Welfare & Inclusion Council
MINUTES

Date	Thursday 1st October 2026
Time	16:30pm - 18:30pm
Location	Hybrid (LC107/Teams)
Chair	Richard Iyede (Welfare and Inclusion President)

No.	Item	Notes
1	Welcome and Introductions	**In Person Attendees:** Richard Iyede (Chair), Maggie Gonzales, Gallows Thompson, Bea Allan, Anurag Bosu, Eva Laure Takouo Kamdjom **Online Attendees:** Loukia Dimitriou, Ivan Barros De Almeida, Dominion Ojeli, Nafiu Soleman, Abdel Moeez, Angel Mamphey, Revanchi Chhabda, Triya Halai
2	Apologies	**Before 48 hours:** none **After 48 hours:** Vidhi Agrawal (accepted). **Absent (no apologies or attendance):** Hamza Ashraf, Shraddha Jain, Aamnah Haque
3	Terms of Reference	**Council Governance and Accountability:** RI introduced the new Welfare and Inclusion Council structure, meeting procedures and attendance expectations. and members agreed to propose a vote-of-no-confidence process for officers who missed required training and the inaugural meeting without apologies. **Meeting Procedures:** RI explained that this was the council's inaugural meeting, so there were no previous actions to approve. Future meetings will read out actions, seek a proposer and seconder, and record agreed actions. Members submitting agenda items can use the QR code, Team space or shared links.

		Voting Requirements: RI stated that votes would be conducted privately through Poll Everywhere. Members must use their name and student number as their screen name so votes can be verified, and anyone feeling pressured to vote should contact studentvoice@brunel.ac.uk. **Attendance Expectations:** RI asked members to submit apologies before meetings where possible. Late or unsupported apologies may be rejected, and repeated apologies may also be refused. Members were reminded that they represent students and should maintain engagement, including keeping cameras on when attending online.
4	Approval of the Previous Minutes	N/A for this meeting
5	Previous Meeting Actions	N/A for this meeting
6	Union Advice and Hardship Support	**Union Advice and Hardship Support:** The Union Advice Service reported supporting students with wellbeing, housing and hardship issues, while Maria highlighted restricted funding and ongoing efforts by HH and RI to secure additional resources. **Advice Caseload:** MB reported that the Union Advice Service had supported 304 students over the relevant three-year period, particularly with wellbeing, hardship funding, housing contracts and university accommodation issues. **Hardship Fund:** The Union's hardship fund is separate from the university's means-tested fund and is designed to offer a shorter route for emergency support. Eight applicants received support during the previous year, with £2,621 provided to successful applicants. **Funding Constraints:** Advisers have had to apply stricter limits because of the available budget. HH and RI are working to raise additional funds so emergency support can continue. **Common Needs:** The main reasons for hardship awards were food, transport and utility costs. The service also continues to support students seeking university funding waivers or other financial assistance.
7	Interfaith Network & Religious Symposium	**Interfaith Network and Religious Symposium:** RI proposed creating an ongoing interfaith network connected to Brunel's

		February Interfaith Week, while DO, GT, and NS raised questions about accessibility, governance and preventing domination or conflict by any single group. **Network Purpose:** RI described the proposed network as a collaborative space for people from different faiths and non-religious backgrounds to identify shared values, work with religious societies and support charitable or community activities. They have contacted Father Piotr and representatives from Islamic, Hindu, Christian and other societies, who expressed interest in recurring collaboration. **February Symposium:** RI explained that the Meeting House has planned Interfaith Week since around 2022. The programme normally includes faith leaders such as an imam, Catholic priest, Anglican reverend, and rabbi, alongside a religious symposium centred on a different theme each year, where participants share perspectives from their traditions. **Safe Participation:** DO asked how the February programme would attract international students who may hold strict religious views or be unfamiliar with interfaith work. GT raised the risk that a group could dominate the space or that unsuitable participants could turn it into a contentious forum. RI responded that clear house rules should prohibit proselytising, attempts to prove one religion right or debate over religious validity; the focus should be learning, exchange and shared values such as charity and hospitality. **Governance Options:** GT suggested that an interfaith structure might need two or three representatives rather than a single chair and co-chair to reduce the risk of domination. NS proposed considering a dedicated faith council rather than an interfaith network. RI said the concept remains at an early stage and invited further participation and feedback. **Follow-Up:** RI asked members to share feedback on the interfaith proposal in the Teams area. This was recorded as an action for the next stage of planning.
8	Student Loneliness	**Student Loneliness And Communications:** Members linked student loneliness to financial pressure, limited time, post-pandemic social development and difficult-to-find activities, leading to proposals for clearer event promotion, improved online spaces and stronger awareness of union services.

