



**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
of the  
**UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH STUDENTS' UNION**  
**28<sup>th</sup> February 2008**  
**The Hive, Plymouth Campus**

**1. Welcome and Introduction**

Chair            Richard Budden (Bubble)  
Minutes        Theresa Aslett

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the Equal Opportunities policy, the Safe Space policy and the Staff and Student Protocol.

**2. Minutes of the last meeting**

**2.1 Points of Accuracy**

None

**2.2 Ratification of previous minutes**

Members vote for the ratification of the previous minutes.

Passed Unanimously

The minutes for the last meeting were ratified.

A question was asked from the floor: Who wrote the document under 5.4.1?  
The Chair replied that this will be discussed under Motions

**2.3 Scrutiny Report (including Matters arising from previous minutes)**

Alex Harris noted that 2.2 is covered by 2.3, so looks at our response to last year's matters arising. The Scrutiny Report was produced by the last Parliament, 21<sup>st</sup> January 2008. It found that although the motion to affiliate to No Sweat was agreed, no action appears to have been taken. VP Education and Welfare is to pursue this.

**3. Matters arising from the previous minutes**

See 2.3 above

**4. Reports**

**4.1 Finance Report presented by Alex Harris, President**

PowerPoint Presentation by AH

The presentation is available to view online at [www.upsu.com](http://www.upsu.com)

The chair notes one pre-submitted question, which is followed by the President's answer. Is the questioner happy with this answer?

Q. The answer explains what the union will do next, which is great, but I also wanted the president to explain the cause of it.

A. The first two paragraphs explain why and then how we'll try to improve. I agree we haven't been able to do as much for our diverse membership as some other unions, but we are under-resourced. We are now working on getting the funding so we can improve in the future.

Q. Do Oceana's marketing policies affect the Union's financial position?

A. Yes, not just here, but around the country, as it's their policy to target students in SU areas. It is the reason why we wrote an open letter to students at the beginning of the year to tell them that Oceana's profits are for themselves, while ours go straight back into more services for students. We would happily work with Oceana for a share of the door take, as we do with other nightclubs, but their offer was unacceptably low and they weren't prepared to work with our policies, such as Safe Space.

There were no further questions on the Finance Report.

AH thanked Alan Wright, now retired, and Gina Connelly, Tracey Gyllenship, Rhiannon Sweet and Pam Verrall in the Finance Office. Also Theresa Aslett, who helps in Finance.

#### **4.2 Sabbatical Officers Q & A Session**

The chair refers to the Sabbatical Officers' Reports document, and notes two pre-submitted questions. The floor will have the opportunity to ask questions on the reports and general questions of the sabbatical team.

BU notes that his report includes information about sports teams, not written by him.

The chair asks for a response to the Graduation Ceremony question.

A. AS – When the complaints started to come in we tried to see what we could do to change the date back, e.g. a course reps petition, meeting with the VC. There was quite a heated discussion, because a) the SU had not been consulted – in fact very few people had been consulted, and b) it was impossible to change the date back without incurring huge financial loss, as the Pavilions had been cancelled. Now we are looking at how to help those affected, e.g. formal complaints to the University, compensation claims where the change incurs financial loss. Also a list of FAQs is being compiled to be sent to all students.

Q. International students – is there a financial problem, that nothing is being done for them? There was money for them last year from the International Office, not the SU.

A. CL – International students are part of my direct responsibility, but it's a very large role and difficult to fit everything in. Unfortunately, although this issue has been on my agenda, I have not been able to address it yet, but hope to soon. I hope the incoming deputy president will be able to do more for international students.

Q. I imagine the sabbatical officers have a duty to inform students that there is a National Student Survey going on at the moment; is the VC aware of the impact this could have on the university, with, e.g. the situation re the graduation ceremony being moved?

