

# Annual General Meeting 2024



**Date:** 29/05/2024  
**Time:** 17:30 – 18:10  
**Chair:** Paige Archer

## Present

*Paige Archer (PA) – Activities and Opportunities Officer*  
*Ibby Williams (IW) – Education and Community Officer*  
*Bobola Ajibola (BA) - Welfare and Diversity Officer*  
*Josh Clare (JC) – Chief Executive Officer*  
*Drew Humphry (DH) – Student Voice and Campaigns Coordinator*  
*14 Total Student Members (SM)*

## Voting Rights

The individuals eligible to vote included 14 students and 3 elected Full Time Officers (FTO's). Each vote resulted in a total count of 17, indicating that all eligible voters participated in each voting instance.

## Minutes

Agenda Point	Minutes	Owner
<i>What is the AGM?</i>	<i>The meeting commenced with an introduction, highlighting that it was a valuable opportunity for all members (students) to provide input on the direction of the Union.</i>	<i>PA</i>
<i>Minutes from Previous Meeting</i>	<i>Those present were informed that due to an IT error the Union does not have access to the minutes.</i>  <i>In lieu of minutes an overview of topics discussed was provided. Those topics are as follows:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>1. The accounts from July 2022 were discussed and approved.</i></li><li><i>2. The FTO's gave updates on their year in office.</i></li><li><i>3. Honorary Life Memberships for the two outgoing officers were discussed and approved.</i></li></ol>	<i>PA</i>

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4. *Motions about late submissions caps and supporting the marking boycott were discussed.*

*As there were no full minutes no vote was carried out to pass the minutes.*

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*Matters Arising – National Student Issues*      *Change It posts that had reached the 25-vote threshold where then presented to those present, they are as follows.*      PA

- *Alumni access to facilities*
- *Graduation in the Summer*
- *Parking spaces at Oxstalls*
- *No Wednesday lectures.*
- *Personal Adobe licences*

*The FTO's then gave updates on national student issues relating to their campaigns. Those updates are as follows;*

### **Cost of Living**

PA

*The harsh reality – heating and eating*

*The cost-of-living crisis has caused many students to have to think about whether they are to eat well or heat their student homes, in some cases. A quote from the office for national statistics survey on the effects of the cost of living on students says, "Some days I really don't eat at all." "When it was really cold, instead of putting the heating on I just [went] to the library...that I knew was hot, just to stay there." - Ryan, 18*

*The Student Finance maintenance loan hasn't rise in line with inflation in over 10 years.*

*This has led to over half of students (53%) turn to their parents for extra funds, with students getting an average of £227 a month from their mums and dads. (Save the Students)*

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### *Uncapped bills in student housing*

*The majority of landlords response to the cost-of-living crisis has been to remove caps on bills such as heating, electric, water and gas for their student tenants. This has caused students to struggle to keep up with their bills, caused issues with fellow house mates fighting over having the heating on, in fear of a larger bill at the end of the month. For many this has also resulted in further charges due to mould damage.*

### **Disabled Students: Accessibility & Adjustments**

IW

*The government has proposed changes to Personal Independence Payments for disabled people. They have suggested changing the payment system into a voucher system, which could remove autonomy from disabled people and mean that they are unable to afford basic necessities.*

*The government has also started a consultation into changes to non medical help for Disabled Students Allowance. This would be things such as study skills tutors or BSL interpreters. The universities would now have to pay for these expensive supports, and for universities that are financially struggling, this might mean that some students may not get the support that they need. This is especially challenging for universities with high proportions of disabled students, such as our university.*

*The government has continued to demonise people with mental health issues, which are disabilities. Our Prime Minister has brought up the idea of a “sick note culture” and made comments about people just getting back to work.*

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## **We Belong**

BA

### *Impact of UK Immigration Policy on International Students with Dependents*

*Causing emotional distress and isolation due to family separation, huge impact on mental health and wellbeing due to anxiety and uncertainty*

### *20 Hours p/week Work Limit for International Students*

*Affecting financial stability and finding affordable accommodation, limited opportunities for work experience and skill development*

### *Student Loneliness*

*Many international students feel isolated due to many things such as cultural dissonance, being home sick, unawareness of their new hometown.*

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## Overview of the Yearly Finances

### **Income Sources:**

JC

#### *Block Grant:*

- *Largest income source, £573,000 last year.*
- *Derived from tuition fees, allocated for various university expenses, including the Students' Union.*

