REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1145192

Report of the Trustees and

Consolidated Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 July 2024

for

WORCESTER STUDENTS' UNION

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The trustees present their report with the consolidated financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 July 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The 2023/24 academic year was another very busy and at times challenging one for Worcester Students' Union (WSU). The cost-of-living crisis and financial pressures continued to have a significant effect on our operations and staff, whilst we endeavoured to begin delivering on a new 5-year strategic framework. We also spent most of the year with only two elected Full Time Officers in post. The year did, however, see some excellent results and outcomes, of which the staff and officer team can be extremely proud. We continue to strive for excellent satisfaction rates amongst our members and to consistently defy our size in terms of impact and national reputation.

We hope this report gives a good insight into our key activities and outcomes in 2023/24, as well as into our ongoing challenges, and a flavour of our future plans. The report is laid out slightly differently to recent years and is done so according to the new Strategic Themes of the Union. An Annual Impact Report for the year will, also, be produced at the end of Semester 1 of 2024/25 and shared widely with the Union's members and stakeholders. It will contain photos and graphics to help showcase the year in an accessible way for students.

The Union remains grateful for the continued support from the University's Board of Governors and Senior Executive team. We are very keen to continue the good relationship where there is mutual support and scrutiny, with the common goal of an excellent student experience and the ongoing sustainability of the University. We maintain that Worcester students are very special.

Status and Administration

The Students' Union is constituted in accordance with its constitution and is administered and managed by the Trustees. Following the Charities Act 2006 and the withdrawal of this exempt status for organisations with annual turnover exceeding £100,000, the Students' Union considered its options and was, subsequently, registered with the Charity Commission in December 2011, Charity No. 1145192.

The Executive Committee members are elected by the membership to take office in early June in the year in which they are elected and hold office for one year until the second week of the following June. Members can run for re-election for a second year on the same terms.

Charitable Objects

WSU seeks to enhance the student experience by providing representation, welfare services, social events and opportunities for student development within the Union and the wider community.

Its Objects under its Constitution are:

• Promoting the interests and welfare of students at the University of Worcester during their course of study and representing, supporting and advising students
• Being the recognised representative channel between students and the University of Worcester and any other external bodies
• Providing social, cultural, sporting, and recreational activities and forums for discussions and debate for the personal development of its students

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE
Achievements and Performance
AIMS AND ACTIVITIES

The Union exists to enhance the student experience and provide all c.10,000 students of the University of Worcester with opportunities to make the most out of their time at University. It aims to achieve this through services offering advice and support, democracy and representation, societies and sport, volunteering, and through student-focussed entertainment and events. To provide these, the Union has established departments and consults with its student staff and members to continuously improve. Executive Officers of the Union sit on every major committee of the University and regularly meet local stakeholders to represent the interests of its members.

The Union will seek at all times to:

(i) ensure that the diversity of its membership is recognised and that equal access is available to all Members of whatever origin or orientation;

(ii) pursue its aims and objectives independent of any political party or religious group;

(iii) pursue equal opportunities by taking positive action within the law to facilitate participation of groups discriminated against by society.

When reviewing our objectives and planning our activities, we have given due consideration to the Charity Commission's general and relevant supplementary guidance on public benefit. Our Constitution, revised in 2020, following a comprehensive governance review, has been structured to give the Board of Trustees reasonable authority to manage the affairs of the Union in a professional manner. The Board of Trustees will give the utmost consideration to the views of Members.

Following extensive student and staff consultation, the Union finalised its new Strategic Framework 2023-28 over the summer of 2023, and introduced it to the student body and key stakeholders in Autumn 2023. An outline is as follows:

Vision Statement:

Delivering excellence, uniting diversity, and enriching student lives

Mission Statement:

To support, represent, and empower our students

Our 5 Key Strategic Themes:

1. Encouraging and supporting students to prioritise their wellbeing
2. Understanding students' financial realities and reflecting that in what we do
3. Empowering students to have their say
4. Making sure our diverse student body is represented
5. Building connected communities where students feel they belong

Full details of our key aims under the 5 themes and how we propose to fulfil them can be found here https://www.worcsu.com/yourunion/aboutwsu/strategy/

Our Values:

Being bold - we will try new things, be adaptable, and speak out when we need to. We will provide opportunities and activities that are worth students spending their time doing (if they're not, we won't do them!). We will create a great place for people to work, where they can see ideas become reality.

Honest communication - we will be open about what we can and can't achieve and what we do and don't do. And we will tell students what we are doing and keep them updated. We will make it clear to our students what we offer and that we are there for all of them.

Keeping it simple - we will avoid having unnecessary bureaucracy or barriers to students getting involved with us.
Developing people - this is hugely important to us. We will shape experiences and develop everyone who is involved in the SU - students and staff alike - so they try new things and gain new skills.

Representative - we will work very hard to ensure that all students at the University feel valued and represented by us.

Inclusive and Accessible - we will ensure that we think about our diverse student body in providing services, activities, and events. We will work to remove barriers and challenge ourselves not to make assumptions about students' wants and needs.

The Union also developed a revised set of KPIs against which to monitor performance and student satisfaction. These are grouped under the areas of:

- Satisfaction rates
- Student Engagement
- Feedback and Intelligence
- Support and Outreach
- Events, Campaigns, and Activities
- Commercial Performance

The strategic themes are mapped against these areas and a total of 16 KPIs are linked to them, with a range of measures, covering:
- Survey results - Course Experience Survey, National Student Survey, our own Insight Surveys, student consultations, Employee Engagement Surveys, Pulse Surveys.
- Engagement in our democratic and governance processes structures, including our Leadership Elections, student bodies, and Representation systems.
- The demographics of the students who are engaged with us (from data we receive from the University).
- Academic and wider student experience outcomes as a result of our engagement with students.
- Impact on students as a result of engaging with us.
- Help and Advice services ad engagement with those
- Major events
- Engagement across the campuses and on-line.

1. ENCOURAGING AND SUPPORT STUDENTS TO PRIORTISE THEIR WELLBEING

Key aims we have set underneath this are:
(i) We will be proactive in finding out what is worrying or concerning our students, without overburdening them
(ii) We will support students to access help and advice
(iii) We will facilitate extra-curricular opportunities that enhance students' wellbeing

HELP AND ADVICE SERVICE

Following the record case numbers across 2022/23, the Help & Advice Service continued to experience high case volumes in 2023/24, albeit slightly lower, with 427 student cases compared to 432. The service received 520 student contacts, comprising 397 confidential enquiry forms (76%) and 123 email or Welcome Desk enquiries (24%). Advisors conducted 473 appointments, either confidential 121s with students or attending University meetings/hearings with them.

September was the busiest month for the service, with 56 student cases opened, marking the highest number ever recorded in a single month. October to December saw a slight drop and then it averaged 43 cases per month from January to July; a prolonged period of consistently high case numbers when compared to previous years.

We saw a significant increase in Teams appointments, with 210 conducted online (44%). A further 190 were face-to-face (40%) and 73 telephone appointments (15%). Teams allows students to meet with advisors from any location, enabling commuters, partner students, those on placements, and those working to still access the service, which is very important to us.

Service headlines:
• The service supported 385 students (in 427 cases). Of these, 322 were students who had not previously used the service.
• Academic issues accounted for 64% of cases, consistent with previous years.
• 24% of the cases related to housing issues, a slight increase from 2022/23. The complexity of housing cases also rose significantly, with multiple appointments, additional support and follow-ups from advisors.
• The remaining 12% of cases related to finance, employment, consumer, and welfare issues.
• Postgraduate students comprised 20% of the total clients, down from 24% last academic year.

In addition to the core appointments service, the team:
- Administered the Safe Sex Express, in partnership with Worcester's NHS Integrated Sexual Health Service (WISH), providing students with free condoms, lubricant, and informational sheets, via collection or delivery. The Safe Sex Express webpages received just over 487 views, and 2,445 condoms were distributed to students.
- Delivered proactive, tailored introductory presentations about the Help and Advice Service to 36 different University cohorts. The service experienced an influx of enquiry forms following presentations and ongoing communications were maintained with academic staff. In total, 269 students (63%) came to the advice service this year after being referred by wellbeing and academic staff, marking a 35% increase from last year.
- Totalled 70 hours of outreach across all University sites. This encompassed the cohort presentations, pop-ups, and Campus Chats.
- Met with 7 university student support services and organised three 'multi-meets', providing a space for all student wellbeing/support teams across the University to share updates and discuss current or upcoming themes and trends. All involved felt this Union-initiated group was very welcome.
- Connected with 18 external organisations, building relationships and referral pathways to ensure quick access to support for students. These organisations all feature on the Union's advice webpages.
- Worked collaboratively with the University on the academic integrity process and policy. We supported the lead Academic Integrity Tutors and the Academic Registrar to review, revise and update the Academic Integrity Policy.
- Participated in a GenAI Working Group, offering feedback on students' understanding, opinions, and current use of GenAI, contributing to new "You can, you shouldn't, you mustn't" guidance for students on GenAI. The advisors also supported the Vice President Education in his blog for WonkHE, Students need to be co-pilots on the AI adventure | Wonkhe
- Worked with the University Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) Leads to deliver presentations to PATs, to raise awareness of the service and how it supports students, including information on external support.

Aims for the service in 2024/25 include:

• Following some cases this year, ensure all students at partner institutions can access our service with ease;
• Continue to increase the service's visibility and prioritise being physically and virtually present where and when students need us.
• Deliver campaigns to improve the student experience, on housing, safety, and wellbeing.

CONSENT

In Semester 1, the Vice President Student Activities, Issy Price, launched a campaign to encourage positive conversations around consent and respect within the University community, encouraging students to speak out against unacceptable behaviour and actions. Issy gained support from many University colleagues to deliver a week of activities, including workshops led by academics and expert guest speakers, pop-up information stalls across campus, and a social media campaign. Issy also appeared on BBC Radio Hereford & Worcester, with Dr Gill Harrop, Senior Lecturer in Forensic Psychology, who leads the University of Worcester's Bystander Intervention Programme, to discuss the aims of the week.

Issy then wrote a blog for WonkHE SUs- Students need support to have conversations about consent | Wonkhe, following which she was contacted by Advance HE, who were working on an e-Learning product aimed at HE sector staff to understand harassment and sexual misconduct (in light of impending OfS regulation in this area). Issy and the President, Al, met with the Product and Innovation Manager to give some input into the design of the product, which was a fantastic opportunity.

WELCOME DESK

Our Welcome Desk is the physical welcome point for students at the SU. From early September 2023, through to end June 2024, it responded to 2,430 enquiries. Of the total contacts, 70% were in person, 20% via email, and 10% through telephone calls, so it seems that students still like to speak to someone in person to resolve their query. In line with our monitoring of sales behind our bar and the need to save costs wherever possible, we continue to review patterns of usage to ensure we are operating the most cost-effective opening times. This may ultimately lead to reduced opening hours going forward.

SPORT AND SOCIETIES

Sport

The year ended with a total of 38 sports clubs, of which 30 were affiliated (had 12 members or more) and 1143 memberships (1198 the previous year) from 1090 students (1079 year). Important to note is that memberships bought through the University's Reach or Get Involved bursary schemes (Get Involved being for Level 4 students and Reach for Level 6 students) accounted for 48% of our overall memberships (68% last year when Reach & Get Involved covered Level 4, Level 5, and Level 6) with 16/38 clubs having over 50% of their memberships bought this way (33/38 last year).

BUCS (British Universities and Colleges) Competitions

By July 2024, we were placed in 60th position (out of 155 institutions) in the BUCS points rankings with 652.5 points. Wheelchair Basketball contributed 79 BUCS Points with a second successive BUCS National Championship title with a convincing 74-34 win over Nottingham at BUCS Big Wednesday.

There were league titles for Football Men's 1 (Midlands 3A), Hockey Women's 1 (Midlands 3A), and Tennis Men's 1 (Midlands 3A) who all achieved promotion to Midlands Tier 2. Rugby Women's 1 also secured the Midlands 1A league title to qualify for the Premier (North) Playoff, narrowly missing out on promotion following a loss to Liverpool Women's 1. In knockout competitions, Hockey Men's 1 qualified for the Midlands Conference Trophy final, coming up short against Nottingham Men's 7 to take home runners-up medals.

The Indoor Cricket teams saw national success this season to put Worcester on the map, with both Indoor Cricket Men's 1 and Indoor Cricket Women's 1 achieving clean sweep league victories in the Midlands A divisions, before qualifying for the National Championship Super 8's Finals. Indoor Cricket Men's 1 qualified for the National Championship final, coming home with silver medals after a defeat by Durham Men's 1. Indoor Cricket Women's 1 lost out to Durham Women's 1 in the National Championship semi-final, before avenging a group stage loss against Loughborough Women's 1 with a 3rd/4th place playoff victory against the same opposition to bring home National Championship bronze medals.

The BUCS Cricket success continued into the Outdoor Cricket season, where Men's 1 went undefeated to claim the Midlands 2B title and earn back-to-back promotions as they progress into Midlands 1A. Women's 1 also went undefeated as they claimed the Western 1A league title, qualifying for the Premier (South) Playoff. The squad came up just short against Bristol/UWE Women's 1, missing out on promotion and remain in Western 1A.

UW Sport continued to support 10 teams through the Performance Teams programme throughout 2023-24, removing development squads Basketball Men's 2 and Netball 2 from the programme. This support significantly contributed to the successes of Wheelchair Basketball, Football Men's 1, Rugby Women's 1, Cricket Men's 1, and Cricket Women's 1.

Netball 1 narrowly missed out on promotion to Premier (North) 2 following the implementation of the new division (based on 2021-24 BUCS Points tallies), so will remain in Midlands 1A. There were relegations for Basketball Men's 1 as they dropped to Midlands 1A after a tough season in Premier (North), while Basketball Women's 1 dropped to Midlands Tier 2 after a tricky year in Midlands 1A (despite making it to the National Trophy semi-final). Rugby Men's 1 narrowly missed out on back-to-back promotions with a 2nd place finish in Midlands 2A, while a strong season for Football Women's 1 saw them in contention for the league title before a 4th place finish in a competitive Midlands 2B league.

In addition to the BUCS Leagues & Knockouts, we were represented at numerous BUCS Events, sending student athletes to the Archery Indoor Regionals & Outdoor Championships, Athletics Indoor & Outdoor Championships, Badminton Nationals, Equestrian Regionals & National Finals, Karate Championships, Swimming Short Course & Long Course Championships, Trampolining Championships, Triathlon Championships, and Weightlifting & Powerlifting Championships.

Individual success came in Equestrian where Evie Hall was selected as an individual qualifier to ride in the Midlands Regionals, qualifying for the National Championship Finals where she finished 34th of 41 riders. In the Weightlifting & Powerlifting Championships, despite no SU Club existing in this sport, Hollie Biggerstaff represented Worcester and took home a National Championship Gold Medal.

This season has also seen significant individual engagement in English Universities' Sport trials and squads. A total of 21 students attended EUS trials in Basketball (Men's), Basketball (Women's), Football (Men's), Hockey (Men's), Hockey (Women's), Netball, Rugby 7s (Men's), and Rugby 7s (Women's). Seven students were selected to their respective EUS squads: Daniel Richards (Men's Hockey), Cassidy Jorritsma (Women's Hockey), Ciara Shackleton (Netball), Deneya Rowe, Eleanor Bonnett, Elin Beaver, and Xanthe Lord (all Women's Rugby 7s), while Louisa Walker (Netball) was named EUS Netball Head Coach.

Other competitive sport

We have also had great achievements amongst some of our non-BUCS clubs this year. All three clubs shortlisted for this year's Club of the Year at our Teamworc Awards were part of this group, and were nominated due to their development, the range of events they held, and because they embody what it is to be part of TeamWorc.

Aerial Fitness, who went on to win Club of the Year, organised their first-ever member showcase in The Hangar which drew members, friends, and family to watch them perform. They hosted a range of other activities and events throughout the year, such as candle and glass painting, a boxing session in aid of International Women's Day, a Halloween ball, and a Take Me Out night in The Hangar.

Cheerleading saw a 67% increase in membership and so created an additional Pom team, as well as an extra recreational session for non-competition members to try new skills. Despite not competing at Varsity this year, they still turned up in large numbers and were the literal cheerleaders of Varsity, also puttingon a brilliant showcase at the Worcester Wednesday events.

Dance also expanded this year by creating a Lyrical team. They had a record-breaking competition season, with every style winning a trophy. The club won 24 trophies in total- many of which were gold! The choreography is created by the Dance captains who are all volunteers and go above and beyond to teach their members the routine, lead rehearsals, and run class sessions for their non-competition members so that everyone gets the opportunity to dance.

Societies

By the end of the year, a total of 847 society memberships had been bought by 698 students. Of these, 50% were purchased through the University bursaries of Reach (111) and Get Involved (310) and 14 societies had 50% or more of their memberships bought this way.

We finished the year with 35 societies. We saw 10 new societies form this year in the Oriental Society, Professional Policing, Gaming, MedSoc, PENSA Worcester, RockSoc, Worcester SSAGO, Physiotherapy, Surgical Society and Physicians Associates.

Student Group Events

Our clubs and societies held a range of fantastic events across 2023/24, including CPD events, big event collaborations, and fundraisers (either for their student group or for charity).

Some of the CPD activities hosted by our academic societies, with a variety of guest speakers were:
- Education Enhancement - Paediatric First Aid Training and Mental health First Aid Training
- Paramedic Society - Becoming a Newly Qualified Paramedic and what to expect in interviews and inductions (talk)
- MedSoc - Public Health Lecture on why women face more knee injuries in sport
- Midwifery Society - International Day of the Midwife event

Student groups organised fabulous events, which really embody what #Teamworc is, such as:
- A Spooky Prom in October and a Take Me Out Night in The Hangar by Ariel Fitness, who were later awarded Charity Fundraising Student Group of the Year at the TeamWorc Awards.
- Uni Boob Team's Boobie Bingo Night in October for Breast cancer awareness (raising £359).
- Men's Cricket and Men's Football charity match for Movember.
- Dance hosted their (now annual) Strictly event as part of the RAG Week in November
- 'We're a committee...get us out of here' returned with more teams than ever before, raising £394.96.
- Poetry hosted a 24-hr read-a-thon for Colchester and Ipswich Hospital Charity, raising £710.
- Paramedic society and RAG - a 24-hr CPR-a-thon for West Midlands Air Ambulance, Cardiac Risk in the Young and to fund Student campaign for a defibs to be installed in the local area, raising £1,019.
- Men's and Women's Rugby collaborated to host a charity car wash for MacMillan (raising £180)
- ACS, Nigerian Society & Uni Boob Team collaborated on a Sip and Paint evening
- Christian Union and Music co-hosted Christmas carols
- Gaming Society, Dungeons and Dragons & Anime and Manga hosted a joint gaming night for RAG British Sign Language Society and Social Sports hosted a wheelchair basketball competition for Stand up 2 Cancer.
- Aerial Fitness, social sports and volleyball also came together to host a trip to Alton Towers.

Teamworc Points

A total of 22 student groups achieved TeamWorc Points accreditation throughout the year; 13 Sports Clubs and 9 Societies. Only the Paramedics Society achieved the Gold threshold (400 points), with an impressive 500 points, while Aerial Fitness, Cheerleading, Uni Boob Team, and Dance hit the 250-point Silver threshold. There were 17 student groups who reached the Bronze threshold (125 points)- Poetry, Netball, Women's Cricket, Nigerian Society, Men's Rugby, Archery, Women's Rugby, Women's Football, Anime & Manga, MedSoc, Gaming, Social Sports, Women's Hockey, Christian Union, Men's Cricket, Men's Football, and Book Club. Groups receive benefits for each level, including social media takeovers and photoshoots.

Give it A Go Week

The Vice President Student Activities encouraged student groups to facilitate events in January to encourage returning and new students to take part in extracurricular activities during their time at university, including clubs, societies, Networks, RAG (Raise and Give), and Volunteering. A total of 15 student groups took part and filming through the week was used as an episode of our #TeamWorc TV TeamWorc TV Episode One: Give it a Go Week (youtube.com)

Women's Gym Pathway

In 2022-23, the Vice President Student Activities (VPSA) worked with the Women's Network and the Sport Facilities team to establish a weekly Women's pathway session in the University gym. This was to enable self-identifying women to train in the gym without fear of intimidation, sexual harassment and the male gaze, which contributes to gym anxiety. The scheme continued in 2023/24 every Thursday. A total 26 women booked on to the 8-week course with 20 attending the first session. The programme saw some drop off from week to week but retained good numbers throughout the 8-week programme. The VPSA went along to one of the sessions where attendees shared their experience: Video | Facebook

Varsity 2024

We saw our annual Varsity against Gloucestershire back again, with 17 points on offer over 3 days of fixtures. A format change saw a much more compact schedule take place at only University-owned facilities, limiting spend on external venues due to financial constraints, limiting impact on academic schedules and SU staff resources, as well as keeping ticket prices for students as low as possible. Some of the clubs and students whose sport was no longer included in the line-up were naturally very disappointed but we did our best to explain the reasons and provide alternative ways for them to compete.

TeamWorc went to battle against TeamGlos in American Football, Badminton (Men's), Badminton (Women's), Basketball (Men's), Dance, Football (Men's), Football (Women's), Futsal (Women's), Hockey (Men's), Hockey (Women's), Netball, Rugby (Men's), Rugby (Women's), Tennis (Men's), Trampolining, Volleyball (Men's), and Volleyball (Women's). There were also showcase performances for Cheerleading (Pom) at the Football fixtures, and for Cheerleading (Stunt) at the Worcester Arena Evening session, as Glos Cheer were unable to compete.

Over the event, we engaged over 500 athletes from both institutions, with 972 tickets being sold by TeamWorc and just over 400 by TeamGlos. Highlights of an incredible three days include a dominant 6-0 clean sweep for TeamWorc at Oxstalls Arena Day, where Women's Hockey (4-0) and Men's Hockey (6-1) were dominant, and Men's Basketball then ended the day with a 94-65 win. After nail-biting wins for Women's Rugby (53-38) and Men's Rugby (25-22) at Oxstalls 4G Pitch Day, the score was 8-1 heading into a busy day of fixtures at Worcester St John's Campus and University of Worcester Arena, with just 9 points needed to clinch the Varsity title.

Early losses in Men's Volleyball (1-3) and Men's Badminton (0-8) saw TeamGlos claw back to 8-3, before a hard-fought 4-4 draw for Women's Badminton saw TeamWorc take the point on countback of games, with the overall 9-3 lead clinching a second successive Varsity title for TeamWorc and ensuring that the trophy would remain in Worcester. The TeamWorc squads did not take their foot off the gas, with a win in Women's Volleyball (3-0) followed by goals galore in front of a great crowd at St John's Campus 3G Pitch where Women's and Men' Football enjoying victories of 5-0 and 5-2 respectively. The Worcester Arena Evening session saw TeamGlos take the point in a closely contested Dance fixture, before Netball were unstoppable with a 57-18 win to end Varsity on a high with a 13-4 overall score. The capacity crowd roared as the trophy to 2023-24 Vice President Student Activities Isobel Price!

Varsity remains a huge highlight for a diverse range of Worcester students and we continued to use the event to raise awareness of issues and good causes. Varsity captains from both Union collaborated to produce their own #ShapeYourSport campaigns as part of the Vice Presidents' joint campaign centred around 'athlete activism'. We saw the clubs come together to raise money and promote awareness of Women in Sport (Netball), International Human Rights (Volleyball), Cancer Research UK (Men's Football), Belonging in Sport (Dance), and many other great campaigns which we nominated for a BUCS (British Universities and Colleges Sport) Digital Engagement Award. It was great to see students working together to jointly campaign on what they agreed was important to them and it certainly contributed to a very positive atmosphere throughout the competition.

We were extremely grateful to many University colleagues, particularly those in the Arena, Sport, and Estates and Facilities, for their support in enabling us to host more fixtures on campus and to ensure a vibrant few days for us all. Looking forward to Varsity 2025, more difficult decisions will need to be made to ensure the event remains as cost effective as possible for both Unions and for students.

RAG (Raise and Give)

Despite the ongoing cost of living pressures for students, our members still managed to raise a total of £15,631.77 for good causes across the year. Of this, £2,9861.21 went to the Union's nominated charity for the year (voted for by students) Behind the Smile. As well as those activities listed under Student Group Events section above:

• Midwifery society hosted a raffle during course induction for Becoming Families and Born Sleeping and raised £474.
• A group of Criminology students took initiative to run their own bake sale fundraiser for the Emergency Services Aid, raising £277.
• In March, for International Women's Day the Women's Network planned an Empowerment Week with various fundraisers for West Mercia Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Clinic, raising £212.
• Women's Cricket raised £738 across the year for the Teenage Cancer Trust, through the 2900 Squat challenge, a Malvern Hills Hike and a Quiz Takeover.
• Men's Cricket ran a charity match for Red for Ruth and raised £1,235.38.
• For Movember, in total £2,055.87 was raised across various events, some stand outs were the Men's Cricket and Men's Football Charity Football Match and Cheerleading's Bring a Boy session.

VOLUNTEERING

A total of this year 6924.75 volunteering hours were logged on the V-record by students across 2023/24, that is an 11.68% increase from 2022/23. We saw 5070.25 hours recorded by club and society members, 1602.75 hours by students completing community projects, 194.5 hours by course reps, 13 hours logged for student council and 35.5 hours logged by SU crew. There was over a 50% increase for three different activity types this year; community projects, course reps and SU crew. Each year we are also aware that, despite our ongoing encouragement, many students do not log their hours and so the real amount is likely to be much higher than this. We have also seen a significant amount of our students volunteer with The Hive, which has been a fantastic partnership, with great results.

We also worked with all our providers to ensure that their accounts and opportunities were up to date and to streamline our brokerage platform to be more accessible for students and stakeholders.

Awards

We were very proud of the RAG Team and the Paramedic Society for being shortlisted for the Collaboration of the Year award by the National Student Fundraising Association, With Lucy Fishwick the assistant Team Leader for the RAG Team also being shortlisted for the Above and Beyond award. At the time of writing, we were waiting for the outcome as the Awards due to the awards being postponed.

We also entered our Varsity Campaign, 'Shape Your Sport' into the Digital Engagement Award category at the BUCS annual awards as it saw fantastic collaboration to raise awareness of a number of good causes by students across the two institutions but it was, unfortunately, not shortlisted.

SAFETY AND WELLBEING IN THE HANGAR

The Hangar team of core and student staff work very hard to exceed our responsibilities as a venue used by students, staff, and members of the local community. Every year The Hangar renews its Best Bar None (BBN) accreditation, as part of our membership of the NUS Charity purchasing consortium. BBN is a national scheme that recognises and rewards responsible and safe premises that prioritise customer experience and wellbeing and contribute positively to the night-time economy.

This year saw our best year ever and whilst we maintained our Gold BBN accreditation for the 7th consecutive year, we also achieved the following accolades at the NUS National Trade Awards held in July 2024, attended by scores of Unions:

- Came 2nd place nationally for SUs for our BBN score;
- Won the Impactful Collaboration Award (for our work with the International Experience Team in hosting a diverse range of cultural events for students)
- Won the Student Input and Feedback Award (for the work of one of our Bar Team Leaders, Ella Page, in creating a new cocktail menu)
- Won the Customer Safety and Comfort Award (for the team's commitment to creating a safe and welcoming environment).

This meant we won all 3 categories in which we were nominated; an astounding achievement which was then picked up by the local press.

In terms of the commercial performance of the Hangar, sales during Welcome Week 2023/24 were below those of 2022/23, although the events we hosted proved very popular with students. The trend of students not drinking alcohol, and spending much less in the bar then continued into the academic year. Cumulative sales by the end of October matched the prior year and continued until May at which point sales began to decline. Throughout the year sales were highest on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, the weekly quiz proving very popular, with Friday still good but considerably lower than previous years.

As detailed in sections 4 and 5 below, we had numerous student-led events, and it was a very good year for student participation, even if this was not reflected in sales. Many of the cultural events we hosted also, by their nature, did not create bar sales but formed a very important part of the work of the SU as a place for students to come and feel at home.

Overall bar takings were £133.1k compared to £139.1k in 2022/23. External events began to show signs of improvement following the COVID drop-off. As most of our students continued to return home at the weekends, we actively promoted the Hangar as a venue on Saturday nights for community hire. Throughout the summer the venue was the evening venue for the University Summer School (MLA) activities. The pool tables within the bar again proved very popular and is now an important new revenue stream, whilst the offer of free table tennis, darts and X-Box saw more students utilising the space during the afternoons.

With revenue declining the focus on saving costs was a major factor throughout 2023/24. During early 2024 an exercise was undertaken to analyse revenue by hour to see if a change to our opening hours would be beneficial. The decision taken was to open an hour later and close an hour earlier (unless it was busy) as the cost of opening for these hours was on average more than the revenue being taken. We did not receive any negative feedback following this change and further changes may be considered in 2024/25 if nightly takings do not improve.

The bar and Hangar space are in need of investment but a lack of funds means this is not currently possible. We have been working with our external suppliers to improve the number of TVs within the space. We will have new screens installed in Summer '24, plus existing screens updated at the cost of the supplier.

We remain limited in terms of our ability to innovate and extend our offer due to the space we occupy and other factors such as the University's catering contract. We continue to discuss our challenges with the University at quarterly finance meetings. As a place for students to meet and enjoy themselves, the Hangar had a successful year. We have catered to the changing student demographic as best we can and we remain buoyed by levels of student engagement.

We continue to maintain sponsorship contracts with Tramps Nightclub and Dominoes as key partners, although these have not recovered to pre-Covid levels in terms of overall value. Our media pack offers competitive rates to advertisers (which don't breach our existing contracts) and we are linked in with the national NUS trading consortium to achieve good value wherever possible.

2. UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS' FINANCIAL REALITIES AND REFLECTING THAT IN WHAT WE DO

Key aims underneath this:

(i) We will keep the cost to students of getting involved with our activities and services to a minimum wherever and however we can
(ii) We will support students in their efforts towards employability and make it clear how getting involved with the SU develops them as people and as leaders
(iii) We will work with the University to ensure value for money across their services and facilities

COST OF LIVING SUPPORT

Community Cupboard

The cost of living remained a significant concern for the Officer team for 2023/24 and they were keen to continue offering the Community Cupboard scheme and Breakfast clubs that commenced in 2022/23. In Semester 1, we noticed an increasing demand as the weeks went by and some days the cupboard needed restocking several times. This was in tandem with reducing donations, which presented a challenge (September only received £8 worth of donations). December, however, saw this pick up following a drive for supplies across the University and in the local community, in partnership with the Local Foodbank. Supplies were then split 50:50.

Over the year, we received a total of 1,308 donations, which equated to £1,223.44 (£762 by the end of the first Semester). We were delighted that the outgoing PVC (Students) forewent a leaving gift and instead asked staff to contribute to the Community Cupboard. This raised £300 in April 2024, most of which has been saved for supplies for Semester 1 on 2024/25. The Union has also applied to the National Lottery Community Fund to support the initiative for a further two years but, at the time of writing, we await news on the application.

Breakfast Club was relaunched in November 2023, and 3 sessions were hosted prior to the Christmas break at City Campus, the Medical School, and inside the Union. Despite our plans, more breakfast club sessions could not take place in Semester 2, largely due to the President needing to take on more duties around Academic Representation following the departure of the Vie President Education. The sessions were a great way to talk to students so we are very keen to revitalise the initiative in 24/25.

International Students' Hardship Fund

One of the President's key manifesto aims was to work with the University to implement the above, following research they conducted that revealed most Universities provided some form of hardship fund for international students. The current Access to Learning Fund (ALF) applies to home students solely and we have seen increasing numbers of international students at Worcester in recent years. Some of these students, in reality, face hardship and financial difficulties during their course of study. Following several meetings, including liaison with the Director of International Recruitment and the PVC (Communications and External Affairs), a paper was presented to University Executive Board and approved, with a new scheme to be implemented in the 2024/25 academic year.

