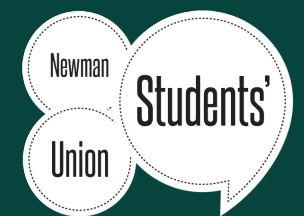




# LAY TRUSTEE.

Recruitment Pack





## Gemma Bowen

**Union President & Board of Trustees Co-Chair**

# Welcome to Newman Students' Union.

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**Newman Students' Union is a student-led, not-for-profit organisation representing over 3,800 students at Birmingham Newman University.** As President and Officer Trustee, I lead the Union in amplifying student voices and supporting their journey through higher education. This includes Co-Chairing the Trustee Board, implementing my Manifesto, and leading the Course Rep system, which facilitates Student Staff Consultative Committees; spaces where students chair meetings with peers, academics, and support services to create open dialogue and drive positive change.

I work closely with our Vice-President, who leads on Community & Wellbeing, and our Student Voice & Advice Co-Ordinator, who provides free, confidential academic advice. We are supported by our Director, who brings strategic oversight and a wealth of experience in the student movement and governance. As part of the National Union of Students (NUS), our members benefit from national representation, resources, and opportunities. Our mission is to ensure every student has the opportunity to excel, and our vision is to empower students to find their place now and in the future.

We are now seeking an External Trustee to join our Board. You don't need prior trustee experience, but some knowledge of the third sector would be helpful. We're looking for someone who is open, supportive, and willing to share ideas, offer constructive challenge, and help us navigate challenges with care and agility. Birmingham Newman University was recently ranked #1 in the UK for Social Inclusion by the Times and Sunday Times meaning as a Union we support a wide and diverse student body including commuter students, mature learners, and those with caring responsibilities; taking pride in helping them grow in confidence and pursue postgraduate opportunities.

If you're passionate about governance, education, inclusion, and empowering students, we'd love to hear from you.

# About us.

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**At Newman Students' Union, our mission is simple: to empower you to use your voice and find your place now and for the future.** We exist to make sure every Newman student is heard, supported, and inspired to make a positive impact.

Most of our funding comes from a block grant from the University, and we report each year on the difference we make. As a registered charity, we're also accountable to the Education Act and the Charity Commission, submitting annual reports and accounts.

Our work is guided by a Board of Trustees made up of five external members (including one from University staff), two students, two Officer Trustees, and the Union Chair, a part-time Officer elected by students.

Every Newman student is automatically a member of the Union, and we're committed to representing our diverse community. We know there's still work to do to make sure every student feels seen and supported, and we're making real progress through our culture, policies, and approach.

In 2023/24 we carried out a major Strategic Review, shaping our new 2024-27 Strategy and strengthening our governance for the years ahead.

We offer a wide range of services: from independent advice and academic representation to student groups and social activities. Our impact is recognised nationally: we've been voted No.1 Students' Union in the Midlands and 3rd in the UK in the National Student Survey, as well as No.1 in the West Midlands at the WhatUni Student Choice Awards in 2025.



# About the University.

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**Building upon our Catholic heritage since 1968, Birmingham Newman has grown into a modern, inclusive university that welcomes people from all backgrounds and world views.**

Our future is shaped by a clear vision and a set of goals that reflect both our mission and our ambition, to be the leading university in inclusive education for the graduate workforce of tomorrow. Our values provide the foundation for a diverse and vibrant academic community.

