Unconfirmed Minutes of the meeting of the Library Users Advisory Group held on the 29th November 2017

Present: Boris Rankov (Chair), Matthew Brooke, Julie Carr, Christopher Whiter, Alexander Reppel, Wendy Flannery, Abbey Aslett, Sian Downes, Emma Burnett, Helen Rimmer, Peter Tarsiewicz, Michael Naef, Daniela Cerimonia, James Ansong, Natalie Bates, Emilie Ancelin, Clement Jones

With : Rachel White (LUAG Secretary)

Apologies: John Brannan, Enrique Lopez-Juez, Joanna Hale, Natasha Barrat, Naina Kanda

**1. Welcome and apologies**

Matthew Brooke (MB) welcomed the new chair Boris Rankov (BR) and outlined the terms of reference for LUAG and welcomed new members. The purpose of the group is to provide a two way conversation between the library service and its users.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 9th May 2017 were confirmed as an accurate record.

**3. Matters arising**

All of the actions as outlined in document 21.2 were completed.

Discussion turned to paper 21.2.a which was presented by Clem Jones (CL), VP Education. The paper is a write up of a recent student council meeting attended by MB where concerns relating to the library were raised. This paper details recommendations for the library going forward, based on student feedback.

Exhibition Space

Students reported that they were not aware of the exhibition space and wanted better promotion of the space. LUAG members asked if there was a sign outside the space as they felt this would be the best way to encourage users to visit. Sian Downes (SD) confirmed there was a sign outside the space and that there will be a large pull up banner arriving soon.

Removing belongings from un-used study spaces

Students raised their concerns over study spaces being reserved by students by leaving their belongings there and not using the space for a long period of time.

MB explained that previously around exam time we had employed study space assistants to monitor behaviour and remove belongings from study spaces that hadn't been returned to for 45mins.

Discussion continued around the concept of having a time policy and if students hadn't returned by a certain time then anyone could remove their belongings. Some students felt that students would feel uncomfortable doing this and they would prefer that a member of staff should do this.

It was agreed that MB would start the process of recruiting a study space assistant to initially monitor the study spaces and behaviour, then when exams start the process of removing belongings, as has happened in previous years, would commence.

MB fed back that the library had experienced a large increase in the numbers of users in the space which has put pressure on study spaces. Compared with the previous set up there are an additional 450 study spaces which puts the spaces to student ratio in line/in front of our competitors. MB also stated that Founder's Library will reopen in Sept 2018 after extensive restorative work has been completed and that will provide an additional 96 spaces. Also there will be an addition of over 100 study spaces going into the library early next year.

**ACTION: MB to start process of recruiting Study Space Assistant**

Plug Sockets

The issue of plug sockets not working was also raised. MB explained that this was due to ongoing electrical and network issues, these issues are well known to Osbornes and the estates team and they are working to resolve this.

Printers

MB reported that the printers are indeed not working as they should be and this is due to issues stated above, not being as reliable as they should be and issues with swipe access. IT are working with the contractor (Konica) to try and resolve these issues, including increased training for IT staff so they can fix more issues without calling out Konica. The library has also sent a list of complicated issues to Konica who are looking into solutions.

In the meantime Helen Rimmer (HR) said that there will be an increased staff presence roaming the library and they will concentrate around the printers to help resolve issues.

Library@

Students expressed concerns that the library is already busy and this will get even worse around exam time and asked if the library could ensure that the library@ scheme continued. MB said he was more than happy to do this and we will work with departments to get spaces. CJ and Natalie Bates (NB) mentioned that the SU could provide space as well.

PG Space

PGTs at first had access to the PGR space due to a technical issue, this has now led to PGT students feeling like they have missed out on a service and are frustrated as they would like their own space.

MB explained the difficulties of having a dedicated PGT space e.g. space in the library to accommodate this, number of PGT students.

Michael Naef (MN) questioned if PGR students needed a dedicated space as there could be space for them in their departments. HR responded saying that not all departments have the space to give to PGR students, plus another aim of the room is to create a community between PGR students.

CJ raised his discussion with senior management and asked if LUAG would support his proposal to turn the new social space in Windsor into a designated PGT space, LUAG will support this proposal.

**ACTION: CJ to report back to LUAG regarding outcomes from proposal taken to College Executive**

Rolling stacks

Comments have been raised regarding the rolling stacks and the potential obstacles that users can face e.g. not much space between the shelves, having to wait to gain access to the shelves, makes it more difficult to browse.

MF stated that it is slightly more difficult to browse the shelves but doesn't see this as a big issue. Boris Rankov (BR) stated that he has used many other libraries and this is common feature. Daniela Cerimonia (DC) stated that some Modern Languages staff are concerned because the book stock is towards the end of the library and some students might not see it. Abbey Aslett (AA) commented that it can take a long time to access books if someone is already in the stacks browsing for items.

NB asked if it would be possible to have more static shelves between the moving ones so you wouldn't have to move as many. MB said that this is something we could consider but it would mean the withdrawal of books to make space for such shelving.

MB also explained that rolling stacks were implemented to try and increase study space in relation to previous student feedback.

Emilie Ancelin (EA) said that she doesn't think students think that the rolling stacks are an issue they would prefer more study spaces.

This led onto a further discussion regarding study spaces as a whole around college. James Ansorg (JA) mentioned that the PCs labs are already busy, MB agreed with this and went onto say that there are probably spaces around the college that could be freed up and this is college wide issue. CJ agreed and is going to mention this in his paper to college exec.

EA agreed that it would be good to free up space around college but that space in the library was key as many people enjoy the productive atmosphere that it encourages. Alex Reppel (AR) said that it would be useful for the college to have a list of all rooms and occupancy levels to help this issue.

