

Council Minutes

3rd week trinity term 2012

3rd Week Council held at 5.30pm on Wednesday 9th May 2012, in St Catherine's College Lecture Theatre

If you have any questions about OUSU Council, you should feel free to contact the Chair, Charlie Baker at any time on chair@ousu.org

- a. Minutes of the Previous Meeting
- b. Matters Arising from the Minutes
- c. Ratifications in Council
- d. Elections in Council
- e. Reports from the Sabbatical Officers
- f. Reports from the Executive Officers who wish to make reports
- g. Questions to Members of the Executive
- h. Emergency Motions
- i. Passage of Motions Nem Con
- j. Motions of No Confidence or Censure
- k. First readings of Motions to Amend the Constitution or Standing Orders
- l. The Budget or Amended Budget
- m. Motions Authorising Capital Expenditure
- n. Other Motions
 - i. motions affecting ousu members as ousu members
 - ii. motions affecting ousu members as students at Oxford University
 - iii. motions affecting ousu members as members of the student movement
 - iv. motions affecting ousu members as residents of Oxford
 - v. motions affecting ousu members as residents of the United Kingdom
 - vi. motions affecting ousu members as citizens of the world
- o. Any Other Business

a. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

No problems minutes passed.

d. Elections in Council

The following positions were elected in OUSU Council of 3rd week.

Returning Officer

David Bagg (Balliol) college was elected.

1 Deputy Returning

Stephen Pritchett (St Catherine's) was elected.

1 position on the Teaching Awards Selection Panel

Charlie Baker (St Catherine's) was elected.

e. Reports from the Sabbatical Officers

President - Martha Mackenzie

I'm Martha and I have a few things to add to my report. Nominations for teaching awards closed got 330 nominations, hoping to announce winners in 5th and 6th week.

If you want to talk about rent then please get in touch with myself or David Butler.

Policy lapse in 5th week have a good look and the Policy Lapse booklet and bring motions on any things that you don't want to lapse.

Yuan has been off unwell and it looks like she's not going to be back in before end of term.

VP Graduates - Jim O'Connell

VP Grads not much to add review of Post grad research has gone down well, colleges may wish to think of what teaching they might like to give to DPhils.

University has introduced idea of higher fees for DPhil's so I am working against this happening.

Going to talk about visas with NUS International Student Conference on Thursday and Friday.

VP (Welfare & Equal Opportunities)

Thanks everyone who came to mind your head was a great success. I would like to give a shout out about student advice service we offer free advice and advocacy so if you don't feel equipped to deal with then please come to us.

VP (Access & Academic Affairs)

One thing to add to written report. We requested more student involvement in JRARG and university was reluctant passed a motion sent letter to group and they have come back and said happy to have one of us on it, a great win, not over yet, needs to go to University council and Conference of Colleges, not there yet, but fingers crossed will get through so big thanks.

VP (Charities & Communities)

Tomorrow is Union RAG comedy debate so please come along if you can.

If interested in getting involved in OUSU garden party, then get in touch.

e. Reports from Members of the Executive who wish to give Reports

BME Office - Chidi Oneyeche

Set up access scheme for BME students, going to set up some presentations for it to go out at end of trinity term to schools.

Common Room Support Officer - James Raynor

Sky are still being difficult about Sku contracts, I am getting close to finding out why can't give contracts to certain colleges, but please get in touch with any feed back

i. Passage of Motions Nem Con

- i. motions affecting OUSU members as OUSU members**
- ii. motions affecting OUSU members as students at Oxford University**

1. Safety Bus Review

Opposition

- iii. motions affecting OUSU members as members of the student movement**
- iv. motions affecting OUSU members as residents of Oxford University Student Union**
- v. motions affecting OUSU members as residents of the United Kingdom**

- vi. Motions affecting OUSU members as citizens of the world**

2. Womcam and Slutwalk 2012

Council notes:

1. That political marches are an important exercise of the right to protest
2. WomCam and OUSU council passed a motion in support of Slutwalk in TT11
3. Slutwalk is a continuing force, with Slutwalk 2012 happening in London
4. Sexual harassment is an important issue to students and should be addressed

Council believes:

1. That Slutwalk raises awareness of issues surrounding consent and sexual well-being
2. OUSU's continued support for Slutwalk is desirable

Council resolves:

1. To organise and promote a Slutwalk in Oxford in TT12, engaging many relevant groups
2. To take a WomCam banner when we march
3. To invite all Oxford residents and students, as well as delegations from each Common Room and Campaign present in OUSU, to join them.

Proposer: *Sarah Pine (Wadham)*

Seconder: *Sussanah Deedigan (Balliol)*

Passed Nem Con.

k. Motions to Amend the Constitution or Standing Orders

OUSU Bye-Laws

Council Notes:

1. OUSU requires Bye-Laws under its new constitution (Memorandum & Articles) and that the current set are only interim.
2. As required by Article 59, the Board of Trustees has approved the text of a full set of replacement Bye-Laws .
3. The University has raised no objections to that text.
4. Proposed Bye-Laws 1 to 4 take effect on their making, one of the consequences of which is that Council may no longer make or amend Rules and Standing Orders.

Council Believes:

1. OUSU should be able to govern itself properly and professionally.
2. Bye-Laws are therefore a good thing.

Council Resolves:

1. In the exercise of its powers under Article 59 to make and adopt the Bye-Laws presented for its approval on 9th May 2012.
2. To request the Internal Affairs Committee to draw up a plan for the remaining Bye-Laws to take effect.