A. AH/AS – We’ve already informed her – one of the first things we said was do you really want people to voice their opinions on the national student survey? Do you really want bad feedback, bad media coverage? The VC’s view seemed to be that’s fine, if students want to do that, then OK, as long as they know that they’re going to be financially hurting the university – but they won’t care, because they’ll be gone by then. We’ve never discouraged people from complaining, which is why we have this formal complaints procedure, so that people can register their disgust about the graduation ceremony being moved, and people understand the level of feeling and how many are affected. It’s important this is highlighted, outside the university as well. This is why AH raised this at BoG, as the university’s students are its best ambassadors, and they’re very aware of this and how this will affect the university’s reputation.

AH refers back to the question re what is being done for international students: we do have the Islamic Awareness Week, and we organised a Chinese New Year celebration. We have also discussed a number of plans with Pat Blower, the University’s International Students’ Officer. We’re also looking at the possibility of a Chinese Society, as they are one of the largest international populations here.

Q. (NB) Your answer to my question – I know your name is on it, but did you write it?

A. AH – Yes.

There were no more questions. The chair reminded members that they can email the officers at any time if they have any questions.

## **5. Motions**

The chair explains the procedure for taking motions, and the debating rules.

### **5.1 Unite against Facism**

AS gave a 3 minute speech in support of the motion.

A member gave a 3 minute speech against the motion. Although he intensely dislikes the BNP, he feels they should be invited in so that we can challenge them.

The chair suggested that this speech appeared to be for an amendment to the motion, but the speaker said no, it was a speech against the motion as a whole. The chair accepted this.

The chair moved to questions and comments.

Q. Has anyone looked at the 1986 Education Act? There is meant to be a political area at University where anyone can talk, and I think that even if this motion is passed it wouldn’t be binding.

A. The chair explained that NUS have had a ruling on this: because SUs operate separately from Universities, it would not be a breach of the Act for SUs to operate a ‘no platform’ policy, it is actually entirely legal.

C. We have a constitution with a whole area about affiliation to external organisations. I’m not saying we shouldn’t affiliate, just that this should be covered by the constitution.

C. I understand what a speaker said about freedom of speech, but if it’s offensive we must do everything to steer clear.

C. I think the points made are valid, but we must remember this is a safe space. If we are opposed to a viewpoint, we should allow freedom of speech as long as it’s managed properly so it’s not disruptive and people feel safe.

C. What does it say about us if the only way we can defeat the BNP is to ban them?

C. AT - wondering what it is we’re afraid of, and do we have so little confidence in our

students. We need to oppose them, but do we really think there'll be a sudden wave of ultra-nationalism?

C. Our national laws cover all the basics, re what is/is not offensive, and it's not the business of a SU to decide this. We should fight people through the ballot boxes.

C. Surely if it incites racial hatred then it's breaking the law, but if it's not illegal what right do we have?

The chair asks CL for procedural information

CL – our constitution is quite clear: if we want to affiliate to an external organisation, it just has to be passed; parliament should recommend to UEC for approval. If it's agreed we can then take it to BoG. CL reads from the SU's Equal Opportunities Policy, and confirms that the BNP breaches all of the points raised under Section A on page 13. This policy and our Safe Space policies are in our constitution and we cannot therefore let the BNP through our doors, as our constitution in this building is our law and takes precedence.

AS makes a 2 minute speech in favour of the motion, stressing how the BNP differs from other far right parties like UKIP. They emerged from the National Front, an organisation who were on the streets, beating people up, and the BNP is now trying to pose as a legitimate political party, without stating their aims.

A member makes a 2 minute speech against the motion: mentions Face's point that we're a university, who else is going to challenge them? Their leader is a Cambridge graduate, not a stupid man and we should be prepared to stand up to them.

AS gives a 1 minute summation, stressing people aren't inherently racist, they need to be informed.

Motion moved to vote:

**For: 20**

**Against: 3**

**Abstentions: 2**

**Motion is passed.**

## **5.2 Graduations**

The chair notes that the proposer, Emma Collison, and seconder, Melanie Moore are absent, and therefore will allow a free speech for anyone who wishes to speak in favour of the motion. No-one wished to make a speech and the motion will therefore not be debated.