Sport Recycling Kit Programme

The Vice President Student Activities was passionate this year that no student should be unable to take part in physical activity and sport due to a lack of equipment or appropriate clothing. There was an increase in uptake across the year in recreational sport sessions, which was really positive but we heard reports of students taking part with the wrong footwear, for example. To help tackle this and with the support of colleagues from University Sport, she established a new recycling programme for sports kit that could be donated by any student, staff or the local community. This is being delivered from the Sport Centre and we are hoping the scheme will continue to grow.

Period Dignity

Amended from the period 'poverty' campaign of the previous year to better reflect the aim of the campaign, the Union continued its partnership with a sustainable feminine hygiene company, 'Hey Girls', to distribute sustainable, quality, free products to both students and the wider community, as 'a community partner'. We linked in with Worcester Cathedral and the Hive, and even sent packages to 3 individuals in the community following referrals from Hey Girls.

In addition to making products available in bathrooms and our 'Caught Short Bags' (emergency packages of single-use products), we trialled a Period Dignity Order scheme. This allowed students to order personalised packages of products, with a focus on the reusable products including period pants, reusable pads, and cups. We received 102 orders and distributed 230 packs of pads/liners and 190 packets of tampons throughout the year. Student feedback show they remain very grateful for this service.

PRICE BENCHMARKING, RESEARCH AND STUDENT CONSULTATION

The Union is committed in its strategic aims to providing good value for our students. To this end, The Hangar conducted a benchmarking exercise with 5 of our main bar competitors in the local area (including Wetherspoons). Of course, not all venues sold exactly the same products, so we compared products that had a similar specification. The findings revealed thar the Hangar was cheaper than most other outlets for the vast majority of our products, including soft drinks. The Wetherspoons' buying model (of bulk-buying kegs that are nearing the end of their 'shelf-life') meant that they sell cheaper draughts and one pub had a short-term offer of £2 pints, which we would not move to (and assume this was to deplete stock).

We have consulted with students throughout the year on our events and ideas. This included the Winter Ball, a potential Summer Ball and how we priced and located that (eventually we had to cancel plans due to a lack of student interest), our loyalty card concept (to be implemented in September 2024), and one of our bar team, Ella, won the Student Feedback and Input Award at the end of year NUS Trade Awards for her input into our cocktail menu.

Loyalty Card
To support the affordability for students of using our venue and to support commercial engagement, we spent the academic year researching and planning an SU Loyalty Card for implementation in September 2024. Part of this was partaking in some external research (at a discounted rate with other Unions) conducted by Alterline into students' commercial and buying habits. The card will ensure a joined-up approach with the other areas and activities of the Union and ongoing student input.

STUDENT EMPLOYABILTY AND DEVELOPMENT

The Union continued to invest time into training students for various roles, as well as to directly employ students as Assistants for Graphic Design, the Welcome Desk, The Hangar Bar, and Security. Numbers attending training across the year for paid and voluntary student roles were as follows:

o Sports and Societies' committee training conference - 158 attendees (106 Sports Clubs & 52 Societies)
o Student Network committee training - 6 out of 12 committee members attended training
o New student staff training -10
o Department Rep training - 22 out of 22 Reps
o Course Rep training - 100% of our 339 Course Reps downloaded their training module and we are confident that most of those students completed it, although some stated they had not.
o Elections -30-minute bookable slots were offered to prospective candidates. In total, 9 students attended, 7 of whom went on to run in the elections.

Over the year, a total of 21 students were employed with us, 6 of whom continued with us from the previous year) supporting The Hangar, our Welcome Desk, and marketing functions, working a total of 5730 hours and earning just under £70,000. We increased student staff pay in year in line with the government rises in the Living Wage, and we do not operate any age differential between pay. We also had 2 student Green Impact Project Assistants over the year who were paid by the University but who supported us with our sustainability efforts. A total of 15 student staff were recognised over the year for excellent work for the Union. Over the year we received 112 applications for student staff roles and the 'Work for Us' page on our website had 1.956 views from 1st September 2023 to 31st July 2024.

The Union continues to support students through the job application process, with a new Employability and Careers section introduced on our website, https://www.worcsu.com/helpandadvice/employability/ hosting our revised Employability Guide.

Our Elections candidates were debriefed post elections on the transferable skills they had gained, and the employability skills symbols used in our new Guide were added to online training modules for sports and society committee training so they could see how they aligned to their new roles and responsibilities. The Student Voice Conference also had a session on the Guide and drop-in sessions were made available.

Our student-friendly Employability Guide can be found here:
https://www.worcsu.com/pageassets/helpandadvice/employability/WSU_Employability_Guide_2023.pdf.

3. EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO HAVE THEIR SAY

Key aims:
(i) We will support students to engage in things that affect them and wider society
(ii) We will go out to where students are and not wait for them to come to us, being present and listening to their experiences
(iii) We will emphasise our independence from the University, ensuring we challenge them based on our students' feedback and experiences, whilst continually demonstrating to students how and where we will represent them.

OUTREACH

It is more important than ever for the Union to represent all students and to be visible across the University estate. This isn't always easy to manage and we have more work to do on this in 2024/25 but over the course of Semester 1 we delivered:
o Officer inductions to 46 during Induction week
o 7 Campus Chats
o 3 Officer Breakfast Clubs
o 53% of visits were to Lakeside, Riverside, Severn, and City Campuses (including Jenny Lind) and 47% to different locations on St John's campus.
o Topics included Academic Representation, RAG, Sports and Society promotion, Volunteering, Housing, Academic Misconduct, cost of living.
o Help and Advice introduced drop-ins and flexible appointments (late and early), appointments at City Campus, as well as co-ordinating 'multi-meets' with University welfare services to share information, and they also secured quiet spaces for students on campus to call student services/the Union if they were in need.

Semester 2 was as follows:
o 30 hours of outreach by the Help and Advice Service
o 36 Presentations to different cohorts about the Help and Advice Service and other opportunities in the SU
o 9 Campus Chats/pop ups
o 9 shared outreach sessions with external support services
o 6 shared outreach sessions with University services

FEEDBACK AND INTELLIGENCE

The Union is committed to being proactive in finding out what is worrying or concerning students, without burdening them. To this end, it gathers feedback and intelligence from across its services, activities and interactions with members centrally, to inform evidence-based campaigns and initiatives.

Our analysis of this work revealed the following:
- Most feedback was logged in January and February
- 33% of feedback received related to academic or education matters
- A quarter of feedback related to the Union itself
- Both housing and finance matters accounted for 13% of the total feedback
- 8% of feedback was around University services and 4% about safety matters.
- 63% of the matters logged impacted the whole University community
- 8% impacted international students and another 8% those from under-represented groups

As a result of the above:

- Help & Advice worked with University staff to clarify the Academic Integrity process for students.
- The Union worked closely with the International Experience and Accommodation Teams to support international students arriving on campus into their accommodation with enhanced inductions.

- From Semester 2, presentations were offered out to all Heads of Schools to ensure student and academics were aware of the Union and the services/opportunities open to them, particularly Help and Advice. This proved very popular and delivered to 36 cohorts.
- The Union supported Course and Department Reps in gathering and presenting student feedback to the University during discussions surrounding the removal of Progress Week
- The Help & Advice Services' priority campaign for 2024/25 will be on safety, particularly around scams targeted at students and international students including work scams (commission-based selling) and essay mills. The Help and Advice services are also running a Safety Fair in October 2024 for a second year and will run an information campaign on the Mitigating Circumstances process.
- Voter apathy will be included in 2024/25 Elections planning
- Even more focus on outreach in 2024/25.

ACADEMIC REPRESENTATION (AR)
Throughout 2023/24 the Union continued to work closely with the University, through the joint Academic Representation Oversight Group (AROG) to deliver the AR scheme and to monitor outcomes Reps engaged well throughout the year, and we had an impressive 105 Course Rep Journals submitted, detailing their work and impacts; a huge increase of 98% on the previous year (53). A snapshot of matters addressed by Reps include:
- car parking concerns on city campus;
- better alignment of learning materials across joint honours disciplines;
- better social space in the café at City campus with books and games, as well as extending evening hours and a more inviting café environment within the Worcester Business School.

Across the year, we had 22 out of 25 Department Rep positions filled, with all appointees undergoing training. Of the 22 Department Reps, 8 were placement students (36%), which highlights strong engagement from vocational courses. Reps engaged fantastically in discussions at councils and various forums and demonstrated an impressive dedication to the role. Despite repeated recruitment efforts, Department Rep positions for Midwifery and CPD, Geography and the Environment, and Psychology PG Taught remained vacant and will be prioritised in 2024/25.

We continued to celebrate the hard work of Course and Department Reps through the 'Rep of the Month' scheme, with some months having several winners due to the high calibre of nominations. In total we awarded Rep of the Month to 21 outstanding Course and Department Reps across all schools, with the students receiving certificates, social media coverage, and £5 Amazon vouchers. Course and Department Reps of the Year were then presented at the annual Teamworc Awards in May.

Through the Rep Accreditation Scheme, 21 reps received Bronze, Silver or Gold Accreditation. Over double the number of Reps received Gold compared to the previous year, again demonstrating their commitment to the role. Awards were presented at a Rep Celebration Event which concluded the Student Voice Conference in April.
Student Voice Conference

The SU held a Student Voice Conference at the end of April, consisting of a series of talks, workshops and bite-size learning opportunities facilitated by SU and University staff, as well as an external speaker, as follows:

- Let's talk leadership
- Employability & Generative A.I.
- Networking, Sustainability & Employability (Including CV/LinkedIn checks and free headshots)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in HEI's - external speaker

We received 65 RSVPs for the conference with approximately 45 students attending and engaging throughout the day, which ended with a lovely Rep celebration in The Hangar.

Rep Forums

These continued as an important way for students and staff to come together, discuss specific topics, and agree actions. A slightly different approach was taken in Semester 1, with Course and Department Reps having overlapping sessions across one day, with the following discussed:
- Library drop off at St John's
- The appropriateness of rooms and spaces for some courses
- Parking issues and permit availability
- Timetabling issues
- Blackboard
- Group work and group marking

Semester 2 then saw another different approach to vary how we engage students, and 9 school-based Forums took place across one week. An additional catch up for the two newly recruited Medical School Course Reps was then held, meaning all 10 schools were engaged. Where possible, Academic Representation Co-ordinators (ARCs) from each school or institute attended as did the Provost. Overall, 51 attendees across 9 forums. We had received 163 RSVP responses for these forums (90 of which were 'Yes' RSVPs), showing many more Reps engaged with our communications but were perhaps unable to attend on the day.

Key matters discussed included effective communication and the use of technology within the AR system, prayer spaces on different campuses, Rep training, maintaining effective boundaries (particularly when Reps are approached regarding non-academic matters), and March in-takes.

Rep Testimonials

Reps have told us the following this year about their experiences:

"Being course rep has been absolutely brilliant and I'm so glad I stepped up to do it. It not only let me take leadership of my group but allowed me to form a closer bond with my peers and form great friendships with them.... Stand up and speak up for your peers and yourselves. It's an amazing opportunity, and you'd be surprised at what you can achieve."

"The role of course representative has provided me with employability skills that have improved my study and career prospects for the future; I am now off to do a Masters wahay! The student to module leader communication developed my skills massively as a learner and a leader; improving my abilities to be empathetic and understanding towards my peers in their final year. The Student Union and other student representatives have been really supportive, being easily contactable if at any point further information was needed. I highly recommend anyone thinking about putting themselves forward for the role to go for it!"

"The SU has given me opportunities to grow throughout my university experience. I have been course and department rep and working with the SU has been a pleasure. I've personally seen the hard work and dedication they put into helping students. I'll always remember the help the SU have done for me."

"Being a student rep... has been amazing for my confidence and professional development."

Satisfaction with the Academic Representation System

A key measure for us is, naturally, satisfaction with the Academic Representation (AR) system amongst the student body. We were pleased with the results from the key surveys that take place annually, helping us to understand students' views on how their academic interests are represented by the Union.

The National Student Survey (NSS) and University Course Experience Survey (CES) results for this academic year were as follows:

National Student Survey (NSS):

Q25 How well does the Student's Union represent students' academic interests?
Overall University: 76.5% (sector average 73%, our score in 2023 was 75%)

The Union is positioned 37th out of 147 Unions nationally in the Universities' compiled NSS rankings (for Q25- 37th/148 in 2023, and for the previous Q26 - 18th/149 in 2022, 19th/149 in 2021 and 2020, 36th/152 in 2019 and 61st/151 in 2018).

Course Experience Survey (CES):

Overall satisfaction with Academic Representation System - **85%**

Q.5.3 - I know who my Course Rep is:
Overall University: 82% (-2% from 2022/23)

Q 5.4 - Course Reps represent the interests of students on my course effectively:
Overall University: **84%** (+4% on 2022/23)

Q14 - How well does the Students' Union represent academic interests:
Overall University: **84%** (+4% on 2022/23)

Pizza with a PVC
Following student feedback at the All Student Meeting in February 2023, that they would like increased visibility of the University's senior leadership team, the Union worked with the PVC (Students), Dr Tim Jones to establish Pizza with a PVC. Students could come along and ask questions, whilst grab a quick slice of the ever-favourite food. There were then a further session with the PVC (Academics), Lisa Stansbie and Sally Moyle. Whilst the numbers of students attending these meets was relatively small, some key topics were discussed and action promised, such as parking, international hardship, catering, and building a community feel on campus.

STUDENT COUNCIL

Student Council, the highest student body in our democratic structure, had another busy and productive year, with some good debate. We filled 77% of the available positions (20 out of 26). This was 86% the year before. Some councillors again struggled with time and other commitments and were unable attend meetings and so by the end of the year, 2 of the 4 meetings had reached quoracy. We will be looking to rearrange the times of the meetings going forward.

Student Council had standing agenda items for each meeting as follows:
• Officer annual objectives and reports
• Update from Sub Councils - Welfare and Inclusion, Education, and what became known as Student Activities (formerly Teamworc) Councils
• Updates from Executive Committee and Trustee Board
• Update from AROG (Academic Representation Oversight Group)
• Live Policies and Ideas
• Current Student Issues
• Menu Diversity and campus catering was added from October 2023 as a standing item on the agenda due to the volume of student comments and concerns raised about this.

In addition to the above, key areas of discussion over the course of the year were around:
• Facilities and support for students on City and Jenny Lind
• Multi faith rooms across the campuses
• Student mental health
• Issues with transport for students on nursing placement during the train strikes
• Issues with Reasonable Adjustment Plans (RAPs) not being actioned for students

• Availability of free period products across campus
• Language clubs for international students to help them understand slang, idioms, and informal English
• The Union's Leadership Elections and All Student Meeting
• Channels for students to report racism or discrimination
• NUS Conference and Liberation Conference
• Honorary Life Memberships
• Supporting the Gypsies, Travellers, Roma, Showman & Boaters (GTRSB) Pledge
• 10 motions went to the Council, 8 of which were passed, some with amendments:
o Separate All Gender and Disabled Toilets - to work with the University
o Incorrect Terminology - to work with the University to create a guide for academics and staff on appropriate terminology
o Email name change - to work with University IT and Registry to ensure students can easily change their email address if they change their names.
o Teamworc Council name change - became Student Activities Council to reflect the Union's Officer structure
o Increase the number of academic representatives on Student Council - from 2 (one per college) to 10 (one per School/Institute)
o Continuing Recording Lectures - to work with the University to ensure implementation. This was to reflect students' studying needs and desire to revisit lectures and discussions within, as well as being linked to issues with Reasonable Adjustment Plans (RAPs) not always being considered properly.
o Race Equality Week - to mandate the Union to recognise the week and ensure the University were involved.
o Accommodation references for international students - to work with the University to seek appropriate guarantor arrangements for private rentals. This was amended to include home students who are estranged or who have no access to a guarantor but who have stayed in University accommodation.

The 2 policies that were not passed were:

• To commit the Union to providing mandatory basic life support and first aid training for committee members. It was agreed this could not be mandatory and would be costly for the Union but was felt to be a positive skill for all students. The Union agreed to investigate the feasibility of such training for the academic year 2024/25, in collaboration with the University.
• To mandate the Union to protect Progress Week in the University calendar and ensure no future change to arrangements around Progress Weeks without student consultation. This policy was submitted to a meeting which was not quorate, and the subsequent email resolution also did not reach quoracy.

The Union is reviewing what is termed 'Policy' versus actions and tasks for the 2024/25 academic year as it was felt by management that some of the policies passed across the 2023/24 year were not technically policies but more 'asks' from students and actions for Officers to follow up.

SUB COUNCILS OF STUDENT COUNCIL

Education Council

This year, Education Councillors were consulted on a range of topics and debated a number of policies through the sub-council, including:
• Policy submissions:
o Student choice for examinations
o Continuing Recording Lectures
o Increase to Academic Representation membership on Student Council
o Progress Week Protection Policy
• Discussion topics: Personal Academic Tutors (PATs), Reasonable Adjustment Plans (RAPs), Timetabling
• Artificial Intelligence Workshop delivered by Helen Hope, Deputy Head of School, Sport & Exercise Science

The average attendance rate across all four Education Council meetings was 48%, with meetings often failing to meet quorum. Consequently, a key priority for the Students' Union next year will be to emphasize the importance of these meetings and encourage higher attendance rates.

Welfare and Inclusion Council

Matters covered by this Sub-Council across 2023/24:

• Policy submissions:
o All Gender/ Disabled Toilet Separation Policy
o Incorrect Terminology Policy
o Email name change
o Race Equality Week Policy
o Action for Accessibility
o Guarantor for International students Policy
o Inclusive period policy
• Discussion topics: Sustainability, Hangar/SU Spaces, and accessible Elections.
• EDI Forum with senior Police and local Hate Crime Officers
• Artificial Intelligence Workshop delivered by Helen Hope, Deputy Head of School, Sport & Exercise Science

The average attendance was 8 councillors per meeting across all four Welfare & Inclusion Councils this year, which is approx. 66% turnout, with one meeting failing to meet quorum.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Welfare & Inclusion Council feedback on Leadership Elections

One of our core aims in our Leadership Elections this year was to seek to improve our election candidate diversity. This follows our elections in 2022-23 where:
(a) no international students run as a candidate
(b) our candidates who defined as male/female/non-binary in 2022-23 did not reflect our large proportion of female students.
(c) of the candidates we received demographic data for in 2022-23 (which was not all candidates), all defined as white students.

December's meeting of Welfare & Inclusion Council was asked a set of questions to help gain feedback from underrepresented groups on their feelings and thoughts surrounding democracy and elections. This was gathered via an anonymous polling platform to ensure participants felt comfortable to be open and honest.

The feedback was insightful and thought-provoking, with comments centring around the following barriers to engagement:

- Language barriers - understanding the terminology and speaking to other students.
- Feeling judged or lacking confidence.
- Time commitment (of running a campaign).
- Financial barrier (cost of running a campaign).
- Mistrust in the principles of a free and fair election.
- Lack of existing representation.

This feedback was subsequently incorporated in our planning processes, resulting in an enhanced and extended set of inclusivity initiatives for the Leadership Elections 2024.

Student Activities Council

Previously named TeamWorc Council, meetings were held in October, November, February and April. The first sub council meeting introduced club and society committee members to the Student Council structure and members voted in our Student Activity Reps to Student Council. Throughout the year, we gathered feedback from members on SU spaces, Celebration Week, the process of recruiting committee members, and Varsity. They also benefitted from then session delivered by Helen Hope on Artificial Intelligence workshop to attendees.

Two policy motions were submitted across the year. The first asked for the Students' Union to integrate Basic Life Support and/or First Aid training into Committee Training to help committee members to respond if a medical emergency occurred during a student group session. The policy was unanimously approved and was passed to Student Council.

The second motion looked at implementing "non-monetary societies" in which societies wouldn't require a membership fee for students to be a part of. The Vice President Student Activities explaining the reasons why student groups have memberships and (in many cases small) fees. There was much discussion amongst the sub council members and the majority of voted against the proposal, due to potential implications, so it did not progress to Student Council.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Our Executive Committee, consisting of the 3 full time officers and supported by the Union's Senior Management Team, continued to meet each month to monitor the Officers' objectives/campaigns and progress against active SU Policies, as well as to discuss student ideas (submitted via the Ideas Forum), student issues, and key projects (including those in collaboration with University). They also approved 11 new societies and 2 new clubs throughout the year. Matters attended to over the course of the year by the Committee included:

Active Policies/Student Ideas (via Ideas Forum):
- Addressing use of incorrect terminology by lecturers
- Progress of University Mental Health Policy
- 24 hours access to Elizabeth Garrett Anderson building /CCTV
- Ability for students to change their name and email across University systems
- Accessible Toilets on campus
- Module withdrawal procedures

Other emerging student matters included:
- Cost of Living
- Progress Week
- Matters raised from Pizza with the PVC
- Catering on Campus
- City Campus and Jenny Lind (facilities and atmosphere)
- International Student Hardship
- Accommodation costs (and other issues related to housing)
- Reasonable Adjustment Plans (and issues related to these for students)
- Network committee bursaries
- Placement issues for nursing issues (including transport during rail strikes)
- Artificial Intelligence (and emerging issues amongst a particular cohort)
- Researching grants to support work of SU
- Middle East Conflict
- Dudley Campus developments
- NUS affiliation and reform
- Students' Choice Awards
- General Election

UNION LEADERSHIP ELECTIONS

The Union's Leadership Elections took place in the last week of February and saw 5 students stand for the 3 positions, with the Vice President Education post uncontested (albeit students had the option to Re-Open Nominations). We initially had 8 candidates standing but 3 of them dropped out of the process, citing time and personal pressures. Anecdotally this as also the case at many other SUs nationally. We reduced the campaigning period even further this year to try and minimise pressure on the candidates and to better accommodate any students on professional courses but some felt the prospect was still too onerous or off-putting. We are still seeing issues around confidence in students, and this is something that is, again, being experienced nationally,

We were delighted to have the highest number of nominations through our 'Recommend a Friend' scheme, whereby students could be recommended by others as a potential candidate. This year we received 120 (in comparison to 73 last year, which was also record breaking) and many conversations took place with those recommended as a result. Many of them were first or second years who decided not to stand this year but seemed very keen to do so in future years.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

A total of 3,210 votes were cast by 1,162 individual voters, (compared to 3,100 votes by 1,101 students in 2023) representing 13.9% of the student population (the sector average remains between 10 and 15%). We also had increased engagement in voting from students from the School of Nursing and Midwifery, which was one of our key aims.

The elections once again enjoyed a very positive atmosphere and the following candidates were successfully elected as the Union's Executive for 2024/25:

SU President - Ruttuja Mane (School of Psychology)
Vice President Education - Elliot Atkinson (School of Humanities)
Vice President Student Activities - Jack Lambert (Worcester Business School)

The Union worked hard to increase diversity in the Leadership Elections. Of the candidates, 60% described their ethnicity as Mixed/Multiple Ethnicity, Asian (Indian) or Any Other Ethnicity (20% in 2023). The President elect is the first international student to be elected into this position for the Union (albeit we have had international student Vice Presidents in the past). All candidates were between 18 and 21, 40% of whom defined their sexual orientation as Bisexual or Gay/Lesbian and 40% considered themselves to have a specific learning disability, other disability, or long-term health condition.

We, also, consulted our Welfare and Inclusion Council on the elections process in December 2023, and their feedback was extremely useful. As a result, measures put in place to try and reduce as many barriers as possible to engagement included:

- A new International Students Guide on the Candidate Hub section of our website, to support any international students considering running with information about support, visas, and overcoming language barriers with a glossary of key terms.
- Wellbeing training as part of candidate training delivered by our Academic and Welfare Advisors.
- A dedicated candidate wellbeing space in the SU building to encourage breaks and down-time.
- A quiet campaigning hour.
- The results night taking place the day after the voting closed to give everyone space to decompress.
- Candidate wellbeing and debrief event (bowling) before the results night, which they all loved!

Following our initiatives, we featured in the NUS's SU Elections 2024 report as a case study for good practice around candidate and staff wellbeing. NUS were the Returning Officer for our Elections (and for 115 other SU elections nationally in Spring and 34 in Autumn 2023). The University's Director of Access and Inclusion was, again, our Deputy Returning Officer, for which we remain very grateful.

Looking forward to the 2025 Leadership Election, we want to:

- Build on the above initiatives and engagement of Welfare and Inclusion Council
- Explore more support for students with disabilities
- Review engagement across the Schools
- Increase the engagement of mature students

ALL STUDENT MEETING

We held our annual All Student Meeting in February, providing a review of Union activities during the 2022/23 academic year and details of our new Strategic Framework 2023-28. We also shared the Union's 2022/23 accounts and gave an overview of our affiliations.

We only had 19 students attend and so did not reach quoracy but those who attended were highly engaged and asked questions around:
• The Union's finances and bar operation
• The contract with sports kit supplier, Kukri (which is a contract the University holds)

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• Home Varsity
• Course Reps
• Teamworc Awards
• Teamworc Points
• A Varsity for societies
• Why certain student groups affiliate to religious organisations
• Multi-faith prayer space on the University campuses

ENGAGEMENT WITH LOCAL AND NATIONAL POLITICS AND IN THE WIDER HE SECTOR

The Union staff and Officers contributed to the following over the year:
- The Vice President Education wrote to MP Robin Walker and Universities Minister, Robert Halfon, regarding the rhetoric around 'rip-off degrees'. Robert Halfon sent a detailed letter in response, offering reassurance that plans to cap degrees in Arts and Humanities etc. would not have a negative impact.
- The OfS consultation on their new strategic priorities.
- OfS and NUS consultations on Freedom of Speech legislation.
- Two articles in WonkHE - Students need support to have conversations about consent | Wonkhe
And Students need to be co-pilots on the AI adventure | Wonkhe.
- The President also attended the Student Council equivalent (Accountability Panel) of another Union as an external contributor.
- The Union's Chief Executive co-ordinates and chairs a working group of senior leads from SUs nationally and BUCS (British Universities and Colleges Sport) to increase the voice of Unions and to amend the governance structure of BUCS to recognise the role many SUs play in HE Sport.
- The Union's Chief Executive and Director and Finance and Commercial were asked to join a national task and finish group organised by BUCS to look at creating a new model for calculating member affiliations/subscriptions.
- The Union's Chief Executive was invited to join the Executive of FACE (Forum for Access and Continuing Education) to increase links between FACE and SUs nationally.
- The Union featured in the NUS's SU Elections 2024 report as a case study for good practice around candidate and staff wellbeing.

The Union now has a strong record of engagement in national and local democracy, as well as other areas of the HE sector. We are confident this will continue in 2024/25.

4. MAKING SURE OUR DIVERSE BODY IS REPRESENTED

Key aims:
(i) We will understand and learn about the diversity of our students so we can support and represent them
(ii) We will ensure Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) is central to all we do, working to an informed action plan each year and keeping our members updated
(iii) We will deliver activities and events that are accessible and that appeal to different students

STUDENT NETWORKS

Following some mixed engagement in 2022/23 with Networks, and lots of discussion with University, the Union restructured Networks over the summer period and agreed, through AROG and the PVC Students, that Chairs and Vice Chairs would receive bursaries in 2023/24. This was to reflect the representative nature of their role, in line with Department Reps, and to encourage engagement as students are more and more reticent to commit to voluntary roles.

We reduced the Networks to 7; for Disabled Students', LGBTQ+ Students', Women's, International Students', Commuters Students, Race Equality, and Mature, Parents & Carers Networks. The removal of Networks was addressed through alternative initiatives (e.g. the Sustainability Network through paid Green Impact Project Assistants). All Networks a Chair appointed and 4 of the 7 also had a Vice Chair in position.

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Highlights of their activities over the year include:
- The Disabled Students' Network's charity basketball event and 'A little Less conversation, More Action Please' Campaign (including collaborating with other student groups), whereby staff were encouraged to use text-to-speech software for half a day. The Network also submitted 3 policies to Welfare & Inclusion Council related to all gender/ disabled toilet separation, incorrect terminology, and accessible communications.

- The Race Equality Network hosted Race Equality Week, which encompassed a range of events, on-line and in person. This included microaggression training, a Culture and Race Workshop, and a Community Dialogue attended by external organisations and University management. Unfortunately, the Network's planned 'Equality Walk' and evening celebration during the week had to be cancelled due to inclement weather There was then a wrap-up event the following week, reflecting on the week and making future commitments. The Union continues to liaise with external stakeholders following the Community Dialogue to engage students more with activities and projects in the local community.

- February was LGBTQ+ History month and the LGBTQ+ Network celebrated by hosting a Valentines Ball for any student to come to celebrate an evening of love and friendship. The theme was 'Flamboyant Fancy' so students dressed to impress, shared a slice of pizza together, and danced the night away.

- The Women's Network hosted a craft-a-thon, a bake sale, a nighttime safety stall, and a guest speaker from the West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre.

- The International Student Network supported students with learning UK slang.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI)

The Union is very proud of the continued efforts it has made in respect of EDI, as a fundamental consideration in our services and operations. Our internal EDI Working Group, again, met monthly and had representation from across the organisation, as well as linking in with the Union's Welfare and Inclusion Council. The group monitored progress against a comprehensive action plan and an end of year report was published in May 2024. Our Anti-Racism statement was also updated. Both can be found here https://www.worcsu.com/yourunion/aboutwsu/equalityanddiversity/

The action plan for 2023/24 covered the following areas:

• Recognition of cultural events and festivals, including our events in the Hangar
• Race Equality and LGBTQ+ engagement in Sport
• Accessibility of the SU's spaces, services, and communications
• The experience of neurodiverse students on campus
• University policy around and facilities for religious observance
• Ethnic diversity of elections candidates
• EDI training for staff and students
• International students' hardship fund
• Gender neutral toilet facilities
• Creation of a #Teamworc EDI video
• Support from external organisations in staff, policy, and service development

In terms of the training, development and awareness raising, the Union facilitated the following:

- Race Awareness training for our core staff team, delivered by Mission Diverse (https://missiondiverse.org/).
- Delivered EDI training to our Club, Society, and Network Committees.

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- Neurodiversity training for core staff and managers, from an external charity, I Am Paying Attention (https://www.iampayingattention.co.uk/) sharing the sessions cost with 2 other Unions.
- An EDI Forum, with the local West Mercia Police Chief Inspector, where students and staff asked questions on the Police's current approach to and priorities around EDI.
- Supported the Race Equality Network to run a range of events for Race Equality Week 2024 in February. This included Microaggressions Training, a Culture and Race Workshop, and a Community Dialogue attended by external organisations and University management.
- The SU took part in Race Equality Matters' 5 Day Challenge https://www.raceequalitymatters.com/5-day-challenge/ , sharing information each day. As part of this, throughout the week staff and students contributed to the Big Promise, expressing their commitments to race equity. This was made into a lovely poster that is on permanent display in the SU.
- Took part in our Disabled Students' Network Text2Speech Day in February, to raise awareness of non-verbal communication methods.
- The Union's Chief Executive was a facilitator at a session organised by the University in preparation for submitting their new Access and Participation Plan (APP), supporting discussions on how the University can prioritise and support race equity.
- Facilitated students' (paid) involvement (paid) in focus groups, contributing ideas on what they felt should be included in the APP.
- The Chief Executive co-ordinated the creation of an on-line forum (via the National Union of Students) for leaders of Students' Unions nationally to share ideas and best practice around race equity.