Please note that the Memorandum and Articles and the Bye-Laws have been widely circulated and are displayed on the OUSU Website.

Proposer: *Martha Mackenzie (St John's)*

Secunder: *Jim O'Connell (Univ)*

Martha Mackenzie (St John's)

Exciting day we pass new byelaws ever closer. In 2010 OUSU registered as a charity, and our governing docs didn't fulfil necessary criteria. This is the first step to new regulations, will get to review in 7th week. Any questions. Everyone happy.

Passed on 1st Reading.

i. The Budget or Amended Budget**OUSU Budget 2012 - 2013****Council Notes and Accepts:**

1. The attached OUSU Budget 2012 - 2013.

Please note that the Budget and accompanying guidance notes have been circulated by email and placed on the OUSU website.

Proposed: *Martha Mackenzie (St John's)*

Secunder: *Jim O'Connell (Univ)*

Martha Mackenzie (St John's)

Budget saw last week, not much changed this is the formal passing off the budget. Want to give context, OUSU applied for extra funding didn't get any. In comparison to other universities we are woefully underfunded, trying to professionalise, but we are struggling, this budget is quite sparse, most is spent on staff, not much on campaigns. I will be bringing a motion in 5th week about our concern of lack in funding, any thoughts you have would like to hear.

This is about this years, moved a lot of money around, so we can employ a term time receptionist, so that our DSO can be used more effectively to support sabs and council.

Careers going through OSSL so some will come in and go back out again as is University's share.

No opposition passes.

n. Other Motions

- i. motions affecting OUSU members as OUSU members
- ii. motions affecting OUSU members as students at Oxford University

1. Safety Bus Review

Council Notes:

1. The 'Safety Bus' is a joint partnership between OUSU and Oxford Brookes Student Union (OBSU). The service is made up of volunteers from Oxford University and Oxford Brookes and provides transportation around Oxford to those who contact the service between 9PM and 3AM (1AM on Sundays), when volunteers are available to staff the service.
2. The financial commitment from OUSU for the service in the 2011/12 academic year is £12000.
3. In 7th Week Council of Michaelmas Term 2011 the Vice President (Charities and Community) and Vice President (Women) were mandated to evaluate the service, promotion and provision of the Safety Bus. This report and its recommendations are the result.

Council Believes:

1. That the Safety Bus provides a valuable welfare service to members of Oxford Brookes University and the University of Oxford.
2. That it is undesirable that this service is only available for a fraction of the Oxford University academic year.

Council Resolves:

1. To endorse the second option outlined in the Safety Bus Review and to mandate the VP C&C to work with OBSU to investigate outsourcing the running of the Safety Bus.
2. To approve the Publicity Plan detailed in Section 8 of the Safety Bus Review.
3. To mandate the VP C&C to ensure that the Safety Bus runs for the duration of the Oxford University term time.

Proposed: *Daniel Stone, St Peter's College*

Seconded: *Oliver Gleeson, Christ Church*

Daniel Stone (St Peter's)

Based on motion brought to OUSU council, and then re-evaluation of Safety bus with Oxford Brookes. Sent out a survey and then went out to common rooms, then had smaller focus groups, then did research into how other Unions run their safety bus. Used feedback to try and get an idea of how to do it think, idea to outsource, need to look into whether feasible. Will put us in a position to discuss with Oxford Brookes, and that they should take into consideration our concerns.

Nick Seaford (St John's)

If find out cost of outsourcing higher, what will do?

Daniel Stone (St Peter's)

See if University is willing to fund cost, and also discuss with Oxford Brookes, how it can cover our term times. Sure we could come to some sort of agreement.

David Townsend (St John's)
How many Oxford term weeks that don't correspond?

Daniel Stone (St Peter's)
Think about 8 but depends on the volunteers, after Christmas and time in summer, when Oxford Brookes has exams.

Nick Seaford (St John's):
Do you think that the share of funding is fair?

Daniel Stone (St Peter's)
Tends to be used a lot more by Oxford Brookes as their accommodation is further away from the clubs. The money given by the University is given specifically for the safety bus and wouldn't be given to us for anything else.

Sean Robinson (The Queen's)
Implement a system when outsourced to monitor the usage.

Daniel Stone (St Peter's)
Yes is something we could definitely require of the companies we outsource to.

No opposition. Motion passes.

- iii. motions affecting OUSU members as members of the student movement
- iv. motions affecting OUSU members as residents of Oxford University Student Union
- v. motions affecting OUSU members as residents of the United Kingdom

- vi. Motions affecting OUSU members as citizens of the world

2. Womcam and Slutwalk 2012

Passed Nem Con.

Safety Bus Review

Trinity Term 2012

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 - iii. Oxford University-only Safety Bus
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- 8. Publicity Plan**
- 9. Summary of Recommendations**

1. Executive Summary

This review is the end result of a three-stage process running throughout Hilary Term 2012.

In the first stage students were invited to share their experiences of using the Safety Bus via an online survey and by a series of Common Room visits. There was almost unanimous agreement that the Safety Bus provided a valuable and well-needed service for Oxford University students, but that often the delivery of the Safety Bus failed to match up to its ideals. Problems were identified in terms of general knowledge and awareness of the Safety Bus, and it was agreed that at a minimum requirement was that the Safety Bus run during Oxford University term times.