#### *Commercial Activities:*

- *Sales of branded items and other small commercial offers aimed at students.*
- *Commercial partnerships, such as with Domino's, generate revenue without additional cost to students.*

#### *Clubs and Societies:*

- *Membership fees contribute to income.*
  - *Income from memberships is ring-fenced and used exclusively for sports and society activities.*
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*External Partnerships:*

- *Non-commercial partnerships with charities and third-sector organizations are pursued but are less financially rewarding compared to commercial deals.*

**Financial Challenges and Adjustments:**

*Block Grant Comparison:*

- *Leeds Trinity Students' Union (4300 students) receives a higher grant per student compared to the University of Gloucester.*
- *The University of Gloucester is not among the highest-funded unions but is not the lowest either.*

*Trading Income:*

- *Significantly below pre-COVID levels.*
- *Welcome period income dropped from £100,000 (2019) to £82,000 (2022-2023).*

*Staffing Costs:*

- *Increased from £379,000 to £437,000 due to fewer vacancies.*

*Main Spending Areas:*

- *Total spending on student activities, including clubs and societies, was over £500,000.*
- *Marketing and events are also significant spending areas.*

*Pension Deficit:*

- *Historical pension deficit requires annual payments of £31,000 until 2032.*
- *Despite generating a small surplus, the pension liability shows a deficit position of £162,000.*

**Question from Member: Are the Students' Union looking into other commercial deals to increase income?**

SM

**Future Financial Strategies:**

- *Exploring growth opportunities with current commercial partners.*

JC

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- *Considering expanding the welcome fair to include more commercial partners.*
  - *Continuously seeking new commercial opportunities.*
  - *However, given the stagnation of enrolment rates at UoG this can lead to challenges in securing future deals.*
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<i>Approval of the Auditors</i>	<i>A motion to approve Cooper Parry as the Auditors for the next financial year was voted on. There were 17 total votes with the break down as follows.</i>	<i>PA</i>
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*For – 14 Votes (82.35%)  
Against – 0 Votes (0%)  
Abstain – 3 Votes (17.65%)*

*Therefore, the motion was passed and Cooper Parry will remain as the Unions Auditors for the next financial year.*

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<i>Approval of the Accounts</i>	<i>A motion to approve the accounts from previous July 2023 was voted on. There were 17 total votes with the break down as follows.</i>	<i>PA</i>
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*For – 16 Votes (94.12%)  
Against – 1 Votes (5.88%)  
Abstain – 0 Votes (0%)*

*Therefore, the motion was passed, and the accounts were approved.*

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<i>Student Voice Updates</i>	<b><i>Student Council and Democratic Structure:</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Currently reviewing the structure and processes to ensure effective student voice representation.</i></li> <li>• <i>This means we haven't held Student Council in the way we normally would.</i></li> <li>• <i>Alternative methods to hear student voices include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"Voice that Change It" initiative.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<i>IW</i>
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- Direct contact with students
  - Student leaders training
  - "Let's Talk" feedback events.
  - Feedback Fortnite

### **Campaigns and Initiatives:**

#### *Sexual Health and Guidance Week:*

- Distributed free sexual health kits.
- Collaborated with Hope House (local sexual health clinic) and GRASSAC (Gloucester Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre) to raise awareness.

#### *Distressful Campaign:*

- Held during exam period to help students manage stress.
- Activities included free breakfasts, yoga sessions, and crafts.

#### *SU Food Equality Projects:*

- Developed community gardens at Park and France Close Hall with student volunteers.

### **Future Improvements:**

*Acknowledgement of this year's challenges and commitment to improving the student voice offering.*

*Planned improvements include:*

- Enhanced training sessions for student representatives.
- Regular termly student council meetings.

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*FTO Manifesto's and Highlights*

### **Paige's Updates**

PA

**Cost of Student Living** – Goodie bags - These are available twice a week on Wednesdays and Fridays! Lighter on the pocket range – a hot approx. £1.60 budget options for students (pasta pots, nachos etc.) Community Cupboard – donation-based food pantry free to all students, there have been some funding struggles with this this academic year, but look forwards to improving on this next

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academic year through student volunteers and the Food Equality project

**Communication** - I've increased social media communications with sports and societies, particularly on Instagram, as well as offering 1-1 sessions with committee members throughout the year, to help them with their roles as committee members, events etc.

**Breaking down barriers** – Secured funding to continue the Activity Access Fund to support Sports Club members. We also introduced the Society Support Fund, lowering financial barriers to participation for societies. Pay-in-2 with the SU – We've seen an increase in the number of Sports Club members using this payment method, over 1/3 of all memberships purchased, as of 2023/24.

