated by MD.

<b>4</b>	<b>Minutes from September meeting (TB29/IT/1)</b>
	<p>The minutes of the Meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September 2025 were confirmed to be an accurate representation.</p> <p><b>Actions from Previous Meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on freshers' income included in report.</li> <li>• Two points needing approval were circulated and approved by the board.</li> </ul>

## **Part 2 Reports**

<b>1</b>	<b>Report From MD General Manager (CEO)</b>	<b>Presentation information</b>
	<p><b>1 Finances</b></p> <p>Started with a reduction in funding, down £5,000. Addressed staffing hours to avoid a deficit budget. Officers actively engaged with sponsors, leading to 95% of target achieved at the time of writing the report.</p> <p>Exceeded target with invoiced amounts. Capitol Students sponsorship secured through relationship management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful Freshers series of events.</li> <li>• Commercial fair brought in a surplus of</li> </ul>	

£2,200.

- Freshers event data generated over £15,000.

## **2 Performance Against Budget**

- Wages slightly higher than 25% due to staff involvement in Freshers weeks.
- Sabbaticals on slightly fewer hours per week but with a better hourly rate.
- "We haven't been running any overtime."

## **3 Cash Flow Management**

### **MD presented the cash flow spread sheet and explained:**

- Blue: Actual first quarter position.
- Green: Forecasted position to the end of the financial year.
- Expecting to end the year with a small surplus of just over a thousand pounds.
- Low point in the bank in April, but May Ball surplus could add £2,500 to £3,000.

## **4 Reserves**

- Reserves of £25,000 held with NatWest.
- Aiming for £35,000 to cover three months of operating costs.
- Paying down pension deficit at £20,000 a year, to be paid off in five years.
- 10% of private income and 13% for pension not affecting operational budget.

## **5 Financial Statements**

Auditors failed to produce draft financial statements on time.

- Proposal to address this issue.

## **Account Approval and Distribution**

- Proposal to distribute accounts ASAP by email after text errors are resolved.

## **Accountancy Services and Alternatives**

Current accountancy service from Wills Accountancy has declined due to personnel changes.

MD Recommended looking at alternatives for accountancy services.

GB Suggests considering retired accountants who audit charities up to 80,000.

	<p>MSU Operates Xero, a digital app-based system for easy accountant access and adjustments.</p> <p><b>Charity Commission and Deadlines</b></p> <p>Although delayed the financial statements will be delivered well within the Charity Commission deadline. MD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The primary deadline is presenting the accounts to the university in February.</li> <li>• The legal deadline is with the Charity Commission, which allows 12 months.</li> </ul> <p><b>Account Issues and Re-tendering</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Past issues included missing lines regarding sabbatical trustees and incorrect descriptions.</li> <li>• Proposes re-tendering for accountancy services next year.</li> <li>• Already considering two people from Plymouth Cast, including a former Deputy VC.</li> </ul> <p><b>New Software and Information Access</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current accountants cite new software as reason for delays.</li> <li>• Accountants have access to all necessary information from August 1st.</li> <li>• All paperwork and payroll information is sent virtually with backup copies.</li> </ul> <p><b>Approval for Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approval to send accounts virtually this side of Christmas.</li> <li>• Approval to seek quotes for new accountancy services.</li> </ul>	
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**Arising:**

2	<b>Report from Officers EM</b>	Presentation information
	<p><b>Office Restructuring and Work Times</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions about rejigging office work times have not yet resulted in changes.</li> </ul>	EM

- Plans to quantify actual work coming from the university with backing from this year's sabbatical officers.
- Going back to the partnership agreement, which includes a schedule regarding funding.

### **University Funding and Independence**

- Argument that cutting funding has a limit beyond which the organization cannot remain independent.
- Salaries are benchmarked and considered on the low side compared to the sector norm.

### **ROI and Business Case**

- Difficulty in driving impact beyond reports due to the small team size.
- Need to present a strong business case for more money next year.
- The business case should demonstrate value for money.

### **Partnership Agreement and Operational Schedules**

- Developing a draft partnership agreement with operational schedules to quantify money spent and benefits.
- The schedules will outline the process for securing finance each year.
- Aims to quantify the time sabbatical officers spend on university committees.
- The in-principle document will be signed off by senior management and the board, while operational schedules will be more flexible.

### **Quantification of Work**

EM in response to questions by GB PG

- The amount of time sabbatical officers spend supporting the university should be calculated and acknowledged.
- Work is assigned from various university departments without overarching quantification.

- Aims to address conflicting meeting invitations and quantify work assigned from different sources.
- Overreacting principle document: Operational schedules can be worked out within the personnel and don't have to go back to board approval all the time.

### **Income Targets**

- 95% of income targets have been reached.
- "Fantastic."
- Sabbatical offices credited for helping find other routes.
- Next big target May Ball. Nothing else of consequence in the middle.

### **Freshers Week**

- 10 day/ night events for Freshers Week were successful.
- Events were inclusive and inviting, catering to everyone.
- A fresher feedback form will be created at the end of the academic year to get student input for Freshers Week 2026.

### **Projects**

- Barjon was painted and redecorated with voluntary service.
- It is now open 24/7.
- Wednesday evenings have picked up.
- Taking a one step at a time approach with Chartwells to get the bar open more days. Currently open Mondays.