		Causes Of Loneliness: MB explained that post-COVID disruption, reduced opportunities to develop social connections, limited money and limited time can prevent students from finding communities. They highlighted particular risks for marginalised students, including queer students and students estranged from family or carrying additional responsibilities. **Event Discoverability:** BA said students currently need to search newsletters, several university websites, social media and the Student Union app to find activities. They argued that research should not be necessary to discover a community and proposed a more cohesive system for advertising events. **Digital Access Problems:** Members reported that the Student Life app is difficult to use, with problems accessing profiles, administrative functions and groups. Societies often use separate WhatsApp, Discord and Instagram spaces, creating further fragmentation. MB acknowledged that the app is still in a pilot phase and asked members to continue providing feedback. **Communications Improvements:** Suggestions included separating newsletters into clearer categories such as events and campus news, using opt-in mailing lists, increasing posters and using chair-led videos to promote networks. MB said additional posters were planned and that online hangouts, watch parties and other digital activities could support commuters and students who prefer to socialise remotely. **Student Feedback Channels:** Members proposed a simple suggestion-box or Google Form so students could raise concerns without already knowing an officer personally. MB confirmed that an ideas portal and feedback tool exist but acknowledged that they are not well publicised. The council may survey networks about a more accessible mechanism and consider a communications working group.
9	Brunel 60th celebration event	**EDI At 60 Celebration:** RI described the planned joint university and Union event celebrating Brunel's diversity and invited members to contribute ideas, including a multimedia arts programme, before planning progresses for spring. **Event Scope:** RI said the EDI at 60 event is being developed with university officials as a celebration of campus diversity, potentially including music, dance, food, fashion, poetry,

		exhibitions, student and staff skills, and engagement with the local community. **Arts Proposal:** GT proposed using the campus Art Centre for a multimedia gallery incorporating photography, interactive media, performance art, poetry, dance and student creative work. RI agreed to present the art-gallery proposal at the next working-group meeting. **Participation:** The event is expected to take place in spring before the examination period. Members interested in contributing should contact RI, who will raise their involvement with the organising group. Feedback and ideas were recorded as a council action.
10	Student Safety	**Student Safety And Campus Security:** The council discussed concerns about dark and open campus areas, awareness of security provision and staffing at large events, with proposed improvements including better lighting, clearer promotion of emergency contacts and increased visible security. **Safety Concerns:** MB said student feedback frequently describes the campus as unsafe, with concerns potentially intensified for marginalised groups. Women students have specifically raised the difficulty of walking across campus when it becomes dark early in the year. **Lighting And Visibility:** Members identified improved lighting as a priority, particularly in dark areas and along routes used at night. They also suggested making security more visible through increased patrols and clearer information about where students can obtain help. **Security Access:** Members noted that the security telephone number is printed on the back of student ID cards and that a security office is available around the clock, but many students do not know this. They also raised concerns that the security team may have become smaller, so awareness and accessibility should be improved. **Large Events:** A question was raised about whether security attends large parties, raves and other crowded events, where safeguarding risks may increase. MB explained that major events use external security at entrances and queues alongside campus security, and that staff can escort vulnerable students to safety. The request for more visible security during large events was to be recorded and passed to the commercial team.