### **Highlights**

**Lobbying nationally** – APPG for students (All Party Parliamentary Group) - This group composed of MPs from all political parties. They allow campaign groups, charities, and other non-governmental organisations active in the field to become involved in discussions and influence politicians.

Renter's Reform Bill - a government bill which would implement a significant set of reforms to the private rental sector in England. The bill currently has protective measure in place that positively impact students, it would ban fixed term tenancies and eviction without cause, which would both help to shield students from landlord exploitation.

**Project reset & Professional services redesign** - This has been challenging at times, as this work has often had to take priority over my campaign activity, due to the significance of the changes.

**Communication** – We've had some challenges with Sports Club and Society communications this year. We've spoken to students and



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*worked with them to improve on this going forwards.*

**Cost of living campaign** – *The university was unable to subsidise the canteen financially, but as a member of the university Catering Committee and Catering Contract management group, we worked together on costs (lighter on the pocket, £2 goodie bags, budget friendly meal deal range)*

BA

### **Bobola's Updates**

*My manifesto points when elected were - Information Dissemination: to improve awareness of information about resources, support services, and cultural programs to empower students.*

*International Students Wellbeing: to support our international students with tailored initiatives to address their unique challenges and enhance their well-being on campus.*

*Community Building and Engagement: to bridge gaps, break stereotypes, and celebrate our shared humanity through activities and workshops.*

### **Highlights**

**Diversity Night** – *Held during September Welcome 2023 at Oxstalls SU, with over 70 attendees, free Nigerian cuisine from local caterer, 'Sandra's kitchen'.*

**Food bank vouchers** – *I issued them to over 20 students, to enable them to get essential resources during a challenging time.*

**International students' tuition fee payment plan** - *I proposed a plan which was approved by the University Executives back in December, providing increased financial flexibility for international students.*

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**“Let’s Talk!” casework surgery** – this event allowed students to seek assistance on study and well-being matters from various university

departments, including the Equality Diversity & Inclusion Team, Student Services, the Accommodation Team and Catering. IW

### **Ibby’s Updates**

My manifesto points when elected were on feedback, employability and communication.

For **feedback**, I have continuously provided SVAs with a feedback loop, implementing a You Said, We Did structure in meetings.

In lieu of Student Council, I have met with students who have created successful Change It motions and escalated them where appropriate.

My **employability** manifesto point has proven more complicated than I was aware, due to the Professional Services Redesign that has taken place this year.

**Communication** has also been challenging due to competing priorities from different areas of my role, such as the aforementioned redesign.

### **Highlights**

There have been some great wins this year! I’ve been working closely with the Disability team to implement Reasonable Adjustment Plans for disabled students. This will centralise how students and lecturers are communicated with in regards to the reasonable adjustments needed for students.

I have led on the Student Representation scheme in what has been a transitional year

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*due to the Schools restructure and a changing staff team. It has been challenging but I am so grateful for the students that I have worked with and I am confident that with the changes we have planned it will be better next year.*

*I have been a big part of student representation on University projects, such as the Student Centres and Nova, the digital assistant.*

*This year has come with many unexpected changes and difficulties, but I am proud to say that I have ensured that students have been well represented across the University.*

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*Approval of  
Honorary  
Lifetime  
Memberships*

*A motion to approve awarding an Honorary Lifetime Membership to Paige Archer was voted on. There were 17 total votes with the break down as follows.*

*JC*

*For – 17 Votes (100%)  
Against – 0 Votes (0%)  
Abstain – 0 Votes (0%)*

*Therefore, the motion was passed, and Paige Archer was awarded an Honorary Lifetime Memberships.*

*A motion to approve awarding an Honorary Lifetime Membership to Ibby Williams was voted on. There were 17 total votes with the break down as follows.*

*For – 17 Votes (100%)  
Against – 0 Votes (0%)  
Abstain – 0 Votes (0%)*

*Therefore, the motion was passed, and Ibby Williams was awarded an Honorary Lifetime Memberships.*

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<i>Student Motions</i>	<i>No valid motions were presented by students during the Annual General Meeting. In order for a motion to be considered valid, the individual proposing the motion must be in attendance at the meeting to introduce it. Regrettably, no motion met this requirement during the AGM.</i>	<i>PA</i>
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<i>Questions</i>	<i>The opportunity was given for students to ask questions.</i>	<i>PA</i>
	<i>No questions were asked and therefore the meeting ended.</i>	

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