**4. Library Services**

**4.1 The New Library: Stats & Figures**

Discussion of the paper regarding stats and figures from the first few months of the library opening. HR pointed out the snapshot of loans and their increase, along with high footfall especially over the weekend which has gone up dramatically compared with weekend figures from Bedford/Founder's.

The high use collection is working well and this is where the library sees the most footfall, the library has done a lot of work to ensure the titles that should be in the high use are. This will be reviewed and updated weekly.

**4.2 Study spaces in the library**

HR reported back on the user experience work the library has undertaken recently. Over the course of a week library staff counted numbers of students in each area of the library and monitored noise levels, this happened at 3 separate points throughout the day.

Findings indicate that the loudest areas where on the ground floor and 1st floor group side (both group study areas), and noise levels and behaviours were as they should be in each area. The loudest and busiest times were at 3pm, with the busiest time of the week being Thursday at 3pm. This survey will be done regularly in the future.

AA and EA both stated that they still don't think the silent areas are quiet enough. HR mentioned that the roaming staff along with the study space assistant will aim to monitor the noise levels and behaviours more closely.

HR asked students how they would feel in approaching fellow students who were not behaving correctly in these areas. EA said that some students would be ok with this but a lot wouldn’t. AA asked if it was possible to add more signs or reinstate the email address where you could report issues, MB will investigate reinstating this.

MN asked if it was possible to get sensors installed that will detail which study spaces are free or perhaps software that could indicate how many spaces are available on each level. MB stated that some software does exist but problems can arise with these, something to consider in the future though.

EA also raised that group study rooms were a problem. Groups will book out the rooms all day under different names. MB and HR explained that there is no way we can prevent this on the system and we provide this service but there is only so much we can do to police it, the study space assistant will be able to monitor this more than is possible at present. JA also stated that sometimes people don't turn up for their bookings. HR mentioned that over the Christmas vacation we will be getting screens outside of the rooms that will tell you if the room is free, you can then book on the spot. Or you will be able to see if it is booked/booked but no one has arrived. Students agreed that this would be really useful. AR asked if it would be possible to have swipe entry, HR explained that at the moment this isn't possible but could be in the future. NB raised that some systems require you to enter all the names of the people in your room and displays them, this might help the issue that EA raised. HR will investigate if this is a possibility with the system we have.

EA raised the issue of cleaning being a problem. MB said we are fully aware of this problem and are working with the cleaning contractors to improve this, especially in light of the increase in footfall over the weekend.

EA asked when the study terrace was likely to open. MB said this was planned for Spring 2018 and mentioned some of the issues we had to consider before opening it e.g. occupancy limits, health and safety, non-smoking.

**ACTION: MB to investigate the reinstating of email for reporting disruptive behaviour**

**ACTION: HR to investigate the possibility of individual details being used when booking group study rooms to prevent different members booking out the room for the whole day.**

**4.3 Reading List Update**

HR explained some of the problems the library faces in obtaining reading lists from departments e.g. engagement, not knowing what courses are running, which courses are just not running for that year, not knowing if changes have been made to the reading list. BR suggested that access to Banner would solve a lot of these issues and the library would know what courses are running and how many students are on them. HR mentioned that we have tried to get it in the past but haven't been granted access. HR to revisit this.

JA sated that as a student the most useful way of accessing course reading is by integrating the reading lists system into Moodle. NB asked if there is any way that the SU can help with this issue. SD will contact NB and CJ to discuss this.

**ACTION: HR to investigate access to Banner**

**ACTION: SD to contact NB and CL regarding how the SU can raise awareness of the importance of the library receiving reading lists.**

**4.4 Information literacy teaching**

The paper submitted to LUAG states that embedding IL training within the curriculum works best, this was agreed by the academic representatives and students, however not all students have access to embedded training.

CJ mentioned that it would be useful to have more advanced training earlier on in their degree.

Emma Burnett (EB) asked the group what other topics students would like to be covered in the library bitesize sessions. AA had not heard of these and recommended that posters would be a good way to promote these sessions. EA suggested that promoting them more heavily through departments would work best.

BR said that this should be raised at a faculty level and it should be more systematically embedded within the curriculum. EB mentioned that this has been raised before is still not fully embedded but things have improved. MB stated that awareness of this may be raised as part of the new academic strategy.

CJ mentioned that it would be a good topic to include on the RHUL 18/19 panel. EA stressed that embedded IL training has been really helpful for her.

**5. Librarian's Report**

MN asked which budget the new resources came from, MB stated that they were paid for by a mixture of departmental budget/general budget.

HR drew attention to the rare resources that we have e.g. Shoah archive and Adam Matthews content.

**6. User Issues**

NB raised the issue of fines and how many students feel they are confusing, also drew our attention to a recent article that stated how much money institutions raise through fines. MB agreed that this was a concern and something that was going to be raised as AOB.

Royal Holloway made £52,000 in fines last year.

At the moment users are fined for bringing books back late, regardless of if there is anyone waiting for the book. In other Universities items are renewed automatically and fines are only placed on overdue books if they are reserved by other users. This was met with positive responses from student representatives.

MB suggested that we could raise fees as an incentive for people to bring those reserved books back, and HR said it would encourage users to place more holds which will help library staff know when to buy more copies.

MB will submit a paper to the college executive stating this is what we want to do, it would need their approval as there is a loss of income to consider.

CJ stated that it would be a good idea to have a quick survey in the library to gather student views on this fine issue.

**ACTION: RW to investigate the setting up of a user survey in the library to gather feedback re fines.**

**7. Communications**

CJ will report back on the outcome of his proposal regarding PGT space and space across the college as a whole.

MB will report back on the findings from the survey the library will hold in relation to the fines issues.

**8. Membership and dates of next meeting**

Dates TBC.