		Existing Patrols: DO reported seeing security staff at venue events, escorting students who require assistance, and patrolling campus on bicycles. They nevertheless acknowledged that further improvement could be considered.
11	Humanitas Module	**Humanitas Curriculum Framework:** RI and AG are developing BrunelPlus Humanitas with university leaders, favouring an embedded or accreditation-based model covering career development, character, civic contribution and communication skills rather than a standalone optional module. **Module Purpose:** RI described Humanitas as a cross-campus approach intended to develop the whole person through career development, character building, community engagement and civic contribution, rather than focusing only on a degree subject. **University Collaboration:** RI and AG have been working with Nick Worsfold and Claire Turner and plan to submit a paper to the University Council on 20 October. Members were asked to provide feedback before that date through the feedback form or directly to RI. **Embedded Delivery:** RI said the team is opposed to a purely optional module because optional professional-development activities often receive limited engagement. Feedback from approximately 80% of students surveyed during Freshers supported a compulsory approach, although further consultation remains open. **Accreditation Model:** Following discussions with NW, the team is considering an accreditation framework rather than requiring identical content in every programme. Courses with existing professional or personal development content could apply for recognition, while courses lacking such provision could strengthen their offer against agreed criteria. **Skills And Union Links:** Potential content includes critical thinking and effective communication, particularly in an AI-enabled environment where students need to demonstrate their own competence. Members suggested including information about the Student Union, work unions and practical opportunities through networks so students can apply the skills developed. RI agreed to circulate the draft paper for feedback.

12	**Student Engagement Drop-Ins**	**Student Engagement Drop-Ins:** RI introduced 'What's Your Story?', a weekly drop-in with the presidents where students can learn about the Union, raise concerns and receive signposting, and members suggested adapting the approach for networks and advice services. **Drop-In Purpose:** The weekly drop-in gives students an informal opportunity to speak with the three presidents, understand the Union's work and raise academic, safety, equality, financial or other concerns. **Support Boundaries:** RI clarified that the presidents are not therapists or counsellors, but can listen, provide information and signpost students to appropriate services. **Network Visibility:** Members suggested holding similar visible sessions for student networks and the Advice Service because many students do not know these roles or services exist. This was linked to the wider need to improve communications and make support easier to find.
13	Report from Student Network Chairs	**Student Representation And Network Plans:** The council's officers outlined planned work on wellbeing, accessibility, financial support, professional development, international student engagement, LGBTQI+ inclusion and commuter representation, with several opportunities for cross-network collaboration. **Wellbeing Initiatives:** IBDA, the student wellbeing facilitator and co-vice chair, identified student engagement as a priority and said activities should be accessible, appealing and enjoyable. They proposed a sports documentary featuring athletes discussing wellbeing, future plans and insecurities, with potential involvement from sports governing organisations, and described Amplified Creative Therapy's plan to use music, art and media-based therapeutic activities. Amplified Creative Therapy has secured £7,000 through the Brunel Venture competition and Military Social Impact Fund. **Accessibility And Women's Support:** LD, the equity and inclusion facilitator, plans to examine accessibility across university buildings, identify barriers and understand how many students require additional support. They also intend to work with the Women's Network on safe spaces for women to discuss issues, with further planning expected around March.

		Professional And Financial Support: DO plans to connect Brunel students with employers and professional networks, including events that help students access difficult-to-reach career opportunities. Their Black History Month programme includes Campus to Corporate, with contributors from organisations such as KPMG and Westfield, and a late-October financial training session covering tax and saving; attendees will receive an exclusive financial playbook. **Network Engagement:** TH is focusing on raising awareness of the new Commuter and Distance Learners Student Network and understanding the difficulties faced by commuting and distance-learning students before deciding on interventions. AM plans to launch the Home Student Network's first meeting by 12 October, develop 'Brunel on Budget' resources on affordable food, discounts, financial support and free activities, and organise low-cost monthly gatherings. **Inclusion And Community Building:** MG wants to improve engagement by addressing students' limited time and financial pressures, potentially working with Triya on sustainable and ethical income opportunities alongside study. NS has already held an international student mixer and is exploring a fundraising event with ISO and other societies. GT plans to build a broader queer community through Trans Awareness Week, LGBT History Month activities, sports collaborations and events that include international and less-connected LGBTQI+ students.
14	Scrutiny & Accountability	**Officer Accountability:** RI raised concerns about the continued non-engagement of several elected network representatives, including those representing Disabled Students, Women Students, Pregnant and Parenting Students, and Gender Diversity and Inclusion. It was noted that some officers had not attended mandatory training, council meetings, or engaged in their roles since election, and had not submitted apologies. Several speakers emphasised that elected officers had actively sought and accepted these positions through the election process and therefore had a responsibility to participate, communicate, and fulfil the expectations of the role. Members discussed the impact of this lack of engagement on the student groups these roles are intended to represent. There was broad agreement that elected representatives have a