The second stage was a small focus group with a representative group of students including representatives from the OUSU Women's Campaign and the postgraduate community. The aim of this group was to evaluate the purpose of the Safety Bus and whether this purpose was being met by current arrangements. The welfare aspect of the Safety Bus was agreed as being its primary purpose and a number of ideas were floated as to how this purpose could be achieved more effectively and at a lower cost.

In the third stage, these ideas were investigated more thoroughly via interviews with possible service providers, correspondence with other Student Unions and conversations with partners. This investigation has provided us with five options to choose between as we consider the future of the Safety Bus:

Option 1. Maintain the status quo: We could keep the Safety Bus functioning as it currently does but with the condition that every effort is made to allow the Safety Bus to run during the duration of Oxford University term times and in a more efficient manner.

Option 2. Alter our partnership: We would keep the partnership with Oxford Brookes University but would contract out the running of the Safety Bus to an external provider.

Option 3. Oxford University-only Safety Bus: We could consider funding and managing a Safety Bus independent of Oxford Brookes University.

Option 4. Taxi Partnership: We could consider working with a local taxi company to offer free transport to vulnerable students.

Option 5. Abandon the Safety Bus concept: We could offer alternatives such as 'Walk safe schemes' or leave the provision of transportation to individual colleges.

For reasons that I shall explain throughout this report, **my preferred Option is Option 2** as it guarantees a level of service to meet the needs of students of both Universities.

Along with this preferred option I have outlined a number of recommendations for improving the service provided by the Safety Bus in its current form, and have included a draft publicity plan to raise awareness of the Safety Bus in the years to come.

A motion will be brought before OUSU Council in 3rd Week of Trinity Term to recommending Option 2 for approval and further investigation.

In the meantime please email community@ousu.org if you wish to comment on anything written in the report.

Daniel Stone
Vice President (Charities and Community)

2. Introduction

The Oxford Student Safety Bus is run jointly by Oxford Brookes Student Union (OBSU) and the Oxford University Student Union as a means of transporting students safely to their homes late at night. The Safety Bus is a demand-responsive service, which means that pick-ups have to be called in using the Safety Bus number (0771 444 50 50), where priority is given to lone travellers and vulnerable students. Passengers are asked to give a voluntary donation of £1 for a service that will take them anywhere within the ring road.

The Safety Bus runs according to Oxford Brookes University term times, from 9pm-3am Monday to Saturday and from 9pm-1am on Sundays. Operation of the Safety Bus is dependent on a committed group of volunteer drivers and co-drivers, as well as the OBSU Membership Services Administrator who is responsible for upkeep of the Safety Buses. There are currently two buses kept and maintained at the Oxford Brookes Headington Hill Campus. Both buses will be used on traditionally busy nights, provided that there are enough volunteers on shift.

In the 2011/12 academic year OUSU will contribute £12,000 to the running of the Safety Bus, while OBSU will more than match this sum, bringing the overall figure of running the two buses beyond £25,000. It is worth noting that OUSU receives money from the University to fund the Safety Bus and there is no evidence that we would be able to hold onto any savings made from providing the service at lower cost.

The review process was set in motion by OBSU and OUSU in October 2011 as an attempt to evaluate current service provision. A few weeks later in 7th Week Council of Michaelmas Term 2011 a motion was passed mandating the Vice President (Women) and Vice President (Charities and Community) to:

1. Evaluate and consider ways to increase and improve upon current efforts to promote usage of the 'Safety Bus'
2. Evaluate current usage of the safety bus
3. Ensure the continuation of the service throughout the evaluation/investigation

This review is in response to both the process begun by the Student Unions and the issues highlighted in the OUSU Council motion. It will begin by presenting the results of the Safety Bus Survey, Focus Group and Student Union investigations, before using these results to suggest options moving forward for the operation and promotion of the Safety Bus. The review concludes with a brief summary of recommendations scattered throughout this report.

3. The Safety Bus Survey

These are the results and subsequent analysis of the Safety Bus Survey conducted during Hilary Term 2012. In total 450 students from the University of Oxford participated in this investigation through the completion of an online survey or by show of hands in a Common Room general meeting.

The information generated from the survey and common rooms have been purposefully separated to account for statistical bias. Survey respondents had to opt-in to the Safety Bus survey and are consequently likely to be more knowledgeable about the safety bus than the average student. However attendees at a random common room general meeting could provide a useful unbiased cross-section of the student body (although it could be argued that students who attend GMs are likely to be more knowledgeable too).

A brief summary of the findings from the Safety Bus Survey and the data from Common Room visits are given below, along with a more detailed breakdown of results.

i. Safety Bus Survey Summary

General usage of the Safety Bus among Oxford University students is quite low due to the central location of colleges, the existence of other alternatives and a general lack of knowledge about the Safety Bus and when it operates. Usage is not helped by the perception that the Safety Bus is exclusively for vulnerable students and a number of bad experiences of students calling the Safety Bus.

Some of these issues are linked to a lack of publicity and awareness, but further publicity could actually exacerbate problems if the Safety Bus continues to run only according to Oxford Brookes University term times and if certain inefficiencies are not successfully ironed out.