## **5.3 Stop the War**

AS makes a 3 minute speech in support of the motion.

(AH leaves the meeting at 19.10 to assist a student, returning at 19.12)

DJ – I'm not against the motion, but I feel uncomfortable with 'Union Resolves to organise transport...', because I don't think the Union should financially support something that doesn't directly benefit students.

The chair proposes to take this as a Parts Procedure, as a call to remove that part from the motion, and asks DJ to explain why he wants this removed, and will invite

someone else to say why it should be kept in.

DJ makes a 2 minute speech explaining why he wants to remove 'Union Resolves to organise transport for students wishing to attend the demonstration'. I am for promoting this, but students should pay for their transport.

AH points out that it doesn't actually say that the Union will pay for the transport.

AS makes a 2 minute speech against the parts. As AH said, it doesn't actually say the SU will pay – I envisaged a contribution from students. Can justify on academic grounds as there will be international speakers attending, like paying for a society to take students to an event.

Move to the vote: vote in favour to remove the parts, or vote against to keep them in.

**For: 2**

**Against: 13**

**Abstentions: 8**

**The parts remain.**

Call for more parts: A member is against a specific policy for removing troops from Afghanistan and Iraq.

The chair invites the speaker to give a speech against the whole motion, which is to support a demonstration to get troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan.

A 3 minute speech against the motion is given by the member, explaining that if troops leave now, the entire infrastructure would collapse and this needs to be set up before troops leave.

The chair asks for comments:

I agree that we need to set up some sort of structure before we leave – we might have caused the problems, who knows, but we can't just leave without doing something about it.

It's easy to forget that it's an illegal war in Iraq. Also easy to forget that the war in Afghanistan was approved by a UN resolution. The war in Iraq is about one thing – oil, not weapons of mass destruction.

Afghanistan is the largest producer of opium in the world. Basically, although we have an opium based drugs problem here in the UK, to actually have a military force in the area which is its main source gives us a fantastic opportunity to tackle and disrupt severely the world opium supply. In every problem there's an opportunity.

AS gives a 2 minute speech in favour of the motion. In Iraq and Afghanistan now the troops are now seen as the aggressors by the majority of civilians, and the reasons are because of their behaviour – rape, torture which is relatively common there, no wonder the troops aren't trusted.

A member makes a 2 minute speech against the motion. British troops are far better behaved than US troops generally. We have a responsibility to continue helping out there, the infrastructure is not strong enough and it would be premature to withdraw from Iraq. Afghanistan is different, there are more peace-keeping forces there.

AS gives a 1 minute summation, urging people to support this motion as there are lots of human rights abuses at stake.

Move to the vote:

**For: 11**

**Against: 10**

**Abstentions: 5**

**Motion is passed.**

#### **5.4 NUS Affiliation**

Michael Turner, proposer, makes a 3 minute speech in favour. This is to investigate whether our affiliation to NUS means we are wasting money or gaining, e.g. with the buying power of NUSSL. We all know Joff wrote the points of information and accuracy for the motion, some of them are partly true and admittedly some information has been difficult to get hold of.

AH makes a 3 minute speech against the motion, and confirms that the points of information and accuracy document was written by him in conjunction with the General Manager and Gina Connelly, Finance Manager. There is a Benefits Statement here from NUSSL if anyone would like to read it. The next most logical supplier would cost us £77k, and it would cost us about £150k to withdraw from the superannuation scheme. The campaigning power of NUS, also, e.g. the top up fees debate where they only lost by 5 votes.

The chair calls for questions / comments:

NB – I'm not saying I'm against NUS, that's not what the paper is about, it's about knowing where the money is going. Sabbatical officers and the managers will decide where £100k and more is going, and you have nothing to do with this, they don't consult you, never. Students should be consulted; there should be an external review.

