

Leeds University Union

Union Council Minutes

Date: 9TH November 2009

Location: ARC Conference Hall

Present: Adam Harper, Beenal Tailor, Chris Belcher, Georgina Bye, Guy Mitchell, Hanif Leylabi, Jack Smith, Jak Codd, James Legge, Janaty Kondos, Joshua Landy, Madeline Harris-Smith, Marcus Crawley, Mark Sowards, Maxim Kikoler, Michael Gladstone, Oonagh Ryder, Pardeep Nijjar, Rachel Wenstone, Rosy Dorfman, Sean McHale, Shehab Mujdab, Alia Mahdi,

In attendance: Edward Breslin, Craig Dawson, Mike Sprak, Stuart Barnes, Emily Spurrell, Mel Wood, Jackie Berry

Minute taker: Sam Dent

Reference: UC/0910/03

1. **Apologies for absence**
Sophia James, Miriam Shaath,
2. **Minutes of the previous Union Council meeting for ratification as a true and accurate record of that meeting**
 - 2.1 **Ordinary Union Council held on 5th October 2009**
Ratified
3. **Matters arising out of these minutes**
 - 3.1 **Amendments;**
Page 7 – body beautiful discussion should read;

MHS – Body Beautiful motion – has disputes with the interpretation of the motion used here.

Page 12 – item 7.2 – The amendment 1 was tabled by Marcus Crawley not Christopher Belcher.
4. **Minutes of the meetings of the sub-committees of Union Council**
 - 4.1 **Executive Committee held on the 5th October 2009**
Ratified
5. **Executive Question Time**
 - 5.1 **October Executive Work Updates**
Mike Gladstone – Education Officer Update

Would like to draw attention to Fee review launch today chaired by Lord Brown, former boss of BP, the VC of Birmingham, and Aston,

and one student Rajay Nalik. The review website independent.gov.uk/herereveiw but won't report back until after the general election.

HL -page 18 on minutes what is being implied by the term recruiting?

MG – Recruiting is not the term that was actually used in the meeting, was trying to referring more to the UCU putting pressure on students to act as activists on their behalf

Rosy Dorfman – Leeds for life – How will it be ensured it becomes business as usual when it leaves project stage? Would be great if exec could be clearer in the minutes and work updates.

MG- Sam will circulate list of commonly used acronyms. Leeds for Life is about to leave the universities 2yrs of project status, to become run normally having been fully developed. Hopefully as have been very impressed with the development of Leeds for Life this will continue to benefit students to a high standard. Has been impressed with Leeds for Life student ambassadors, and is sure they would be happy to come an make a presentation about Leeds for Life to UC.

Jak Codd – Communications and Internal Affairs Officer Update

Take as read

Madeleine Harris-Smith – Welfare Officer Update

Safe Space Scheme in development. This has been used at a few Universities, if a student feels threatened at night; there will be a group of nominated local businesses, which the Police have interviewed. These will act as safety points were students can take refuge and call for a taxis or assistance. Has also attended Welfare Assembly, and Body Beautiful Working Group. Also today NUS put mental health on the NUS Welfare Policy agenda.

Sean McHale – After legal advice was sought last week can legal advice be sought in regard to the implementation of Pill Testing Kits.

MHS – The pill testing kit report was made Suzy, and legal advice was not sought due to tight budget requirements.

HL – Can we refer it to the welfare assembly, as seems like the best place to discuss it.

James Legge – Legal advice seemed illusive, but easy to get from steering committee, why was it not gained?

MHS – As not Welfare Officer at that time, was not involved in that decision.

Mark to find out of position of legal advice

Josh Landy – Activities Officer Update

RD – What is ISEC? Who could do their training?

JL- A national organisation to help people across the country to find internships, and provide training on leadership project management. Opportunity to provide more in-depth opportunity for training in Jan in a work shop style.

RD – What about new committees which are forming? Will training be open to them?

JoL – Not separately – Will be training in June for all new societies.

RD – Why were the hockey club punished?

JoL- In their first social of the year, they contravened many of the guidelines published by the activities exec, and was taken to DEVCO, and activities exec gave Match Bans, to all the Social Secretaries, the President and Vice President, of the club. Feels a real issue with society socials ahs been highlighted, and during November will force home their responsibilities.