There was almost unanimous agreement that the Safety Bus provided a valuable and well-needed service for Oxford University students, but that often the delivery of the Safety Bus failed to match up to its ideals.

ii. Common Room Visits Summary

General awareness of the Safety Bus was quite high (90%), but usage was much lower. Perceptions of the Safety Bus and knowledge of the workings of the Safety Bus were quite poor, but there was a consensus that the Safety Bus had to at the very least run according to both Oxford Brookes and Oxford University Term times.

iii. Safety Bus Survey Detailed Results

Q1. Name

Q2. Gender:

Gender		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	35.0%	76
Female	64.1%	139
Other	0.9%	2
<i>answered question</i>		217
<i>skipped question</i>		4

Q3. College: Students from 36 Colleges and PPHs participated in the survey, with the greatest number of responses from Balliol (32), Corpus Christi (15) and Linacre/St Hugh's (11)

Q4. Undergraduate/Postgraduate

Undergraduate/Postgraduate		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Undergraduate	79.2%	175
Postgraduate	20.4%	45
Other	0.5%	1
<i>answered question</i>		221
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q5. Year of Study

Year of Study		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	30.3%	67
2	30.8%	68
3	25.3%	56
4	10.4%	23
5	2.3%	5
6	0.5%	1
6+	0.5%	1
<i>answered question</i>		221
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q6. Safety Bus Usage

How often do you use the Safety Bus?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Never	70.6%	139
I used it once but haven't used it since (jump to Q8)	19.8%	39
Occasionally (jump to Q9)	9.1%	18
Regularly (jump to Q9)	1.5%	3
Other (please specify)		2
<i>answered question</i>		197
<i>skipped question</i>		24

There were two responses of people who have tried the Safety Bus number and couldn't get through or found it wasn't running

Q7. Why have you never used the Safety Bus?

The responses collected for this question can be broadly divided into:

1. No need for the Safety Bus (79) - Respondents didn't stay out that late or their college is quite central or they felt that there were **better alternatives** such as public transport, bikes, walking with a panic alarm or using existing college taxi services that reimburse women walking home alone at night
2. Lack of information (31) - Respondents **didn't know it existed and/or where/how to catch it**
3. Perceived inconvenience (11): There was a **perception that the Safety Bus would take too long to arrive** and so getting a taxi was easier

4. Altruism (9): Respondents didn't want to take the service away from someone in greater need. Suggestion that **the word 'Safety' meant that people were reluctant to use it**
5. Perceptions of Safety Bus (8): Linked to 1 and 4, it was perceived that the Safety Bus was for drunken people or only in the case of an emergency. Therefore people were embarrassed to use it.
6. Bad Experiences (8): These ranged from calls not connecting (2), to people having to wait too long for the bus to arrive (3), to really poor service from 'rude' volunteers (3). One suggestion was that rather than ringing out, **the Voicemail on the Safety Bus phone** could be used to communicate more effectively to passengers of the safety bus isn't running that night etc. These negative experiences were extremely damaging to the reputation of the Safety Bus within these common rooms and affected the willingness of students to use it.
7. Forgot it existed (3)

Q8. Why do you no longer use the Safety Bus?

The responses fell broadly into four categories:

1. Bad Experiences (23): Further divided into
 - a. Not running when needed (12): This is primarily because the bus only runs according to **Brookes Term times** so people were calling and not getting through
 - b. Slow service (7): **Took far too long**
 - c. Rude volunteers (3): Talk down to passengers as volunteers assume they're drunk; **volunteers can act predatorily (asking female volunteers for their phone number)**
 - d. Someone wasn't picked up (1)
2. No need (20): The Safety Bus was used as a one off in an emergency situation or during **freshers' week**
3. Change in situation so they live much closer to town (3)
4. Plans to use bus again (2)

Q9. Average waiting times

If you have used the Safety Bus, what is the average amount of time you have waited to be picked up?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 5 minutes	5.7%	3
5-10 minutes	26.4%	14
10-15 minutes	32.1%	17
15-20 minutes	24.5%	13
20+ minutes	13.2%	7
Other (please specify)		6
answered question		53
skipped question		168

Two answers in the 'other' category were 45mins-1hr and more than an hour

Q.10 Do you know the Safety Bus number?

Do you know the number to call the Safety Bus?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
No	55.8%	110
Yes, I keep it in my phone	43.1%	85
Yes, I keep it on my person (wallet etc.)	2.5%	5
Yes, I've memorised it	0.5%	1
Other (please specify)		4
answered question		197
skipped question		24

Q.11 When does the Safety Bus run?

When does the Safety Bus run?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
All year round	4.1%	8
According to Oxford Brookes term times	18.8%	37
According to Oxford University term times	10.7%	21
I don't know	71.6%	141
Other (please specify)		1
answered question		197
skipped question		24

The correct answer is 'according to Oxford Brookes term times'

Q.12 When should the Safety Bus run?

When should the Safety Bus run?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
All year round	17.3%	34
During Oxford Brookes term times only	1.0%	2
During Oxford University term times only	3.6%	7
During both Oxford Brookes and Oxford University term times	73.1%	144
I don't know	6.1%	12
Other (please specify)		2
answered question		197
skipped question		24

The two 'other' suggestions were to run it during the vacation to account for postgraduates and to put the service on hold until adjustments are made to make it function properly

Q.13 Would you consider volunteering for the Safety Bus?

Would you consider volunteering for the Safety Bus?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	23.8%	45
No	56.1%	106
I don't know	21.7%	41
answered question		189
skipped question		32

Q.14 Would you recommend the Safety Bus to a new student?