A call for parts on 'Union Resolves' point 1. After "...an independent investigation..." I would like to add ", where financially viable, "

The chair asks if the proposer accepts the parts; if so it will automatically become part of it.

Q. NB – how do we define "financially viable"?

A. Chair – it means essentially what you pass it to mean, so you either accept it, or..

Member who called for parts: it should be decided by UEC / Parliament next year, because it could cost a huge amount of money to have an independent review.

Chair: does the proposer accept it or not?

MT: yes.

Chair: Union Resolves, point 1, now reads: *"That an independent investigation, where financially viable, into the costs and benefits of affiliation to NUS for the University of Plymouth Students' Union (UPSU) should be completed before 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008."*

MT – Just because you say how well NUS do for us, doesn't necessarily mean it's right, that we are objective in our search for the best buy. Our finance regulations state that for anything over £3000, we must find the best value deal.

Member to MT: by saying you want a review, you are questioning our elected sabbs, who are doing the best they can. This motion says we don't trust them, and it almost undermines the whole structure of Parliament.

NB – If we must go by the Staff / Student protocol, then we must follow our constitution to protect students. It says that staff should not be involved in politics, but someone on the staff in the union wrote this letter. This is why we need an independent review. So I ask the president, who wrote this?

AH: I wrote this, in conjunction with the GM, Joff and I wrote this together.

DJ – I think we're moving away from the focus of this motion. I like reviews, but evidence driven, and we must move with financial caution.

CL – I agree about being financially cautious. I've looked at other SUs, e.g. Bristol who are in and out of NUS. It's a very serious issue, affecting a lot of students, not just here but all over the south west. The motion must be treated with great caution.

MT – How can we make a measured judgment if we don't know the measurements? The reason for a 30<sup>th</sup> June deadline is because that's after the re-affiliation, so no knee-jerk decision, gives time to consider. We need to let NUS know that we are looking at other options, not blindly accepting them.

AH – procedural motion: MT mentions the need to give this group more time – why not make the deadline 30<sup>th</sup> August for the investigation to be completed?

CL – notes that this would overlap with the changeover of sabbs.

The chair asks MT if he accepts that you give them an extra 2 months?

MT: No

Chair: The motion remains with the original deadline.

NB gives a 1 minute speech in favour of the motion, saying there are lots of examples to support this. Not saying disaffiliate, but see if anything is better.

AH gives a 1 minute speech against the motion. I have figures here which show NUS will come out as best, but if you want an independent review, then OK.

A 30 second summation was formally waived.

Move to the vote:

**For: 8**

**Against: 9**

**Abstentions: 10**

**The motion falls**

The chair rules that because of time constraints the initial speeches will be cut to 2 minutes.

### **5.5 Abortion Rights**

AS gives a 2 minute speech in support of the motion. The move to reduce the time limit for abortion is being pushed by people who want to stop abortions altogether. Only 1% of abortions are in this period. Globally around 70k women die every year in back street abortions.

A member gives a 2 minute speech against the motion. It's all very well to say women have the right to choose, and I can see the sense in that if it's for the woman's safety and welfare, but speaking as a woman who thinks abortion is wrong, I think women have the right to choose before they become pregnant.

The chair asks for questions / comments:

Q. Are you saying then that if a woman is raped she has no right to abort that child?  
NB – section 13 of the constitution describes all the measures to take before we affiliate to an external organisation. Are we following these, yes or no?

A. CL – outlines the procedures in the new constitution for affiliation, e.g. going to Parliament etc. In terms of agreeing, it has to be through referendum. So UEC, then BoG, then referendum. In answer to your question, Norbert, currently no.

Chair – I'm going to stop this discussion, getting too deep. What you're saying is, is this following the procedures for affiliation?

CL – not the current ones, no, but if the motion is passed we will go through the correct procedures.

Chair – can we now continue with comments and questions:

Surely the safety of the person already alive is paramount – losing 2 lives in a back street abortion is worse.