5.2 Letter from NUS Democratic Procedures Committee Re: Delegate Entitlement

HL – Apologies for not forwarding the statement he presented last time but it will be online from tomorrow, and has received support across factions.

Adam Harper – The tone was not too positive, what did Jak think?:
JC – Didn't expect NUS to change its position, but now its on record that they are expressing their opposition.

6. Assemblies Question Time

6.1 Assemblies work update report

Women's Assembly Chair Update

RD – Take as read.

Has been finding it hard to get members to attend – would be great if general reps came, and spread the word a bit.

Pardeep Nijjar – Is the assembly just for girls?

RD – No all genders and gender identifiers.

Education Assembly Chair Update

Jack Smith - Email up and running – Reps presently finding their feet around department culture. Thinks motion on UCU would have been best to deal with it in assembly mine event on Wednesday. Drive to publicise needed.

SMH – Can you elucidate on growing unease on cuts?

JS– Anyone who has asked about it has concerns about the cuts.

E&E Assembly Chair Update

Adam Harper - submitted update after the deadline. Main issue was numbers being low attending assembly.

LSR shop radio mentioned – can be used to advertise.

Activities Executive Chair Update

Christopher Belcher -Run up to fresher fair 2 volunteers from the committee have played instrumental role in organising and running this. (seconded by JoL)

AH – didn't think there was as many in Reily Smith as hoped – in 3hrs there only 2 people signed up to our group.

JoL – May not have been as busy as people thought, but has been really happy with the way it went, and halls reps went round on promotion. This event is really important in getting those shy people in, and part of the union. Incidentally one group near AH's stall got over 30 members during the day. Also there were approximately 1400 people there, but spread over many areas, giving the impression of not being too busy, but is still a lot of people there and over 3x as many as at refreshers 2009.

RD – has been good, but notes the clash with reading week.

JoL – Most available week in the Union Calendar, but is aware of this and this should be considered in future.

Georgina Bye – Has seen great responses on give it a go, thinks its a really great program.

Welfare Assembly Chair Update

As read.

No questions.

LGBT Assembly Chair Update

Marcus Crawley – Has taken meeting with the Chaplaincy, and many different groups interested in LGBT history moth. One main issue has been gender neutral toilet. Also the EDL protest went very well.

HL – how are you messaging your constituency?

MC – Facebook, and some lists of emails from last year.

James Legge – what's a gender neutral toilets?

MC – a male female toilet– where there is no gender attached and both males of females.

JoL – Is the idea to implement these in union?

MC – Idea is to allocate a disabled toilet, for it.

PN – Isn't a disabled toilet already gender neutral?

MC – yes but generally only for disabled people.

Lucy Gabrett – all toilets?

MC –No, just one or possibly 2.

JS – what about the potential for perverted behaviour and this leading to discomfort with LUU toilet facilities?

MC – Should be seen as in the case of an opposite gendered carer of a child, for example would make it easier for them and more comfortable for them to use a non-gender assigned toilet.

CB – Gay blood ban campaign, is this going to run through year and do you want to join it with LGBT society?

MC – all support welcomed already working closes with LGBT.

JaL – Considering the stigma attached to trans people going into normal toilets. What of the stigma of a special toilet?

MC – Anyone could use it, would not be exclusively trans toilet – useful as some people don't feel comfortable using a unisex toilet.

HL – Notes that the decision for this has come from trans people.

MHS – Notes EDL protest should of mentioned been mentioned in her update and the work of Hanif and Sophia on the project.

International Assembly Chair Update

Janaty Kondas - as read

JS – brought to attention the film culture shock film – which may be useful.

MG – is it possible to catch up on PBS issue with exec?
JK – yes – already chatting with Sophia – projects coming after Christmas break.

CB – what is PBS?

JK and MG – discussed the PBS (points based system) and explained how it revolved around a 40 point system for determining entrance into the UK, for students this also involves adding a University responsibility to report to the UK Boarder Agency.

MG – Adds university responsibility is practiced so as to not cause discrimination, all students attendance is scrutinised by the university in the same way by the university.

Discussion on meeting attendance at assemblies, and seeking help in increasing attendance – website mentioned, and issues with the structure of the democratic system.

MHS – verbal update from Sean?

SMH – Had a meeting with Jak Codd, and Faculty Reps, issues around Phd students and wages for marking.