Would you recommend the Safety Bus to a new student?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	66.5%	131
No	8.6%	17
I don't know	24.9%	49
Why/Why not?		82
answered question		197
skipped question		24

Out of those who answered yes:

1. 29 thought it was a really good service as it is safe, cheap and a good alternative
2. 22 non-users would recommend it as it seemed like a good idea

Out of those who answered no/I don't know:

1. 15 said they couldn't recommend a service they hadn't used and didn't know much about
2. 9 thought it was unreliable and too slow
3. 5 had a particularly bad experience using the safety bus
4. 1 said they were afraid of going on a bus full of drunk people
5. One recommendation was that it is **dangerous to advertise an unreliable service**. This respondent was left stranded far from home with £1 in their pocket.

Q.15 What would you say is the best aspect of the Safety Bus?

The responses were:

1. Price (47): The optional £1 fee was low enough not to put people off from using the bus
2. Safety (23): People felt safe on the Safety Bus and could trust volunteers more than taxi drivers (3)
3. Convenience (15): The fact that it ran at night throughout Oxford and took you to your door
4. The Idea (11): Knowing that it's there as an option even if idea has been executed poorly
5. Prioritising (8): The fact that 'vulnerable' people are given priority
6. Friendly volunteers (6)
7. Non-judgemental (1)

Q.16 Is there anything that could be done differently?

The responses were:

1. A quicker service (14): It takes too long and the expected length of time isn't always accurately communicated
2. Publicity (14): People aren't aware of the Safety Bus and the number. Why not **distribute the card to lodges?**
3. Purpose (8): Make the purpose clear - **is it only for 'vulnerable' students or not?** Show it's non-judgemental
4. Consistency/reliability (7): Doesn't run when advertised
5. Volunteers (3): Need better **training on being non-confrontational, friendlier and should aim to have at least one female volunteer**
6. More buses (3)
7. Longer running hours (2)
8. Use in the day for charity groups to increase visibility (2)
9. Waste of time, money and effort. It's the responsibility of students to plan ahead (1)

Common Room Visits Detailed Results

The combined results from the 7 Common Rooms visited in Hilary Term 2012 are as follows:

Total number of students: 229

1. Have they heard of the Safety Bus?
Yes - 205 (90%); No - 24 (10%)
2. Have they used the Safety Bus (out of 205)
Yes - 25 (12%); No - 180 (88%)
3. Do you have the Safety Bus number to hand? (out of 205)
Phone - 51 (25%); wallet/equivalent - 8 (4%); elsewhere - 8 (4%); don't know - 138 (67%)
4. When does the Safety Bus run? (out of 205)
All year - 0; Brookes - 74 (36%); OU - 47 (23%); Both - 15 (7%); Don't Know - 69 (34%)
5. When should it run?
All year - 12 (5%); Brookes - 0; OU only - 0; Both term times - 207 (90%)
6. Would you consider volunteering for the Safety Bus?
Yes - 36 (16%); No - 193 (84%)

iv. Summary of Recommendations

The Safety Bus Survey brought out a number of key recommendations:

1. The Safety Bus has to run during Oxford University term times: frustrations were exacerbated because the service wasn't running when expected.
2. The Safety Bus has to run quickly and more reliably: the relatively close proximity of Oxford Colleges and places of residence, means that there are often more viable alternatives.
3. Promotion has to become more effective: People didn't know enough about the Safety Bus - one suggestion was to leave Safety Bus cards in College lodges. An important point was that we should only heavily promote a service that we know is functioning well or else we could put students in danger.
4. Publicity should also make it clear whom the Safety Bus is for. This could potentially lead to changing the name from 'Safety' as it was felt that this name conjured up unhelpful associations and made people reluctant to use it.
5. Use Voicemail on the Safety Bus phone to pass on information rather than allowing it to ring out.
6. Volunteer Training: Training should re-emphasise the importance of being non-confrontational. There was also a concerning account of a volunteer acting predatorily, which should also be addressed in upcoming volunteer training. It was suggested that having at least one female volunteer could make female passengers more comfortable.

4. The Focus Group

The focus group was brought together to offer a cross-sectional response to some of the fundamental questions behind the function of Safety Bus, how it is publicised and what an improved service would look like. The focus group was conducted without knowledge of the results of the Safety Bus survey.

An open invitation was sent out to Womens' Officers, OUSU Representatives, Welfare Representatives and Common Room Presidents, in the hope that we'd be able to get together a representative group of students from the undergraduate and postgraduate community. The end result was a group of 5 students and sabbatical officers broadly covering these interest groups.

Our first discussion was on the purpose of the Safety Bus. It was agreed that its primary purpose was the **welfare service it provided to vulnerable students**, both directly and indirectly, as it prevented the use of potentially harmful alternatives. Other fringe benefits included the impact of the Safety Bus in maintaining positive relationships with the police and local community.

We concluded that the primary purpose was best fulfilled through **low prices, a reliable and quick service, and trust in the Safety Bus brand**. It was felt that the current price level was good, but that service was often unreliable and slow, and the Safety Bus brand was being let down by a general lack of awareness and publicity.

The unreliability of the service was apportioned to the fact that it didn't run during a large part of the Oxford University academic year and sometimes didn't run when advertised, usually if there were not enough willing volunteers. However there were also irregularities based on the distance between the Safety Bus and the passenger at the time the call was made. It was felt that this was primarily due to the greater distance of Oxford Brookes University campuses and halls of residence from the city centre. The inability to respond quickly to the needs of vulnerable students was deemed to be unacceptable given the purpose of the Safety Bus.