Q. Does it cost us to affiliate?

A. AS – about £25

AH – my mother is a midwife and is absolutely pro-choice. By being anti-abortion you're saying, e.g. that a heroin addict should carry on and have a baby that is known to be already heroin addicted.

AS gives a 1 minute speech in favour of the motion – it's about women having access to safe and legal abortion.

A member gives a 1 minute speech against the motion – despite good argument, abortion is wrong. This motion seeks to not reduce the upper time limit, but it is currently too late.

AT makes a 30 second summation.

Move to the vote:

**For: 19**

**Against: 1**

**Abstentions: 3**

**Motion is passed.**

## **5.6 Election Timing**

The chair notes that the proposer has left and moves to the seconder, who withdraws the motion.

## **5.7 Separation of Education and Welfare Role**

The chair explains that if this is passed it would have to move to BoG and then to referendum.

AS and MA give a 3 minute speech for the motion, explaining that the current 2 areas are huge. It should be possible financially as we're losing one position this year with

the closure of Exmouth, so this would maintain 6 sabbs.

CL gives a 3 minute speech against the motion. The proposed option is to start in July 2008, which we can't because elections have already taken place for the next academic year. Also, the Union and the University have come to an agreement to have a team of 5 sabbatical officers, not 6. Agree in principle, but it needs amending to allow for the current situation, otherwise we would have to re-run the elections.

Questions and comments:

I know we're skint, but if we're losing Exmouth VP, then surely we can afford this.

DJ – it's a good paper, but very subjective, need some objective views before we decide.

NB – We had separate roles 3 years ago, and then there was a restructure because it was not needed, so the roles of Welfare and Education were combined.

As CL said, many sabbs can't do everything they want to, and separating these roles would enable them to.

AT – many justifications for splitting, but what you'll end up with is 2 people who only get very good towards the end of their 2<sup>nd</sup> term, then they're out – would that benefit us? I could propose splitting Activities and Comms, but comes down to my weakness in not fulfilling my role.

The last Education and Welfare focussed on education, while AS focuses on welfare, so each time one side has got left behind.

DJ – I think there should be no decision involving a firm commitment until the proposal is reviewed.

AT – I'm the first Activities & Comms officer, and I concentrate on media – James is more likely to concentrate on societies – is that a justification to split the roles?

CL – The university view is a maximum of 5 sabbs, not open to negotiation, when the democratic review was put in place 3 years ago. The new governance review will have a severe impact for the next 20 years. In 2-3 years the benefits for students will be greater overall representation.

AS – nationally SUs are reducing their sabbs and we need to defend our position. Ed & Welfare in terms of student representation is one of the biggest priorities for the union.

MA gives a 2 minute speech in favour of the motion – the university wants us to represent students properly, which we currently can't do.

DJ gives a 2 minute speech against the motion, we should remember that we're going to be needing support for 8000 partner college students.

Summation was formally waived.

Move to the vote:

**For: 10**

**Against: 7**

**Abstentions: 6**

**Motion is passed.**

CL points out that the way this motion has been passed means that it is starting in July 2008.

The chair confirms that this was meant to be 2009; this is in the chair's notes.

## 5.8 Team Kit

BU gives a 1.5 minute speech for the motion. Having the same colours can't be anything but a benefit, linking in with other Devon teams such as Argyle, Albion etc. A member gives a 1.5 minute speech against the motion. What about people who don't come from Devon? We might go to Uni here, but we're not necessarily locals.

Comments and questions:

AH – the University is in Devon and we're trying to build the university as a community facing university. Teams would be performing for and representing Plymouth, and would become the pride of Plymouth, representing the university and encouraging the community to take a pride in their local university.

NB – I agree with the motion, but this has been on the agenda before – 4 years ago – how are we going to carry it forward?

BU – there was a big disagreement among the clubs 4 years ago, I wasn't here then. We need to pick the colours, this suggestion was made, and we thought, why not?

