ASTON UNIVERSITY

SPORT & RECREATION USER GROUP

Minutes of the Sport Aston User Group meeting held on 25 November 2011

PRESENT:	Mrs Joy Atkins	Chair
	Mr Mike Kirkman	Director of Campus Services
	Mrs Michele Robins	Facility Operations Manager
	Dr John Elgy	University Staff Representative
	Mr James Seymour	University Staff Representative
	Ms Emma Hurcombe	University Staff Representative
	Mr Andrew Harris	VP Student Activities
	Ms Gill Clark	Student Development Administrator
	Mr Ben Brophy	Athletic Union Representative
	Miss Ash Walton	Athletic Union Representative

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms Beverley Ward

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr Gareth Evans

2. CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

Joy Atkins elected as Chair of the User Group for academic year 2011-12, Andy Harris elected as Vice-Chair.

3. WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The Chair welcomed two new AU representatives to the committee as well as Andy Harris as VP Student Activities. Due to one staff representative retiring from Aston and two others withdrawing from the committee, the existing members were asked to consider, for the next meeting, any suitable staff representatives who would be willing to join the committee.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

It was noted that the User Group should elect a Chair and Vice Chair from among its non-ex officio staff members. On this occasion however, the group were in agreement that the VP Student Activities, although ex-officio by default, should hold the position of Vice Chair. For the current academic year.

5. WRITTEN REPORT FROM HEAD OF SPORT ASTON

Premises

(i) The department have had a difficult first term due to the delayed re-opening of Woodcock sports centre, together with the fact that not all facilities were completed as originally scheduled. Following the departure of the original contractors, Linfords, in October, a new contractor has taken over outstanding works with a proposed opening date for the remainder of the facilities of 3rd January 2012. Optimistically the pool may be open before Christmas, dependant on all remaining works on the pool being fully completed. The Head of Sport Aston thanked the AU and the students for their patience during this period and for their co-operation in using alternative facilities for sports such as swimming, water-polo and kayacking.

There are still some structural works due to be carried out the week before Christmas to the area beneath the seating in Woodcock hall and to the pool cubicles in summer 2012. However this it is hoped these works can be completed without further closures.

(ii) Phase 2 Woodcock re-development has been approved in principle by the University Council.

(iii) The scheme is currently with Birmingham City Council Planning Department. The university has made a commitment not to demolish Gem sports centre until Phase 2 has been completed.

(iv) There have been lighting problems with the ASV pitch relating to the timer for the lighting controls and the lux levels. The timer issue has now been resolved and the lights are now controlled via Gem sports centre reception pc.

(v) Despite piecemeal repairs being carried out at the recreation centre it is still in need of major investment. The Astroturf carpet will require replacement within two years and the pavilion is dated. The committee noted that the recreation centre has a low profile within the university with many staff unaware of its existence. The committee felt that the profile of the centre could be raised by internal promotion, e.g. friends and family functions, staff away days, etc.
ACTION NOTE: Marketing Officer to place information in Aston Aspects and marketing campaign to be launched in 2012.

Finance

(i) There has been a high level of income taken from gym memberships to date; However this needs to set against the loss of income from other areas due to late completion of the project

(ii) This academic year 12 coaches have been appointed for AU training and the student scholarship scheme attracted a high response rate. Four full time and four part time scholarships have been awarded.

(iii) Aston Olympians primary school event is once again scheduled for June 2012 and the department will be requesting assistance from staff and student volunteers with this two day event.

6. WRITTEN REPORT FROM VP STUDENT ACTIVITIES

(i) Various clubs including Dance, Aquatics and Marital Arts have had some difficulties allocating space for their clubs in term 1. The students have been very understanding knowing the problems Sport Aston have faced with the reduction in facilities available.

(ii) BUCS has got off to a disappointing start with Aston currently being 89th in the league table; there are 27 active sports clubs participating in BUCS. The possibility of a dedicated board at Gem and Woodcock for BUCS results and also contact details for various clubs/captains is to be investigated.
ACTION NOTE: Mike Kirkman to contact David Farrow regarding communication of BUCS successes.

(iii) For the first time this year a ladies Gaelic football club has formed and they will be competing in BUCS next academic year.

(iv) There was a 42% sign up for clubs and societies at Freshers Fair this academic year. The chair recommended that promotion of clubs should also be made at other admission periods: January, April and July. The staff representative from the Library suggested that the library foyer could be used for promoting AU clubs (table, display, contacts).

(v) It was reported that disappointingly there are still lectures being held up to 1pm on Wednesday afternoons which affects travel to away games. There have been occasions where the club has had to concede the match because they are unable to arrive at the venue in time to play. The chair recommended that the VP Student

activities contact Ifti Khan in Registry who deals with timetabling issues to discuss this issue.

7. REPRESENTATIVES ISSUES

No issues

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No issues

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 10th February 2012 at 1.00pm in Woodcock meeting room.

REC/BSW
17/11/09