The discussion on publicity produced a number of useful recommendations:

- Publicity should target friends and give them the responsibility of getting their friends home safely. Often an individual will be too drunk to make the rational decision of calling the Safety Bus.
- We should consider changing the name of the Safety Bus as there is stigma attached to the word 'safety'. Other SUs have a 'Night Bus' while Sheffield has a 'Women's Minibus'.
- Publicity should involve: putting safety bus cards in lodges, bars and common rooms, use of facebook and YouTube, targeting Entz Reps and freshers' week, and putting posters in undergraduate and graduate accommodation a considerable distance away from the city centre.

In closing we discussed how the welfare service of the Safety Bus could more effectively and/or efficiently be provided by other means. This discussion spawned the investigation at the heart of the next three chapters.

5. Other Student Unions

Many other Student Unions run a 'safety' bus with varied levels of success. In the vast majority of cases the bus has a series of set pick-up times from outside the Student Union building or other popular destinations in town. Most Student Unions also give **details of a preferred taxi company** should the bus reach capacity.

The Oxford context is very different in that OUSU doesn't have a central venue and the Brookes central venue is situated outside of the city centre and no longer runs student club nights. Unlike the Oxford Student Safety Bus, the service offered by other Unions has limited capacity to respond to emergency situations, as there is very little in place to reach students away from the Student Union building who needed immediate assistance.

Out of the many examples, three case studies from other Student Unions have been selected as illustrations of the way in which the Safety Bus functions elsewhere:

i. The Women's Minibus

The Sheffield University Student Union runs a Women's Minibus 7-nights a week during term time, taking women to their doors from outside the Student Union building. Tickets cost £1.50 each and can be bought either by purchasing them from the Student Union earlier in the day or by turning up at the fixed pick-up time. The pick-up time is on the half hour every hour between 9.30pm and 2.30am. It is estimated to cost around £10,000 per year.

The minibus works because most students will go to the club nights hosted by the SU, so the pick-up spot is an ideal location for clubbers and people working late in the library just around the corner. The women passengers really appreciate the service provided, as they don't have the same level of trust and security catching a taxi home. There is often backlash from men who would like to use the service too, but more than thirty years on, it is still a women's only bus.

Sheffield University Student Union also runs a 'Safety Taxi' scheme in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University Student Union, the City Council and a local taxi company. Under the terms of their agreement a lone or vulnerable student can hand over a card and receive free transportation back home, therefore responding to the needs of students in an emergency.

ii. Leicester SU's Safety Bus

Leicester three Safety Buses take students home on a daily basis throughout term time from 6pm in the winter and 7pm in the summer. Pick-ups are every half hour, from outside the Student Union or the venue of the most popular student club night (after midnight). It costs £2 per trip home or students can purchase a termly or annual Safety Bus Pass, worth £39 and £79 respectively. This year 16 termly and 196 annual passes have been sold.

The buses operate at a deficit of around £45,000 per year to run as they're driven and operated by paid staff members. However they are able to claw back some of this deficit by hiring out the minibuses to sports clubs and societies.

iii. The Durham Night Bus

The Durham Night bus operates in an almost identical fashion to the Oxford Student Safety Bus. For a fee of £1 the bus responds on demand to students calling the Night bus number, with priority given to lone travellers. The bus transports an estimated 10,000 students per year despite only using one vehicle.

However the big difference is that the Night Bus is contracted out to external providers. Under their agreement the contractor keeps the £1 fee and charges the Student Union an additional fixed amount per week. Durham estimates that it costs them around £10,00 per year to offer a service that is fully staffed and maintained by an external company.

The bus also has a different image to the Safety Bus. At the start of a night out it is viewed as a "Party bus" to take students from colleges into town. Its welfare function of providing a safe and secure way back

home takes priority after a night out. This has been found to be an extremely productive way of getting students comfortable with the idea of calling and using the Safety Bus.

6. Options Moving Forward

The responses to the Safety Bus Survey, the opinions expressed in the focus group and the results of investigations into similar schemes have convinced me that there are five options to choose between as we face the future of the Safety Bus. In this section I will outline the five options and their relative strengths and weaknesses, then in the following section I will select the option I believe to be the preferable option of the five.

The five options are:

- i. Maintain the status quo
- ii. Alter our partnership
- iii. Oxford University-only Safety Bus
- iv. Taxi Partnership
- v. Abandon the Safety Bus concept

I. Maintain the Status Quo

We could keep the Safety Bus functioning as it currently does but with the condition that every effort is made to allow the Safety Bus to run during the duration of Oxford University term times and in a more efficient manner.

The Safety Bus has a system that transports the majority of callers safely to their desired destination. Some would say 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it'. However I think it is broken.

It is broken primarily because for the majority of Trinity Term and the beginning of Hilary Term this vital welfare service isn't available to students at the University of Oxford, despite the hefty sum paid by the Student Union. This HAS to change. The question then becomes how can we keep the Safety Bus running outside of Brookes term times given that the majority of volunteers and all the support staff are members of Oxford Brookes University?

Even if this question has an easy answer, I think the case studies from other Student Unions have shown that the Safety Bus isn't operating as efficiently as it could. Using a central student union venue clearly isn't feasible, but we should investigate the possibility of following Leicester's model of having fixed pick-up times outside popular venues.

II. Alter our partnership

We would keep the partnership with Oxford Brookes University but would contract out the running of the Safety Bus to an external provider.

In answer to the question posed under the previous heading, I think the only way to guarantee a reliable, consistent service running through both Oxford Brookes and Oxford University term times is to contract out the running of the Safety Bus.