In terms of our internal processes and commitments as a Union:
- We worked with the University to ensure that Chairs and Vice Chairs of our Student Networks received a bursary for their work for the first time, in line with Department Reps, to reflect the representative nature of their role.
- Had specific EDI objectives around our annual Leadership Elections, to remove barriers to engagement and to increase the diversity of candidates.
- We continued to run our recruitment processes for core and student staff in a transparent and inclusive way, being proactive in encouraging applications from people based on skills and competencies (and not prioritising experience) and explaining who we are as an organisation and our EDI commitments
- Upheld our zero-tolerance approach to all forms of discrimination and harassment within #Teamworc. We spent time educating students on the impact of certain conduct and supporting students to be active bystanders. We continued to promote the need for students to look out for each other and embrace difference. We had a very good year, with very few incidents within our student groups.
- We reviewed our EDI Policy and Anti-Racism statement.
- Introduced a suite of updated and, in some cases new, policies in our Employee Handbook related to 'Special and Other Leave'. This was to further support our staff to balance their work life with their private life and public duties.
- Reviewed our Bye Laws and processes to remove barriers to engagement, with comprehensive updates prepared for implementation in 2024/25.

In relation to the Union's services for members we:

- We held a diverse programme of events and celebrations in The Hangar marking Diwali, Nigerian Independence, Onam Festival, Black History Month, Chinese New Year, and hosted a Break the Fast station during Ramadan. We also facilitated an Afrobeats Night, Christmas Winter Ball, Bollywood Night, LGBTQ+ Valentines Ball, and a global quiz hosted by the International Experience Team.
- The Hangar team had monthly meetings with the University's International Team to ensure great collaboration and won a national award for their efforts in this respect.
- Increased the accessibility of our Help and Advice service further, offering more flexible appointment times and drop-in sessions, developing our advice enquiry forms to allow for enlarged text and yellow paper print versions, and having text to speech and language translation available on our ipad.
- Translated our Teamworc Awards running order into braille and developed braille menus for use in The Hangar from September 2024. We, also, had braille stickers placed at the bottom of the stairs in the venue.

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- Supported several international students with issues they had experienced on course placements and reported these to the University. These were taken very seriously and followed up with the Chief Nursing Officer and Freedom to Speak up Guardian in the NHS Acute Hospital Trust and reported to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). We were very heartened by the University's response in this matter.
- Other issues related to transport to placements (with ongoing train strikes) were also raised by student Reps and resulted in a new working group related to placements being established by the University to tackle the problem, of which the SU President is a member.
- Worked hard to encourage the University to create a Hardship Fund that is accessible to our international students, presenting research conducted by the President of provision at other Universities.
- Created a working group with colleagues from the University's International Experience Team and Sport department, to increase engagement of international students in all forms of sport at Worcester. This resulted in a small increase in the diversity of students engaged with BUCS sports teams but many more students engaged with recreational sport, which the group promoted.
- Continue to assess demographic data biannually of the members who are engaged with our activities as Reps, volunteers, and club, society, and network members. Our aim is to address where our engaged students do not reflect (or exceed) the University overall population data.
- Raised the need for more accessible toilets across campus with the University, and new signage is now being installed. The University will be adding a map to MyDay to show where the accessible toilets, baby change facilities, and gender-neutral toilets can be found on campus.
- Worked with the University on improving prayer facilities and spaces across the campuses, which is still being worked on.
- Worked with the University's Disability Service on supporting students with neurodivergence as part of their induction, facilitating bespoke activities for students.
- We consulted with students when organising major events such as Celebration Week on what they wanted to see and accessibility, including financially.

Going forward in 2024/25, in summary the Union aims to:
- Facilitate further bystander and micro-aggressions training for the student body.
- Continue to strive to increase the diversity of students engaging with our annual Leadership Elections.
- Develop a Neurodiversity Policy for the organisation (following the training this year).
- Deliver a Race Equality Week in 2025, in partnership with the University and community stakeholders.
- Continue to learn from best practice in the sector, as well as seek external expertise, to ensure our processes and procedures are as inclusive and effective as possible.
- Update our calendar of cultural events for 2024/25, working with University colleagues and continue the great relationship we have with the International Experience Team.
- Work to ensure we have more diversity within the memberships of our sports clubs, societies, networks, Rep cohorts and volunteers, and supporting our student groups to be informed and inclusive.
- Continue to scrutinise our space/building, liaising with University Estates on improvements we believe are needed.

The Hangar

As detailed above, the Hangar held a very diverse programme of events and celebrations across the year marking Diwali, Nigerian Independence, Onam Festival, Black History Month, Chinese New Year (with an amazing dragon in attendance!), as well as hosting a Break the Fast station during Ramadan. It also hosted an Afrobeats Night, the Christmas Winter Ball, a Bollywood Night, the LGBTQ+ Valentines Ball, and a global quiz hosted by the International Experience Team. The team won the Impactful Collaboration Award in the national NUS Trade Awards for this and their excellent collaboration with the University's International Experience Team. In addition to this, the Hangar team supported students to host the highest number of student-led events ever, at 96. Of these, 91 were run by clubs, societies, and Networks, and 5 were RAG Team events.

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5. BUILDING CONNECTED COMMUNITIES WHERE STUDENTS FEEL THEY BELONG

Key aims:

(i) We will be highly visible to our student body and be a 'home from home' through physical and online spaces
(ii) We will help and enable students to build communities that benefit them and their University experience
(iii) We will provide environments for students to have positive interactions with each other and learn new things

INDUCTION TALKS
The Union delivered more induction talks in 2023/24 than in the previous year, up from 39 to 46. We noted that many schools seemed to be doing bigger induction talks, combining levels or courses, so the number of students receiving these induction talks most likely also increased on previous years.

The Officers presented talks to students across every school, including the new Medical School. They fed back that University staff were supportive of the talks, often highlighting their importance, and prompting questions from their students, which was great.

School	2022	2023	
School of Psychology	2	4	+2
Three Counties School of Nursing and Midwifery	5	7	+2
Institute of Education	7	10	+3
Worcester Business School	4	3	-1
School of Arts	2	4	+2
School of Humanities	3	5	+2
School of Science and the Environment	3	3	=
Allied Health and Community	6	6	=
School of Sport and Exercise Science	7	2	-5
Three Counties Medical School	-	1	+1
Research School	-	1	+1
TOTAL	**39**	**46**	**+7**

In addition to the Officer inductions above, in Semester 2, SU Induction presentations were offered out via all Heads of School to ensure student and academics were aware of the Union and the services and opportunities open to them, particularly the Help and Advice Service. This proved very popular and was delivered to 36 cohorts.

WELCOME FESTIVAL
The Union worked with the University to create what we hope was a lovely welcome or return for students. We held the Big Worcester Welcome on arrivals Saturday, with lots of stalls located outside the Union about Union, University and external services. The Monday saw the Welcome Fair, which had to be moved indoors to the Sports Hall last minute due to inclement weather, but which nevertheless, had great attendance with 2,800 students recorded. Again, students could get all sorts of information about how to join student groups, access services within the Union and University, and get involved with local organisations. The day was vibrant (with a great Reggae band entertaining us) and everyone pulled together to make it a success, despite the incessant rain!

The rest of the week included the Colour Mile and a Rec Sport Day, a Society Pick N Mix, a Safety and a Volunteering Fair, alongside students' academic inductions. This was alongside a comprehensive and diverse evening events programme.

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TEA DANCE

In December, the Union hosted the very popular Tea Dance for some lovely senior citizens from the local community. It has become an annual event in the Union which Active Hereford and Worcester help to promote, and a real highlight of the calendar. Students from the Saints Dance Society and Christian Union gave band performances during the afternoon, and student volunteers were on hand to dance with attendees to the band and to a local singing duo, Two4One. A raffle was drawn with prizes, Christmas chocolates, and crafts. The day provided a chance for great intergenerational fun, with bags of laughter and merriment - it really is a very special event.

CELEBRATION WEEK

Teamworc Awards

The TeamWorc Awards are the Union's chance to say a big thank you and well done to everyone in the TeamWorc community for all their amazing achievements throughout the year. This year's awards took place in mid-May, with 145 students and VIPs in attendance in The Hangar. It really felt like everyone had an amazing time. The deserving winners of this year's TeamWorc Awards were as follows:

o Athlete of the Year - Alice Hopkins (Blind Football)
o Changemaker for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion - Christian Wilson (Disabled Students' Network)
o Changemaker for Student Experience - The Progress Week Collective (Department Reps)
o Charity Fundraising Student Group of the Year - Aerial Fitness
o Course Rep of the Year - Luke Marshall-Watkin (Computing)
o Department Rep - Oliver Nightingale (Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, and Nutritional Therapy)
o Event of the Year - 24-hour CPR Training Marathon (Paramedic Society and RAG)
o Outstanding Contribution to the Community - Amy Shadbolt (Women's Hockey)
o Network Campaign of the Year - Race Equality Week (Race Equality Network)
o Network Committee Member of the Year - Harriet Lawrence (Women's Network)
o Network of the Year - Race Equality Network
o New Society of the Year - Medsoc
o Society Committee Member of the Year - Benji Robison (Paramedic Society)
o Sports Club Committee Member of the Year - Megan Ince (Dance)
o Society of the Year - UniBoob Team
o Sports Team of the Year - Men's Cricket
o Sports Club of the Year - Aerial Fitness

You can see some nice photos here:
https://www.worcsu.com/barandevents/celebrationweek/teamworcawards/

In addition to the Teamworc Awards, the WorcStar initiative continued to celebrate students who go above and beyond to enhance the student experience. We gave around 30 WorcStars (badges and certificates) to students from networks, clubs, and societies with nominations coming from Union staff and Officers, as well as other students. We also gave WorcStars to some staff members in the University across the year whom we felt had really gone the extra mile for us and for students. This included staff in Estates (cleaning), Student Services, Sport, and the International Experience Team who all seemed delighted!

Students' Choice Awards

We received a total of 385 nominations from students for the above, and the winners - decided by a student panel - were as follows:

- Outstanding Lecturer Award - Michael Wheatley (School of Humanities)
- Extra Mile Award for Support Staff - Mark Harwood-Browne (Disability Advisor, Student Services)
- Award for Exceptional Personal Academic Tutor - Elizabeth Russell (Institute of Education)
- Sustainability Award - Mike Wheeler (School of Science and the Environment)
- ARC (Academic Representation Co-ordinator) of the Year - Amy Johnson (School of Psychology)
- Provost Award for Excellence - Kaytie Holdstock (Institute of Education)

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MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

Throughout 2023-24, the Union continued to communicate to students across a range of platforms, including social media, physical and digital displays, direct email, and face-to-face promotion.

Significant levels of promotion were given to three of the SU's major events during the year; Welcome Festival, the Leadership Elections, and Varsity, with high levels of engagement both online and in-person. Along with regular, ongoing promotion (including a weekly email to the student body) of SU services, campaigns, and events, several campaigns saw a particular focus. These included the Community Cupboard and cost-of-living support, Help & Advice and the launch of Myth Buster Mondays, the Consent campaign, Refreshers and Give it a Go Week, and the Insights survey in May, which is detailed further down in this report.

Marketing and social media content for The Hangar saw promotion of major events such as Welcome Festival, the Winter Ball, Refreshers, and a variety of student-led events. There was also continued promotion of the weekly line-up, newly introduced products and drinks, non-alcoholic offerings, value for money and The Hangar's position as one of the cheapest venues in Worcester. During Semester Two, management of The Hangar Instagram was given to a member of student staff to help boost engagement by creating a more student friendly platform.

Social Media

The majority of social media platforms have continued to see steady increases in engagement. Both the Union and Hangar Instagram saw far more content posted than in previous years, with growth in new followers, impressions, and engagement, surpassing the SU and Hangar Facebook pages.

Platform	Followers	Impressions	Engagements
SU Facebook	9,034	547,833	13,356
Hangar Facebook	1,521	64,054	937
SU Instagram	5,251	827,212	26,768
Hangar Instagram	2,049	265,564	9,465
TikTok*	1,009	11,003	326

Number of followers, impressions, and engagements for SU and Hangar social media in 2023-24 academic year up to the end of July. *Metrics for TikTok are from February 2024 to July 2024.

Website

Website use and engagement has remained at levels consistent with previous years, despite a fall in the overall number of students at the University. There are significant increases in both use and engagement at notable times during the academic year; Welcome Festival, the Leadership Elections, and club and society elections. The Sports & Societies and Help & Advice pages remain the most accessed areas of the website across the year. September, October, February, and April are the busiest months, with between 59,000 and 64,000 pages views by between 6,000 and 8,500 users. The total number of page views over the year was 424,347 by 56,621 users.

SUSTAINABILITY

The Union achieved re-accreditation under the Responsible Futures (RF) scheme following our 2024 submission, with our classification pending. Our sustainability efforts were supported by a Green Impact Project Assistant, funded by the University, who earned a Gold mark in the University's Green Impact Award for her contributions towards improving student engagement in sustainability.
Over the year, despite having very limited resource to dedicate to this area, we collaborated with students and the University's Sustainability Team to:

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• Deliver a range of activities for Go Green Week and host Repair Cafés at St John's Campus.
• Create a new sustainability and logo.
• Raise awareness of sustainability issues within the team through a staff sustainability board and a 'Make it Green' event.
• Widen the participation of our Sustainability Committee and create an internal sustainability strategy in line with our earlier commitment to the SDG accord.
• Support the University's Director of Sustainability to launch a new Sustainability Hub at St John's campus, offering students opportunities to learn how to sew, build terrariums, and take care of plants.
• Collaborate with Hey Girls to provide sustainable period products to students.
• Support the Allotment and Gardening Society and ensure all clubs and societies received sustainability training to encourage pro-environmental behaviours.
• Review the criteria for sustainability points towards the Team Worc Award to ensure students are properly recognised for their efforts towards the natural world.
• Come in top 25 institutions nationally with our response rate for SOS-UK Sustainability Survey.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Staff learning, development, and wellbeing is very important to the Union. We continued to hold fortnightly team meetings (chaired by different members of the team) to aid teamwork and communication, as well as staff breakfasts as more relaxed group activity, as well as half day strategic meetings. A 'Star of the Month' was announced at staff meetings for great work, which came with a little trophy that was passed between 'Stars'! We updated our student staff newsletter, written by the Welcome Desk Assistants for the wider student staff team, to help keep student staff informed of what was going on in the Union. We arranged out of office activities, such as a Sip and Paint, and down time when major events were taking place, such as the Euros.

Student staff were all inducted into their roles and have places on the Union's Staff Consultative Forum and Health and Safety Committee. Several student staff received recognition throughout the year for great work (through an on-line nomination process) and received a letter and shopping voucher.

Union staff and Officers undertook learning and development over the year, as well as being encouraged to get involved in projects outside of their immediate area of work to widen their knowledge and develop new skills. Courses and learning undertaken over the year included Diversity & Inclusion, Health & Safety, GDPR, Information Security Awareness, Disability Awareness, First Aid. Neurodiversity training, UJS (Union of Jewish Students) Antisemitism Training, and Race Awareness training. As well as these, staff and Officers attended many of the annual conferences and events, including NUS Strategic Exchange, Membership Services Conference, SOS-UK (Students Organising for Sustainability) Sustainability Summit, SU Digital, BUCS Conference, NUS Conference, The NUS Trade Show, and Lead and Change.

Core staff had their Personal Performance Appraisals (PPA) held and objectives set, which fed into the Union's operational plan. Staff also have a Personal Development Plan that sits alongside their PPA and all follow a 121 template that was implemented in year to ensure they monitored progress against objectives, recorded successes and challenges, and actions from each 121. This seems to be very popular amongst staff and helps them to reflect on their achievements on a regular basis.

In the background, despite resource challenges, it was an extremely busy year and a vast amount of work was done to update our Employee Handbook and HR processes, including:
o Creating an updated PPA/PDP/121 template and process
o Revising our travel, expenses, compassionate leave, and sick policies
o Introducing a suite of new Special and Other leave polices
o Starting the process of reviewing our Maternity, Paternity, and Parental Leave policy
o Updating our information for current and prospective employees on our non-pay staff benefits
o Reviewing and updating our Health and Safety Policy

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o Updating our core staff contracts
o Updating our Student Staff Handbook and contract
o Liaising with Staff Savvy, our on-line HR portal provider, to iron out problems and further embed the system into the organisation
o Researching potential HR retainer services to support the Union with HR matters. We concluded this was not affordable at this time but, as a result of the process, we began using the Rradar service provided through our insurance with Endsleigh, much more fully.
o Attending webinars and free external workshops to keep abreast of developments in employment legislation and amending our processes as necessary.
o Maintaining contact with a network of HR staff in SUs nationally, through NUS and sharing best practice.

OVERALL PERFORMANCE AND STUDENT SATISFACTION

National Student Survey (NSS):

Q25 How well does the Student's Union represent students' academic interests?
Overall University: 76.5% (sector average 73%, our score in 2023 was 75%)

The Union is positioned 37th out of 147 Unions nationally in the Universities' compiled NSS rankings (for Q25 - 37th/148 in 2023, and for the previous Q26 - 18th/149 in 2022, 19th/149 in 2021 and 2020, 36th/152 in 2019 and 61st/151 in 2018).
The Union is also positioned 3rd in the 'cathedral' group of the 12 Providers against which the University benchmarks itself:

NSS 2024	Students' Union
University of Worcester	3
Bath Spa University	9
Birmingham City University	10
Buckinghamshire New University	1
Canterbury Christ Church University	5
Coventry University	4
Liverpool Hope University	2
Staffordshire University	8
University of Chester	6
University of Northampton	7
University of the West of England	12
University of Wolverhampton	11

The Union saw scores go up in all B2 optional questions (which traditionally score much lower than the compulsory questions):

B2 - Students' Union - Overall score 37% (31% in 2023) We do not get sector averages for these questions.
o B.2.1. The Students' Union had had a positive impact on my sense of belonging to the university or college - 38% (33% in 2023)

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o B.2. 2. The Students' Union has had a positive impact on the local community = 41% (34% in 2023)
o B.2.3. The Students' Union has helped me develop useful life skills = 32% (25% in 2023).

Course Experience Survey (CES):

Overall satisfaction with Academic Representation System - 85%

Q.5.3 - I know who my Course Rep is:
Overall University: **82%** (-2% from 2022/23)

Q 5.4 - Course Reps represent the interests of students on my course effectively:
Overall University: **84%** (+4% on 2022/23)

Q14 - How well does the Students' Union represent academic interests:
Overall University: **84%** (+4% on 2022/23)

An additional question was asked in 2023, at our request, and we are grateful for the University adding this question in as the NSS no longer asks students about their general satisfaction with the Union. The following was asked:

o **How satisfied are you with your Students' Union** - score was **87%**

WSU Insights Survey

In May, the Union have recently surveyed our members on how they feel we are doing against our new strategic framework. We had 434 responses, which is not as high as we were hoping for, but we know that students do get survey fatigue. We are in the process of drilling down into the results but some headlines include:

o Most respondents were 1st year undergraduates.
o Most respondents were students on professional courses, attending St Johns campus.
o 79% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the SU and its range of services supported the health and wellbeing of students.
o 74% agreed or strongly agreed that fulfilling student roles within the SU helps students' employability.
o 74% agreed or strongly agreed that the SU prioritises EDI
o 75% agreed or strongly agreed that the SU provides easy and accessible ways for students to give feedback and suggestions
o 76% agreed or strongly agreed that the SU is good at communicating what it does
o 78% agreed or strongly agreed that the SU has a positive impact on University life.
Most other areas scored in the mid-high 70s but the lowest score was our visible presence away from St John's, which was at 71%. We have been doing much more outreach this year but have struggled with the current resource levels we have. Whilst we embed our strategic framework, we feel this is a reasonable start but will, obviously be looking to increase these scores year on year throughout its life cycle. When we are facing financial and resource restraints, this is not easy but we will continue to strive for excellence and to fulfil our organisational vision.

Some very pleasing free text comments included:
'The SU has helped me find the people who have made my university experience 10x better than it could have been without all the things the SU does'.
'Participating in events in The Hangar have been some of the most memorable times at university'.
'The feeling of belonging directly at the start of the first semester was a valuable experience'.
'The SU was very welcoming when I first started at the university and a very important part of creating a friendly atmosphere'.
'Being part of a sports club and society helped me meet a wide range of friends'.

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'I appreciate being able to have my say in things like elections'.
'Creating safe and relaxing spaces for students to de-stress'.
'The SU has given me opportunities to grow throughout my university experience'.
'I have had the opportunity to be a student rep, which has been amazing for my confidence and professional development'.
'I think the SU does a fantastic job on all levels advocating for student voice'.
'I feel seen.'

The word cloud below is created from the positive comments fed back by students:

We also asked students what they would like us to see from us in the future to be the best SU and had several free-text responses, that can be summarised as students wanting:
- more visible presence of the Union across the campuses
- more support for international students, mature students, and neurodiverse students, and
- more daytime events.

The Union will work to address this as it develops its operational plan for 2024/25.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial position

Income from all sources totalled £1,011,070 (2023: £991,083). Total expenditure of £1,039,232 (2023: £1,053,966) on all the students' services we provide, which left a deficit for the year of £28,162 (2023 deficit £62,883).

The General Fund balance at the year end stood at £159,210 (2023: £214,292).

Restricted funds, which represent monies raised by the Union's various clubs and societies were £210,950 (2023: £197,039).

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reserves policy

The primary aim of the policy is to ensure that sufficient reserves are in place to provide funds for investment in the Union and its activities, thus enhancing the experience of students at this University. With a secure base of reserves, the Trustees of WSU will be exercising their duty to oversee the finances of the organisation in a prudent and proper manner and to minimise risks to the organisation's viability.

The level of reserves needed at any one time was reviewed again in-year by the Trustee Board and was agreed to be 3 months' operating costs (as defined by the annual budgeted organisational expenditure), known as the 'operating reserve'. The Board is acutely aware that forecasting and modelling a realistic budget for the 2024/25 academic year, the Union is likely to fall below its reserves levels in 2024/25 for 2-3 months in the Summer of 2025. The Union's reserves policy states that action needs to be taken if this is the case for more than 6 months, at which point the Trustees should ask the management to formulate a recovery plan for the Board's approval. The Union has also communicated this to the University.

As mentioned throughout this report, the senior management are highly sensitive to the financial situation facing the Union and already have cost-saving measures and regular contract negotiations in place. Staff positions are reviewed routinely when a member of the team leaves the organisation and, in the current circumstances, particular emphasis is placed on whether the remaining team could realistically consume any extra work.

Reserves in excess of the required reserves are held as 'free reserves' or 'designated reserves', in accordance with the Trustee Board. If there are surplus funds available above the minimum level, the Committee should plan to utilise these within three years.

Going concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

FUTURE PLANS

Operationally, some of the immediate priorities of the 2024/25 officer and staff team are:

• Continuing work to support students during the cost-of-living crisis, retaining the Community Cupboard extending Breakfast Clubs, and implementing a new Kitchen Korner to help students with domestic equipment.
• Maintaining our annual EDI action plan so that these matters remain central to all we do.
• Raise awareness to international students of the financial support available to them, following the implementation of a new international student hardship fund and supporting them with their housing concerns..
• Embedding our services and staff much more across the campuses, aiming to establish, with the University's help, an SU Hub on City Campus.
• Increase our engagement with mature students and commuting students, providing more daytimes activities.
• Increase the number of academic societies.
• Continuing to provide accessible ways for students on professional courses to engage with us.
• Continue to have a positive staff culture where all staff are welcoming to students, where their contribution is valued and rewarded, and they feel genuine job satisfaction.
• Seeking creative and appropriate additional sources of revenue, including external bookings in the Hangar, media sales, and external partnerships.

FUTURE FUNDING

We will work with the University annually to negotiate on our annual block grant. This is to ensure we continue to maximise our impact and can maintain our services in a financial environment where costs continue to rise or remain high, as well as to develop as an organisation to meet the needs of our increasingly diverse student body. A key promise in our new strategic framework is to be visible and relevant to more and more of our members; to be proactive and not wait for them to come to us. This requires significant outreach work and creativity from what is a very small team (now less than 20 core staff), whilst doing what we can to minimise financial risk, ensure we are future proof, and maintain healthy reserves. This is not going to be easy.

We will continue to allocate as much resource as possible to student-facing services and representation and to work hard behind the scenes to maximise the benefit of contracts and reduce costs wherever possible. We feel strongly that there is a need to strategically review the Union's funding, space, and facilities on St John's campus and other campuses (especially City Campus), to build on good student satisfaction levels and to support the University's aims around recruitment, retention, and progression. When we surveyed our members in May 2024, they told us that we are not visible enough outside of St Johns campus - we must do our best to address this within our current team and resources.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust and constitutes an unincorporated charity.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Charity constitution

The University of Worcester Students' Union (hereafter referred to as 'WSU' or 'the Union') falls under the definition of a "Students' Union" in section 20(1) of the Education Act 1994, and has charitable status. The University of Worcester (hereafter referred to as the University) exercises its duty under the Education Act 1994 to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to secure that the Union operates in a fair and democratic manner and is accountable for its finances.

Since becoming a registered charity, WSU has a dedicated Board of Trustees, consisting of up to three full time officers, up to four student trustees, and up to three lay trustees. The Student and Lay Trustees are selected on the basis of their appropriateness, experience and expertise by a simple majority vote of an Appointments Panel. Appointments of student trustees need to be ratified by a majority vote of Student Council. The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the good governance and financial stability of the Union and has been responsible for passing policies and procedures to bring the Union up to date with changing legal requirements.

The Union is a democratic organisation, with the ultimate decision making power being its membership through Student Council, which is the sovereign body. Student Council agrees the Policy of the Union, discusses wider and national issues that affect students at Worcester, guides strategic campaigns, represents the voice of students, and makes, appeals and amends the Bye-Laws, jointly with Trustees. Student Council continued to hold the officers accountable for their actions this year through a number of virtual meeting and 2 out of four were quorate (meaning some votes then needed to be conducted over email post meeting).

Three Full Time Officers are elected into position by cross-campus secret ballot, for a one-year term of office and they become the Union's Executive Committee. The Executive Committee oversee the day to day student-centered activities of the Union and are accountable to Student Council. All Executive Officers should receive an induction and training into their legal and administrative responsibilities, with an on-going programme of development during their term of office. The Full Time Officers able to run for re-election for a second year on the same terms.

The Union employs non-student professional staff to ensure effective management and delivery of its many activities and services and to implement the policy decisions made through the democratic process. There is delegated authority, through the Chief Executive Officer, for operational decision-making and accountability within the various areas of the Union, in accordance with agreed structures.The Chief Executive is accountable to the Board of Trustees.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER

The Union receives a Block Grant from the University and occupies buildings owned by the University, which also pays for utilities.The Union also receives IT Services from the University through an Operating Model. This support is intrinsic to the relationship between the University and Union. Although the Union seeks to supplement and diversify its income through commercial and trading activities where possible, it continues to be dependent on the support of the University. The Union believes this that this support is an integral part of the University structure and strategic plans and of significant value to the overall student experience.

The Union believes it has continued to demonstrate its value and impact in facilitating opportunities and communities for students, providing students with a voice, and continuously improving the experience at Worcester. The Union remains grateful to the University for their ongoing support and looks forward to continued collaboration as it works to support its diverse membership, ensuring students can create positive, ensuring memories of their time at University.

CHARITY GOVERNANCE CODE

The Union is committed to the seven principles outlined in the Code as follows:

1. Organisational Purpose
The Union continues to have strong organisational purpose and to work to its charitable objectives, laid out in its Constitution. As mentioned above, the Union implemented a new 5-year Strategic Framework in Autumn 2023, following extensive consultation with students and staff during 2022/23. A new vision, mission, values, enablers, and organisational KPIs are part of the framework, alongside 5 key strategic themes which will underpin the work of the Union.

2. Leadership
The Board of Trustees works with the Chief Executive and senior management in the organisation to agree a clear strategic direction and to ensure that the organisational values are reflected and demonstrated in its work.

3. Integrity
Trustees of the organisation are expected to follow the Nolan Principles of Public Life and receive training on this. They are also expected to maintain the independence of the Union and to ensure it works to its charitable aims at all times.

4. Decision-making risk and control
The Board maintains strong oversight of the organisation, delegated where appropriate to sub-committees with defined terms of reference. Key procedures and policies of the Union, as well as organisational performance and legal compliance are reviewed on a regular basis.The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error (see risk management section below for more detail)..

5. Board effectiveness
The structure and composition of the Board, as well as recruitment to it, ensure an appropriate balance of skills, knowledge and student representation. A Skills and Experience Matrix has been created to support this process. Trustees receive training upon their appointment and an induction to the Union and their role. The Board and its Sub-Committees meet regularly to receive information and reports and to have full and frank discussions of important issues. The Chief Executive also maintains email communication with the Board between meetings on important matters, as well as meets with the Chair and Deputy Chair at least once between full Board meetings to discuss current management priorities.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

6. Diversity

The Board values diversity in all its forms and is committed to reaching out to under-represented groups when recruiting Trustees to ensure they are reflective of the membership of the Union and of society. As with staff recruitment, the Union looks to external support and expertise when recruiting Lay Trustees, where this is affordable when recruiting Student Trustees from its membership, the Union will do its utmost to target promotion amongst cohorts of students which are typically under-represented. Monitoring of diversity of Board membership is undertaken alongside similar monitoring of diversity amongst staff.

7. Openness and accountability

Building trust to secure the confidence of our members and stakeholders is a key part of how the Union operates. Student Council receives updates on the work on the Board and vice versa. The Board also ensures that the Union's membership is kept informed of progress and performance through annual meetings (All Student Meetings), as well as accessible information published on the Union's website, including summary minutes of full Board meetings. A Register of Declarations of Interest for Trustees is also maintained and reviewed regularly.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

The Board of Trustees reviews the risk factors that could affect the strategic, operational and business interests of the Union. Considering the possible risks, the Board has put in place a risk register with attendant checks and balances to ensure compliance with health and safety, employment law and financial competency. The Union also maintains its own annual Statement of Legal Compliance, which is reviewed at by the Board at the same time each year as the risk register. The register was reviewed during the academic year and areas deemed to be of heightened risk, as we emerged from the pandemic, are listed below, with associated actions to try and mitigate or annual.The number of heightened risk areas remained the same as in 2022/23 at 6 (with 5 of these continuing from 2022/23).

- (New - increased from medium to high risk) That the Union does not achieve an increase in in block grant received from the University but continues to rely heavily on its own commercial income. This was amended to high from medium risk as the block grant has remained static since 2021/22. The Union has a strong ongoing relationship with the University and regularly reports on impact but a static block grant and increased costs, particularly in relation to human resources, is placing significant strain on the organisation's finances. Quarterly finance meetings with the Pro Vice Chancellor Finance and Resources continue, where accounts and budgets are discussed, as well as challenges and developments. The Union is currently operating strict spending policies, saving costs where it can, and is seeking appropriate alternative income streams that do not breach existing sponsorship contracts, but this remains very challenging.

- The Union receives a cut in its annual block grant from the University as a result of low student recruitment (particularly in light of current inflationary rises to general costs and salaries): As above, the block grant has remained static since 2021/22 and the University continues to face recruitment challenges. The University has strategies in place for recruitment, retention and progression. The Union continues to implement cost saving measures where it can, as above.

- Union trading operations are not profitable as expected as a result of University or external influences: This remains a serious concern, affected by the ongoing national cost of living crisis and rises in the National Living Wage. Students' ability to spend is much reduced, whilst staff costs continue to rise. As above, the Union meets on a quarterly basis with the PVC (Finance and Resources) and attends the University's Audit Committee each November following the production of annual accounts. Monthly accounts are shared with the University Executive and Trustee Board. The Union continues to implement cost saving measures where it can and look into alternative income streams that are appropriate, as above. Monthly meetings take place with Venue staff and senior managers and efforts continue to increase external bookings in the venue to pre pandemic levels and to ensure student events are as cost sensitive as possible to entice students in. The Union occupies a University building, with outlets run by the University's caterers, which limits the ability to diversify operations and independent income. It is also in conversation with the University about how to affordably update and decorate/refurbish the venue to encourage more students to use the space.