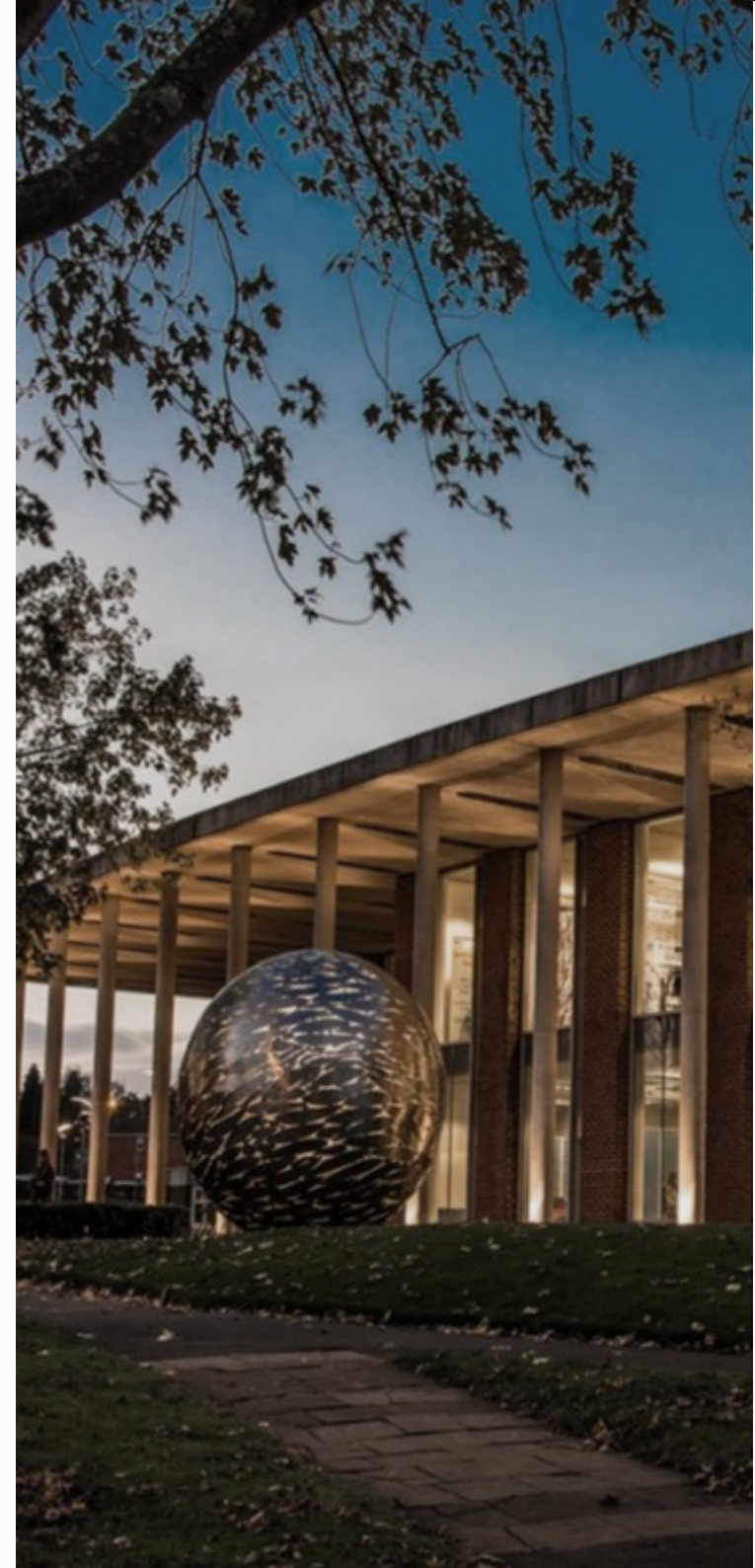
At the heart of this is our commitment to a values-driven, high-quality university education. We aim to nurture curiosity, confidence, and capability in every learner, ensuring that they graduate with more than knowledge—they leave with the skills and resilience to thrive in a changing world.

Today, Birmingham Newman is home to students, staff, researchers, and partners working together to shape a better future. Collaboration and support sit at the heart of our university, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to grow, belong, and contribute to something meaningful.

Our close-knit community of staff and students enables us to build genuine connections, offer personalised support, and create a culture where people are seen and valued. This sense of belonging extends beyond the classroom, shaping an environment where students, colleagues, and our wider community can work together to make a real impact.

We are deeply connected to our local and global networks. Through strong partnerships with employers, organisations, and research initiatives, we ensure our teaching and research are relevant, innovative, and responsive to real-world needs.