Move to the vote:

**For: 21**

**Against: 0**

**Abstentions: 0**

**Motion is passed.**

The chair reports that there has been a challenge to the order paper, to move NUS motions forward to now, and asks the proposer to say in 30 seconds why this should be approved.

CL explains that the deadline for receipt of motions is midday tomorrow and it is therefore vital these are discussed.

In the absence of anyone speaking against changing the order paper, the chair accepted the challenge, and NUS motions will be discussed now.

## 7. NUS Motions

Chair clarifies the process of amendments to NUS motions

### 7.1 Zone Society & Citizenship

#### **Amending motion 806 (Climate Change)**

A 30 second speech for the amendment was made by Alison Smith, VP Education and Welfare

A 30 second speech against the amendment was made by a student member.

The Chair ruled that no comments or questions would be taken on any of these amending motions, but that the meeting would move directly to the vote.

VOTE

**For: 15**

**Against: 2**

**Abstentions: 3**

**MOTION (to send the amending motion to NUS) PASSED**

### 7.2 Zone Strong & Active Unions

### **Amendment motion 505 (NUS Extra)**

A 30 second speech for the amendment was made by Alison Smith, VP Education and Welfare

A 30 second speech against the amendment was made by Chris Leversha, Deputy President

VOTE

**For: 9**

**Against: 6**

**Abstentions: 2**

**MOTION (to send the amending motion to NUS) PASSED**

### **7.3 Zone Welfare**

#### **Amending motion 707 (Love Music Hate Racism)**

A 30 second speech for the amendment was made by Alison Smith, VP Education & Welfare.

No speech was made against the amendment.

VOTE

**For: 19**

**Against: 0**

**Abstentions: 0**

**MOTION (to send the amending motion to NUS) PASSED**

### **7.4 Zone Education**

#### **Amending Motion 618 (A vision of Education)**

A 30 second speech for the amendment was made by Alison Smith, VP Education and Welfare

No speech was made against the amendment.

VOTE

**For: 16**

**Against: 0**

**Abstentions: 3**

**MOTION (to send the amending motion to NUS) PASSED**

## **6. For Discussion**

The chair notes that there are only 20 minutes remaining and two items for discussion. Do you want to discuss both items, or only one?

It was agreed that 10 minutes would be allowed for each item.

### **6.1 Governance Review**

NB – just a discussion as to what the Governance Review is about, how to make students aware of everything that is going on around them.

AH – the Governance Review is quite important. UPSU, with the support of the university, was the first SU to declare that they would not be rushing through the review. SUs that have rushed the process, such as Kings, have suffered financially. We don't run, we walk, and Norbert has highlighted a failing on our part, that we haven't kept people informed and up to date with the review. It actually began in 2002, when we were 4 separate unions. Since then we have merged and developed

our democratic structures, and we are trying to ensure, e.g. with parliament, that our model works from the bottom up, not the top down. At NUS's request, this model has been presented at NUS conference.

The question is where to go now? We don't want to rush now that the government has extended the deadline for registration. We could be better in terms of our democracy, holding officers, UEC to account, but do we want to incur legal fees while we're a poor union, or to follow NUS advice and continue on a slow but careful review?

CL – The review has been officially under way for quite a while, and the first visible step is the current sabbatical structure. What it means is that under the 2006 Charities Act we have to register ourselves as an official charity. The reason there hasn't been much reported is because there hasn't really been much going on. We're currently collecting data and watching other institutions' progress. When that data is finally in we'll present it to students. A governance steering group is a good idea, but I would recommend that a paper is presented to parliament before it's decided how that body will function, e.g. how large it has to be etc. I'm happy to take over the government of the office of deputy president – if my successor is happy to continue with that? (Yes) Brilliant.

AH – also it says to report the progress to parliament at least once a term – we could report it at every parliament, depends how often you want it.

CL – It's going to be a very slow process, so please be patient, it is actually going on and we will report the current status.

The chair asks for other comments

DJ – I've been here for 3 years and I've not once been told that a governance review is happening. Students must be informed.