Durham University Student Union have shown that this model makes financial sense as the economies of scale and scope afforded to professional coach companies allows them to provide a much cheaper service inclusive of staffing and maintenance costs. Contracting out also avoids the problems of volunteer shortages during the exam period and other times of student inactivity.

Conversely, contracting out will rob the service of student volunteers. Although the Safety Bus Survey unearthed grievances with student volunteers, many more commented that the volunteers contributed to a friendly and enjoyable journey, and that they were able to trust student volunteers more. As well as the effect on the service user there is also a negative effect on individual volunteers who lose the opportunity to contribute to a service they care about.

III. Oxford University-only Safety Bus

We could consider funding and managing a Safety Bus independent of Oxford Brookes University.

This would seek primarily to address concerns voiced about the speed of the service. Having an Oxford University-only Safety Bus would greatly reduce the average length of journeys and would consequently reduce average waiting times.

I'd question whether there would be enough demand among Oxford University students given the close proximity of colleges to the city centre. Usage among Brookes students is much greater than that of Oxford University students and it could be more efficient to pool our resources into a single service. However owning our own bus could allow us to create demand in new ways by working with volunteering groups or societies.

If we chose to go it alone, we would be faced with the prospect of sourcing our own volunteers and finding somewhere to keep the Safety Bus, although outsourcing could solve both of these problems. The latter problem could also be remedied by exploring the possibilities of working in partnership with the Oxford University Sports Federation or local minibus owners, but this is unlikely to be able to provide a reliable and cost-effective service.

IV. Taxi Partnership

We could consider working with a local taxi company to offer free transport to vulnerable students.

Sheffield University Student Union has both a bus scheme and a 'safe taxi' scheme, so the two are not mutually exclusive. However I would see a taxi scheme as an addition to a good safety bus scheme.

Feedback suggests that the Safety Bus works because students trust it, whereas they wouldn't be as quick to use a taxi if they were alone at night. Taxis are also unlikely to want to take home students on the verge of vomiting, when the majority of emergency cases attended to by the Safety Bus will involve students in an intoxicated state.

However taxis are both reliable and quick. It is undesirable for a student who is feeling unsafe to be told to wait for a considerable amount of time (if they're able to get through to a Safety Bus in the first place). Taxis would offer a speedy solution and the firm we have a partnership with could be adorned with Student Union branding to make them easily identifiable.

V. Abandon the Safety Bus concept

We could offer alternatives such as 'Walk safe schemes' or leave the provision of transportation to individual colleges.

This option isn't desirable or efficient, but has been included in the review for the sake of completeness. There was almost unanimous agreement from everyone involved in the review that the Safety Bus provided a valuable and necessary welfare service for students in a vulnerable position.

Walk safe schemes are meaningless for a student too intoxicated to stand and for individual students who for whatever reason find themselves alone. And it simply wouldn't be feasible for colleges to provide anything on the scale of the Safety Bus. A few colleges have a taxi partnership scheme in full operation, so it is perhaps worth encouraging other colleges to do the same.

I don't think college taxi schemes will eradicate the need for a centralised Safety Bus, but would add to our collective welfare provision to ensure that vulnerable students are looked after.

7. Preferred Option

Using the results of the survey and the focus group it has been possible to derive a list of criteria that service users would like to find in the Safety Bus. I have measured these criteria against how likely they are to be achieved within each of these options where:

- 1 = very unlikely
- 2 = unlikely
- 3 = difficult to say
- 4 = likely
- 5 = very likely

I have taken Option 5 out of consideration because none of the criteria are applicable to a non-existent service and have added brackets to Option 3 to take account of outsourcing an Oxford-only Safety Bus.

The results confirm my preferred option as **Option 2: Altering our partnership with Oxford Brookes University and outsourcing the running of the Safety Bus.**

	Maintain	Outsource	Oxford-only (If outsourced)	Taxi
Likelihood of running for duration of Oxford term	3	5	5 (5)	5
Providing a Quick Service	3	3	4 (4)	4
Providing a Reliable Service	3	5	2 (5)	5
Ease of Promotion and Messaging	4	4	4 (4)	2
Strength of Safety Bus Brand	4	4	4 (4)	2
Demand from students	4	4	3 (3)	4
Low cost to passengers	5	5	5 (5)	5
Feasibility	5	4	3 (3)	4
TOTAL	31	34	30 (33)	31

As of yet, the cost of pursuing option 2 is unknown but the evidence from other Student Unions suggests that it will be significantly less than the amount we currently spend. A desirable agreement for contracting out the Safety Bus could be an outlay of £300 per week split between the two Student Unions plus the £1 passenger fee payable to the company, in return for a fully staffed Safety Bus running according to a mixture of scheduled stops on major student club nights and a demand-responsive service.

As mentioned earlier, the major drawback of Option 2 is the effect on student volunteers. I can assure you that I have not treated this matter lightly, but I believe that outsourcing is the only way to guarantee a basic standard of service for both Universities. The Safety Bus is primarily a welfare service and we never want to be in a situation where the needs of a vulnerable student are left unmet.

8. Publicity Plan

Regardless of what option we choose moving forward it essential that the Safety Bus is promoted effectively. The following Publicity Plan outlines the current strategy for publicising use of the Safety Bus among the Oxford University student population and includes suggestions drawn out during this review. Broader issues of Safety Bus usage are identified and marketing suggestions are given.

This is by no means a perfect plan and future Vice Presidents (Charities and Community) should seek to amend it as new opportunities present themselves. Note that under the current contract OBSU is obliged to provide OUSU with 5000 flyers and 150 posters upon reasonable request.