- The Union suffers a significant fall in income through a lack of sponsorship contracts: Monthly meetings are held with key sponsorship partners, including Tramps and Dominoes. The principal contract with Tramps remains half that of pre pandemic levels. The contract with Dominos remains stable and at previous levels. Contracts are renegotiated in a timely manner by Union management and the Trustee Board and University kept informed of any concerns around renewal or a reduction of income from any agreement. Opportunities are sought for additional income (as per risks above and bearing in mind limitations placed by our principal contract) where possible and best practice sought from the sector.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

- The Union and its staff are adversely affected by negative developments with pension provider/s, namely SUSS: Communication has been maintained with SUSS Trustees, and NUS. AGMs attended, and questions posed regarding projections for the scheme. Advice regularly sought from Auditors and the University is being kept abreast of developments. Successive valuations suggest that the annual cost for Unions will continue to rise at a steady rate. Latest AGM (March 2024) confirmed continuingly low levels of funding although it had improved slightly (now 53% funded) under the fiduciary management of Schroders. The recovery period for the scheme currently ends on 1st May 2037. Many Unions are now investigating the cost of their S75 to pull out of the scheme, including the principal employer, NUS UK, which may well cause increased risk for those Unions left in. Some Unions have already left or are in the process of doing so, a handful of which had a large stake in the scheme. The Union enquired into its S75 debit figure in January 2024, and this was c.£370k, which is not affordable. Next valuation is in June 2025 (in June 2022, the scheme was £134m in deficit).

- That staff morale and retention are negatively affected by perceived low pay, reward, and advancement opportunities within the Student's Union structure. Particularly in the context of the 'Great Resignation' post Covid, increasing expectations by employees, and the cost-of-living crisis (including current inflationary increases on wages) This risk was added in 2022/23: The Trustee Board are consulted on strategic issues relating to staff pay and reward, including annual cost of living rises, increments that go beyond individual pay scales, and organisational change. An external pay and reward review was undertaken in Summer 2022 to provide a new organisational pay policy and framework to increase transparency and understanding of roles. Annual salary benchmarking exercise takes place with comparable roles in the region and similar sectors. Work is ongoing with the Board to continuously review and reflect upon non-pay benefits for staff. Staff are informed of the additional benefits of working for the SU aside from pay, including training and development, life insurance (whilst in service), EAP, Edenred discount childcare vouchers, and other discount vouchers. Core staff all have an annual Personal Development Plan, alongside their objectives.

Two new risks were added in November 2023, one relating to Freedom of Speech (in light of government legislation and new regulation from the Office for Students), and the other to data/IT breaches in relation to payroll (and how this data is currently backed up):

4.7 That the Union suffers reputational damage from an issue related to freedom of speech.
5.13 That the Union suffers from data or IT breaches, particularly in relation to SAGE payroll systems.

Pay policy for senior staff

The level of remuneration agreed for senior members of staff for the academic year, was based on benchmarking with equivalent position in other Unions nationally, with an external pay and reward review for the Union conducted over several months in 2022, by Atkinson HR Limited, whilst taking into consideration the size and turnover of the Union, as well as the location of the institution and the size of the Union's membership. A benchmarking exercise was also undertaken using Croner Group data in April 2023.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number
1145192

Principal address
Henwick Grove
Worcester
Worcestershire
WR2 6AJ

Trustees
A. Linforth - ended term of office June 2024
S. James - ended term of office November 2023
I. Price - ended term of office June 2024
M. Osborne - ended term of office March 2024
E. Boddice - ended term of office May 2024
E. Orme - appointed October 2023, ended term of office May 2024
T. Young - appointed October 2023
R. Williams - appointed October 2019, commenced second term in office October 2022
M. Brittain - appointed Oct 2018, commenced second term of office October 2021
E. Burke - appointed May 2023

Auditors
Knox Cropper LLP
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors
153 -155 London Road
Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire
HP3 9SQ

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES
The trustees are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales, the Charities Act 2011, Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 26/11/24 and signed on its behalf by:

Trustee

Opinion
We have audited the financial statements of Worcester Students' Union (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 July 2024 which comprise the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities, the Consolidated Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:
- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's and groups affairs as at 31 July 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion
We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern
In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information
The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Report of the Independent Auditors thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception
We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:
- the information given in the Report of the Trustees is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees
As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements which give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements
We have been appointed as auditors under Section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a Report of the Independent Auditors that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

o The Group is required to comply with charity law and, based on our knowledge of its activities, we identified that the legal requirement to accurately account for restricted funds was of key significance.
o We gained an understanding of how the charity complied with its legal and regulatory framework, including the requirement to properly account for restricted funds, through discussions with management and a review of the documented policies, procedures and controls.
o The audit team, which is experienced in the audit of charities, considered the group's susceptibility to material misstatement and how fraud may occur. Our considerations included the risk of management override.
o Our approach was to check that all restricted income was properly identified and separately accounted for and to ensure that only valid and appropriate expenditure was charged to restricted funds. This included reviewing journal adjustments and unusual transactions.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Knox Cropper LLP

Knox Cropper LLP
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors
153 -155 London Road
Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire
HP3 9SQ

Date: 4/4/2025

WORCESTER STUDENTS' UNION

Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31 July 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	**2024 Total funds £**	2023 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies	2	**607,300**	**-**	**607,300**	606,910
Charitable activities	5				
Student activities		**-**	**180,788**	**180,788**	163,293
Bar		**132,452**	**-**	**132,452**	126,699
Other trading activities	3	**83,042**	**-**	**83,042**	91,027
Investment income	4	**7,488**	**-**	**7,488**	3,154
Total		**830,282**	**180,788**	**1,011,070**	991,083
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds	6	**96,439**	**-**	**96,439**	106,775
Charitable activities	7				
Representation		**106,442**	**-**	**106,442**	108,074
Advice and welfare		**83,215**	**-**	**83,215**	67,665
Student activities		**292,347**	**166,877**	**459,224**	474,231
Bar		**265,954**	**-**	**265,954**	272,042
Affiliations		**27,958**	**-**	**27,958**	25,179
Total		**872,355**	**166,877**	**1,039,232**	1,053,966
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		**(42,073)**	**13,911**	**(28,162)**	(62,883)
Other recognised gains/(losses)					
Actuarial gains/(losses) on defined benefit schemes		**30,785**	**-**	**30,785**	(55,752)
Net movement in funds		**(11,288)**	**13,911**	**2,623**	(118,635)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		**(196,926)**	**197,039**	**113**	118,748
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		**(208,214)**	**210,950**	**2,736**	113

The notes form part of these financial statements

WORCESTER STUDENTS' UNION

Consolidated Balance Sheet
31 July 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	**2024 Total funds £**	2023 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	12	**5,710**	**-**	**5,710**	11,485
CURRENT ASSETS					
Stocks	14	**5,350**	**-**	**5,350**	6,537
Debtors	15	**29,513**	**-**	**29,513**	19,582
Cash at bank and in hand		**150,795**	**210,950**	**361,745**	414,296
		185,658	**210,950**	**396,608**	440,415
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	16	**(32,158)**	**-**	**(32,158)**	(40,569)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		**153,500**	**210,950**	**364,450**	399,846
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		**159,210**	**210,950**	**370,160**	411,331
PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES	17	**(367,424)**	**-**	**(367,424)**	(411,218)
NET ASSETS/(LIABILITIES)		**(208,214)**	**210,950**	**2,736**	113
FUNDS	18				
Unrestricted funds				**(208,214)**	(196,926)
Restricted funds				**210,950**	197,039
TOTAL FUNDS				**2,736**	113

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on .....26/11/24..... and were signed on its behalf by:

.....
Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

WORCESTER STUDENTS' UNION

Charity Balance Sheet
31 July 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	**2024 Total funds £**	2023 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	12	**5,710**	**-**	**5,710**	11,485
Investments	13	**1**	**-**	**1**	1
		5,711	**-**	**5,711**	11,486
CURRENT ASSETS					
Stocks	14	**5,350**	**-**	**5,350**	6,537
Debtors	15	**29,513**	**-**	**29,513**	19,582
Cash at bank and in hand		**150,795**	**210,950**	**361,745**	414,296
		185,658	**210,950**	**396,608**	440,415
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	16	**(32,159)**	**-**	**(32,159)**	(40,570)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		**153,499**	**210,950**	**364,449**	399,845
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		**159,210**	**210,950**	**370,160**	411,331
PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES	17	**(367,424)**	**-**	**(367,424)**	(411,218)
NET ASSETS/(LIABILITIES)		**(208,214)**	**210,950**	**2,736**	113
FUNDS	18				
Unrestricted funds				**(208,214)**	(196,926)
Restricted funds				**210,950**	197,039
TOTAL FUNDS				**2,736**	113

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 26/11/24 and were signed on its behalf by:

Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

Consolidated Cash Flow Statement
for the Year Ended 31 July 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	**(60,039)**	(83,508)
Net cash used in operating activities		**(60,039)**	(83,508)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		**-**	(2,656)
Interest received		**7,488**	3,154
Net cash provided by investing activities		**7,488**	498
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		**(52,551)**	(83,010)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		**414,296**	497,306
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		**361,745**	414,296

The notes form part of these financial statements

1. RECONCILIATION OF NET EXPENDITURE TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2024 £	2023 £
Net expenditure for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	**(28,162)**	(62,883)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	**5,775**	5,554
Interest received	**(7,488)**	(3,154)
SUSS Pension deficit movements	**(13,009)**	(13,258)
Decrease in stocks	**1,187**	2,086
Increase in debtors	**(9,931)**	(16,221)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	**(8,411)**	4,368
Net cash used in operations	**(60,039)**	(83,508)

2. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	At 1.8.23 £	Cash flow £	**At 31.7.24** **£**
Net cash			
Cash at bank and in hand	**414,296**	**(52,551)**	**361,745**
	414,296	**(52,551)**	**361,745**
Total	**414,296**	**(52,551)**	**361,745**

The notes form part of these financial statements

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements
The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Charities Act 2011. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, with the exception of investments which are included at market value.

Income
All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Other income is recognised in the period in which it is receivable and to the extent the goods have been provided or on completion of the service.

Expenditure
Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Fundraising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions and do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities. Support costs are those costs incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the charity and include project management carried out at Headquarters. Governance costs are those incurred in connection with administration of the charity and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

Allocation and apportionment of support costs
The bases on which support costs have been allocated is set out in note 8 of the accounts.

Tangible fixed assets
There is no set de minimis level for the capitalisation of tangible fixed assets and each case is dealt with on an individual basis.

The policy with respect to impairment reviews of fixed assets is that reviews will be carried out if events indicate that the carrying value of any fixed asset may not be recoverable. Impairment losses are recognised in the SOFA.

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on the following bases:

Retail fixtures and fittings -	10 to 30% per annum straight line and 20% reducing balance
Administration fixtures & fittings -	20% per annum reducing balance
Improvements to premises -	10 to 20% per annum straight line and 20% reducing balance

continued...

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Stocks
Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value, after making due allowance for obsolete and slow moving items.

Taxation
The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting
Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits
The Union participates in the Students' Union Superannuation Scheme (SUSS), a defined benefit scheme which is externally funded and contracted out of the State Second Pension. The fund is valued at least every three years by a professionally qualified independent actuary with the rates of contribution payable being determined by the trustees on the advice of the actuary.

The most recent valuation of the Scheme was carried out as at 30 June 2022 and showed that the market value of the Scheme's assets was £106,697,000 with these assets representing 44% of the value of benefits that had accrued to members after allowing for expected future increases in earnings. The deficit on an ongoing funding basis amounted to £136,645,000

The 2022 valuation recommended a monthly contribution requirement by each participating Union intended to clear the ongoing funding deficit ending in 2037, increasing by 5% each year.

The scheme operates as a pooled arrangement, with contributions paid at a centrally agreed rate. As a consequence, no share of the underlying assets and liabilities can be directly attributed to the Union.

Under FRS 102, where a scheme participates in a multi-employer defined benefit pension scheme that is in deficit and the employer has entered into an agreement to fund the deficit the entity shall recognise a liability for the contributions payable that arise from the agreement. As the agreement runs until 2037, a discount rate of 3.8% has been applied in determining the net present value of the contributions made in the period.

The union also contributes to the Aegon Pension Scheme. The annual contributions payable are charged to the income and expenditure account.

Going concern
After making appropriate enquiries, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

continued...

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	2024	2023
	£	£
Grants	600,000	600,000
Other grants	7,300	6,910
	607,300	606,910

Grants received, included in the above, are as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
University of Worcester	600,000	600,000

3. OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	2024	2023
	£	£
Marketing	62,350	60,750
Other	119	705
NUS Extra	-	229
Commissions receivable	4,368	5,321
Varsity income	9,731	16,843
Events income	6,474	7,179
	83,042	91,027

4. INVESTMENT INCOME

	2024	2023
	£	£
Deposit account interest	7,488	3,154

continued...

5. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Activity	2024 £	2023 £
Student Activity			
Membership	Student activities	**180,788**	163,293
Bar	Bar	**132,452**	126,699
		313,240	289,992

6. RAISING FUNDS

Raising donations and legacies

	2024 £	2023 £
Staff costs	**85,083**	90,913
Marketing costs	**11,599**	13,920
	96,682	104,833

Other trading activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Purchases	**44**	1,255
Bad debts	**(287)**	687
	(243)	1,942
Aggregate amounts	**96,439**	106,775

7. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct Costs £	Support costs (see note 8) £	Totals £
Representation	**-**	**106,442**	**106,442**
Advice and welfare	**65,473**	**17,742**	**83,215**
Student activities	**335,041**	**124,183**	**459,224**
Bar	**159,509**	**106,445**	**265,954**
Affiliations	**27,958**	**-**	**27,958**
	587,981	**354,812**	**942,793**

continued...

8. SUPPORT COSTS

	Management	Governance costs	Totals
	£	£	£
Representation	**69,914**	**36,528**	**106,442**
Advice and welfare	**11,654**	**6,088**	**17,742**
Student activities	**81,570**	**42,613**	**124,183**
Bar	**69,918**	**36,527**	**106,445**
	233,056	**121,756**	**354,812**

Activity	Basis of allocation
Management	Based on estimated usage of resources
Governance costs	Based on estimated usage of resources

9. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trustees' salaries	**60,221**	63,306
Trustees' social security	**4,293**	4,864
	64,514	68,170

Each of the Executive Committee's sabbatical officers received remuneration as authorised in the Union's governing document, for the representation, campaigning and support work they undertake as distinct from their trustee responsibilities.

Trustees' expenses

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trustees' expenses	**-**	570

10. STAFF COSTS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	**575,058**	567,740
Social security costs	**41,842**	40,147
Other pension costs	**32,191**	31,019
	649,091	638,906

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2024	2023
Full time	**17**	21
Students - Semester only	**16**	15
	33	36

continued...

10. STAFF COSTS - continued

During the year one member of staff received employment benefits (excluding employers pension costs) between £60,000 and £70,000.

The key management personnel of the charity during the year ended 31 July 2024 comprised of the Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Director of Representation and Membership Services and the Venue and Events Manager.

The total amount paid, including Employers National Insurance and Pension, to the Key Management Personnel for the year ended 31July 2024 was £217,018 (2023: £181,477).

11. COMPARATIVES FOR THE CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	606,910	-	606,910
Charitable activities			
Student activities	-	163,293	163,293
Bar	126,699	-	126,699
Other trading activities	91,027	-	91,027
Investment income	3,154	-	3,154
Total	827,790	163,293	991,083
EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising funds	106,775	-	106,775
Charitable activities			
Representation	108,074	-	108,074
Advice and welfare	67,665	-	67,665
Student activities	318,733	155,498	474,231
Bar	272,042	-	272,042
Affiliations	25,179	-	25,179
Total	898,468	155,498	1,053,966
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	(70,678)	7,795	(62,883)
Other recognised gains/(losses)			
Actuarial gains/(losses) on defined benefit schemes	(55,752)	-	(55,752)
Net movement in funds	(126,430)	7,795	(118,635)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	(70,496)	189,244	118,748
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	(196,926)	197,039	113

continued...

12. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

Group and Charity	Fixtures and fittings £
COST	
At 1 August 2023 and 31 July 2024	**912,277**
DEPRECIATION	
At 1 August 2023	**900,792**
Charge for year	**5,775**
At 31 July 2024	**906,567**
NET BOOK VALUE	
At 31 July 2024	**5,710**
At 31 July 2023	11,485

13. FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS

Charity	Unlisted investments £
MARKET VALUE	
At 1 August 2023 and 31 July 2024	**1**
NET BOOK VALUE	
At 31 July 2024	**1**
At 31 July 2023	1

There were no investment assets outside the UK.

14. STOCKS

Group and Charity	2024 £	2023 £
Stocks	**5,350**	6,537

continued...

15. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

Group and Charity

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade debtors	11,477	17,883
Other debtors	1,699	1,699
VAT	961	-
Prepayments and accrued income	15,376	-
	29,513	19,582

16. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	Group		Charity	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
Trade creditors	7,728	14,665	7,728	14,665
Taxation and social security	9,798	12,051	9,798	12,051
Other creditors	14,632	13,853	14,632	13,853
Inter company	-	-	1	1
	32,158	40,569	32,159	40,570

17. PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES

Group and Charity

	2024	2023
	£	£
Provisions	367,424	411,218

The above provision relates to the deficit funding contributions the Union is required to make to SUSS (see notes 1 and 19).

18. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

Group and Charity

	At 1.8.23	Net movement in funds	Transfers between funds	At 31.7.24
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	214,292	(26,447)	(28,635)	159,210
Pension deficit	(411,218)	15,159	28,635	(367,424)
	(196,926)	(11,288)	-	(208,214)
Restricted funds				
Clubs and societies	197,039	13,911	-	210,950
TOTAL FUNDS	113	2,623	-	2,736

continued...

18. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

Group and Charity	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Gains and losses £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	**830,282**	**(856,729)**	**-**	**(26,447)**
Pension deficit	**-**	**(15,626)**	**30,785**	**15,159**
	830,282	**(872,355)**	**30,785**	**(11,288)**
Restricted funds				
Clubs and societies	**180,788**	**(166,877)**	**-**	**13,911**
TOTAL FUNDS	**1,011,070**	**(1,039,232)**	**30,785**	**2,623**

Comparatives for movement in funds

Group and Charity	At 1.8.22 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.7.23 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	298,228	(56,666)	(27,270)	214,292
Pension deficit	(368,724)	(69,764)	27,270	(411,218)
	(70,496)	(126,430)	-	(196,926)
Restricted funds				
Clubs and societies	189,244	7,795	-	197,039
TOTAL FUNDS	118,748	(118,635)	-	113

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

Group and Charity	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Gains and losses £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	827,790	(884,456)	-	(56,666)
Pension deficit	-	(14,012)	(55,752)	(69,764)
	827,790	(898,468)	(55,752)	(126,430)
Restricted funds				
Clubs and societies	163,293	(155,498)	-	7,795
TOTAL FUNDS	991,083	(1,053,966)	(55,752)	(118,635)

continued...

18. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined position is as follows:

Group and Charity	At 1.8.22 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.7.24 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	298,228	(83,113)	(55,905)	159,210
Pension deficit	(368,724)	(54,605)	55,905	(367,424)
	(70,496)	(137,718)	-	(208,214)
Restricted funds				
Clubs and societies	189,244	21,706	-	210,950
TOTAL FUNDS	118,748	(116,012)	-	2,736

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

Group and Charity	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Gains and losses £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	1,658,072	(1,741,185)	-	(83,113)
Pension deficit	-	(29,638)	(24,967)	(54,605)
	1,658,072	(1,770,823)	(24,967)	(137,718)
Restricted funds				
Clubs and societies	344,081	(322,375)	-	21,706
TOTAL FUNDS	2,002,153	(2,093,198)	(24,967)	(116,012)

Clubs and societies - these funds represent income from the various student clubs and societies which is specifically to be spent on the fund or society to which it relates.

continued...

19. EMPLOYEE BENEFIT OBLIGATIONS

The Union participates in the Students' Union Superannuation Scheme, which is a defined benefit scheme whose membership consists of employees of students' unions and related bodies throughout the country. Benefits in respect of service up to 30 September 2003 are accrued on a "final salary" basis, with benefits in respect of service from 1 October 2003 accruing on a Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) basis. With effect from 30 September 2011 the Scheme closed to future accrual.

The most recent valuation of the Scheme was carried out as at 30 June 2022 and showed that the market value of the Scheme's assets was £106,697,000 with these assets representing 44% of the value of benefits that had accrued to members after allowing for expected future increases in earnings. The deficit on an ongoing funding basis amounted to £136,645,000.

The assumptions which have the most significant effect upon the results of the valuation are those relating to the rate of return on investments and the rates of increase in salaries and pensions.

The following assumptions applied at 30 June 2022:

• Discount rate: Bank of England gilt curve + 1.5% pa, linearly changing over a term of 13 years to gilts curve + 0.25% pa.
• Pension increases: A model of each increase, allowing for insurers' relative pricing of different caps and collars..

The 2022 Valuation recommended a monthly contribution requirement by each Participating Employer expressed in monetary terms intended to clear the ongoing funding deficit by 1 May 2037 and will increase by at least 5% each year.

These contributions also include an allowance for cost of the ongoing administrative and operational expenses of running the Scheme of £5,038 pa. Surpluses or deficits which arise at future valuations will also impact on the Union's future contribution commitment. In addition to the above contributions, the Union also pays its share of the Scheme's levy to the Pension Protection Fund.

The liability provided for in respect of the SUSS pension deficit amounted increased to £367,424 (2023: £411,218) at 31 July 2024 (see note 17).

The Union also has members in the Aegon Pension Scheme which is a defined contribution scheme.

The total contributions due to the Schemes by the Union in respect of eligible employees for the year ended 31 July 2024 are disclosed in the staff costs note.

continued...

20. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

The union is in receipt of a recurrent grant from the parent body to cover salaries and overheads. The amount received for the year ended 31 July 2024 was £600,000 (2023: £600,000).

At the year end the total due to the Union from the University of Worcester was £9,125 (2023: £100).

At the year end the total due to the University of Worcester from the Union was £4,227 (2023: nil).

21. ULTIMATE CONTROLLING PARTY

The union is controlled by the executive committee which is subject to democratic election by the voting membership of the union. The ultimate control of the union is vested under the constitution in the membership in General meeting. As such no single person or entity controls the union.

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1145192

Report of the Trustees and

Consolidated Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 July 2024

for

WORCESTER STUDENTS' UNION

Knox Cropper LLP
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors
153 -155 London Road
Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire
HP3 9SQ

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The trustees present their report with the consolidated financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 July 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The 2023/24 academic year was another very busy and at times challenging one for Worcester Students' Union (WSU). The cost-of-living crisis and financial pressures continued to have a significant effect on our operations and staff, whilst we endeavoured to begin delivering on a new 5-year strategic framework. We also spent most of the year with only two elected Full Time Officers in post. The year did, however, see some excellent results and outcomes, of which the staff and officer team can be extremely proud. We continue to strive for excellent satisfaction rates amongst our members and to consistently defy our size in terms of impact and national reputation.

We hope this report gives a good insight into our key activities and outcomes in 2023/24, as well as into our ongoing challenges, and a flavour of our future plans. The report is laid out slightly differently to recent years and is done so according to the new Strategic Themes of the Union. An Annual Impact Report for the year will, also, be produced at the end of Semester 1 of 2024/25 and shared widely with the Union's members and stakeholders. It will contain photos and graphics to help showcase the year in an accessible way for students.

The Union remains grateful for the continued support from the University's Board of Governors and Senior Executive team. We are very keen to continue the good relationship where there is mutual support and scrutiny, with the common goal of an excellent student experience and the ongoing sustainability of the University. We maintain that Worcester students are very special.

Status and Administration

The Students' Union is constituted in accordance with its constitution and is administered and managed by the Trustees. Following the Charities Act 2006 and the withdrawal of this exempt status for organisations with annual turnover exceeding £100,000, the Students' Union considered its options and was, subsequently, registered with the Charity Commission in December 2011, Charity No. 1145192.

The Executive Committee members are elected by the membership to take office in early June in the year in which they are elected and hold office for one year until the second week of the following June. Members can run for re-election for a second year on the same terms.

Charitable Objects

WSU seeks to enhance the student experience by providing representation, welfare services, social events and opportunities for student development within the Union and the wider community.

Its Objects under its Constitution are:

• Promoting the interests and welfare of students at the University of Worcester during their course of study and representing, supporting and advising students
• Being the recognised representative channel between students and the University of Worcester and any other external bodies
• Providing social, cultural, sporting, and recreational activities and forums for discussions and debate for the personal development of its students

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE
Achievements and Performance
AIMS AND ACTIVITIES

The Union exists to enhance the student experience and provide all c.10,000 students of the University of Worcester with opportunities to make the most out of their time at University. It aims to achieve this through services offering advice and support, democracy and representation, societies and sport, volunteering, and through student-focussed entertainment and events. To provide these, the Union has established departments and consults with its student staff and members to continuously improve. Executive Officers of the Union sit on every major committee of the University and regularly meet local stakeholders to represent the interests of its members.

The Union will seek at all times to:

(i) ensure that the diversity of its membership is recognised and that equal access is available to all Members of whatever origin or orientation;

(ii) pursue its aims and objectives independent of any political party or religious group;

(iii) pursue equal opportunities by taking positive action within the law to facilitate participation of groups discriminated against by society.

When reviewing our objectives and planning our activities, we have given due consideration to the Charity Commission's general and relevant supplementary guidance on public benefit. Our Constitution, revised in 2020, following a comprehensive governance review, has been structured to give the Board of Trustees reasonable authority to manage the affairs of the Union in a professional manner. The Board of Trustees will give the utmost consideration to the views of Members.

Following extensive student and staff consultation, the Union finalised its new Strategic Framework 2023-28 over the summer of 2023, and introduced it to the student body and key stakeholders in Autumn 2023. An outline is as follows:

Vision Statement:

Delivering excellence, uniting diversity, and enriching student lives

Mission Statement:

To support, represent, and empower our students

Our 5 Key Strategic Themes:

1. Encouraging and supporting students to prioritise their wellbeing
2. Understanding students' financial realities and reflecting that in what we do
3. Empowering students to have their say
4. Making sure our diverse student body is represented
5. Building connected communities where students feel they belong

Full details of our key aims under the 5 themes and how we propose to fulfil them can be found here https://www.worcsu.com/yourunion/aboutwsu/strategy/

Our Values:

Being bold - we will try new things, be adaptable, and speak out when we need to. We will provide opportunities and activities that are worth students spending their time doing (if they're not, we won't do them!). We will create a great place for people to work, where they can see ideas become reality.

Honest communication - we will be open about what we can and can't achieve and what we do and don't do. And we will tell students what we are doing and keep them updated. We will make it clear to our students what we offer and that we are there for all of them.

Keeping it simple - we will avoid having unnecessary bureaucracy or barriers to students getting involved with us.
Developing people - this is hugely important to us. We will shape experiences and develop everyone who is involved in the SU - students and staff alike - so they try new things and gain new skills.

Representative - we will work very hard to ensure that all students at the University feel valued and represented by us.

Inclusive and Accessible - we will ensure that we think about our diverse student body in providing services, activities, and events. We will work to remove barriers and challenge ourselves not to make assumptions about students' wants and needs.

The Union also developed a revised set of KPIs against which to monitor performance and student satisfaction. These are grouped under the areas of:

- Satisfaction rates
- Student Engagement
- Feedback and Intelligence
- Support and Outreach
- Events, Campaigns, and Activities
- Commercial Performance

The strategic themes are mapped against these areas and a total of 16 KPIs are linked to them, with a range of measures, covering:
- Survey results - Course Experience Survey, National Student Survey, our own Insight Surveys, student consultations, Employee Engagement Surveys, Pulse Surveys.
- Engagement in our democratic and governance processes structures, including our Leadership Elections, student bodies, and Representation systems.
- The demographics of the students who are engaged with us (from data we receive from the University).
- Academic and wider student experience outcomes as a result of our engagement with students.
- Impact on students as a result of engaging with us.
- Help and Advice services ad engagement with those
- Major events
- Engagement across the campuses and on-line.

1. ENCOURAGING AND SUPPORT STUDENTS TO PRIORTISE THEIR WELLBEING

Key aims we have set underneath this are:
(i) We will be proactive in finding out what is worrying or concerning our students, without overburdening them
(ii) We will support students to access help and advice
(iii) We will facilitate extra-curricular opportunities that enhance students' wellbeing

HELP AND ADVICE SERVICE

Following the record case numbers across 2022/23, the Help & Advice Service continued to experience high case volumes in 2023/24, albeit slightly lower, with 427 student cases compared to 432. The service received 520 student contacts, comprising 397 confidential enquiry forms (76%) and 123 email or Welcome Desk enquiries (24%). Advisors conducted 473 appointments, either confidential 121s with students or attending University meetings/hearings with them.

September was the busiest month for the service, with 56 student cases opened, marking the highest number ever recorded in a single month. October to December saw a slight drop and then it averaged 43 cases per month from January to July; a prolonged period of consistently high case numbers when compared to previous years.

We saw a significant increase in Teams appointments, with 210 conducted online (44%). A further 190 were face-to-face (40%) and 73 telephone appointments (15%). Teams allows students to meet with advisors from any location, enabling commuters, partner students, those on placements, and those working to still access the service, which is very important to us.

Service headlines:
• The service supported 385 students (in 427 cases). Of these, 322 were students who had not previously used the service.
• Academic issues accounted for 64% of cases, consistent with previous years.
• 24% of the cases related to housing issues, a slight increase from 2022/23. The complexity of housing cases also rose significantly, with multiple appointments, additional support and follow-ups from advisors.
• The remaining 12% of cases related to finance, employment, consumer, and welfare issues.
• Postgraduate students comprised 20% of the total clients, down from 24% last academic year.

In addition to the core appointments service, the team:
- Administered the Safe Sex Express, in partnership with Worcester's NHS Integrated Sexual Health Service (WISH), providing students with free condoms, lubricant, and informational sheets, via collection or delivery. The Safe Sex Express webpages received just over 487 views, and 2,445 condoms were distributed to students.
- Delivered proactive, tailored introductory presentations about the Help and Advice Service to 36 different University cohorts. The service experienced an influx of enquiry forms following presentations and ongoing communications were maintained with academic staff. In total, 269 students (63%) came to the advice service this year after being referred by wellbeing and academic staff, marking a 35% increase from last year.
- Totalled 70 hours of outreach across all University sites. This encompassed the cohort presentations, pop-ups, and Campus Chats.
- Met with 7 university student support services and organised three 'multi-meets', providing a space for all student wellbeing/support teams across the University to share updates and discuss current or upcoming themes and trends. All involved felt this Union-initiated group was very welcome.
- Connected with 18 external organisations, building relationships and referral pathways to ensure quick access to support for students. These organisations all feature on the Union's advice webpages.
- Worked collaboratively with the University on the academic integrity process and policy. We supported the lead Academic Integrity Tutors and the Academic Registrar to review, revise and update the Academic Integrity Policy.
- Participated in a GenAI Working Group, offering feedback on students' understanding, opinions, and current use of GenAI, contributing to new "You can, you shouldn't, you mustn't" guidance for students on GenAI. The advisors also supported the Vice President Education in his blog for WonkHE, Students need to be co-pilots on the AI adventure | Wonkhe
- Worked with the University Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) Leads to deliver presentations to PATs, to raise awareness of the service and how it supports students, including information on external support.

Aims for the service in 2024/25 include:

• Following some cases this year, ensure all students at partner institutions can access our service with ease;
• Continue to increase the service's visibility and prioritise being physically and virtually present where and when students need us.
• Deliver campaigns to improve the student experience, on housing, safety, and wellbeing.