Inter-faith Assembly

Beenal Tailor – hoping for a good turn out inter faith week.

Next week – exciting line up of events including talent show, and food market.

PN – Thanks to the Inter-faith assembly for allowing us to promote ISOC charity week through them.

7. Business referred by Assemblies

7.1 Food Labelling and Choice for Specific Dietary Requirements

AH – Personally had negative experience with Old Bar member of staff who didn't understand dietary requirement issues.

Union could potentially get more custom out of adopting these measures.

MHS – Motion seen to solidify some current practices, and furthermore following conversations with PN will incorporate his Any Other Business motions concerns, therefore tabling the following amendments;

Union notes, add;

- LUU has a large population of students who are vegetarian by personal preference, due to faith, while others abide by Halal Kosher Food Laws.

Union Resolves add;

- That all LUU shops 'Pick 'n Mix@ sweets will be clearly labelled as suitable for vegetarians and vegans.

Vote on Amendments
**Unanimous FOR
PASSED**

Vote on Motion;
**Unanimous FOR
PASSED**

7.2 'Law Pay? No Way! Support the Bin Strike'

Factual accuracy of this issue was raised, meeting proceeded to item 7.3 while a supplement was produced on this issue.

Following discussion of 7.3;
Liberal Democrat Students Chair, Chirs Lovell, absent from the meeting, had forwarded concerns about the factual accuracy of this motion, these were circulated by supplement to the meeting.

Discussion ensued.

No one present at the meeting proposed or seconded these amendments to the motion and they were not adopted by the proposer, and therefore fell.

HL: this policy seeks to re-affirm the position LUU has already taken in statements to the press on the issue of the bin strike, and gives in the resolves the right for collection boxes for the strike fund to be distributed around the union.

MG – what sense had come from the general student body that there was support for this issue?

HL – this had been widely discussed and supported at the welfare assembly.

JaL – according to polling data from Leeds Student 73% of students support the strike.

Vote on the Motion

For	Against	Abstain
CB, GM, JS, AH, MK, JaL, AM, PN, OR, RW, GB, BT, JK, MC, SMH, HL, RD, JoL, JC, MHS		MG, LG, AS
20	0	3

PASSED

7.3 For an Open Debate on Uni Funding Cuts

HL - A meeting has been set up with the Pro VC on Wednesday to

discuss the issues with the student body – interested in facilitating open debate between both parties informing students on all the issues.

MG – Important to remember that no clear decision has been made yet, it is important to have open discussions on the issues of cuts, but unclear were to go until clear decisions have been made or proposed.

MHS – call to see as many UC members as possible come to Pro VC meeting on Wednesday and become involved in the discussion.

Discussion on the size of the fee assigned to promotion in the resolves was discussed, and the possibility of amending it mooted. Was agreed that the figure of £50 was reasonable.

Discussion on the nature of assemblies, and their promotion ensued.

JS – this motion should also be discussed at the education assembly.

HL – Important to reach out to ordinary students on this issue.

Discussed the knock on effects of lectures jobs cuts leading to negative effects on students education.

MG – As no decision has been clearly made on where and how the cuts will be made this appears to be pre-emptive, when decisions have been made and the potential effects on students have been worked out, then is the time to intervene.

JC- Important to remember the union is here for students, not for lecturer.

GM – points out that UCU has a wealth of knowledge and experience, their positions and comments are not carelessly made comments from lectures on the issue, and their views should not be marginalised as such.

SMH calls procedural motion to vote.

Vote on Procedural Motion to Vote:

For	Against	Abstain
16	1	6

PASSED

Vote on the Motion:

For	Against	Abstain
GM, AH, AM, PN, OR, BT, JK, HL, LG	RW, GB, SMH, RD, JC, JoL, MG, AS	CB, JS, JaL, MK, MC, MHS
9	8	6

PASSED

8. Business referred by the Student Executive

8.1 Re-opening Unfilled Union Council Positions

UC bye-election JC – few people been in touch – concurrent with referendum – full council important under represented

**Unanimous Vote FOR
PASSED**

9. Business referred by other Members

9.1 Chemical Engineering Society Sponsorship

Stuart Barnes – President of Chemical Engineering Society;

- Seeks to overturn ban in this case on the basis of funding education field trips and work placements which will benefit education and job opportunities.
- Seeking to avoid seeing students who can't independently afford to fund these trips being disadvantaged.