Time	Details	Publicity Used	Suggestions
Long Vacation	<p>Entz Reps, Welfare Reps and Common Room Committees will be in the process of planning freshers' week.</p> <p>This is an ideal opportunity to advertise the Safety Bus as a means of getting people home after a house party/night out.</p>	Email via entzlist, welfare reps' list reminding people of the service offered by Safety Bus.	<p>Get Presidents to 'push' it to their reps/freshers' week committees by sending an email via Preslist and MCR PresCom.</p> <p>Be more proactive in facilitating relationship. Get reps to email you what night they're planning to go out, where and with how many people. They will still have to ring on the night, but being proactive may make them more likely to do so.</p> <p>Get feedback from reps who have used the service.</p>
Freshers' Week	<p>People will be arriving in Oxford and/or 'living out' in Oxford for the first time. Many of these people will be unfamiliar with the Safety Bus.</p> <p>The freshers' fair provides a perfect opportunity to introduce people to the Safety Bus as do induction talks.</p>	<p>Safety Bus cards handed out during freshers' fair on the OUSU stall.</p> <p>Safety Bus number read out during International Students' induction talk and on visits to Common Rooms.</p> <p>Facebook Group and YouTube clip.</p>	<p>OUSU isn't invited to all Common Rooms and when they are, time is limited. Welfare Reps should be emailed beforehand and asked to include the Safety Bus as part of their induction talks.</p> <p>Talks will be even more interesting if punctuated by a video clip and efforts should be made to use facebook and other forms of online marketing tools.</p>
On-going from freshers' week	<p>The publicity strategy should seek to target those groups who are most likely to use the bus - namely the population 'living out' or living in college/university owned property a suitable distance away from the centre of town.</p> <p>These groups are notoriously quite difficult to reach but the Student Community</p>	<p>All Common Room welfare reps, entz officers and later, OUSU reps and Common Room Presidents, emailed to ask if they require posters. Posters then distributed on request.</p> <p>Safety Bus cards in</p>	<p>Direct strategy towards colleges further away from the City Centre.</p> <p>Use Student Community Wardens to distribute safety bus cards.</p> <p>Include the Safety Bus poster in the Oxford Student at least twice a term.</p> <p>Distribute posters to college or university owned</p>

	<p>Warden and Head Residents Schemes could offer a mechanism for effective communication. Certain colleges such as St Hugh's and St Hilda's may also be more amenable to the Safety Bus.</p> <p>Publicity should target friends and put the onus on them to get their friends home safely after a night out, using the Safety Bus.</p>	<p>lodges, Common Rooms and college bars.</p> <p>New poster design and/or video targeting friends.</p>	<p>accommodation buildings via Head Residents or college reps.</p>
On-going from freshers' week	<p>It will be important to maintain productive relationships with clubs, the police and external venues. In appropriate situations these external parties should see the Safety Bus as a partner in helping to manage the night-time economy.</p>	<p>Distribution of Safety Bus cards and number to door staff and police.</p>	<p>Maintain communication with external stakeholders.</p>
Volunteer Drives	<p>It may be necessary to make a concerted effort to attract volunteers for the Safety Bus. Drives should begin with but not be limited to current Safety Bus users.</p>	<p>Publicise through Oxford Hub, the Oxford Student Newspaper and relevant mail lists</p>	<p>Devise a way for regular users to be approached to fill volunteering opportunities. Streamline volunteer training process.</p>
On-going from freshers' week	<p>It will be necessary to continually evaluate usage of the Safety Bus while maintaining a flow of communication with users and Common Room reps.</p>	<p>Email to reps.</p>	<p>Offer more posters, reminder of complaints procedure and offer to visit Common Room to talk about safety bus.</p> <p>Consider sending an email at the start/end of each term to keep the Safety Bus fresh in the minds of reps.</p>
Trinity Term	<p>Constant evaluation will be necessary to ensure the efficient running of the Safety Bus. If done correctly the evaluation can also boost awareness and participation.</p>	<p>Safety Bus Review to be conducted over HT/TT 2012, using surveys and forums.</p>	<p>An annual review of the Safety Bus is to be encouraged through the use of surveys etc.</p>

9. Summary of Recommendations

The Safety Bus provides a valuable welfare service for the students of Oxford Brookes University and the University of Oxford. In summary, the recommendations I have made for improving the service are:

1. The Safety Bus has to run during Oxford University term times. This is a minimum requirement for a welfare service designed to serve Oxford University students. I believe that this will be achieved most effectively by outsourcing provision of the Safety Bus.
2. The Safety Bus has to run quickly and more reliably. This was a clear message from the survey and focus group. I think we should explore the possibilities of having scheduled stops outside popular venues while maintaining the requirement for people to call or book in advance.
3. Promotion has to become more effective. I take responsibility for the shortcomings in this area and have written a publicity plan for future years.
4. Use of Voicemail on the Safety Bus phone to pass on information rather than allowing it to ring out.
5. Volunteer Training should re-emphasise the importance of being non-confrontational and professional in service.
6. Both Student Unions should explore the possibility of starting a partnership with a local taxi company and should at the very least give details of a preferred taxi company for students travelling home at night.

In conclusion I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this review either through completing the survey, taking part in the focus group or attending your common room general meeting.

I hope this review has captured your thoughts and concerns as we together we seek to improve your time here in Oxford.

Daniel Stone
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Vice President (Charities and Community)