CONSENT

In Semester 1, the Vice President Student Activities, Issy Price, launched a campaign to encourage positive conversations around consent and respect within the University community, encouraging students to speak out against unacceptable behaviour and actions. Issy gained support from many University colleagues to deliver a week of activities, including workshops led by academics and expert guest speakers, pop-up information stalls across campus, and a social media campaign. Issy also appeared on BBC Radio Hereford & Worcester, with Dr Gill Harrop, Senior Lecturer in Forensic Psychology, who leads the University of Worcester's Bystander Intervention Programme, to discuss the aims of the week.

Issy then wrote a blog for WonkHE SUs- Students need support to have conversations about consent | Wonkhe, following which she was contacted by Advance HE, who were working on an e-Learning product aimed at HE sector staff to understand harassment and sexual misconduct (in light of impending OfS regulation in this area). Issy and the President, Al, met with the Product and Innovation Manager to give some input into the design of the product, which was a fantastic opportunity.

WELCOME DESK

Our Welcome Desk is the physical welcome point for students at the SU. From early September 2023, through to end June 2024, it responded to 2,430 enquiries. Of the total contacts, 70% were in person, 20% via email, and 10% through telephone calls, so it seems that students still like to speak to someone in person to resolve their query. In line with our monitoring of sales behind our bar and the need to save costs wherever possible, we continue to review patterns of usage to ensure we are operating the most cost-effective opening times. This may ultimately lead to reduced opening hours going forward.

SPORT AND SOCIETIES

Sport

The year ended with a total of 38 sports clubs, of which 30 were affiliated (had 12 members or more) and 1143 memberships (1198 the previous year) from 1090 students (1079 year). Important to note is that memberships bought through the University's Reach or Get Involved bursary schemes (Get Involved being for Level 4 students and Reach for Level 6 students) accounted for 48% of our overall memberships (68% last year when Reach & Get Involved covered Level 4, Level 5, and Level 6) with 16/38 clubs having over 50% of their memberships bought this way (33/38 last year).

BUCS (British Universities and Colleges) Competitions

By July 2024, we were placed in 60th position (out of 155 institutions) in the BUCS points rankings with 652.5 points. Wheelchair Basketball contributed 79 BUCS Points with a second successive BUCS National Championship title with a convincing 74-34 win over Nottingham at BUCS Big Wednesday.

There were league titles for Football Men's 1 (Midlands 3A), Hockey Women's 1 (Midlands 3A), and Tennis Men's 1 (Midlands 3A) who all achieved promotion to Midlands Tier 2. Rugby Women's 1 also secured the Midlands 1A league title to qualify for the Premier (North) Playoff, narrowly missing out on promotion following a loss to Liverpool Women's 1. In knockout competitions, Hockey Men's 1 qualified for the Midlands Conference Trophy final, coming up short against Nottingham Men's 7 to take home runners-up medals.

The Indoor Cricket teams saw national success this season to put Worcester on the map, with both Indoor Cricket Men's 1 and Indoor Cricket Women's 1 achieving clean sweep league victories in the Midlands A divisions, before qualifying for the National Championship Super 8's Finals. Indoor Cricket Men's 1 qualified for the National Championship final, coming home with silver medals after a defeat by Durham Men's 1. Indoor Cricket Women's 1 lost out to Durham Women's 1 in the National Championship semi-final, before avenging a group stage loss against Loughborough Women's 1 with a 3rd/4th place playoff victory against the same opposition to bring home National Championship bronze medals.

The BUCS Cricket success continued into the Outdoor Cricket season, where Men's 1 went undefeated to claim the Midlands 2B title and earn back-to-back promotions as they progress into Midlands 1A. Women's 1 also went undefeated as they claimed the Western 1A league title, qualifying for the Premier (South) Playoff. The squad came up just short against Bristol/UWE Women's 1, missing out on promotion and remain in Western 1A.

UW Sport continued to support 10 teams through the Performance Teams programme throughout 2023-24, removing development squads Basketball Men's 2 and Netball 2 from the programme. This support significantly contributed to the successes of Wheelchair Basketball, Football Men's 1, Rugby Women's 1, Cricket Men's 1, and Cricket Women's 1.

Netball 1 narrowly missed out on promotion to Premier (North) 2 following the implementation of the new division (based on 2021-24 BUCS Points tallies), so will remain in Midlands 1A. There were relegations for Basketball Men's 1 as they dropped to Midlands 1A after a tough season in Premier (North), while Basketball Women's 1 dropped to Midlands Tier 2 after a tricky year in Midlands 1A (despite making it to the National Trophy semi-final). Rugby Men's 1 narrowly missed out on back-to-back promotions with a 2nd place finish in Midlands 2A, while a strong season for Football Women's 1 saw them in contention for the league title before a 4th place finish in a competitive Midlands 2B league.

In addition to the BUCS Leagues & Knockouts, we were represented at numerous BUCS Events, sending student athletes to the Archery Indoor Regionals & Outdoor Championships, Athletics Indoor & Outdoor Championships, Badminton Nationals, Equestrian Regionals & National Finals, Karate Championships, Swimming Short Course & Long Course Championships, Trampolining Championships, Triathlon Championships, and Weightlifting & Powerlifting Championships.

Individual success came in Equestrian where Evie Hall was selected as an individual qualifier to ride in the Midlands Regionals, qualifying for the National Championship Finals where she finished 34th of 41 riders. In the Weightlifting & Powerlifting Championships, despite no SU Club existing in this sport, Hollie Biggerstaff represented Worcester and took home a National Championship Gold Medal.

This season has also seen significant individual engagement in English Universities' Sport trials and squads. A total of 21 students attended EUS trials in Basketball (Men's), Basketball (Women's), Football (Men's), Hockey (Men's), Hockey (Women's), Netball, Rugby 7s (Men's), and Rugby 7s (Women's). Seven students were selected to their respective EUS squads: Daniel Richards (Men's Hockey), Cassidy Jorritsma (Women's Hockey), Ciara Shackleton (Netball), Deneya Rowe, Eleanor Bonnett, Elin Beaver, and Xanthe Lord (all Women's Rugby 7s), while Louisa Walker (Netball) was named EUS Netball Head Coach.

Other competitive sport

We have also had great achievements amongst some of our non-BUCS clubs this year. All three clubs shortlisted for this year's Club of the Year at our Teamworc Awards were part of this group, and were nominated due to their development, the range of events they held, and because they embody what it is to be part of TeamWorc.

Aerial Fitness, who went on to win Club of the Year, organised their first-ever member showcase in The Hangar which drew members, friends, and family to watch them perform. They hosted a range of other activities and events throughout the year, such as candle and glass painting, a boxing session in aid of International Women's Day, a Halloween ball, and a Take Me Out night in The Hangar.

Cheerleading saw a 67% increase in membership and so created an additional Pom team, as well as an extra recreational session for non-competition members to try new skills. Despite not competing at Varsity this year, they still turned up in large numbers and were the literal cheerleaders of Varsity, also puttingon a brilliant showcase at the Worcester Wednesday events.

Dance also expanded this year by creating a Lyrical team. They had a record-breaking competition season, with every style winning a trophy. The club won 24 trophies in total- many of which were gold! The choreography is created by the Dance captains who are all volunteers and go above and beyond to teach their members the routine, lead rehearsals, and run class sessions for their non-competition members so that everyone gets the opportunity to dance.

Societies

By the end of the year, a total of 847 society memberships had been bought by 698 students. Of these, 50% were purchased through the University bursaries of Reach (111) and Get Involved (310) and 14 societies had 50% or more of their memberships bought this way.

We finished the year with 35 societies. We saw 10 new societies form this year in the Oriental Society, Professional Policing, Gaming, MedSoc, PENSA Worcester, RockSoc, Worcester SSAGO, Physiotherapy, Surgical Society and Physicians Associates.

Student Group Events

Our clubs and societies held a range of fantastic events across 2023/24, including CPD events, big event collaborations, and fundraisers (either for their student group or for charity).

Some of the CPD activities hosted by our academic societies, with a variety of guest speakers were:
- Education Enhancement - Paediatric First Aid Training and Mental health First Aid Training
- Paramedic Society - Becoming a Newly Qualified Paramedic and what to expect in interviews and inductions (talk)
- MedSoc - Public Health Lecture on why women face more knee injuries in sport
- Midwifery Society - International Day of the Midwife event

Student groups organised fabulous events, which really embody what #Teamworc is, such as:
- A Spooky Prom in October and a Take Me Out Night in The Hangar by Ariel Fitness, who were later awarded Charity Fundraising Student Group of the Year at the TeamWorc Awards.
- Uni Boob Team's Boobie Bingo Night in October for Breast cancer awareness (raising £359).
- Men's Cricket and Men's Football charity match for Movember.
- Dance hosted their (now annual) Strictly event as part of the RAG Week in November
- 'We're a committee...get us out of here' returned with more teams than ever before, raising £394.96.
- Poetry hosted a 24-hr read-a-thon for Colchester and Ipswich Hospital Charity, raising £710.
- Paramedic society and RAG - a 24-hr CPR-a-thon for West Midlands Air Ambulance, Cardiac Risk in the Young and to fund Student campaign for a defibs to be installed in the local area, raising £1,019.
- Men's and Women's Rugby collaborated to host a charity car wash for MacMillan (raising £180)
- ACS, Nigerian Society & Uni Boob Team collaborated on a Sip and Paint evening
- Christian Union and Music co-hosted Christmas carols
- Gaming Society, Dungeons and Dragons & Anime and Manga hosted a joint gaming night for RAG British Sign Language Society and Social Sports hosted a wheelchair basketball competition for Stand up 2 Cancer.
- Aerial Fitness, social sports and volleyball also came together to host a trip to Alton Towers.

Teamworc Points

A total of 22 student groups achieved TeamWorc Points accreditation throughout the year; 13 Sports Clubs and 9 Societies. Only the Paramedics Society achieved the Gold threshold (400 points), with an impressive 500 points, while Aerial Fitness, Cheerleading, Uni Boob Team, and Dance hit the 250-point Silver threshold. There were 17 student groups who reached the Bronze threshold (125 points)- Poetry, Netball, Women's Cricket, Nigerian Society, Men's Rugby, Archery, Women's Rugby, Women's Football, Anime & Manga, MedSoc, Gaming, Social Sports, Women's Hockey, Christian Union, Men's Cricket, Men's Football, and Book Club. Groups receive benefits for each level, including social media takeovers and photoshoots.

Give it A Go Week

The Vice President Student Activities encouraged student groups to facilitate events in January to encourage returning and new students to take part in extracurricular activities during their time at university, including clubs, societies, Networks, RAG (Raise and Give), and Volunteering. A total of 15 student groups took part and filming through the week was used as an episode of our #TeamWorc TV TeamWorc TV Episode One: Give it a Go Week (youtube.com)

Women's Gym Pathway

In 2022-23, the Vice President Student Activities (VPSA) worked with the Women's Network and the Sport Facilities team to establish a weekly Women's pathway session in the University gym. This was to enable self-identifying women to train in the gym without fear of intimidation, sexual harassment and the male gaze, which contributes to gym anxiety. The scheme continued in 2023/24 every Thursday. A total 26 women booked on to the 8-week course with 20 attending the first session. The programme saw some drop off from week to week but retained good numbers throughout the 8-week programme. The VPSA went along to one of the sessions where attendees shared their experience: Video | Facebook

Varsity 2024

We saw our annual Varsity against Gloucestershire back again, with 17 points on offer over 3 days of fixtures. A format change saw a much more compact schedule take place at only University-owned facilities, limiting spend on external venues due to financial constraints, limiting impact on academic schedules and SU staff resources, as well as keeping ticket prices for students as low as possible. Some of the clubs and students whose sport was no longer included in the line-up were naturally very disappointed but we did our best to explain the reasons and provide alternative ways for them to compete.

TeamWorc went to battle against TeamGlos in American Football, Badminton (Men's), Badminton (Women's), Basketball (Men's), Dance, Football (Men's), Football (Women's), Futsal (Women's), Hockey (Men's), Hockey (Women's), Netball, Rugby (Men's), Rugby (Women's), Tennis (Men's), Trampolining, Volleyball (Men's), and Volleyball (Women's). There were also showcase performances for Cheerleading (Pom) at the Football fixtures, and for Cheerleading (Stunt) at the Worcester Arena Evening session, as Glos Cheer were unable to compete.

Over the event, we engaged over 500 athletes from both institutions, with 972 tickets being sold by TeamWorc and just over 400 by TeamGlos. Highlights of an incredible three days include a dominant 6-0 clean sweep for TeamWorc at Oxstalls Arena Day, where Women's Hockey (4-0) and Men's Hockey (6-1) were dominant, and Men's Basketball then ended the day with a 94-65 win. After nail-biting wins for Women's Rugby (53-38) and Men's Rugby (25-22) at Oxstalls 4G Pitch Day, the score was 8-1 heading into a busy day of fixtures at Worcester St John's Campus and University of Worcester Arena, with just 9 points needed to clinch the Varsity title.

Early losses in Men's Volleyball (1-3) and Men's Badminton (0-8) saw TeamGlos claw back to 8-3, before a hard-fought 4-4 draw for Women's Badminton saw TeamWorc take the point on countback of games, with the overall 9-3 lead clinching a second successive Varsity title for TeamWorc and ensuring that the trophy would remain in Worcester. The TeamWorc squads did not take their foot off the gas, with a win in Women's Volleyball (3-0) followed by goals galore in front of a great crowd at St John's Campus 3G Pitch where Women's and Men' Football enjoying victories of 5-0 and 5-2 respectively. The Worcester Arena Evening session saw TeamGlos take the point in a closely contested Dance fixture, before Netball were unstoppable with a 57-18 win to end Varsity on a high with a 13-4 overall score. The capacity crowd roared as the trophy to 2023-24 Vice President Student Activities Isobel Price!

Varsity remains a huge highlight for a diverse range of Worcester students and we continued to use the event to raise awareness of issues and good causes. Varsity captains from both Union collaborated to produce their own #ShapeYourSport campaigns as part of the Vice Presidents' joint campaign centred around 'athlete activism'. We saw the clubs come together to raise money and promote awareness of Women in Sport (Netball), International Human Rights (Volleyball), Cancer Research UK (Men's Football), Belonging in Sport (Dance), and many other great campaigns which we nominated for a BUCS (British Universities and Colleges Sport) Digital Engagement Award. It was great to see students working together to jointly campaign on what they agreed was important to them and it certainly contributed to a very positive atmosphere throughout the competition.

We were extremely grateful to many University colleagues, particularly those in the Arena, Sport, and Estates and Facilities, for their support in enabling us to host more fixtures on campus and to ensure a vibrant few days for us all. Looking forward to Varsity 2025, more difficult decisions will need to be made to ensure the event remains as cost effective as possible for both Unions and for students.

RAG (Raise and Give)

Despite the ongoing cost of living pressures for students, our members still managed to raise a total of £15,631.77 for good causes across the year. Of this, £2,9861.21 went to the Union's nominated charity for the year (voted for by students) Behind the Smile. As well as those activities listed under Student Group Events section above:

• Midwifery society hosted a raffle during course induction for Becoming Families and Born Sleeping and raised £474.
• A group of Criminology students took initiative to run their own bake sale fundraiser for the Emergency Services Aid, raising £277.
• In March, for International Women's Day the Women's Network planned an Empowerment Week with various fundraisers for West Mercia Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Clinic, raising £212.
• Women's Cricket raised £738 across the year for the Teenage Cancer Trust, through the 2900 Squat challenge, a Malvern Hills Hike and a Quiz Takeover.
• Men's Cricket ran a charity match for Red for Ruth and raised £1,235.38.
• For Movember, in total £2,055.87 was raised across various events, some stand outs were the Men's Cricket and Men's Football Charity Football Match and Cheerleading's Bring a Boy session.

VOLUNTEERING

A total of this year 6924.75 volunteering hours were logged on the V-record by students across 2023/24, that is an 11.68% increase from 2022/23. We saw 5070.25 hours recorded by club and society members, 1602.75 hours by students completing community projects, 194.5 hours by course reps, 13 hours logged for student council and 35.5 hours logged by SU crew. There was over a 50% increase for three different activity types this year; community projects, course reps and SU crew. Each year we are also aware that, despite our ongoing encouragement, many students do not log their hours and so the real amount is likely to be much higher than this. We have also seen a significant amount of our students volunteer with The Hive, which has been a fantastic partnership, with great results.

We also worked with all our providers to ensure that their accounts and opportunities were up to date and to streamline our brokerage platform to be more accessible for students and stakeholders.

Awards

We were very proud of the RAG Team and the Paramedic Society for being shortlisted for the Collaboration of the Year award by the National Student Fundraising Association, With Lucy Fishwick the assistant Team Leader for the RAG Team also being shortlisted for the Above and Beyond award. At the time of writing, we were waiting for the outcome as the Awards due to the awards being postponed.

We also entered our Varsity Campaign, 'Shape Your Sport' into the Digital Engagement Award category at the BUCS annual awards as it saw fantastic collaboration to raise awareness of a number of good causes by students across the two institutions but it was, unfortunately, not shortlisted.

SAFETY AND WELLBEING IN THE HANGAR

The Hangar team of core and student staff work very hard to exceed our responsibilities as a venue used by students, staff, and members of the local community. Every year The Hangar renews its Best Bar None (BBN) accreditation, as part of our membership of the NUS Charity purchasing consortium. BBN is a national scheme that recognises and rewards responsible and safe premises that prioritise customer experience and wellbeing and contribute positively to the night-time economy.

This year saw our best year ever and whilst we maintained our Gold BBN accreditation for the 7th consecutive year, we also achieved the following accolades at the NUS National Trade Awards held in July 2024, attended by scores of Unions:

- Came 2nd place nationally for SUs for our BBN score;
- Won the Impactful Collaboration Award (for our work with the International Experience Team in hosting a diverse range of cultural events for students)
- Won the Student Input and Feedback Award (for the work of one of our Bar Team Leaders, Ella Page, in creating a new cocktail menu)
- Won the Customer Safety and Comfort Award (for the team's commitment to creating a safe and welcoming environment).

This meant we won all 3 categories in which we were nominated; an astounding achievement which was then picked up by the local press.

In terms of the commercial performance of the Hangar, sales during Welcome Week 2023/24 were below those of 2022/23, although the events we hosted proved very popular with students. The trend of students not drinking alcohol, and spending much less in the bar then continued into the academic year. Cumulative sales by the end of October matched the prior year and continued until May at which point sales began to decline. Throughout the year sales were highest on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, the weekly quiz proving very popular, with Friday still good but considerably lower than previous years.

As detailed in sections 4 and 5 below, we had numerous student-led events, and it was a very good year for student participation, even if this was not reflected in sales. Many of the cultural events we hosted also, by their nature, did not create bar sales but formed a very important part of the work of the SU as a place for students to come and feel at home.

Overall bar takings were £133.1k compared to £139.1k in 2022/23. External events began to show signs of improvement following the COVID drop-off. As most of our students continued to return home at the weekends, we actively promoted the Hangar as a venue on Saturday nights for community hire. Throughout the summer the venue was the evening venue for the University Summer School (MLA) activities. The pool tables within the bar again proved very popular and is now an important new revenue stream, whilst the offer of free table tennis, darts and X-Box saw more students utilising the space during the afternoons.

With revenue declining the focus on saving costs was a major factor throughout 2023/24. During early 2024 an exercise was undertaken to analyse revenue by hour to see if a change to our opening hours would be beneficial. The decision taken was to open an hour later and close an hour earlier (unless it was busy) as the cost of opening for these hours was on average more than the revenue being taken. We did not receive any negative feedback following this change and further changes may be considered in 2024/25 if nightly takings do not improve.

The bar and Hangar space are in need of investment but a lack of funds means this is not currently possible. We have been working with our external suppliers to improve the number of TVs within the space. We will have new screens installed in Summer '24, plus existing screens updated at the cost of the supplier.

We remain limited in terms of our ability to innovate and extend our offer due to the space we occupy and other factors such as the University's catering contract. We continue to discuss our challenges with the University at quarterly finance meetings. As a place for students to meet and enjoy themselves, the Hangar had a successful year. We have catered to the changing student demographic as best we can and we remain buoyed by levels of student engagement.

We continue to maintain sponsorship contracts with Tramps Nightclub and Dominoes as key partners, although these have not recovered to pre-Covid levels in terms of overall value. Our media pack offers competitive rates to advertisers (which don't breach our existing contracts) and we are linked in with the national NUS trading consortium to achieve good value wherever possible.

2. UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS' FINANCIAL REALITIES AND REFLECTING THAT IN WHAT WE DO

Key aims underneath this:

(i) We will keep the cost to students of getting involved with our activities and services to a minimum wherever and however we can
(ii) We will support students in their efforts towards employability and make it clear how getting involved with the SU develops them as people and as leaders
(iii) We will work with the University to ensure value for money across their services and facilities

COST OF LIVING SUPPORT

Community Cupboard

The cost of living remained a significant concern for the Officer team for 2023/24 and they were keen to continue offering the Community Cupboard scheme and Breakfast clubs that commenced in 2022/23. In Semester 1, we noticed an increasing demand as the weeks went by and some days the cupboard needed restocking several times. This was in tandem with reducing donations, which presented a challenge (September only received £8 worth of donations). December, however, saw this pick up following a drive for supplies across the University and in the local community, in partnership with the Local Foodbank. Supplies were then split 50:50.

Over the year, we received a total of 1,308 donations, which equated to £1,223.44 (£762 by the end of the first Semester). We were delighted that the outgoing PVC (Students) forewent a leaving gift and instead asked staff to contribute to the Community Cupboard. This raised £300 in April 2024, most of which has been saved for supplies for Semester 1 on 2024/25. The Union has also applied to the National Lottery Community Fund to support the initiative for a further two years but, at the time of writing, we await news on the application.

Breakfast Club was relaunched in November 2023, and 3 sessions were hosted prior to the Christmas break at City Campus, the Medical School, and inside the Union. Despite our plans, more breakfast club sessions could not take place in Semester 2, largely due to the President needing to take on more duties around Academic Representation following the departure of the Vie President Education. The sessions were a great way to talk to students so we are very keen to revitalise the initiative in 24/25.

International Students' Hardship Fund

One of the President's key manifesto aims was to work with the University to implement the above, following research they conducted that revealed most Universities provided some form of hardship fund for international students. The current Access to Learning Fund (ALF) applies to home students solely and we have seen increasing numbers of international students at Worcester in recent years. Some of these students, in reality, face hardship and financial difficulties during their course of study. Following several meetings, including liaison with the Director of International Recruitment and the PVC (Communications and External Affairs), a paper was presented to University Executive Board and approved, with a new scheme to be implemented in the 2024/25 academic year.

Sport Recycling Kit Programme

The Vice President Student Activities was passionate this year that no student should be unable to take part in physical activity and sport due to a lack of equipment or appropriate clothing. There was an increase in uptake across the year in recreational sport sessions, which was really positive but we heard reports of students taking part with the wrong footwear, for example. To help tackle this and with the support of colleagues from University Sport, she established a new recycling programme for sports kit that could be donated by any student, staff or the local community. This is being delivered from the Sport Centre and we are hoping the scheme will continue to grow.

Period Dignity

Amended from the period 'poverty' campaign of the previous year to better reflect the aim of the campaign, the Union continued its partnership with a sustainable feminine hygiene company, 'Hey Girls', to distribute sustainable, quality, free products to both students and the wider community, as 'a community partner'. We linked in with Worcester Cathedral and the Hive, and even sent packages to 3 individuals in the community following referrals from Hey Girls.

In addition to making products available in bathrooms and our 'Caught Short Bags' (emergency packages of single-use products), we trialled a Period Dignity Order scheme. This allowed students to order personalised packages of products, with a focus on the reusable products including period pants, reusable pads, and cups. We received 102 orders and distributed 230 packs of pads/liners and 190 packets of tampons throughout the year. Student feedback show they remain very grateful for this service.

PRICE BENCHMARKING, RESEARCH AND STUDENT CONSULTATION

The Union is committed in its strategic aims to providing good value for our students. To this end, The Hangar conducted a benchmarking exercise with 5 of our main bar competitors in the local area (including Wetherspoons). Of course, not all venues sold exactly the same products, so we compared products that had a similar specification. The findings revealed thar the Hangar was cheaper than most other outlets for the vast majority of our products, including soft drinks. The Wetherspoons' buying model (of bulk-buying kegs that are nearing the end of their 'shelf-life') meant that they sell cheaper draughts and one pub had a short-term offer of £2 pints, which we would not move to (and assume this was to deplete stock).

We have consulted with students throughout the year on our events and ideas. This included the Winter Ball, a potential Summer Ball and how we priced and located that (eventually we had to cancel plans due to a lack of student interest), our loyalty card concept (to be implemented in September 2024), and one of our bar team, Ella, won the Student Feedback and Input Award at the end of year NUS Trade Awards for her input into our cocktail menu.

Loyalty Card
To support the affordability for students of using our venue and to support commercial engagement, we spent the academic year researching and planning an SU Loyalty Card for implementation in September 2024. Part of this was partaking in some external research (at a discounted rate with other Unions) conducted by Alterline into students' commercial and buying habits. The card will ensure a joined-up approach with the other areas and activities of the Union and ongoing student input.

STUDENT EMPLOYABILTY AND DEVELOPMENT

The Union continued to invest time into training students for various roles, as well as to directly employ students as Assistants for Graphic Design, the Welcome Desk, The Hangar Bar, and Security. Numbers attending training across the year for paid and voluntary student roles were as follows:

o Sports and Societies' committee training conference - 158 attendees (106 Sports Clubs & 52 Societies)
o Student Network committee training - 6 out of 12 committee members attended training
o New student staff training -10
o Department Rep training - 22 out of 22 Reps
o Course Rep training - 100% of our 339 Course Reps downloaded their training module and we are confident that most of those students completed it, although some stated they had not.
o Elections -30-minute bookable slots were offered to prospective candidates. In total, 9 students attended, 7 of whom went on to run in the elections.

Over the year, a total of 21 students were employed with us, 6 of whom continued with us from the previous year) supporting The Hangar, our Welcome Desk, and marketing functions, working a total of 5730 hours and earning just under £70,000. We increased student staff pay in year in line with the government rises in the Living Wage, and we do not operate any age differential between pay. We also had 2 student Green Impact Project Assistants over the year who were paid by the University but who supported us with our sustainability efforts. A total of 15 student staff were recognised over the year for excellent work for the Union. Over the year we received 112 applications for student staff roles and the 'Work for Us' page on our website had 1.956 views from 1st September 2023 to 31st July 2024.

The Union continues to support students through the job application process, with a new Employability and Careers section introduced on our website, https://www.worcsu.com/helpandadvice/employability/ hosting our revised Employability Guide.

Our Elections candidates were debriefed post elections on the transferable skills they had gained, and the employability skills symbols used in our new Guide were added to online training modules for sports and society committee training so they could see how they aligned to their new roles and responsibilities. The Student Voice Conference also had a session on the Guide and drop-in sessions were made available.

Our student-friendly Employability Guide can be found here:
https://www.worcsu.com/pageassets/helpandadvice/employability/WSU_Employability_Guide_2023.pdf.

3. EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO HAVE THEIR SAY

Key aims:
(i) We will support students to engage in things that affect them and wider society
(ii) We will go out to where students are and not wait for them to come to us, being present and listening to their experiences
(iii) We will emphasise our independence from the University, ensuring we challenge them based on our students' feedback and experiences, whilst continually demonstrating to students how and where we will represent them.

OUTREACH

It is more important than ever for the Union to represent all students and to be visible across the University estate. This isn't always easy to manage and we have more work to do on this in 2024/25 but over the course of Semester 1 we delivered:
o Officer inductions to 46 during Induction week
o 7 Campus Chats
o 3 Officer Breakfast Clubs
o 53% of visits were to Lakeside, Riverside, Severn, and City Campuses (including Jenny Lind) and 47% to different locations on St John's campus.
o Topics included Academic Representation, RAG, Sports and Society promotion, Volunteering, Housing, Academic Misconduct, cost of living.
o Help and Advice introduced drop-ins and flexible appointments (late and early), appointments at City Campus, as well as co-ordinating 'multi-meets' with University welfare services to share information, and they also secured quiet spaces for students on campus to call student services/the Union if they were in need.

Semester 2 was as follows:
o 30 hours of outreach by the Help and Advice Service
o 36 Presentations to different cohorts about the Help and Advice Service and other opportunities in the SU
o 9 Campus Chats/pop ups
o 9 shared outreach sessions with external support services
o 6 shared outreach sessions with University services

FEEDBACK AND INTELLIGENCE

The Union is committed to being proactive in finding out what is worrying or concerning students, without burdening them. To this end, it gathers feedback and intelligence from across its services, activities and interactions with members centrally, to inform evidence-based campaigns and initiatives.

Our analysis of this work revealed the following:
- Most feedback was logged in January and February
- 33% of feedback received related to academic or education matters
- A quarter of feedback related to the Union itself
- Both housing and finance matters accounted for 13% of the total feedback
- 8% of feedback was around University services and 4% about safety matters.
- 63% of the matters logged impacted the whole University community
- 8% impacted international students and another 8% those from under-represented groups

As a result of the above:

- Help & Advice worked with University staff to clarify the Academic Integrity process for students.
- The Union worked closely with the International Experience and Accommodation Teams to support international students arriving on campus into their accommodation with enhanced inductions.

- From Semester 2, presentations were offered out to all Heads of Schools to ensure student and academics were aware of the Union and the services/opportunities open to them, particularly Help and Advice. This proved very popular and delivered to 36 cohorts.
- The Union supported Course and Department Reps in gathering and presenting student feedback to the University during discussions surrounding the removal of Progress Week
- The Help & Advice Services' priority campaign for 2024/25 will be on safety, particularly around scams targeted at students and international students including work scams (commission-based selling) and essay mills. The Help and Advice services are also running a Safety Fair in October 2024 for a second year and will run an information campaign on the Mitigating Circumstances process.
- Voter apathy will be included in 2024/25 Elections planning
- Even more focus on outreach in 2024/25.

ACADEMIC REPRESENTATION (AR)
Throughout 2023/24 the Union continued to work closely with the University, through the joint Academic Representation Oversight Group (AROG) to deliver the AR scheme and to monitor outcomes Reps engaged well throughout the year, and we had an impressive 105 Course Rep Journals submitted, detailing their work and impacts; a huge increase of 98% on the previous year (53). A snapshot of matters addressed by Reps include:
- car parking concerns on city campus;
- better alignment of learning materials across joint honours disciplines;
- better social space in the café at City campus with books and games, as well as extending evening hours and a more inviting café environment within the Worcester Business School.

Across the year, we had 22 out of 25 Department Rep positions filled, with all appointees undergoing training. Of the 22 Department Reps, 8 were placement students (36%), which highlights strong engagement from vocational courses. Reps engaged fantastically in discussions at councils and various forums and demonstrated an impressive dedication to the role. Despite repeated recruitment efforts, Department Rep positions for Midwifery and CPD, Geography and the Environment, and Psychology PG Taught remained vacant and will be prioritised in 2024/25.

We continued to celebrate the hard work of Course and Department Reps through the 'Rep of the Month' scheme, with some months having several winners due to the high calibre of nominations. In total we awarded Rep of the Month to 21 outstanding Course and Department Reps across all schools, with the students receiving certificates, social media coverage, and £5 Amazon vouchers. Course and Department Reps of the Year were then presented at the annual Teamworc Awards in May.

Through the Rep Accreditation Scheme, 21 reps received Bronze, Silver or Gold Accreditation. Over double the number of Reps received Gold compared to the previous year, again demonstrating their commitment to the role. Awards were presented at a Rep Celebration Event which concluded the Student Voice Conference in April.
Student Voice Conference

The SU held a Student Voice Conference at the end of April, consisting of a series of talks, workshops and bite-size learning opportunities facilitated by SU and University staff, as well as an external speaker, as follows:

- Let's talk leadership
- Employability & Generative A.I.
- Networking, Sustainability & Employability (Including CV/LinkedIn checks and free headshots)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in HEI's - external speaker

We received 65 RSVPs for the conference with approximately 45 students attending and engaging throughout the day, which ended with a lovely Rep celebration in The Hangar.