		responsibility to participate, communicate, and fulfil the expectations of their role, and that continued non-attendance without explanation undermines effective representation. MG raised that communication of absences or conflict is easy, and that these representatives should be expected to give notice with consequences. DO commented that missing both training and meetings without apology demonstrated a lack of commitment. Members agreed that leadership roles should carry clear expectations and consequences where those expectations are not met. LD stated that officers who fail to attend the required training session and the first council meeting should be replaced by students willing to undertake the role. No objections to this view were raised. RI clarified that any removal would need to follow the appropriate democratic process, with replacement chairs or vice-chairs elected through the relevant network structures. MB also advised that the Student Voice team could support networks in convening meetings where necessary to facilitate these elections. **Agreed Accountability Action:** RI proposed that a motion be brought to the next council meeting seeking votes of no confidence in officers who had failed to engage with training, meetings, or their representative responsibilities without explanation. The proposal was supported by the council without objection and will be brought forward at the next meeting.
15	Any other Business	**Trans Inclusion Statement:** Members asked the Union to respond publicly to the Supreme Court ruling and related EHRC guidance on single-sex spaces, and Maria agreed to connect them with the communications manager so a draft statement and later policy motion can be developed. **Request For Statement:** Members said the university had not issued a statement following the Supreme Court ruling and EHRC guidance on single-sex spaces, creating uncertainty for trans students and staff. They proposed that the Student Union publish a statement affirming its commitment to the safety and wellbeing of trans people on campus. **University Engagement:** Members also asked the Union to press the university to make its own statement. They said a Union statement could demonstrate that students want

		clarity and could support a formal request to the university through the appropriate committee or governance route. **Drafting Process:** MB suggested preparing a formal statement and, separately, a policy motion setting out the Union's expectations and any principles to apply in Union spaces. They offered to introduce the members to Francesca, the communications manager, and requested that the council provide feedback on the draft. **Agreed Follow-Up:** The initial action is to draft the statement and share it with the council for feedback. A future meeting is expected to consider the formal policy motion and the Union's position.

ACTIONS

Follow-up tasks:

Agreed Next Steps: RI summarised the council's follow-up work, including circulating the Humanitas draft, developing the trans-inclusion statement and policy motion, collecting interfaith and EDI event feedback, and recording accountability proposals for the next meeting.

- **Humanitas Paper:** Send the draft Humanitas paper to council members for review and feedback before its submission to University Education Council. (RI)
- **Trans-Inclusion Statement:** Connect the proposer with Francesca and the communications manager to draft a Union statement on the Supreme Court ruling and trans students' safety, incorporating council feedback for consideration at the next meeting. (MB)
- **Interfaith Network:** Share feedback on the proposed Interfaith Network in the Teams area to inform its structure and safeguarding arrangements. (the council)
- **Brunel 60th EDI Event:** Invite interested council members to join the planning discussions and collect their ideas for the joint University–Union EDI at 60 events. (RI)
- **Network Engagement Survey:** Circulate a survey to network chairs on whether a more accessible student suggestion and feedback mechanism is needed and report the outcome at a future meeting. (MB)
- **Accountability Motion:** Prepare a motion for the next council meeting proposing a vote of no confidence for network officers who missed required training and the inaugural meeting without apologies, in line with the applicable attendance rules. (RI)