RD – wouldn't want to create a different rule in this case discriminating against other societies and opening up the opportunity for other societies to follow.

SB – this isn't opening the flood gates to such a situation, would welcome monitoring of funds, has seen in the previous year an exception of another society, although initially they failed a second motion on the issue passed.

Debate ensued around the following issues;

- Global Citizenship, and the ban being taken for the needs of those who are disadvantaged.
- The issue of LUU being here to support and represent students.
- The affiliation of the society to the union, and the opportunity to monitor funding while the society is affiliated.
- The damage the lack of an exemption could do to the future of the students (over 460) who have invested in their future by going into higher education.
- The reforms companies included in the ban have been making, and the position that chemical engineers seek to contribute to the greater energy efficiency, such a ban potentially disrupting a student's ability to achieve this.

Issues about the behaviour of union councillors and attendees, toward SB were raised by JC.

Apologies were made by members and attendees.

It was clarified that the Chemical engineering society receive virtually no funding from the union itself. JoL.

Procedural Motion to Vote;

For	Against	Abstain
17	0	4

PASSED

Vote on the Motion;

For	Against	Abstain
CB, GM, MK, RW, GB, MC, JC, MG, MHS, AL, JoL	GM, AH, JaL, AM, PN, OR, BT, JK, HL, RD	JS, LG,
10	11	2

FAILED

JoL leaves the meeting.

9.2 Should Leeds University Union (LUU) lobby the University for better provision in the Worsley Building?

Withdrawn

10. Reports and Declarations to Union Council

A number of reports were presented to union council, paper work had been submitted in advance, and a general discussion on union politics resulted.

JoL returns to the Meeting during this stage.

11. Any Other Business

11.1 Pro-Choice Motion

MHS – bring motion to any other business in light of recent event, and the fact that the current policy on abortion from LUU is to fall in December.

RD – Dorman should read Dorfman.

Issues were raised about the ability of LUU to raise concerns over Northern Ireland policy, and that this is a divisive issue which should go to referendum. It was decided that it was still appropriate to discuss issues of Northern Ireland policy just as other countries policy are discussed by LUU campaigns.

MHS – Clarified that Abortion rights were a national pro-choice organisation, working against the anti choice lobby, and the effects of this on women's liberties.

RD – Women's assembly back up pro-choice stance, seen as a neutral stance, only form of neutral stance is a presenting a choice.

Vote on the motion:

For	Against	Abstain
CB, GM, AH, MK, PN, OR, RW, GB, BT, JK, MC, SMH, HL, RD, JoL, JC, MG, MHS, LG, AS		JaL, AM, PN
17	0	3

PASSED

11.2 General Student Reps – A Discussion

Rachel Wenstone initiates debate.

Key Points Raised;

- Importance of GSR and 1st Year reps to come together and be more co-ordinated and organised.
- GSR presence at union events and assembly
- Greater publicity of and communication with GSR and 1st Year reps.
- Greater accountability through GSR updates and question time.

More general points;

- Important conversation to be had but better to look to the future and discuss this through the democracy review.
- Generic email accounts for reps
- White boards, surgeries and anonymous feedback.
- Reaching out to students – the impracticality of this, but also the value of this.
- The issue of union politics – if the student is not involved the union politics is not right.

11.3 Green action Motion

AH presents the motion, and covers the key points it raises.

CB – shouldn't this have been presented to the Activities Executive?

GB – Important lesson here on adopting responsibility.

JS – following conversations with Geoff Banks this is not an exceptional circumstance or case, this issue has occurred with many other societies, ranging from the £300 pounds here to over £1500 in damages, and repayment plans have been adopted and the matter settled. As it was understood this matter had been settled.

GM – what about the damage caused by workers at Extras or

Essentials. Would they be treated in the same way?
JoL – The damage would have come from the budget for Essentials or Extras, being treated just the same as green action are here.
Furthermore there were issues in this case that the person performing the damage had attempting to cover it up and not reporting it, as seen by CCTV evidence.

JaL procedural motion to vote.

Vote on Procedural Motion to Vote

For	Against	Abstain
22	0	1

PASSED

Vote on the Motion:

For	Against	Abstain
2	16	3

FAILED

- 11.4 Pick and Mix Labelling in LUU shops**
Withdrawn
Meeting Closed