### **Visibility**

- Student Union is now more visible, especially on Instagram.
- 300-400 new followers on Instagram.
- Alumni say it's the most active they've seen SU online.
- Club societies have continued to grow. Currently at 5 new ones.

**Student Voice**

- Student Experience Council was rebranded to be less formal.
- Renamed to Student Solutions.
- Good engagement in person and online.
- Students raise issues and suggest solutions.
- Actions and updates are posted on Instagram.

**Challenges**

- Mental health is a growing concern.
- Students are coming into the office to offload.
- There is still stigma around using mental health services.
- Tonic Tuesdays are being launched next year, with on-site and off-site local services for mental health.
- Students are struggling financially and can't afford to get involved in events.
- Sports club fees have been capped at £150.
- Parking costs have increased and are affecting attendance, especially in the afternoon.

**Sabbatical Officers**

- Students are relying on sabbatical officers rather than using support systems at the university.
- Sabbatical officers can only offer conversation in the office.
- Referrals are needed for further support.

**Barjon**

- Chartwells has a large remit and lacks the expertise to run a student bar.
- There is no proaction into what can be done.
- The bar needs someone who knows the license trade.

- A joint university/student union committee with a sole focus on the bar could be beneficial.
- The committee could look at suppliers, costs, products, opening times, and staffing policies.
- Explore leaving the bar out of the contract when renegotiating with Chartwells.
- Partner with someone to manage the bar.
- Wetherspoons sent a letter about a collaboration.
- Contract restraints prevent exploring this avenue.

### **General Discussion**

DA expresses a positive sentiment regarding the sabbatical group, noting that they are focused on helping the SU grow its income and reach.

DA advises the officers to avoid focusing solely on reporting to the university board and to maintain their current energy.

- All officer roles have been filled, and there is a potential female trustee candidate.

### **Sponsorship Strategy MD**

- MD updates the board on widening the sponsor base beyond accommodation agencies, which are currently the primary sponsors due to the consistent demand for student housing.

He emphasizes the need to safeguard existing partnerships with accommodation agencies, recalling a past instance where the Vice Chancellor placed an embargo on such sponsorships, which resulted in a loss of income for three years after the initial year of matched funding.

- The goal is to create a sponsorship policy that diversifies sponsors, attracts more sponsorship, and safeguards existing relationships.

MD prefers having multiple smaller sponsors over one large sponsor to avoid over-reliance and potential issues with sponsors exerting

undue influence.

- A sponsorship strategy should straddle sabbatical turnover to maintain continuity, especially given the increased involvement of EM and IT with sponsors.

The strategy will be workshopped and developed, with the aim of having a handover document by the end of the officers' first term.

A sabbatical-led case study or example should be included in the strategy to inspire new sabbatical officers and provide boundaries for sponsors.

### **Club Sponsorship EM**

- One sponsor initially promised a lot but later underdelivered, requiring the SU officers to work overtime to promote their club. The SU has since retracted some support and is setting up a meeting to discuss the sponsor's responsibilities.
- Some sponsors directly sponsor sports teams, which is not reflected in the SU's financial reporting but is facilitated through the SU's relationships.
- The SU administers the clubs' bank accounts, but the money is not considered student union money.

### **Sports Federation EM**

- The relationship with the Sports Federation is described as a "grey area."

The Sports Federation is not a separate legal entity but rather a department of the university that operates with a committee-based approach.

- EM hasn't attended a meeting in over 12 months.
- EM is unsure why they are in attendance.

### **Varsity Event**

- The university's contracts with a specific brand have limited creative freedom for students during the varsity event, making it

	<p>expensive for them to purchase T-shirts with the Marjon crest logo.</p> <p>The SU is trying to find a solution by allowing students to use the Marjon Student Union logo without breaching any contracts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students often complain to the SU about the Sports Federation but are afraid to do so directly due to potential repercussions.</li> </ul>	
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	<b>AOB</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
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### **Student Experience Council/Student Solutions**

- Student Experience Council has been rebranded as Student Solutions.
- Issues raised at Student Experience Council used to be brought up in the President's report.
- It was agreed that clarity is needed regarding the relationship between Student Experience Council and Student Solutions.

### **File Sharing**

- The board discussed file sharing and the complications due to IT university accounts.
- The suggestion was made to create secondary email accounts outside of the university system to operate a SharePoint account.
- It was agreed that the board needs to decide what files should be shared.
- EM was tasked with emailing the board to determine what they would like to see in a shared file.

### **QSI Audit**

- There were no further points to add to the QSI audit.

### **Parking Issue**

- The parking issue, now managed by an external company, is a student satisfaction issue.

- The issue is being addressed in Student Solutions meetings and is being worked on by a student experience director.
- A timer should be put on resolving the parking issue due to its potential impact on student satisfaction, sense of belonging, and time spent on campus.

### Limited Company Status

- Changing to a limited company could attract higher quality trustees.
- Cost has been a prohibitive factor in the past.
- The board agreed to include the cost of becoming a limited company in their next funding request to the university/student union.

<b>RESERVED BUSINESS</b>
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Close 1600

<b>ACTION</b>		<b>BY WHOM</b>	<b>DATE</b>
5	Email the board for approval to seek quotes for new accountancy services	MD	ASAP
	Circulate financial statements for approval	MD	ASAP
AOB	Email the board to ask what they would like to see in shared files	EM	ASAP