As a result, our graduates and staff alike contribute with confidence, skills, and purpose – making a difference not only in their own lives, but in their communities, professions, and the wider world.



# How we are run.

Following our 2023/24 Strategic and Governance Review, we've introduced a refreshed governance structure that puts students firmly at the heart of everything we do. Central to this is a new Student Council, a broader range of part-time Officer roles, and two Student Council sub-committees focused on delivering our four strategic pillars: **Voice, Support, Community, and Wellbeing**.

## Trustee Board

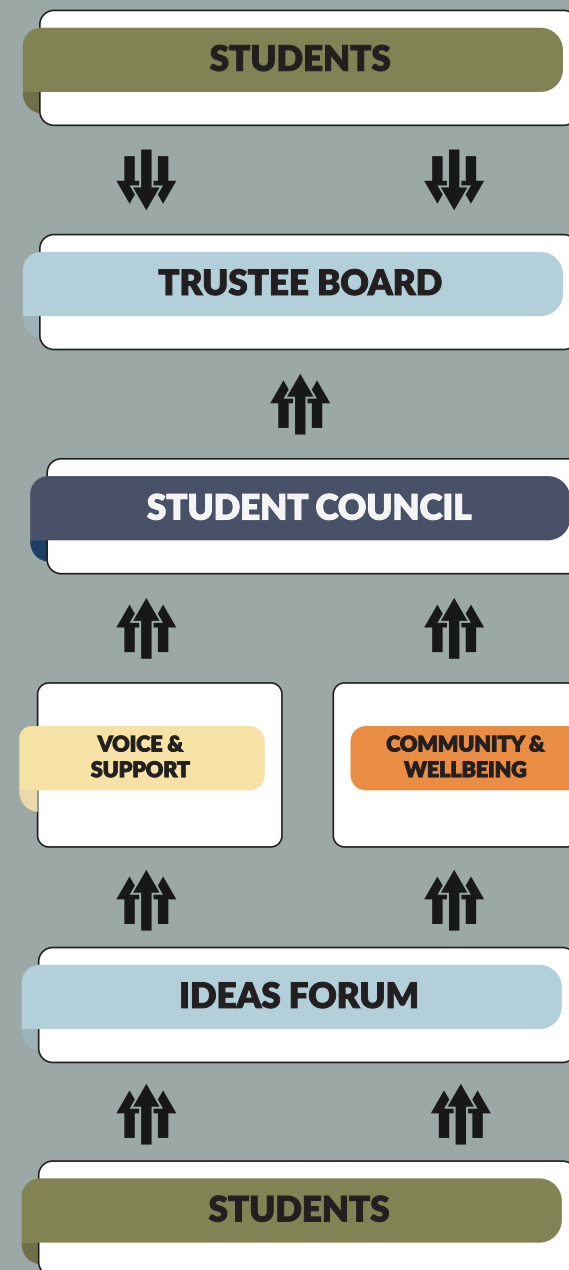
The Trustee Board is responsible for directing the work of Newman Students' Union in the long term. The Board oversees our strategic plan and ensures that we are well run as a charity, including financial and legal security. Our Board is made up of a mixture of our 2 Officer Trustees, 2 Student Trustees, the Union Chair, a University Trustee and 4 Lay Trustees, who bring experience and knowledge from outside of the University. The Board is Co-Chaired by the Union President and the Lay Co-Chair. The Lay Co-Chair is also responsible for line management of the Union Director.

## Officer Trustees

Each year, two students are elected by the student body to serve as President and Vice-President for a one-year term, either following completion of their studies or during an approved sabbatical year. They are elected to lead the Students' Union and to represent student views to the University, particularly in matters relating to the student experience. Both Officers serve as members of the Trustee Board, with the President acting as Co-Chair. Each Officer leads one of the two sub-committees of Council and oversees the work of the Part-Time Officers assigned to their respective committees.