Rep Forums

These continued as an important way for students and staff to come together, discuss specific topics, and agree actions. A slightly different approach was taken in Semester 1, with Course and Department Reps having overlapping sessions across one day, with the following discussed:
- Library drop off at St John's
- The appropriateness of rooms and spaces for some courses
- Parking issues and permit availability
- Timetabling issues
- Blackboard
- Group work and group marking

Semester 2 then saw another different approach to vary how we engage students, and 9 school-based Forums took place across one week. An additional catch up for the two newly recruited Medical School Course Reps was then held, meaning all 10 schools were engaged. Where possible, Academic Representation Co-ordinators (ARCs) from each school or institute attended as did the Provost. Overall, 51 attendees across 9 forums. We had received 163 RSVP responses for these forums (90 of which were 'Yes' RSVPs), showing many more Reps engaged with our communications but were perhaps unable to attend on the day.

Key matters discussed included effective communication and the use of technology within the AR system, prayer spaces on different campuses, Rep training, maintaining effective boundaries (particularly when Reps are approached regarding non-academic matters), and March in-takes.

Rep Testimonials

Reps have told us the following this year about their experiences:

"Being course rep has been absolutely brilliant and I'm so glad I stepped up to do it. It not only let me take leadership of my group but allowed me to form a closer bond with my peers and form great friendships with them.... Stand up and speak up for your peers and yourselves. It's an amazing opportunity, and you'd be surprised at what you can achieve."

"The role of course representative has provided me with employability skills that have improved my study and career prospects for the future; I am now off to do a Masters wahay! The student to module leader communication developed my skills massively as a learner and a leader; improving my abilities to be empathetic and understanding towards my peers in their final year. The Student Union and other student representatives have been really supportive, being easily contactable if at any point further information was needed. I highly recommend anyone thinking about putting themselves forward for the role to go for it!"

"The SU has given me opportunities to grow throughout my university experience. I have been course and department rep and working with the SU has been a pleasure. I've personally seen the hard work and dedication they put into helping students. I'll always remember the help the SU have done for me."

"Being a student rep... has been amazing for my confidence and professional development."

Satisfaction with the Academic Representation System

A key measure for us is, naturally, satisfaction with the Academic Representation (AR) system amongst the student body. We were pleased with the results from the key surveys that take place annually, helping us to understand students' views on how their academic interests are represented by the Union.

The National Student Survey (NSS) and University Course Experience Survey (CES) results for this academic year were as follows:

National Student Survey (NSS):

Q25 How well does the Student's Union represent students' academic interests?
Overall University: 76.5% (sector average 73%, our score in 2023 was 75%)

The Union is positioned 37th out of 147 Unions nationally in the Universities' compiled NSS rankings (for Q25- 37th/148 in 2023, and for the previous Q26 - 18th/149 in 2022, 19th/149 in 2021 and 2020, 36th/152 in 2019 and 61st/151 in 2018).

Course Experience Survey (CES):

Overall satisfaction with Academic Representation System - **85%**

Q.5.3 - I know who my Course Rep is:
Overall University: 82% (-2% from 2022/23)

Q 5.4 - Course Reps represent the interests of students on my course effectively:
Overall University: **84%** (+4% on 2022/23)

Q14 - How well does the Students' Union represent academic interests:
Overall University: **84%** (+4% on 2022/23)

Pizza with a PVC
Following student feedback at the All Student Meeting in February 2023, that they would like increased visibility of the University's senior leadership team, the Union worked with the PVC (Students), Dr Tim Jones to establish Pizza with a PVC. Students could come along and ask questions, whilst grab a quick slice of the ever-favourite food. There were then a further session with the PVC (Academics), Lisa Stansbie and Sally Moyle. Whilst the numbers of students attending these meets was relatively small, some key topics were discussed and action promised, such as parking, international hardship, catering, and building a community feel on campus.

STUDENT COUNCIL

Student Council, the highest student body in our democratic structure, had another busy and productive year, with some good debate. We filled 77% of the available positions (20 out of 26). This was 86% the year before. Some councillors again struggled with time and other commitments and were unable attend meetings and so by the end of the year, 2 of the 4 meetings had reached quoracy. We will be looking to rearrange the times of the meetings going forward.

Student Council had standing agenda items for each meeting as follows:
• Officer annual objectives and reports
• Update from Sub Councils - Welfare and Inclusion, Education, and what became known as Student Activities (formerly Teamworc) Councils
• Updates from Executive Committee and Trustee Board
• Update from AROG (Academic Representation Oversight Group)
• Live Policies and Ideas
• Current Student Issues
• Menu Diversity and campus catering was added from October 2023 as a standing item on the agenda due to the volume of student comments and concerns raised about this.

In addition to the above, key areas of discussion over the course of the year were around:
• Facilities and support for students on City and Jenny Lind
• Multi faith rooms across the campuses
• Student mental health
• Issues with transport for students on nursing placement during the train strikes
• Issues with Reasonable Adjustment Plans (RAPs) not being actioned for students

• Availability of free period products across campus
• Language clubs for international students to help them understand slang, idioms, and informal English
• The Union's Leadership Elections and All Student Meeting
• Channels for students to report racism or discrimination
• NUS Conference and Liberation Conference
• Honorary Life Memberships
• Supporting the Gypsies, Travellers, Roma, Showman & Boaters (GTRSB) Pledge
• 10 motions went to the Council, 8 of which were passed, some with amendments:
o Separate All Gender and Disabled Toilets - to work with the University
o Incorrect Terminology - to work with the University to create a guide for academics and staff on appropriate terminology
o Email name change - to work with University IT and Registry to ensure students can easily change their email address if they change their names.
o Teamworc Council name change - became Student Activities Council to reflect the Union's Officer structure
o Increase the number of academic representatives on Student Council - from 2 (one per college) to 10 (one per School/Institute)
o Continuing Recording Lectures - to work with the University to ensure implementation. This was to reflect students' studying needs and desire to revisit lectures and discussions within, as well as being linked to issues with Reasonable Adjustment Plans (RAPs) not always being considered properly.
o Race Equality Week - to mandate the Union to recognise the week and ensure the University were involved.
o Accommodation references for international students - to work with the University to seek appropriate guarantor arrangements for private rentals. This was amended to include home students who are estranged or who have no access to a guarantor but who have stayed in University accommodation.

The 2 policies that were not passed were:

• To commit the Union to providing mandatory basic life support and first aid training for committee members. It was agreed this could not be mandatory and would be costly for the Union but was felt to be a positive skill for all students. The Union agreed to investigate the feasibility of such training for the academic year 2024/25, in collaboration with the University.
• To mandate the Union to protect Progress Week in the University calendar and ensure no future change to arrangements around Progress Weeks without student consultation. This policy was submitted to a meeting which was not quorate, and the subsequent email resolution also did not reach quoracy.

The Union is reviewing what is termed 'Policy' versus actions and tasks for the 2024/25 academic year as it was felt by management that some of the policies passed across the 2023/24 year were not technically policies but more 'asks' from students and actions for Officers to follow up.

SUB COUNCILS OF STUDENT COUNCIL

Education Council

This year, Education Councillors were consulted on a range of topics and debated a number of policies through the sub-council, including:
• Policy submissions:
o Student choice for examinations
o Continuing Recording Lectures
o Increase to Academic Representation membership on Student Council
o Progress Week Protection Policy
• Discussion topics: Personal Academic Tutors (PATs), Reasonable Adjustment Plans (RAPs), Timetabling
• Artificial Intelligence Workshop delivered by Helen Hope, Deputy Head of School, Sport & Exercise Science

The average attendance rate across all four Education Council meetings was 48%, with meetings often failing to meet quorum. Consequently, a key priority for the Students' Union next year will be to emphasize the importance of these meetings and encourage higher attendance rates.

Welfare and Inclusion Council

Matters covered by this Sub-Council across 2023/24:

• Policy submissions:
o All Gender/ Disabled Toilet Separation Policy
o Incorrect Terminology Policy
o Email name change
o Race Equality Week Policy
o Action for Accessibility
o Guarantor for International students Policy
o Inclusive period policy
• Discussion topics: Sustainability, Hangar/SU Spaces, and accessible Elections.
• EDI Forum with senior Police and local Hate Crime Officers
• Artificial Intelligence Workshop delivered by Helen Hope, Deputy Head of School, Sport & Exercise Science

The average attendance was 8 councillors per meeting across all four Welfare & Inclusion Councils this year, which is approx. 66% turnout, with one meeting failing to meet quorum.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Welfare & Inclusion Council feedback on Leadership Elections

One of our core aims in our Leadership Elections this year was to seek to improve our election candidate diversity. This follows our elections in 2022-23 where:
(a) no international students run as a candidate
(b) our candidates who defined as male/female/non-binary in 2022-23 did not reflect our large proportion of female students.
(c) of the candidates we received demographic data for in 2022-23 (which was not all candidates), all defined as white students.

December's meeting of Welfare & Inclusion Council was asked a set of questions to help gain feedback from underrepresented groups on their feelings and thoughts surrounding democracy and elections. This was gathered via an anonymous polling platform to ensure participants felt comfortable to be open and honest.

The feedback was insightful and thought-provoking, with comments centring around the following barriers to engagement:

- Language barriers - understanding the terminology and speaking to other students.
- Feeling judged or lacking confidence.
- Time commitment (of running a campaign).
- Financial barrier (cost of running a campaign).
- Mistrust in the principles of a free and fair election.
- Lack of existing representation.

This feedback was subsequently incorporated in our planning processes, resulting in an enhanced and extended set of inclusivity initiatives for the Leadership Elections 2024.

Student Activities Council

Previously named TeamWorc Council, meetings were held in October, November, February and April. The first sub council meeting introduced club and society committee members to the Student Council structure and members voted in our Student Activity Reps to Student Council. Throughout the year, we gathered feedback from members on SU spaces, Celebration Week, the process of recruiting committee members, and Varsity. They also benefitted from then session delivered by Helen Hope on Artificial Intelligence workshop to attendees.

Two policy motions were submitted across the year. The first asked for the Students' Union to integrate Basic Life Support and/or First Aid training into Committee Training to help committee members to respond if a medical emergency occurred during a student group session. The policy was unanimously approved and was passed to Student Council.

The second motion looked at implementing "non-monetary societies" in which societies wouldn't require a membership fee for students to be a part of. The Vice President Student Activities explaining the reasons why student groups have memberships and (in many cases small) fees. There was much discussion amongst the sub council members and the majority of voted against the proposal, due to potential implications, so it did not progress to Student Council.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Our Executive Committee, consisting of the 3 full time officers and supported by the Union's Senior Management Team, continued to meet each month to monitor the Officers' objectives/campaigns and progress against active SU Policies, as well as to discuss student ideas (submitted via the Ideas Forum), student issues, and key projects (including those in collaboration with University). They also approved 11 new societies and 2 new clubs throughout the year. Matters attended to over the course of the year by the Committee included:

Active Policies/Student Ideas (via Ideas Forum):
- Addressing use of incorrect terminology by lecturers
- Progress of University Mental Health Policy
- 24 hours access to Elizabeth Garrett Anderson building /CCTV
- Ability for students to change their name and email across University systems
- Accessible Toilets on campus
- Module withdrawal procedures

Other emerging student matters included:
- Cost of Living
- Progress Week
- Matters raised from Pizza with the PVC
- Catering on Campus
- City Campus and Jenny Lind (facilities and atmosphere)
- International Student Hardship
- Accommodation costs (and other issues related to housing)
- Reasonable Adjustment Plans (and issues related to these for students)
- Network committee bursaries
- Placement issues for nursing issues (including transport during rail strikes)
- Artificial Intelligence (and emerging issues amongst a particular cohort)
- Researching grants to support work of SU
- Middle East Conflict
- Dudley Campus developments
- NUS affiliation and reform
- Students' Choice Awards
- General Election

UNION LEADERSHIP ELECTIONS

The Union's Leadership Elections took place in the last week of February and saw 5 students stand for the 3 positions, with the Vice President Education post uncontested (albeit students had the option to Re-Open Nominations). We initially had 8 candidates standing but 3 of them dropped out of the process, citing time and personal pressures. Anecdotally this as also the case at many other SUs nationally. We reduced the campaigning period even further this year to try and minimise pressure on the candidates and to better accommodate any students on professional courses but some felt the prospect was still too onerous or off-putting. We are still seeing issues around confidence in students, and this is something that is, again, being experienced nationally,

We were delighted to have the highest number of nominations through our 'Recommend a Friend' scheme, whereby students could be recommended by others as a potential candidate. This year we received 120 (in comparison to 73 last year, which was also record breaking) and many conversations took place with those recommended as a result. Many of them were first or second years who decided not to stand this year but seemed very keen to do so in future years.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

A total of 3,210 votes were cast by 1,162 individual voters, (compared to 3,100 votes by 1,101 students in 2023) representing 13.9% of the student population (the sector average remains between 10 and 15%). We also had increased engagement in voting from students from the School of Nursing and Midwifery, which was one of our key aims.

The elections once again enjoyed a very positive atmosphere and the following candidates were successfully elected as the Union's Executive for 2024/25:

SU President - Ruttuja Mane (School of Psychology)
Vice President Education - Elliot Atkinson (School of Humanities)
Vice President Student Activities - Jack Lambert (Worcester Business School)

The Union worked hard to increase diversity in the Leadership Elections. Of the candidates, 60% described their ethnicity as Mixed/Multiple Ethnicity, Asian (Indian) or Any Other Ethnicity (20% in 2023). The President elect is the first international student to be elected into this position for the Union (albeit we have had international student Vice Presidents in the past). All candidates were between 18 and 21, 40% of whom defined their sexual orientation as Bisexual or Gay/Lesbian and 40% considered themselves to have a specific learning disability, other disability, or long-term health condition.

We, also, consulted our Welfare and Inclusion Council on the elections process in December 2023, and their feedback was extremely useful. As a result, measures put in place to try and reduce as many barriers as possible to engagement included:

- A new International Students Guide on the Candidate Hub section of our website, to support any international students considering running with information about support, visas, and overcoming language barriers with a glossary of key terms.
- Wellbeing training as part of candidate training delivered by our Academic and Welfare Advisors.
- A dedicated candidate wellbeing space in the SU building to encourage breaks and down-time.
- A quiet campaigning hour.
- The results night taking place the day after the voting closed to give everyone space to decompress.
- Candidate wellbeing and debrief event (bowling) before the results night, which they all loved!

Following our initiatives, we featured in the NUS's SU Elections 2024 report as a case study for good practice around candidate and staff wellbeing. NUS were the Returning Officer for our Elections (and for 115 other SU elections nationally in Spring and 34 in Autumn 2023). The University's Director of Access and Inclusion was, again, our Deputy Returning Officer, for which we remain very grateful.

Looking forward to the 2025 Leadership Election, we want to:

- Build on the above initiatives and engagement of Welfare and Inclusion Council
- Explore more support for students with disabilities
- Review engagement across the Schools
- Increase the engagement of mature students

ALL STUDENT MEETING

We held our annual All Student Meeting in February, providing a review of Union activities during the 2022/23 academic year and details of our new Strategic Framework 2023-28. We also shared the Union's 2022/23 accounts and gave an overview of our affiliations.

We only had 19 students attend and so did not reach quoracy but those who attended were highly engaged and asked questions around:
• The Union's finances and bar operation
• The contract with sports kit supplier, Kukri (which is a contract the University holds)

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• Home Varsity
• Course Reps
• Teamworc Awards
• Teamworc Points
• A Varsity for societies
• Why certain student groups affiliate to religious organisations
• Multi-faith prayer space on the University campuses

ENGAGEMENT WITH LOCAL AND NATIONAL POLITICS AND IN THE WIDER HE SECTOR

The Union staff and Officers contributed to the following over the year:
- The Vice President Education wrote to MP Robin Walker and Universities Minister, Robert Halfon, regarding the rhetoric around 'rip-off degrees'. Robert Halfon sent a detailed letter in response, offering reassurance that plans to cap degrees in Arts and Humanities etc. would not have a negative impact.
- The OfS consultation on their new strategic priorities.
- OfS and NUS consultations on Freedom of Speech legislation.
- Two articles in WonkHE - Students need support to have conversations about consent | Wonkhe
And Students need to be co-pilots on the AI adventure | Wonkhe.
- The President also attended the Student Council equivalent (Accountability Panel) of another Union as an external contributor.
- The Union's Chief Executive co-ordinates and chairs a working group of senior leads from SUs nationally and BUCS (British Universities and Colleges Sport) to increase the voice of Unions and to amend the governance structure of BUCS to recognise the role many SUs play in HE Sport.
- The Union's Chief Executive and Director and Finance and Commercial were asked to join a national task and finish group organised by BUCS to look at creating a new model for calculating member affiliations/subscriptions.
- The Union's Chief Executive was invited to join the Executive of FACE (Forum for Access and Continuing Education) to increase links between FACE and SUs nationally.
- The Union featured in the NUS's SU Elections 2024 report as a case study for good practice around candidate and staff wellbeing.

The Union now has a strong record of engagement in national and local democracy, as well as other areas of the HE sector. We are confident this will continue in 2024/25.

4. MAKING SURE OUR DIVERSE BODY IS REPRESENTED

Key aims:
(i) We will understand and learn about the diversity of our students so we can support and represent them
(ii) We will ensure Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) is central to all we do, working to an informed action plan each year and keeping our members updated
(iii) We will deliver activities and events that are accessible and that appeal to different students

STUDENT NETWORKS

Following some mixed engagement in 2022/23 with Networks, and lots of discussion with University, the Union restructured Networks over the summer period and agreed, through AROG and the PVC Students, that Chairs and Vice Chairs would receive bursaries in 2023/24. This was to reflect the representative nature of their role, in line with Department Reps, and to encourage engagement as students are more and more reticent to commit to voluntary roles.

We reduced the Networks to 7; for Disabled Students', LGBTQ+ Students', Women's, International Students', Commuters Students, Race Equality, and Mature, Parents & Carers Networks. The removal of Networks was addressed through alternative initiatives (e.g. the Sustainability Network through paid Green Impact Project Assistants). All Networks a Chair appointed and 4 of the 7 also had a Vice Chair in position.

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Highlights of their activities over the year include:
- The Disabled Students' Network's charity basketball event and 'A little Less conversation, More Action Please' Campaign (including collaborating with other student groups), whereby staff were encouraged to use text-to-speech software for half a day. The Network also submitted 3 policies to Welfare & Inclusion Council related to all gender/ disabled toilet separation, incorrect terminology, and accessible communications.

- The Race Equality Network hosted Race Equality Week, which encompassed a range of events, on-line and in person. This included microaggression training, a Culture and Race Workshop, and a Community Dialogue attended by external organisations and University management. Unfortunately, the Network's planned 'Equality Walk' and evening celebration during the week had to be cancelled due to inclement weather There was then a wrap-up event the following week, reflecting on the week and making future commitments. The Union continues to liaise with external stakeholders following the Community Dialogue to engage students more with activities and projects in the local community.

- February was LGBTQ+ History month and the LGBTQ+ Network celebrated by hosting a Valentines Ball for any student to come to celebrate an evening of love and friendship. The theme was 'Flamboyant Fancy' so students dressed to impress, shared a slice of pizza together, and danced the night away.

- The Women's Network hosted a craft-a-thon, a bake sale, a nighttime safety stall, and a guest speaker from the West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre.

- The International Student Network supported students with learning UK slang.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI)

The Union is very proud of the continued efforts it has made in respect of EDI, as a fundamental consideration in our services and operations. Our internal EDI Working Group, again, met monthly and had representation from across the organisation, as well as linking in with the Union's Welfare and Inclusion Council. The group monitored progress against a comprehensive action plan and an end of year report was published in May 2024. Our Anti-Racism statement was also updated. Both can be found here https://www.worcsu.com/yourunion/aboutwsu/equalityanddiversity/

The action plan for 2023/24 covered the following areas:

• Recognition of cultural events and festivals, including our events in the Hangar
• Race Equality and LGBTQ+ engagement in Sport
• Accessibility of the SU's spaces, services, and communications
• The experience of neurodiverse students on campus
• University policy around and facilities for religious observance
• Ethnic diversity of elections candidates
• EDI training for staff and students
• International students' hardship fund
• Gender neutral toilet facilities
• Creation of a #Teamworc EDI video
• Support from external organisations in staff, policy, and service development

In terms of the training, development and awareness raising, the Union facilitated the following:

- Race Awareness training for our core staff team, delivered by Mission Diverse (https://missiondiverse.org/).
- Delivered EDI training to our Club, Society, and Network Committees.

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- Neurodiversity training for core staff and managers, from an external charity, I Am Paying Attention (https://www.iampayingattention.co.uk/) sharing the sessions cost with 2 other Unions.
- An EDI Forum, with the local West Mercia Police Chief Inspector, where students and staff asked questions on the Police's current approach to and priorities around EDI.
- Supported the Race Equality Network to run a range of events for Race Equality Week 2024 in February. This included Microaggressions Training, a Culture and Race Workshop, and a Community Dialogue attended by external organisations and University management.
- The SU took part in Race Equality Matters' 5 Day Challenge https://www.raceequalitymatters.com/5-day-challenge/ , sharing information each day. As part of this, throughout the week staff and students contributed to the Big Promise, expressing their commitments to race equity. This was made into a lovely poster that is on permanent display in the SU.
- Took part in our Disabled Students' Network Text2Speech Day in February, to raise awareness of non-verbal communication methods.
- The Union's Chief Executive was a facilitator at a session organised by the University in preparation for submitting their new Access and Participation Plan (APP), supporting discussions on how the University can prioritise and support race equity.
- Facilitated students' (paid) involvement (paid) in focus groups, contributing ideas on what they felt should be included in the APP.
- The Chief Executive co-ordinated the creation of an on-line forum (via the National Union of Students) for leaders of Students' Unions nationally to share ideas and best practice around race equity.

In terms of our internal processes and commitments as a Union:
- We worked with the University to ensure that Chairs and Vice Chairs of our Student Networks received a bursary for their work for the first time, in line with Department Reps, to reflect the representative nature of their role.
- Had specific EDI objectives around our annual Leadership Elections, to remove barriers to engagement and to increase the diversity of candidates.
- We continued to run our recruitment processes for core and student staff in a transparent and inclusive way, being proactive in encouraging applications from people based on skills and competencies (and not prioritising experience) and explaining who we are as an organisation and our EDI commitments
- Upheld our zero-tolerance approach to all forms of discrimination and harassment within #Teamworc. We spent time educating students on the impact of certain conduct and supporting students to be active bystanders. We continued to promote the need for students to look out for each other and embrace difference. We had a very good year, with very few incidents within our student groups.
- We reviewed our EDI Policy and Anti-Racism statement.
- Introduced a suite of updated and, in some cases new, policies in our Employee Handbook related to 'Special and Other Leave'. This was to further support our staff to balance their work life with their private life and public duties.
- Reviewed our Bye Laws and processes to remove barriers to engagement, with comprehensive updates prepared for implementation in 2024/25.

In relation to the Union's services for members we:

- We held a diverse programme of events and celebrations in The Hangar marking Diwali, Nigerian Independence, Onam Festival, Black History Month, Chinese New Year, and hosted a Break the Fast station during Ramadan. We also facilitated an Afrobeats Night, Christmas Winter Ball, Bollywood Night, LGBTQ+ Valentines Ball, and a global quiz hosted by the International Experience Team.
- The Hangar team had monthly meetings with the University's International Team to ensure great collaboration and won a national award for their efforts in this respect.
- Increased the accessibility of our Help and Advice service further, offering more flexible appointment times and drop-in sessions, developing our advice enquiry forms to allow for enlarged text and yellow paper print versions, and having text to speech and language translation available on our ipad.
- Translated our Teamworc Awards running order into braille and developed braille menus for use in The Hangar from September 2024. We, also, had braille stickers placed at the bottom of the stairs in the venue.

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- Supported several international students with issues they had experienced on course placements and reported these to the University. These were taken very seriously and followed up with the Chief Nursing Officer and Freedom to Speak up Guardian in the NHS Acute Hospital Trust and reported to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). We were very heartened by the University's response in this matter.
- Other issues related to transport to placements (with ongoing train strikes) were also raised by student Reps and resulted in a new working group related to placements being established by the University to tackle the problem, of which the SU President is a member.
- Worked hard to encourage the University to create a Hardship Fund that is accessible to our international students, presenting research conducted by the President of provision at other Universities.
- Created a working group with colleagues from the University's International Experience Team and Sport department, to increase engagement of international students in all forms of sport at Worcester. This resulted in a small increase in the diversity of students engaged with BUCS sports teams but many more students engaged with recreational sport, which the group promoted.
- Continue to assess demographic data biannually of the members who are engaged with our activities as Reps, volunteers, and club, society, and network members. Our aim is to address where our engaged students do not reflect (or exceed) the University overall population data.
- Raised the need for more accessible toilets across campus with the University, and new signage is now being installed. The University will be adding a map to MyDay to show where the accessible toilets, baby change facilities, and gender-neutral toilets can be found on campus.
- Worked with the University on improving prayer facilities and spaces across the campuses, which is still being worked on.
- Worked with the University's Disability Service on supporting students with neurodivergence as part of their induction, facilitating bespoke activities for students.
- We consulted with students when organising major events such as Celebration Week on what they wanted to see and accessibility, including financially.

Going forward in 2024/25, in summary the Union aims to:
- Facilitate further bystander and micro-aggressions training for the student body.
- Continue to strive to increase the diversity of students engaging with our annual Leadership Elections.
- Develop a Neurodiversity Policy for the organisation (following the training this year).
- Deliver a Race Equality Week in 2025, in partnership with the University and community stakeholders.
- Continue to learn from best practice in the sector, as well as seek external expertise, to ensure our processes and procedures are as inclusive and effective as possible.
- Update our calendar of cultural events for 2024/25, working with University colleagues and continue the great relationship we have with the International Experience Team.
- Work to ensure we have more diversity within the memberships of our sports clubs, societies, networks, Rep cohorts and volunteers, and supporting our student groups to be informed and inclusive.
- Continue to scrutinise our space/building, liaising with University Estates on improvements we believe are needed.

The Hangar

As detailed above, the Hangar held a very diverse programme of events and celebrations across the year marking Diwali, Nigerian Independence, Onam Festival, Black History Month, Chinese New Year (with an amazing dragon in attendance!), as well as hosting a Break the Fast station during Ramadan. It also hosted an Afrobeats Night, the Christmas Winter Ball, a Bollywood Night, the LGBTQ+ Valentines Ball, and a global quiz hosted by the International Experience Team. The team won the Impactful Collaboration Award in the national NUS Trade Awards for this and their excellent collaboration with the University's International Experience Team. In addition to this, the Hangar team supported students to host the highest number of student-led events ever, at 96. Of these, 91 were run by clubs, societies, and Networks, and 5 were RAG Team events.

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5. BUILDING CONNECTED COMMUNITIES WHERE STUDENTS FEEL THEY BELONG

Key aims:

(i) We will be highly visible to our student body and be a 'home from home' through physical and online spaces
(ii) We will help and enable students to build communities that benefit them and their University experience
(iii) We will provide environments for students to have positive interactions with each other and learn new things

INDUCTION TALKS
The Union delivered more induction talks in 2023/24 than in the previous year, up from 39 to 46. We noted that many schools seemed to be doing bigger induction talks, combining levels or courses, so the number of students receiving these induction talks most likely also increased on previous years.

The Officers presented talks to students across every school, including the new Medical School. They fed back that University staff were supportive of the talks, often highlighting their importance, and prompting questions from their students, which was great.

School	2022	2023	
School of Psychology	2	4	+2
Three Counties School of Nursing and Midwifery	5	7	+2
Institute of Education	7	10	+3
Worcester Business School	4	3	-1
School of Arts	2	4	+2
School of Humanities	3	5	+2
School of Science and the Environment	3	3	=
Allied Health and Community	6	6	=
School of Sport and Exercise Science	7	2	-5
Three Counties Medical School	-	1	+1
Research School	-	1	+1
TOTAL	**39**	**46**	**+7**

In addition to the Officer inductions above, in Semester 2, SU Induction presentations were offered out via all Heads of School to ensure student and academics were aware of the Union and the services and opportunities open to them, particularly the Help and Advice Service. This proved very popular and was delivered to 36 cohorts.

WELCOME FESTIVAL
The Union worked with the University to create what we hope was a lovely welcome or return for students. We held the Big Worcester Welcome on arrivals Saturday, with lots of stalls located outside the Union about Union, University and external services. The Monday saw the Welcome Fair, which had to be moved indoors to the Sports Hall last minute due to inclement weather, but which nevertheless, had great attendance with 2,800 students recorded. Again, students could get all sorts of information about how to join student groups, access services within the Union and University, and get involved with local organisations. The day was vibrant (with a great Reggae band entertaining us) and everyone pulled together to make it a success, despite the incessant rain!

The rest of the week included the Colour Mile and a Rec Sport Day, a Society Pick N Mix, a Safety and a Volunteering Fair, alongside students' academic inductions. This was alongside a comprehensive and diverse evening events programme.

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TEA DANCE

In December, the Union hosted the very popular Tea Dance for some lovely senior citizens from the local community. It has become an annual event in the Union which Active Hereford and Worcester help to promote, and a real highlight of the calendar. Students from the Saints Dance Society and Christian Union gave band performances during the afternoon, and student volunteers were on hand to dance with attendees to the band and to a local singing duo, Two4One. A raffle was drawn with prizes, Christmas chocolates, and crafts. The day provided a chance for great intergenerational fun, with bags of laughter and merriment - it really is a very special event.

CELEBRATION WEEK

Teamworc Awards

The TeamWorc Awards are the Union's chance to say a big thank you and well done to everyone in the TeamWorc community for all their amazing achievements throughout the year. This year's awards took place in mid-May, with 145 students and VIPs in attendance in The Hangar. It really felt like everyone had an amazing time. The deserving winners of this year's TeamWorc Awards were as follows:

o Athlete of the Year - Alice Hopkins (Blind Football)
o Changemaker for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion - Christian Wilson (Disabled Students' Network)
o Changemaker for Student Experience - The Progress Week Collective (Department Reps)
o Charity Fundraising Student Group of the Year - Aerial Fitness
o Course Rep of the Year - Luke Marshall-Watkin (Computing)
o Department Rep - Oliver Nightingale (Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, and Nutritional Therapy)
o Event of the Year - 24-hour CPR Training Marathon (Paramedic Society and RAG)
o Outstanding Contribution to the Community - Amy Shadbolt (Women's Hockey)
o Network Campaign of the Year - Race Equality Week (Race Equality Network)
o Network Committee Member of the Year - Harriet Lawrence (Women's Network)
o Network of the Year - Race Equality Network
o New Society of the Year - Medsoc
o Society Committee Member of the Year - Benji Robison (Paramedic Society)
o Sports Club Committee Member of the Year - Megan Ince (Dance)
o Society of the Year - UniBoob Team
o Sports Team of the Year - Men's Cricket
o Sports Club of the Year - Aerial Fitness

You can see some nice photos here:
https://www.worcsu.com/barandevents/celebrationweek/teamworcawards/

In addition to the Teamworc Awards, the WorcStar initiative continued to celebrate students who go above and beyond to enhance the student experience. We gave around 30 WorcStars (badges and certificates) to students from networks, clubs, and societies with nominations coming from Union staff and Officers, as well as other students. We also gave WorcStars to some staff members in the University across the year whom we felt had really gone the extra mile for us and for students. This included staff in Estates (cleaning), Student Services, Sport, and the International Experience Team who all seemed delighted!