CL – I agree – I didn't know anything about the governance review until Kat last year asked me to come and read a paper. I agree there has been nothing reported so far, but when we have information to present, we will.

NB – we have to involve students at all stages, we need to ensure that the people the governance review affects are kept informed.

DJ – concerned that we're waiting upon direction, potentially coming in 2010 – that's not long, 2 years, by which time we have to start implementing.

AH – the deadline is for registration. At the moment we are compliant in terms of what we do because of the development of parliament and what we've done there. So I don't think we have to worry too much – we are compliant and we could register now, but what we're working on is that we're robust enough.

DJ - key point is compliance, but at the moment this is in fragments.

NB – We need more transparency, need to bring the control of the SU back to the students.

CL – I agree as Norbert suggested we need to get a more transparent working model in place, and then we can build on the foundations how we want to proceed. It won't be long before all of our data is actually in, and then we'll be able to put all that together into a document ready for approval.

AH – Also, we're part of the HEFCE team at the university and we're getting legal advice. We haven't given the students feedback about where we are, but when we do have the information ready we'll be able to give the students a chance to feed back on the models we've been working on.

## **6.2 Elections 2008 Report**

The chair notes the minutes of the elections meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> February. This is

looking at models that could be used in the future. There is an NUS pack on elections that can be used – NUS are mapping how many students are voting, what areas, what systems, e.g. online, paper ballot, mixture of the two.

Any comments on the elections report?

CL – pretty self-explanatory. We looked at how the elections went, what was good, what wasn't. Any comments are welcome.

MA – a lot of candidates would prefer if done over one week, not 2. Campaigning for a week then voting for 3 days is another idea.

CL – it has been looked at, but it can be too intense, and more stressful.

A student – I think you did a good job this year, but maybe would have been a little easier if hustings had been in the first week.

AT – Last year when we were standing, hustings was in the first week, our first day. I would suggest for next year having two hustings, at beginning and end – same questions, but you'll get better at answering them.

A student – by the time we had hustings this year a lot of people had already voted.

A student – I didn't feel there was a lot of information about the elections. I didn't really know when things were happening.

AS – Me and Claire felt this. Also, maybe we shouldn't have campaigning on club nights, because not everyone is outgoing, for example, and if can work against them to feel they have to campaign in the clubs.

AH – We should also be aware of reaching our diverse member ship with hustings – they're usually held in the evening, which isn't always helpful to mature students, maybe with a family. Also they're usually only in one venue, which is not very inclusive. We're actually looking at having hustings at lunchtime, also looking at different location, to reach people who don't come into the union.

JR – re campaigning on club nights, we need to consider the cost – we all had to pay £3 to get into C103, £3 to get into Walkabout, and it all mounts up

AT – in answer to a student, I believe from Exmouth campus? (yes). It was a failing on our part to get adequate information out there. We got material down there, but it was a difficult issue because Mike had to do his job, but he was also campaigning, so couldn't be expected to do both. Re club nights, it's never going to be a perfect system, because people have different strengths – some candidates really want to do it. We have to consider the candidates' welfare re campaigning too hard and burning out, but we can't stop them if they want to be in the union at 9.00 am and carry on till 3.00 am in the clubs. Re costs when it runs for two weeks – you need two weeks, because it takes at least a week to get your message out there – so maybe we should just hand out VIP passes for getting into the student club nights.

Chair asks for a final comment from Chris Leversha, before closing the meeting.

CL – re campaigning, next year the Union and the University are working closely together to have a democracy event on campus. There will also be a lifting of the bans on areas where you can and cannot campaign. So if we remove the nightclubs as somewhere where you can campaign, there will be other areas in the University that will be opened up to candidates for the first time. It's all about effective time management by the candidates – they don't have to go to every club night if they don't think it's going to help their campaign.

Chair – that brings to a close the Annual General Meeting. Thank you very much for your patience. And if you have any questions at any time, remember to ask the officers, and the incoming officers, at any time. Thank you.

Meeting ends.