## Student Council

Our Student Forum is 'the Parliament' of the Newman student body. Any student member is able to attend meetings, put forward agenda items, and debate the issues of the meeting. The full voting members of council are the 10 Part -Time Officers, 8 School Representatives and the 2 Officer Trustees. Student Council is chaired by the Union Chair, who is also a Trustee. Our Student Council helps to ensure that students remain at the centre of our work and can drive our policy and campaigning agenda. Student Council has two Sub-Committees - Voice & Support and Community & Welfare, who deal with operational delivery of Council motions and priorities.



# How we are run.

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## Governing Documents

Following the Governance Review in 2023/24, a new constitution and set of Bye-Laws was passed by University Council in the summer of 2024, setting out fundamental principles such as our charitable nature, membership and leadership structure. You can read more about our Constitution and Bye Laws [here](#).

## Finances

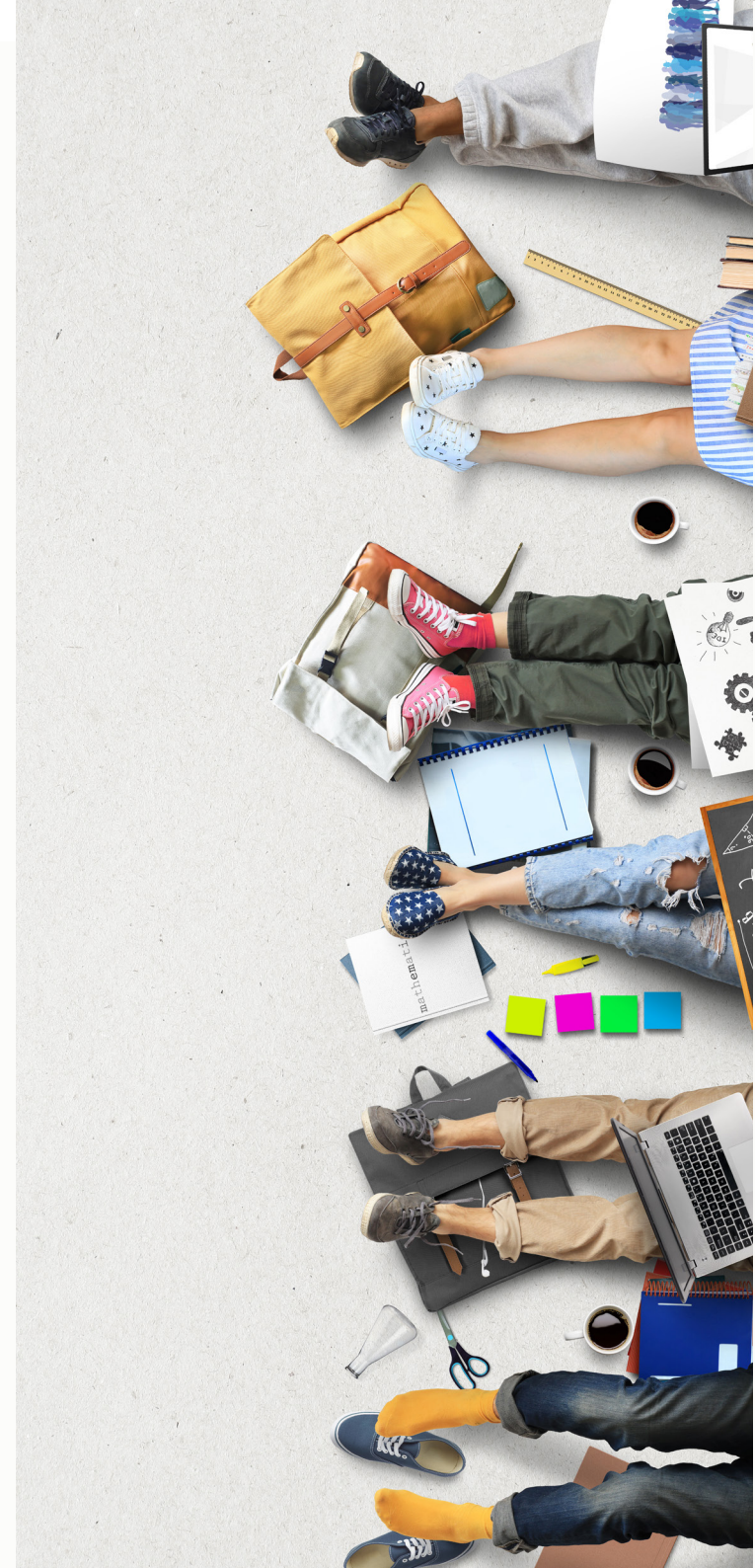
As a registered charity, the Students' Union operates on a not-for-profit basis, reinvesting all income into services and opportunities that benefit students. The Union's annual turnover is just over £230,000, the majority of which is derived from an annual block grant provided by the University. This is supplemented by modest income from events and a small social enterprise offer.