Students' Choice Awards

We received a total of 385 nominations from students for the above, and the winners - decided by a student panel - were as follows:

- Outstanding Lecturer Award - Michael Wheatley (School of Humanities)
- Extra Mile Award for Support Staff - Mark Harwood-Browne (Disability Advisor, Student Services)
- Award for Exceptional Personal Academic Tutor - Elizabeth Russell (Institute of Education)
- Sustainability Award - Mike Wheeler (School of Science and the Environment)
- ARC (Academic Representation Co-ordinator) of the Year - Amy Johnson (School of Psychology)
- Provost Award for Excellence - Kaytie Holdstock (Institute of Education)

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MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

Throughout 2023-24, the Union continued to communicate to students across a range of platforms, including social media, physical and digital displays, direct email, and face-to-face promotion.

Significant levels of promotion were given to three of the SU's major events during the year; Welcome Festival, the Leadership Elections, and Varsity, with high levels of engagement both online and in-person. Along with regular, ongoing promotion (including a weekly email to the student body) of SU services, campaigns, and events, several campaigns saw a particular focus. These included the Community Cupboard and cost-of-living support, Help & Advice and the launch of Myth Buster Mondays, the Consent campaign, Refreshers and Give it a Go Week, and the Insights survey in May, which is detailed further down in this report.

Marketing and social media content for The Hangar saw promotion of major events such as Welcome Festival, the Winter Ball, Refreshers, and a variety of student-led events. There was also continued promotion of the weekly line-up, newly introduced products and drinks, non-alcoholic offerings, value for money and The Hangar's position as one of the cheapest venues in Worcester. During Semester Two, management of The Hangar Instagram was given to a member of student staff to help boost engagement by creating a more student friendly platform.

Social Media

The majority of social media platforms have continued to see steady increases in engagement. Both the Union and Hangar Instagram saw far more content posted than in previous years, with growth in new followers, impressions, and engagement, surpassing the SU and Hangar Facebook pages.

Platform	Followers	Impressions	Engagements
SU Facebook	9,034	547,833	13,356
Hangar Facebook	1,521	64,054	937
SU Instagram	5,251	827,212	26,768
Hangar Instagram	2,049	265,564	9,465
TikTok*	1,009	11,003	326

Number of followers, impressions, and engagements for SU and Hangar social media in 2023-24 academic year up to the end of July. *Metrics for TikTok are from February 2024 to July 2024.

Website

Website use and engagement has remained at levels consistent with previous years, despite a fall in the overall number of students at the University. There are significant increases in both use and engagement at notable times during the academic year; Welcome Festival, the Leadership Elections, and club and society elections. The Sports & Societies and Help & Advice pages remain the most accessed areas of the website across the year. September, October, February, and April are the busiest months, with between 59,000 and 64,000 pages views by between 6,000 and 8,500 users. The total number of page views over the year was 424,347 by 56,621 users.

SUSTAINABILITY

The Union achieved re-accreditation under the Responsible Futures (RF) scheme following our 2024 submission, with our classification pending. Our sustainability efforts were supported by a Green Impact Project Assistant, funded by the University, who earned a Gold mark in the University's Green Impact Award for her contributions towards improving student engagement in sustainability.
Over the year, despite having very limited resource to dedicate to this area, we collaborated with students and the University's Sustainability Team to:

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• Deliver a range of activities for Go Green Week and host Repair Cafés at St John's Campus.
• Create a new sustainability and logo.
• Raise awareness of sustainability issues within the team through a staff sustainability board and a 'Make it Green' event.
• Widen the participation of our Sustainability Committee and create an internal sustainability strategy in line with our earlier commitment to the SDG accord.
• Support the University's Director of Sustainability to launch a new Sustainability Hub at St John's campus, offering students opportunities to learn how to sew, build terrariums, and take care of plants.
• Collaborate with Hey Girls to provide sustainable period products to students.
• Support the Allotment and Gardening Society and ensure all clubs and societies received sustainability training to encourage pro-environmental behaviours.
• Review the criteria for sustainability points towards the Team Worc Award to ensure students are properly recognised for their efforts towards the natural world.
• Come in top 25 institutions nationally with our response rate for SOS-UK Sustainability Survey.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Staff learning, development, and wellbeing is very important to the Union. We continued to hold fortnightly team meetings (chaired by different members of the team) to aid teamwork and communication, as well as staff breakfasts as more relaxed group activity, as well as half day strategic meetings. A 'Star of the Month' was announced at staff meetings for great work, which came with a little trophy that was passed between 'Stars'! We updated our student staff newsletter, written by the Welcome Desk Assistants for the wider student staff team, to help keep student staff informed of what was going on in the Union. We arranged out of office activities, such as a Sip and Paint, and down time when major events were taking place, such as the Euros.

Student staff were all inducted into their roles and have places on the Union's Staff Consultative Forum and Health and Safety Committee. Several student staff received recognition throughout the year for great work (through an on-line nomination process) and received a letter and shopping voucher.

Union staff and Officers undertook learning and development over the year, as well as being encouraged to get involved in projects outside of their immediate area of work to widen their knowledge and develop new skills. Courses and learning undertaken over the year included Diversity & Inclusion, Health & Safety, GDPR, Information Security Awareness, Disability Awareness, First Aid. Neurodiversity training, UJS (Union of Jewish Students) Antisemitism Training, and Race Awareness training. As well as these, staff and Officers attended many of the annual conferences and events, including NUS Strategic Exchange, Membership Services Conference, SOS-UK (Students Organising for Sustainability) Sustainability Summit, SU Digital, BUCS Conference, NUS Conference, The NUS Trade Show, and Lead and Change.

Core staff had their Personal Performance Appraisals (PPA) held and objectives set, which fed into the Union's operational plan. Staff also have a Personal Development Plan that sits alongside their PPA and all follow a 121 template that was implemented in year to ensure they monitored progress against objectives, recorded successes and challenges, and actions from each 121. This seems to be very popular amongst staff and helps them to reflect on their achievements on a regular basis.

In the background, despite resource challenges, it was an extremely busy year and a vast amount of work was done to update our Employee Handbook and HR processes, including:
o Creating an updated PPA/PDP/121 template and process
o Revising our travel, expenses, compassionate leave, and sick policies
o Introducing a suite of new Special and Other leave polices
o Starting the process of reviewing our Maternity, Paternity, and Parental Leave policy
o Updating our information for current and prospective employees on our non-pay staff benefits
o Reviewing and updating our Health and Safety Policy

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o Updating our core staff contracts
o Updating our Student Staff Handbook and contract
o Liaising with Staff Savvy, our on-line HR portal provider, to iron out problems and further embed the system into the organisation
o Researching potential HR retainer services to support the Union with HR matters. We concluded this was not affordable at this time but, as a result of the process, we began using the Rradar service provided through our insurance with Endsleigh, much more fully.
o Attending webinars and free external workshops to keep abreast of developments in employment legislation and amending our processes as necessary.
o Maintaining contact with a network of HR staff in SUs nationally, through NUS and sharing best practice.

OVERALL PERFORMANCE AND STUDENT SATISFACTION

National Student Survey (NSS):

Q25 How well does the Student's Union represent students' academic interests?
Overall University: 76.5% (sector average 73%, our score in 2023 was 75%)

The Union is positioned 37th out of 147 Unions nationally in the Universities' compiled NSS rankings (for Q25 - 37th/148 in 2023, and for the previous Q26 - 18th/149 in 2022, 19th/149 in 2021 and 2020, 36th/152 in 2019 and 61st/151 in 2018).
The Union is also positioned 3rd in the 'cathedral' group of the 12 Providers against which the University benchmarks itself:

NSS 2024	Students' Union
University of Worcester	3
Bath Spa University	9
Birmingham City University	10
Buckinghamshire New University	1
Canterbury Christ Church University	5
Coventry University	4
Liverpool Hope University	2
Staffordshire University	8
University of Chester	6
University of Northampton	7
University of the West of England	12
University of Wolverhampton	11

The Union saw scores go up in all B2 optional questions (which traditionally score much lower than the compulsory questions):

B2 - Students' Union - Overall score 37% (31% in 2023) We do not get sector averages for these questions.
o B.2.1. The Students' Union had had a positive impact on my sense of belonging to the university or college - 38% (33% in 2023)

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o B.2. 2. The Students' Union has had a positive impact on the local community = 41% (34% in 2023)
o B.2.3. The Students' Union has helped me develop useful life skills = 32% (25% in 2023).

Course Experience Survey (CES):

Overall satisfaction with Academic Representation System - 85%

Q.5.3 - I know who my Course Rep is:
Overall University: **82%** (-2% from 2022/23)

Q 5.4 - Course Reps represent the interests of students on my course effectively:
Overall University: **84%** (+4% on 2022/23)

Q14 - How well does the Students' Union represent academic interests:
Overall University: **84%** (+4% on 2022/23)

An additional question was asked in 2023, at our request, and we are grateful for the University adding this question in as the NSS no longer asks students about their general satisfaction with the Union. The following was asked:

o **How satisfied are you with your Students' Union** - score was **87%**

WSU Insights Survey

In May, the Union have recently surveyed our members on how they feel we are doing against our new strategic framework. We had 434 responses, which is not as high as we were hoping for, but we know that students do get survey fatigue. We are in the process of drilling down into the results but some headlines include:

o Most respondents were 1st year undergraduates.
o Most respondents were students on professional courses, attending St Johns campus.
o 79% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the SU and its range of services supported the health and wellbeing of students.
o 74% agreed or strongly agreed that fulfilling student roles within the SU helps students' employability.
o 74% agreed or strongly agreed that the SU prioritises EDI
o 75% agreed or strongly agreed that the SU provides easy and accessible ways for students to give feedback and suggestions
o 76% agreed or strongly agreed that the SU is good at communicating what it does
o 78% agreed or strongly agreed that the SU has a positive impact on University life.
Most other areas scored in the mid-high 70s but the lowest score was our visible presence away from St John's, which was at 71%. We have been doing much more outreach this year but have struggled with the current resource levels we have. Whilst we embed our strategic framework, we feel this is a reasonable start but will, obviously be looking to increase these scores year on year throughout its life cycle. When we are facing financial and resource restraints, this is not easy but we will continue to strive for excellence and to fulfil our organisational vision.

Some very pleasing free text comments included:
'The SU has helped me find the people who have made my university experience 10x better than it could have been without all the things the SU does'.
'Participating in events in The Hangar have been some of the most memorable times at university'.
'The feeling of belonging directly at the start of the first semester was a valuable experience'.
'The SU was very welcoming when I first started at the university and a very important part of creating a friendly atmosphere'.
'Being part of a sports club and society helped me meet a wide range of friends'.

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'I appreciate being able to have my say in things like elections'.
'Creating safe and relaxing spaces for students to de-stress'.
'The SU has given me opportunities to grow throughout my university experience'.
'I have had the opportunity to be a student rep, which has been amazing for my confidence and professional development'.
'I think the SU does a fantastic job on all levels advocating for student voice'.
'I feel seen.'

The word cloud below is created from the positive comments fed back by students:

We also asked students what they would like us to see from us in the future to be the best SU and had several free-text responses, that can be summarised as students wanting:
- more visible presence of the Union across the campuses
- more support for international students, mature students, and neurodiverse students, and
- more daytime events.

The Union will work to address this as it develops its operational plan for 2024/25.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial position

Income from all sources totalled £1,011,070 (2023: £991,083). Total expenditure of £1,039,232 (2023: £1,053,966) on all the students' services we provide, which left a deficit for the year of £28,162 (2023 deficit £62,883).

The General Fund balance at the year end stood at £159,210 (2023: £214,292).

Restricted funds, which represent monies raised by the Union's various clubs and societies were £210,950 (2023: £197,039).

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reserves policy

The primary aim of the policy is to ensure that sufficient reserves are in place to provide funds for investment in the Union and its activities, thus enhancing the experience of students at this University. With a secure base of reserves, the Trustees of WSU will be exercising their duty to oversee the finances of the organisation in a prudent and proper manner and to minimise risks to the organisation's viability.

The level of reserves needed at any one time was reviewed again in-year by the Trustee Board and was agreed to be 3 months' operating costs (as defined by the annual budgeted organisational expenditure), known as the 'operating reserve'. The Board is acutely aware that forecasting and modelling a realistic budget for the 2024/25 academic year, the Union is likely to fall below its reserves levels in 2024/25 for 2-3 months in the Summer of 2025. The Union's reserves policy states that action needs to be taken if this is the case for more than 6 months, at which point the Trustees should ask the management to formulate a recovery plan for the Board's approval. The Union has also communicated this to the University.

As mentioned throughout this report, the senior management are highly sensitive to the financial situation facing the Union and already have cost-saving measures and regular contract negotiations in place. Staff positions are reviewed routinely when a member of the team leaves the organisation and, in the current circumstances, particular emphasis is placed on whether the remaining team could realistically consume any extra work.

Reserves in excess of the required reserves are held as 'free reserves' or 'designated reserves', in accordance with the Trustee Board. If there are surplus funds available above the minimum level, the Committee should plan to utilise these within three years.

Going concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

FUTURE PLANS

Operationally, some of the immediate priorities of the 2024/25 officer and staff team are:

• Continuing work to support students during the cost-of-living crisis, retaining the Community Cupboard extending Breakfast Clubs, and implementing a new Kitchen Korner to help students with domestic equipment.
• Maintaining our annual EDI action plan so that these matters remain central to all we do.
• Raise awareness to international students of the financial support available to them, following the implementation of a new international student hardship fund and supporting them with their housing concerns..
• Embedding our services and staff much more across the campuses, aiming to establish, with the University's help, an SU Hub on City Campus.
• Increase our engagement with mature students and commuting students, providing more daytimes activities.
• Increase the number of academic societies.
• Continuing to provide accessible ways for students on professional courses to engage with us.
• Continue to have a positive staff culture where all staff are welcoming to students, where their contribution is valued and rewarded, and they feel genuine job satisfaction.
• Seeking creative and appropriate additional sources of revenue, including external bookings in the Hangar, media sales, and external partnerships.

FUTURE FUNDING

We will work with the University annually to negotiate on our annual block grant. This is to ensure we continue to maximise our impact and can maintain our services in a financial environment where costs continue to rise or remain high, as well as to develop as an organisation to meet the needs of our increasingly diverse student body. A key promise in our new strategic framework is to be visible and relevant to more and more of our members; to be proactive and not wait for them to come to us. This requires significant outreach work and creativity from what is a very small team (now less than 20 core staff), whilst doing what we can to minimise financial risk, ensure we are future proof, and maintain healthy reserves. This is not going to be easy.

We will continue to allocate as much resource as possible to student-facing services and representation and to work hard behind the scenes to maximise the benefit of contracts and reduce costs wherever possible. We feel strongly that there is a need to strategically review the Union's funding, space, and facilities on St John's campus and other campuses (especially City Campus), to build on good student satisfaction levels and to support the University's aims around recruitment, retention, and progression. When we surveyed our members in May 2024, they told us that we are not visible enough outside of St Johns campus - we must do our best to address this within our current team and resources.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust and constitutes an unincorporated charity.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Charity constitution

The University of Worcester Students' Union (hereafter referred to as 'WSU' or 'the Union') falls under the definition of a "Students' Union" in section 20(1) of the Education Act 1994, and has charitable status. The University of Worcester (hereafter referred to as the University) exercises its duty under the Education Act 1994 to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to secure that the Union operates in a fair and democratic manner and is accountable for its finances.

Since becoming a registered charity, WSU has a dedicated Board of Trustees, consisting of up to three full time officers, up to four student trustees, and up to three lay trustees. The Student and Lay Trustees are selected on the basis of their appropriateness, experience and expertise by a simple majority vote of an Appointments Panel. Appointments of student trustees need to be ratified by a majority vote of Student Council. The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the good governance and financial stability of the Union and has been responsible for passing policies and procedures to bring the Union up to date with changing legal requirements.

The Union is a democratic organisation, with the ultimate decision making power being its membership through Student Council, which is the sovereign body. Student Council agrees the Policy of the Union, discusses wider and national issues that affect students at Worcester, guides strategic campaigns, represents the voice of students, and makes, appeals and amends the Bye-Laws, jointly with Trustees. Student Council continued to hold the officers accountable for their actions this year through a number of virtual meeting and 2 out of four were quorate (meaning some votes then needed to be conducted over email post meeting).

Three Full Time Officers are elected into position by cross-campus secret ballot, for a one-year term of office and they become the Union's Executive Committee. The Executive Committee oversee the day to day student-centered activities of the Union and are accountable to Student Council. All Executive Officers should receive an induction and training into their legal and administrative responsibilities, with an on-going programme of development during their term of office. The Full Time Officers able to run for re-election for a second year on the same terms.

The Union employs non-student professional staff to ensure effective management and delivery of its many activities and services and to implement the policy decisions made through the democratic process. There is delegated authority, through the Chief Executive Officer, for operational decision-making and accountability within the various areas of the Union, in accordance with agreed structures.The Chief Executive is accountable to the Board of Trustees.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER

The Union receives a Block Grant from the University and occupies buildings owned by the University, which also pays for utilities.The Union also receives IT Services from the University through an Operating Model. This support is intrinsic to the relationship between the University and Union. Although the Union seeks to supplement and diversify its income through commercial and trading activities where possible, it continues to be dependent on the support of the University. The Union believes this that this support is an integral part of the University structure and strategic plans and of significant value to the overall student experience.

The Union believes it has continued to demonstrate its value and impact in facilitating opportunities and communities for students, providing students with a voice, and continuously improving the experience at Worcester. The Union remains grateful to the University for their ongoing support and looks forward to continued collaboration as it works to support its diverse membership, ensuring students can create positive, ensuring memories of their time at University.

CHARITY GOVERNANCE CODE

The Union is committed to the seven principles outlined in the Code as follows:

1. Organisational Purpose
The Union continues to have strong organisational purpose and to work to its charitable objectives, laid out in its Constitution. As mentioned above, the Union implemented a new 5-year Strategic Framework in Autumn 2023, following extensive consultation with students and staff during 2022/23. A new vision, mission, values, enablers, and organisational KPIs are part of the framework, alongside 5 key strategic themes which will underpin the work of the Union.

2. Leadership
The Board of Trustees works with the Chief Executive and senior management in the organisation to agree a clear strategic direction and to ensure that the organisational values are reflected and demonstrated in its work.

3. Integrity
Trustees of the organisation are expected to follow the Nolan Principles of Public Life and receive training on this. They are also expected to maintain the independence of the Union and to ensure it works to its charitable aims at all times.

4. Decision-making risk and control
The Board maintains strong oversight of the organisation, delegated where appropriate to sub-committees with defined terms of reference. Key procedures and policies of the Union, as well as organisational performance and legal compliance are reviewed on a regular basis.The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error (see risk management section below for more detail)..

5. Board effectiveness
The structure and composition of the Board, as well as recruitment to it, ensure an appropriate balance of skills, knowledge and student representation. A Skills and Experience Matrix has been created to support this process. Trustees receive training upon their appointment and an induction to the Union and their role. The Board and its Sub-Committees meet regularly to receive information and reports and to have full and frank discussions of important issues. The Chief Executive also maintains email communication with the Board between meetings on important matters, as well as meets with the Chair and Deputy Chair at least once between full Board meetings to discuss current management priorities.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

6. Diversity

The Board values diversity in all its forms and is committed to reaching out to under-represented groups when recruiting Trustees to ensure they are reflective of the membership of the Union and of society. As with staff recruitment, the Union looks to external support and expertise when recruiting Lay Trustees, where this is affordable when recruiting Student Trustees from its membership, the Union will do its utmost to target promotion amongst cohorts of students which are typically under-represented. Monitoring of diversity of Board membership is undertaken alongside similar monitoring of diversity amongst staff.

7. Openness and accountability

Building trust to secure the confidence of our members and stakeholders is a key part of how the Union operates. Student Council receives updates on the work on the Board and vice versa. The Board also ensures that the Union's membership is kept informed of progress and performance through annual meetings (All Student Meetings), as well as accessible information published on the Union's website, including summary minutes of full Board meetings. A Register of Declarations of Interest for Trustees is also maintained and reviewed regularly.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

The Board of Trustees reviews the risk factors that could affect the strategic, operational and business interests of the Union. Considering the possible risks, the Board has put in place a risk register with attendant checks and balances to ensure compliance with health and safety, employment law and financial competency. The Union also maintains its own annual Statement of Legal Compliance, which is reviewed at by the Board at the same time each year as the risk register. The register was reviewed during the academic year and areas deemed to be of heightened risk, as we emerged from the pandemic, are listed below, with associated actions to try and mitigate or annual.The number of heightened risk areas remained the same as in 2022/23 at 6 (with 5 of these continuing from 2022/23).

- (New - increased from medium to high risk) That the Union does not achieve an increase in in block grant received from the University but continues to rely heavily on its own commercial income. This was amended to high from medium risk as the block grant has remained static since 2021/22. The Union has a strong ongoing relationship with the University and regularly reports on impact but a static block grant and increased costs, particularly in relation to human resources, is placing significant strain on the organisation's finances. Quarterly finance meetings with the Pro Vice Chancellor Finance and Resources continue, where accounts and budgets are discussed, as well as challenges and developments. The Union is currently operating strict spending policies, saving costs where it can, and is seeking appropriate alternative income streams that do not breach existing sponsorship contracts, but this remains very challenging.

- The Union receives a cut in its annual block grant from the University as a result of low student recruitment (particularly in light of current inflationary rises to general costs and salaries): As above, the block grant has remained static since 2021/22 and the University continues to face recruitment challenges. The University has strategies in place for recruitment, retention and progression. The Union continues to implement cost saving measures where it can, as above.

- Union trading operations are not profitable as expected as a result of University or external influences: This remains a serious concern, affected by the ongoing national cost of living crisis and rises in the National Living Wage. Students' ability to spend is much reduced, whilst staff costs continue to rise. As above, the Union meets on a quarterly basis with the PVC (Finance and Resources) and attends the University's Audit Committee each November following the production of annual accounts. Monthly accounts are shared with the University Executive and Trustee Board. The Union continues to implement cost saving measures where it can and look into alternative income streams that are appropriate, as above. Monthly meetings take place with Venue staff and senior managers and efforts continue to increase external bookings in the venue to pre pandemic levels and to ensure student events are as cost sensitive as possible to entice students in. The Union occupies a University building, with outlets run by the University's caterers, which limits the ability to diversify operations and independent income. It is also in conversation with the University about how to affordably update and decorate/refurbish the venue to encourage more students to use the space.

- The Union suffers a significant fall in income through a lack of sponsorship contracts: Monthly meetings are held with key sponsorship partners, including Tramps and Dominoes. The principal contract with Tramps remains half that of pre pandemic levels. The contract with Dominos remains stable and at previous levels. Contracts are renegotiated in a timely manner by Union management and the Trustee Board and University kept informed of any concerns around renewal or a reduction of income from any agreement. Opportunities are sought for additional income (as per risks above and bearing in mind limitations placed by our principal contract) where possible and best practice sought from the sector.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

- The Union and its staff are adversely affected by negative developments with pension provider/s, namely SUSS: Communication has been maintained with SUSS Trustees, and NUS. AGMs attended, and questions posed regarding projections for the scheme. Advice regularly sought from Auditors and the University is being kept abreast of developments. Successive valuations suggest that the annual cost for Unions will continue to rise at a steady rate. Latest AGM (March 2024) confirmed continuingly low levels of funding although it had improved slightly (now 53% funded) under the fiduciary management of Schroders. The recovery period for the scheme currently ends on 1st May 2037. Many Unions are now investigating the cost of their S75 to pull out of the scheme, including the principal employer, NUS UK, which may well cause increased risk for those Unions left in. Some Unions have already left or are in the process of doing so, a handful of which had a large stake in the scheme. The Union enquired into its S75 debit figure in January 2024, and this was c.£370k, which is not affordable. Next valuation is in June 2025 (in June 2022, the scheme was £134m in deficit).

- That staff morale and retention are negatively affected by perceived low pay, reward, and advancement opportunities within the Student's Union structure. Particularly in the context of the 'Great Resignation' post Covid, increasing expectations by employees, and the cost-of-living crisis (including current inflationary increases on wages) This risk was added in 2022/23: The Trustee Board are consulted on strategic issues relating to staff pay and reward, including annual cost of living rises, increments that go beyond individual pay scales, and organisational change. An external pay and reward review was undertaken in Summer 2022 to provide a new organisational pay policy and framework to increase transparency and understanding of roles. Annual salary benchmarking exercise takes place with comparable roles in the region and similar sectors. Work is ongoing with the Board to continuously review and reflect upon non-pay benefits for staff. Staff are informed of the additional benefits of working for the SU aside from pay, including training and development, life insurance (whilst in service), EAP, Edenred discount childcare vouchers, and other discount vouchers. Core staff all have an annual Personal Development Plan, alongside their objectives.

Two new risks were added in November 2023, one relating to Freedom of Speech (in light of government legislation and new regulation from the Office for Students), and the other to data/IT breaches in relation to payroll (and how this data is currently backed up):

4.7 That the Union suffers reputational damage from an issue related to freedom of speech.
5.13 That the Union suffers from data or IT breaches, particularly in relation to SAGE payroll systems.

Pay policy for senior staff

The level of remuneration agreed for senior members of staff for the academic year, was based on benchmarking with equivalent position in other Unions nationally, with an external pay and reward review for the Union conducted over several months in 2022, by Atkinson HR Limited, whilst taking into consideration the size and turnover of the Union, as well as the location of the institution and the size of the Union's membership. A benchmarking exercise was also undertaken using Croner Group data in April 2023.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number
1145192

Principal address
Henwick Grove
Worcester
Worcestershire
WR2 6AJ

Trustees
A. Linforth - ended term of office June 2024
S. James - ended term of office November 2023
I. Price - ended term of office June 2024
M. Osborne - ended term of office March 2024
E. Boddice - ended term of office May 2024
E. Orme - appointed October 2023, ended term of office May 2024
T. Young - appointed October 2023
R. Williams - appointed October 2019, commenced second term in office October 2022
M. Brittain - appointed Oct 2018, commenced second term of office October 2021
E. Burke - appointed May 2023

Auditors
Knox Cropper LLP
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors
153 -155 London Road
Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire
HP3 9SQ

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES
The trustees are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales, the Charities Act 2011, Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 26/11/24 and signed on its behalf by:

Trustee

Opinion
We have audited the financial statements of Worcester Students' Union (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 July 2024 which comprise the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities, the Consolidated Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:
- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's and groups affairs as at 31 July 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion
We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern
In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information
The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Report of the Independent Auditors thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception
We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:
- the information given in the Report of the Trustees is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees
As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements which give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements
We have been appointed as auditors under Section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a Report of the Independent Auditors that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

o The Group is required to comply with charity law and, based on our knowledge of its activities, we identified that the legal requirement to accurately account for restricted funds was of key significance.
o We gained an understanding of how the charity complied with its legal and regulatory framework, including the requirement to properly account for restricted funds, through discussions with management and a review of the documented policies, procedures and controls.
o The audit team, which is experienced in the audit of charities, considered the group's susceptibility to material misstatement and how fraud may occur. Our considerations included the risk of management override.
o Our approach was to check that all restricted income was properly identified and separately accounted for and to ensure that only valid and appropriate expenditure was charged to restricted funds. This included reviewing journal adjustments and unusual transactions.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Knox Cropper LLP

Knox Cropper LLP
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors
153 -155 London Road
Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire
HP3 9SQ

Date: 4/4/2025

WORCESTER STUDENTS' UNION

Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31 July 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	**2024 Total funds £**	2023 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies	2	**607,300**	**-**	**607,300**	606,910
Charitable activities	5				
Student activities		**-**	**180,788**	**180,788**	163,293
Bar		**132,452**	**-**	**132,452**	126,699
Other trading activities	3	**83,042**	**-**	**83,042**	91,027
Investment income	4	**7,488**	**-**	**7,488**	3,154
Total		**830,282**	**180,788**	**1,011,070**	991,083
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds	6	**96,439**	**-**	**96,439**	106,775
Charitable activities	7				
Representation		**106,442**	**-**	**106,442**	108,074
Advice and welfare		**83,215**	**-**	**83,215**	67,665
Student activities		**292,347**	**166,877**	**459,224**	474,231
Bar		**265,954**	**-**	**265,954**	272,042
Affiliations		**27,958**	**-**	**27,958**	25,179
Total		**872,355**	**166,877**	**1,039,232**	1,053,966
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		**(42,073)**	**13,911**	**(28,162)**	(62,883)
Other recognised gains/(losses)					
Actuarial gains/(losses) on defined benefit schemes		**30,785**	**-**	**30,785**	(55,752)
Net movement in funds		**(11,288)**	**13,911**	**2,623**	(118,635)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		**(196,926)**	**197,039**	**113**	118,748
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		**(208,214)**	**210,950**	**2,736**	113

The notes form part of these financial statements

WORCESTER STUDENTS' UNION

Consolidated Balance Sheet
31 July 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	**2024 Total funds £**	2023 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	12	**5,710**	**-**	**5,710**	11,485
CURRENT ASSETS					
Stocks	14	**5,350**	**-**	**5,350**	6,537
Debtors	15	**29,513**	**-**	**29,513**	19,582
Cash at bank and in hand		**150,795**	**210,950**	**361,745**	414,296
		185,658	**210,950**	**396,608**	440,415
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	16	**(32,158)**	**-**	**(32,158)**	(40,569)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		**153,500**	**210,950**	**364,450**	399,846
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		**159,210**	**210,950**	**370,160**	411,331
PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES	17	**(367,424)**	**-**	**(367,424)**	(411,218)
NET ASSETS/(LIABILITIES)		**(208,214)**	**210,950**	**2,736**	113
FUNDS	18				
Unrestricted funds				**(208,214)**	(196,926)
Restricted funds				**210,950**	197,039
TOTAL FUNDS				**2,736**	113

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on .....26/11/24..... and were signed on its behalf by:

.....
Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

WORCESTER STUDENTS' UNION

Charity Balance Sheet
31 July 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	**2024 Total funds £**	2023 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	12	**5,710**	**-**	**5,710**	11,485
Investments	13	**1**	**-**	**1**	1
		5,711	**-**	**5,711**	11,486
CURRENT ASSETS					
Stocks	14	**5,350**	**-**	**5,350**	6,537
Debtors	15	**29,513**	**-**	**29,513**	19,582
Cash at bank and in hand		**150,795**	**210,950**	**361,745**	414,296
		185,658	**210,950**	**396,608**	440,415
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	16	**(32,159)**	**-**	**(32,159)**	(40,570)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		**153,499**	**210,950**	**364,449**	399,845
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		**159,210**	**210,950**	**370,160**	411,331
PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES	17	**(367,424)**	**-**	**(367,424)**	(411,218)
NET ASSETS/(LIABILITIES)		**(208,214)**	**210,950**	**2,736**	113
FUNDS	18				
Unrestricted funds				**(208,214)**	(196,926)
Restricted funds				**210,950**	197,039
TOTAL FUNDS				**2,736**	113

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 26/11/24 and were signed on its behalf by:

Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

Consolidated Cash Flow Statement
for the Year Ended 31 July 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	**(60,039)**	(83,508)
Net cash used in operating activities		**(60,039)**	(83,508)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		**-**	(2,656)
Interest received		**7,488**	3,154
Net cash provided by investing activities		**7,488**	498
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		**(52,551)**	(83,010)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		**414,296**	497,306
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		**361,745**	414,296

The notes form part of these financial statements

1. RECONCILIATION OF NET EXPENDITURE TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2024 £	2023 £
Net expenditure for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	**(28,162)**	(62,883)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	**5,775**	5,554
Interest received	**(7,488)**	(3,154)
SUSS Pension deficit movements	**(13,009)**	(13,258)
Decrease in stocks	**1,187**	2,086
Increase in debtors	**(9,931)**	(16,221)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	**(8,411)**	4,368
Net cash used in operations	**(60,039)**	(83,508)

2. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	At 1.8.23 £	Cash flow £	**At 31.7.24** **£**
Net cash			
Cash at bank and in hand	**414,296**	**(52,551)**	**361,745**
	414,296	**(52,551)**	**361,745**
Total	**414,296**	**(52,551)**	**361,745**

The notes form part of these financial statements

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements
The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Charities Act 2011. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, with the exception of investments which are included at market value.

Income
All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Other income is recognised in the period in which it is receivable and to the extent the goods have been provided or on completion of the service.

Expenditure
Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Fundraising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions and do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities. Support costs are those costs incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the charity and include project management carried out at Headquarters. Governance costs are those incurred in connection with administration of the charity and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

Allocation and apportionment of support costs
The bases on which support costs have been allocated is set out in note 8 of the accounts.

Tangible fixed assets
There is no set de minimis level for the capitalisation of tangible fixed assets and each case is dealt with on an individual basis.

The policy with respect to impairment reviews of fixed assets is that reviews will be carried out if events indicate that the carrying value of any fixed asset may not be recoverable. Impairment losses are recognised in the SOFA.

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on the following bases:

Retail fixtures and fittings -	10 to 30% per annum straight line and 20% reducing balance
Administration fixtures & fittings -	20% per annum reducing balance
Improvements to premises -	10 to 20% per annum straight line and 20% reducing balance

continued...

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Stocks
Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value, after making due allowance for obsolete and slow moving items.

Taxation
The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting
Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits
The Union participates in the Students' Union Superannuation Scheme (SUSS), a defined benefit scheme which is externally funded and contracted out of the State Second Pension. The fund is valued at least every three years by a professionally qualified independent actuary with the rates of contribution payable being determined by the trustees on the advice of the actuary.

The most recent valuation of the Scheme was carried out as at 30 June 2022 and showed that the market value of the Scheme's assets was £106,697,000 with these assets representing 44% of the value of benefits that had accrued to members after allowing for expected future increases in earnings. The deficit on an ongoing funding basis amounted to £136,645,000

The 2022 valuation recommended a monthly contribution requirement by each participating Union intended to clear the ongoing funding deficit ending in 2037, increasing by 5% each year.

The scheme operates as a pooled arrangement, with contributions paid at a centrally agreed rate. As a consequence, no share of the underlying assets and liabilities can be directly attributed to the Union.

Under FRS 102, where a scheme participates in a multi-employer defined benefit pension scheme that is in deficit and the employer has entered into an agreement to fund the deficit the entity shall recognise a liability for the contributions payable that arise from the agreement. As the agreement runs until 2037, a discount rate of 3.8% has been applied in determining the net present value of the contributions made in the period.

The union also contributes to the Aegon Pension Scheme. The annual contributions payable are charged to the income and expenditure account.

Going concern
After making appropriate enquiries, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

continued...

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	2024	2023
	£	£
Grants	600,000	600,000
Other grants	7,300	6,910
	607,300	606,910

Grants received, included in the above, are as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
University of Worcester	600,000	600,000

3. OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	2024	2023
	£	£
Marketing	62,350	60,750
Other	119	705
NUS Extra	-	229
Commissions receivable	4,368	5,321
Varsity income	9,731	16,843
Events income	6,474	7,179
	83,042	91,027

4. INVESTMENT INCOME

	2024	2023
	£	£
Deposit account interest	7,488	3,154

continued...

5. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Activity	2024 £	2023 £
Student Activity			
Membership	Student activities	**180,788**	163,293
Bar	Bar	**132,452**	126,699
		313,240	289,992

6. RAISING FUNDS

Raising donations and legacies

	2024 £	2023 £
Staff costs	**85,083**	90,913
Marketing costs	**11,599**	13,920
	96,682	104,833

Other trading activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Purchases	**44**	1,255
Bad debts	**(287)**	687
	(243)	1,942
Aggregate amounts	**96,439**	106,775

7. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct Costs £	Support costs (see note 8) £	Totals £
Representation	**-**	**106,442**	**106,442**
Advice and welfare	**65,473**	**17,742**	**83,215**
Student activities	**335,041**	**124,183**	**459,224**
Bar	**159,509**	**106,445**	**265,954**
Affiliations	**27,958**	**-**	**27,958**
	587,981	**354,812**	**942,793**

continued...

8. SUPPORT COSTS

	Management	Governance costs	Totals
	£	£	£
Representation	**69,914**	**36,528**	**106,442**
Advice and welfare	**11,654**	**6,088**	**17,742**
Student activities	**81,570**	**42,613**	**124,183**
Bar	**69,918**	**36,527**	**106,445**
	233,056	**121,756**	**354,812**

Activity	Basis of allocation
Management	Based on estimated usage of resources
Governance costs	Based on estimated usage of resources

9. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trustees' salaries	**60,221**	63,306
Trustees' social security	**4,293**	4,864
	64,514	68,170

Each of the Executive Committee's sabbatical officers received remuneration as authorised in the Union's governing document, for the representation, campaigning and support work they undertake as distinct from their trustee responsibilities.

Trustees' expenses

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trustees' expenses	**-**	570

10. STAFF COSTS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	**575,058**	567,740
Social security costs	**41,842**	40,147
Other pension costs	**32,191**	31,019
	649,091	638,906

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2024	2023
Full time	**17**	21
Students - Semester only	**16**	15
	33	36

continued...

10. STAFF COSTS - continued

During the year one member of staff received employment benefits (excluding employers pension costs) between £60,000 and £70,000.

The key management personnel of the charity during the year ended 31 July 2024 comprised of the Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Director of Representation and Membership Services and the Venue and Events Manager.

The total amount paid, including Employers National Insurance and Pension, to the Key Management Personnel for the year ended 31July 2024 was £217,018 (2023: £181,477).

11. COMPARATIVES FOR THE CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	606,910	-	606,910
Charitable activities			
Student activities	-	163,293	163,293
Bar	126,699	-	126,699
Other trading activities	91,027	-	91,027
Investment income	3,154	-	3,154
Total	827,790	163,293	991,083
EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising funds	106,775	-	106,775
Charitable activities			
Representation	108,074	-	108,074
Advice and welfare	67,665	-	67,665
Student activities	318,733	155,498	474,231
Bar	272,042	-	272,042
Affiliations	25,179	-	25,179
Total	898,468	155,498	1,053,966
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	(70,678)	7,795	(62,883)
Other recognised gains/(losses)			
Actuarial gains/(losses) on defined benefit schemes	(55,752)	-	(55,752)
Net movement in funds	(126,430)	7,795	(118,635)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	(70,496)	189,244	118,748
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	(196,926)	197,039	113

continued...

12. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

Group and Charity	Fixtures and fittings £
COST	
At 1 August 2023 and 31 July 2024	**912,277**
DEPRECIATION	
At 1 August 2023	**900,792**
Charge for year	**5,775**
At 31 July 2024	**906,567**
NET BOOK VALUE	
At 31 July 2024	**5,710**
At 31 July 2023	11,485

13. FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS

Charity	Unlisted investments £
MARKET VALUE	
At 1 August 2023 and 31 July 2024	**1**
NET BOOK VALUE	
At 31 July 2024	**1**
At 31 July 2023	1

There were no investment assets outside the UK.

14. STOCKS

Group and Charity	2024 £	2023 £
Stocks	**5,350**	6,537

continued...

15. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

Group and Charity

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade debtors	11,477	17,883
Other debtors	1,699	1,699
VAT	961	-
Prepayments and accrued income	15,376	-
	29,513	19,582

16. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	Group		Charity	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
Trade creditors	7,728	14,665	7,728	14,665
Taxation and social security	9,798	12,051	9,798	12,051
Other creditors	14,632	13,853	14,632	13,853
Inter company	-	-	1	1
	32,158	40,569	32,159	40,570

17. PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES

Group and Charity

	2024	2023
	£	£
Provisions	367,424	411,218

The above provision relates to the deficit funding contributions the Union is required to make to SUSS (see notes 1 and 19).

18. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

Group and Charity

	At 1.8.23	Net movement in funds	Transfers between funds	At 31.7.24
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	214,292	(26,447)	(28,635)	159,210
Pension deficit	(411,218)	15,159	28,635	(367,424)
	(196,926)	(11,288)	-	(208,214)
Restricted funds				
Clubs and societies	197,039	13,911	-	210,950
TOTAL FUNDS	113	2,623	-	2,736

continued...

18. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

Group and Charity	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Gains and losses £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	**830,282**	**(856,729)**	**-**	**(26,447)**
Pension deficit	**-**	**(15,626)**	**30,785**	**15,159**
	830,282	**(872,355)**	**30,785**	**(11,288)**
Restricted funds				
Clubs and societies	**180,788**	**(166,877)**	**-**	**13,911**
TOTAL FUNDS	**1,011,070**	**(1,039,232)**	**30,785**	**2,623**

Comparatives for movement in funds

Group and Charity	At 1.8.22 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.7.23 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	298,228	(56,666)	(27,270)	214,292
Pension deficit	(368,724)	(69,764)	27,270	(411,218)
	(70,496)	(126,430)	-	(196,926)
Restricted funds				
Clubs and societies	189,244	7,795	-	197,039
TOTAL FUNDS	118,748	(118,635)	-	113

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

Group and Charity	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Gains and losses £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	827,790	(884,456)	-	(56,666)
Pension deficit	-	(14,012)	(55,752)	(69,764)
	827,790	(898,468)	(55,752)	(126,430)
Restricted funds				
Clubs and societies	163,293	(155,498)	-	7,795
TOTAL FUNDS	991,083	(1,053,966)	(55,752)	(118,635)

continued...

18. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined position is as follows:

Group and Charity	At 1.8.22 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.7.24 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	298,228	(83,113)	(55,905)	159,210
Pension deficit	(368,724)	(54,605)	55,905	(367,424)
	(70,496)	(137,718)	-	(208,214)
Restricted funds				
Clubs and societies	189,244	21,706	-	210,950
TOTAL FUNDS	118,748	(116,012)	-	2,736

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

Group and Charity	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Gains and losses £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	1,658,072	(1,741,185)	-	(83,113)
Pension deficit	-	(29,638)	(24,967)	(54,605)
	1,658,072	(1,770,823)	(24,967)	(137,718)
Restricted funds				
Clubs and societies	344,081	(322,375)	-	21,706
TOTAL FUNDS	2,002,153	(2,093,198)	(24,967)	(116,012)

Clubs and societies - these funds represent income from the various student clubs and societies which is specifically to be spent on the fund or society to which it relates.

continued...

19. EMPLOYEE BENEFIT OBLIGATIONS

The Union participates in the Students' Union Superannuation Scheme, which is a defined benefit scheme whose membership consists of employees of students' unions and related bodies throughout the country. Benefits in respect of service up to 30 September 2003 are accrued on a "final salary" basis, with benefits in respect of service from 1 October 2003 accruing on a Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) basis. With effect from 30 September 2011 the Scheme closed to future accrual.

The most recent valuation of the Scheme was carried out as at 30 June 2022 and showed that the market value of the Scheme's assets was £106,697,000 with these assets representing 44% of the value of benefits that had accrued to members after allowing for expected future increases in earnings. The deficit on an ongoing funding basis amounted to £136,645,000.

The assumptions which have the most significant effect upon the results of the valuation are those relating to the rate of return on investments and the rates of increase in salaries and pensions.

The following assumptions applied at 30 June 2022:

• Discount rate: Bank of England gilt curve + 1.5% pa, linearly changing over a term of 13 years to gilts curve + 0.25% pa.
• Pension increases: A model of each increase, allowing for insurers' relative pricing of different caps and collars..

The 2022 Valuation recommended a monthly contribution requirement by each Participating Employer expressed in monetary terms intended to clear the ongoing funding deficit by 1 May 2037 and will increase by at least 5% each year.

These contributions also include an allowance for cost of the ongoing administrative and operational expenses of running the Scheme of £5,038 pa. Surpluses or deficits which arise at future valuations will also impact on the Union's future contribution commitment. In addition to the above contributions, the Union also pays its share of the Scheme's levy to the Pension Protection Fund.

The liability provided for in respect of the SUSS pension deficit amounted increased to £367,424 (2023: £411,218) at 31 July 2024 (see note 17).

The Union also has members in the Aegon Pension Scheme which is a defined contribution scheme.

The total contributions due to the Schemes by the Union in respect of eligible employees for the year ended 31 July 2024 are disclosed in the staff costs note.

continued...

20. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

The union is in receipt of a recurrent grant from the parent body to cover salaries and overheads. The amount received for the year ended 31 July 2024 was £600,000 (2023: £600,000).

At the year end the total due to the Union from the University of Worcester was £9,125 (2023: £100).

At the year end the total due to the University of Worcester from the Union was £4,227 (2023: nil).

21. ULTIMATE CONTROLLING PARTY

The union is controlled by the executive committee which is subject to democratic election by the voting membership of the union. The ultimate control of the union is vested under the constitution in the membership in General meeting. As such no single person or entity controls the union.

KNOX CROPPER
chartered accountants

Worcester Students' Union

Audit Findings Report

Year Ended
31st July 2024

The Board of Trustees

Worcester Students' Union

23rd September 2024

Dear Trustees

Audit findings for the year ended 31st July 2024

This Audit Findings Report highlights the significant findings arising from the audit and sets out the key matters which we are required to formally report to those charged with governance in accordance with International Standard on Auditing (UK) 260.

As you will appreciate, our audit procedures are designed primarily to enable us to form an opinion on the accounts as a whole. Our procedures include such tests of the accounting records and internal control systems as are, in our opinion, necessary for audit purposes. Consequently, whilst our procedures may identify certain weaknesses which may exist, the audit procedures in themselves should not be relied upon to reveal all the weaknesses which may exist in the system.

This report has been prepared for your sole use and we assume no responsibility to any other party in respect of its contents. The report should not be disclosed to any third party without our prior written consent.

This report is not exhaustive and deals with only the more significant matters which came to our attention during the audit. Other matters of lesser significance have been discussed with the relevant staff during the course of our audit work.

In conclusion we would like to take this opportunity of expressing our appreciation to all your staff, particularly Rob, for his assistance and co-operation during the course of our audit. If you have any queries on any of the points in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours Sincerely

Knox Cropper LLP

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Audit Overview

General

The purpose of our audit is to gather sufficient evidence to allow us to conclude that the transactions and balances disclosed in the accounts are unlikely to be materially misstated, to establish that disclosures reflected in the accounts comply with the requirements of legislation and relevant accounting standards, to assess whether the accounting policies adopted are appropriate and consistently applied and to assess whether judgements exercised and estimates made in the preparation of the accounts are fair and reasonable.

Audit Report

We confirm that we have completed the audit to our satisfaction and intend to issue an unqualified audit opinion on the Financial Statements. This means that we have no material reservations over the figures or information disclosed in the financial statements.

The wording of our audit report is in accordance with the standard text for unqualified audit reports prescribed by the Financial Reporting Council. Our report also includes a section which is specific to this audit setting out our response to the risk of material misstatement in respect of irregularities arising from non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud.

Estimates and Judgments

The estimates and judgments made by management affecting the financial statements are the SUSS pension deficit provision, depreciation, accruals and prepayments.

We have concluded that management have exercised judgments and calculated estimates in a fair and reasonable way.

Accounting Policies and Disclosures

The accounting policies which have been adopted in the financial statements are in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice and are, in all material respects, appropriate to the organisation's operations and in compliance with FRS 102 and the Charity SORP 2019.

Adequate consideration was given to the potential impact of changes in legislation and accounting standards which arose during the year. No significant changes arose during the current year which affected the financial statements and therefore the form and content of the accounts are consistent with the preceding year.

Professional Ethics and Independence

We confirm our compliance with the Ethical Standard issued by the Financial Reporting Council.

We confirm that we have not carried out any non-audit work which could impair our independence and there are no other matters in relation to our audit engagement which we consider should be brought to your attention.

Other Audit Matters

In accordance with UK auditing standards, we confirm the following matters in relation to our audit of the financial statements:

a) We have not identified or been made aware of any incidents of fraud or suspected fraud. We would emphasise that our work as auditor is not intended to identify any instances of fraud of a non-material nature and should not be relied upon for this purpose.
b) We have not identified or been made aware of any incidents of non-compliance with laws and regulations which could have a material impact on the financial statements.
c) We have not identified or been made aware of any related party transactions other than matters which have been disclosed in the financial statements.
d) We have received all requested third-party confirmations which represent an essential element of our audit evidence.
e) Apart from the matters set out in this report, there were no significant matters discussed with management during the audit which we are required to bring to your attention. There were no significant disagreements with management or any limitations placed on the scope of our work. No significant difficulties were encountered during the audit.

Materiality and Audit Adjustments

Materiality

Materiality is used both to plan the nature and extent of audit testing and to evaluate the effect of misstatement. In accordance with ISA (UK) 260 'Communication with those charged with governance', we are obliged to include details in this report of all unadjusted errors which are below materiality unless they are clearly trivial. Whilst our audit procedures are designed to identify misstatements which are material to our audit opinion, we also report to those charged with governance and management any uncorrected misstatements of lower value errors to the extent that our audit identifies these.

Omissions or misstatements are regarded as material if they would reasonably influence the users of the financial statements. The assessment of what is material is a matter of professional judgement.

Our assessment of materiality the year ended 31st July 2024 was calculated as follows:

	£	**Explanation**
Overall Materiality for the Financial Statements	12,146	Accounts materially misstated where total errors exceed this value
Performance Materiality	9,110	Work performed to capture individual errors at this level.
Triviality Level	607	Unadjusted errors above this level are reported.

Audit Adjustments

There were no material adjustments made to the financial statements arising from our audit work.

We confirm that no misstatements were detected during the audit which remain uncorrected in the financial statements other than matters which are both individually and cumulatively clearly trivial.

Key Audit Risks and Conclusions

The following schedule sets out the key risks which we identified as part of our audit planning. It sets out our approach to ensuring that these risks did not give rise to any material misstatement in the financial statements and our audit findings.

	Risk	Audit Approach	Audit Findings
1	**Completeness of Income** Completeness of income is always considered high risk and audit procedures need to be devised to address this risk.	We carried out testing on the various income streams and the controls around them. We also performed analytical procedures for testing income trends.	We are satisfied following the review of income documentation and analytical procedures that income is not materially mis-stated within the accounts.
2	**Classification of income** Income received by the Charity could be subject to restrictions and therefore income may need to be treated as restricted income.	We will review the underlying documentation supporting income to ascertain whether restrictions apply, and if applicable, review expenditure from these funds to ascertain whether the imposed restrictions are being adhered to.	This was tested as part of our income testing. Appears to be fairly stated in the accounts.
3	**Payroll costs** Payroll expenditure is a substantial part of total expenditure therefore this is an area, which although not a high risk area, will be thoroughly reviewed due to its materiality.	We performed a proof in total on the payroll costs by agreeing the payroll reports to the accounts. We will also perform substantive testing on a sample of employees, including checking contracts of employment.	There were no issues noted during our audit testing. Payroll expenditure appears to be fairly stated in the accounts.

4	**VAT** Risk that VAT has been incorrectly accounted for.	During our income and expenditure testing we will perform substantive tests, which will include checking the accuracy and the treatment of the VAT recorded.	We did not find any issues during our audit work. However, we have included a point in the internal control matters section below recommending that a VAT review is considered.
5	**SUSS Pension deficit provision** The assumptions and calculations used may be inappropriate and may cause a material misstatement.	Check the calculations and assumptions used for the pension deficit provision.	The assumptions used for the SUSS pension deficit calculation are appropriate and the calculation performed has been agreed. The SUSS pension deficit liability appears to be fairly stated in the accounts.
6	**Management Override of Controls** This represents a key risk for all organisations and we are required to specifically check to ensure that there is no evidence of management override during the year.	We checked that controls were applied consistently throughout the year and reviewed a sample of journal adjustments to ensure they are valid.	We did not find any instances where management had overridden controls.
7	**Related party transactions** Identification of all related party transactions conducted throughout the year.	We reviewed and assessed the controls in place to identify and disclose related party transactions and looked out for related party transactions during our review of the accounting records.	This was tested as part of our income and expenditure testing. We requested that related party declaration forms were completed by all trustees and senior management. No issues noted were noted.

Internal Control Observations and Recommendations

We are required to report to you, in writing, significant deficiencies in the internal controls and the internal control environment that we have identified during the course of our audit. These matters are limited to those which we have concluded are of sufficient importance to be reported to you. Our audit cannot necessarily be expected to disclose all deficiencies in the system and, as a result, the matters reported may not be the only ones which exist.

We have categorised the internal control deficiencies using a colour-scale rating system. The key to which is as follows:

Control weakness is not significant but we recommend that it be addressed to comply with good practice	🟢
Control weakness is serious and needs to be addressed	🟠
Control weakness is of critical importance and needs to be addressed as a priority	🔴

Matters Brought Forward from the Previous Year

Risk Rating		Observation	Recommendation	Management Response
🟢	1	**VAT Review** We did not find any issues in relation to VAT during our audit and the Union appears to be adhering to its current methodology. However, the Union has not had a VAT review for a few years. VAT in the charity sector is complex and any changes to the Union's activities or changes in VAT regulations could impact on the VAT compliance of the Union.	**Last year** Given the complex nature of VAT within the charity sector, we recommend that the Union considers having a VAT review undertaken. We understand that the University undertook a review of the VAT of the Union a couple of years ago and concluded that the irrecoverable VAT was under the de-minimis limit. However, this should be calculated and confirmed every quarter when the VAT return is submitted.	

Current year
This point is still valid for the current year.

Matters Arising in the Current Year

Risk Rating	Observation	Recommendation	Management Response
	We are pleased to report that the accounting records were well maintained. No significant weaknesses were identified during the audit. Internal controls were generally appropriate for the size of organisation and our compliance testing indicated that they were operating effectively in practice.		

Emerging Issues

Proposed changes to Financial Reporting

The Charity SORP and Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102), on which the SORP is based, are both in the process of being updated, with changes expected to be implemented for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2026. On 29 September 2023, the FRC published a project update on its periodic review of FRS 102. The proposed changes reflect changes which have been made to International Financial Reporting Standards and include:

a) a requirement for all leases, with limited exceptions, to be capitalised, requiring the asset and the lease liability to be accounted for in the Balance Sheet.
b) a revised criteria for the recognition of goods and services based on a five-step model which may have implications for the recognition of grants and contracts

The update to the Charity SORP is following the same timetable as it is required to incorporate all the changes made to FRS 102. However, it is also likely to implement a number of additional changes, reflecting feedback from a wide range of stakeholders. Changes are likely to include:

a) a requirement for larger charities to include sustainability reporting in their Annual Report
b) a simplified reporting regime for smaller charities.

Companies House Reform

The Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act, which became law on 26 October 2023, has introduced significant changes to the way Companies House will operate, changing its role from a passive recipient of information to an active gatekeeper, charged with ensuring that information held on the register is valid and accurate.

Some changes are due to be implemented from 4 March 2024 but the majority of changes will not be implemented for at least a year because many of the provisions require secondary legislation and Companies House will need to increase its resources and establish new systems and processes.

The principal changes are set out below:

a) Identification Checks - Directors, persons with significant control and those filing returns on behalf of the company will all have to have their identities verified.

b) Filing information and documentation with Companies House - Following implementation, all filing with Companies House must be carried out by an authorised company official whose identity has been verified or by an Authorised Corporate Services Provider.
c) Directors and Members - Companies will no longer be permitted to have corporate shareholders unless all the directors of the corporate entity are natural persons whose identities have been verified. Companies will no longer be required to keep a register of directors as the record held by Companies House will be the sole verified listing of directors.
d) Company Registered Address - In future, following implementation, company registered addresses must be able to physically receive letters and documents with the expectation that they will come to the attention of an authorised person acting on behalf of the company. As a result, PO Box addresses will no longer be acceptable. Companies must also register an e-mail address, although this will not be available for public view. New companies will have to provide this on formation. Existing companies will need to provide it on their next Confirmation Statement following implementation.
e) Statutory Accounts - There will be a gradual transition, over a period of two to three years, requiring all statutory accounts to be filed using software. Companies House are currently working with software providers to facilitate the filing of more complex accounts.
f) Companies House Role - Companies House will have a statutory responsibility to monitor and check company information to ensure that it is valid and accurate with the objective of disrupting economic crime and preventing abuse of the register.

Letter of Representation

International auditing standards require us to obtain, from the trustees, a number of specific representations and also confirmation of any other material representation given to us during the course of our audit which forms part of our audit evidence. The representations should be made on the basis of enquiries of management and staff with relevant knowledge and expertise.

The following is the full list of representations which we will require to be formally provided to us in a letter, signed on behalf of the trustees, prior to signing our audit report.

Confirmation of Responsibilities

1. We have fulfilled our responsibilities as trustees under the Companies Act 2006/Charities Act 2011 ("the Act") for preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view in accordance with the financial reporting framework (FRS 102 and the Charity SORP).

2. We confirm that all accounting records have been made available to you for the purpose of your audit, in accordance with your terms of engagement, and that all the transactions undertaken by the charity have been properly reflected and recorded in the accounting records. All other records and related information, including minutes of all management and Trustees' meetings, have been made available to you. We have given you unrestricted access to persons within the charity in order to obtain audit evidence and have provided any additional information that you have requested for the purposes of your audit.

3. We acknowledge our legal responsibilities regarding disclosure of information to you as auditors and confirm that:
    - so far as each Trustee is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which you as auditors are unaware; and
    - each Trustee has taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as a trustee to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that you are aware of that information.

Estimates and Judgments

4. We confirm that the methods, significant assumptions and source data used by us in making accounting estimates, and their disclosure in the financial statements, are appropriate and in compliance with the recognition, measurement and disclosure requirements of FRS 102.

5. We confirm that all known actual or possible litigation and claims, the implication of which should be considered when preparing the financial statements, have been disclosed to you and have been accounted for and disclosed in accordance with FRS102 and the Act.

Post Balance Sheet Events and Commitments

6. We confirm that there have been no events since the balance sheet date which necessitate revision of the figures in the financial statements, or inclusion of a note thereto, other than those matters which have already been disclosed or included in the financial statements.

7. We confirm that the charity has not contracted for any capital expenditure other than as disclosed in the financial statements.

8. We confirm that we have no plans or intentions that may materially alter the carrying value and, where relevant, the fair value measurements or classification of assets and liabilities reflected in the financial statements.

Related Parties

9. We confirm that we are aware of the definition of a related party as set out in FRS102 and the charity SORP.

10. We confirm that we have disclosed to you all related parties and related party transactions relevant to the charity and that we are not aware of further related party transactions other than those already disclosed in the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of FRS102 and the Act.

11. We confirm that the charity has not had, at any time during the year, an arrangement, transaction or agreement to provide credit facilities for trustees, nor to provide guarantees of any kind on behalf of the trustees, except as disclosed in the financial statements.

Laws, Regulations and Contractual Agreements

12. We confirm that we are not aware of any possible or actual instance of non-compliance with those laws and regulations which provide a legal framework within which the charity conducts its operations, non-compliance with which could affect the financial statements.

13. The charity has complied with all aspects of contractual and other agreements that could have a material effect on the financial statements in the event of non-compliance.

Internal Control and Fraud

14. We acknowledge our responsibility for the design and implementation of controls to prevent and detect fraud and we confirm that we have assessed the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud and that we have made this assessment available to you. We also confirm that, to the best of our knowledge and belief, there have been no significant deficiencies in internal control during the year.

15. We confirm that we have disclosed to you our knowledge of any actual or suspected instances of fraud involving management, employees with a significant role in internal control, and others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements. We also confirm that we have disclosed to you our knowledge of any allegations of fraud or suspected fraud, affecting the financial statements, which have been communicated by employees, former employees, regulators or others.

Going Concern

16. We confirm that, having considered financial projections which reflect the charity's expectations and intentions for a period of at least twelve months from the date on which the financial statements are expected to be approved, in our opinion, the charity's financial statements should be prepared on the going concern basis.

Uncorrected Misstatements

17. We confirm that, in our opinion, the effects of any uncorrected misstatements which have been set out in the Audit Findings Report, are immaterial, both individually and in aggregate, to the financial statements as a whole.

Commentary on the Financial Statements

GENERAL

The consolidated accounts have been drawn up on the basis of generally accepted accounting principles (Charities SORP 2019 - FRS 102) and relevant legislation. The accounts consist of:

- The Report of the Trustees, which affords the trustees the opportunity to explain the Charity's objectives for the year and its achievements and in particular how it has delivered public benefit. It also allows them to comment on financial performance for the year and financial position at the year end as well as making a range of disclosures required either by law or by accounting standards.
- An Auditors' report, which explains the scope of the audit, the nature of the auditors' responsibilities and expresses the audit opinion.
- A consolidated Statement of Financial Activities, which analyses incoming resources and resources expended by the group arriving at a net result thereby providing a measure of financial performance.
- A consolidated Balance Sheet, which analyses the group's assets and liabilities at the year end, thereby providing a measure of financial position at that date.
- A Balance Sheet, which analyses the Charity's assets and liabilities at the year end, thereby providing a measure of financial position at that date.
- A consolidated Cash Flow Statement and notes, which analyses the group's movement in cash during the year.
- Notes to the accounts, which provide an indication of the accounting policies adopted and provide further analysis of the figures disclosed in the primary statements.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

Net movement in total funds for the year showed a surplus of £2,623 in comparison to a deficit of £118,635 last year.

Total Income increased slightly from £991k to £1,011k. The increase in income is the result of the following:

1. Income from Student Activities increased from £163k last year to £181k this year. This income represents funds raised by the various clubs and societies of the Union. These funds can only be spent for the benefit of the club or society it was raised for, consequently, this income is restricted income.
2. Income from the bar increased from £127k to £132k.

3. Donations and legacies income (£607k) is in line with the previous year. The grant received from the University this year was the same as the previous year (£600k).
4. Other trading activities income of £83k has decreased slightly from £91k. Other trading activities income includes Advertising income, which is similar to last year. Varsity income decreased to £10k and Events income decreased slightly to £6k.
5. Investment income has increased from £3k to £7k, which is bank interest.

Expenditure for the year decreased from £1,054k to £1,039k. The main reasons for the decrease are explained below:

1. Student activities costs decreased from £474k to £459k. This is made up of restricted expenditure (from the clubs and societies self-raised funds) and unrestricted expenditure (expenditure by the Union). Restricted expenditure increased from £155k to £167k and unrestricted expenditure decreased from £319k to £292k.
2. Bar expenditure has decreased slightly from £272k to £266k.
3. Included within expenditure are wages, which have increased this year from £639k to £649k.
4. All other expenditure was broadly in line with the previous year.

The Student Union Superannuation Pension Scheme (SUSS) liability has decreased this year. The discount rate used stayed at 5%.

As a result of the above, the total unrestricted reserves at the disposition of the Charity have decreased by £11k. Unrestricted reserves, therefore, are now in deficit by £208k. Restricted reserves increased by £14k to £211k.

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET

Net book value of fixed assets has decreased from £11k to £6k. There were no additions and no disposals during the year. The depreciation charge for the year was £5.5k.

Net current assets, the principal balance sheet measure of short to medium term solvency, has decreased from £400k to £364k. There is a sound margin of solvency with unrestricted cash and bank balances alone being sufficient to cover Creditors by a factor of 4.7:1.

The stock figure of £5k relates to stocks held by the bar. This is a similar value to last year.

Debtors have increased from £20k to £30k. The increase relates to prepayments and accrued income.

Cash and bank balances have decreased from £414k to £362k. £352k of this was held in the Union's deposit account. The balance represents the current account and various floats held by the bar or in the safe.

Creditors have decreased slightly to £32k from £41k. Trade creditors have decreased to £8k from £15k. The balance is made up of Tax and social security of (£10k) and other creditors (£15k).

Provisions for liabilities' represents the calculated deficit funding contributions the Union must make in respect of the SUSS scheme. This has decreased from £411k to £367k. The decrease represents the unwinding of the discount, of £16k, less the actuarial gain of £31k and the contributions made to SUSS of £29k.