For 2026/27, the Students' Union has further strengthened its relationship with the University and has secured a substantial increase in block grant funding. This investment will enable the Union to expand its permanent staff team and allocate significant additional resources directly to student-led activities and opportunities. Day-to-day financial management is delegated to the Union Director, with accounting and financial services delivered through a partnership with Durham University Students' Union..

## Our Staff team

Newman Students' Union operates with a small staff team comprising the Union Director, Student Voice & Advice Co-ordinator, and Student Voice & Communities Co-ordinator. The Trustee Board delegates responsibility for the day-to-day management of the organisation and delivery of its strategic objectives to the Union Director, who is line-managed by the Lay Co-Chair of the Board.

The staff team delivers the Union's operational services and supports the elected Officers in carrying out their duties and achieving their manifesto commitments. The Union Director also serves as a key link between the Students' Union and the University, sitting as a member of the University Management Team. Collectively, the staff provide the stability and continuity necessary for the Union's ongoing development and success.



# Strategy 2024-27.

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## Our Vision

Empower you to use your voice and find your place now and for the future.

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## Our Mission

We exist to ensure students have every opportunity to grow and excel at Birmingham Newman University by:

- Using our influence to ensure that the Student Experience you expect and deserve is the one that you receive. Campaigning on the issues that you care about on and off campus, in and out of your studies. Making sure your voice is heard and acted upon.
  - Providing a welcoming environment for students to share their lives at Newman, no matter what that looks like and offering the support to make the best of that journey.
  - Enabling and supporting activities, events and initiatives that help you find your place in a vibrant, inclusive and diverse community.
  - Providing space and opportunities for you to explore new interests, hobbies, cultures and experiences to enhance and maintain your wellbeing during your time at Newman and develop skills for the future.
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## Our Values

➤ Inclusive   ➤ Ethical   ➤ Independent   ➤ Agile   ➤ Quality   ➤ Sustainable

To read or download our Strategy 2024-27 please click [here](#).



## Strategic Review 2023/24

The Union entered its Strategic Review process in October 2023. This process followed a period of transition following completion of the previous strategy. This period of transition was necessary to lay some of the foundation blocks in the Organisation's finances, staffing and operational policies that had previously been missing.

Keeping students at the very centre of our planning, we entered into the broadest insight project undertaken in the Union's history. The results gathered have directly influenced our direction for the next 3 years.

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**WE SPOKE TO OVER**

**14%**

**OF NEWMAN STUDENTS**

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# About the role.

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Being a Trustee of Birmingham Newman Students' Union offers a unique opportunity to help shape the strategic direction of a small, ambitious charity at an exciting stage of its development. The Trustee Board **meets four times per year**, ideally in person, though remote attendance can be facilitated. The Board also has a Finance, Risk & HR Sub-Committee, which meets an additional three times annually. Successful applicants may also apply to join this sub-committee.

As a small organisation, we are particularly keen to attract Trustees who share our enthusiasm and commitment, and who are willing to contribute their skills and expertise beyond formal meetings to help us deliver our strategic objectives.

Previous trustee experience is not required, as full training and support will be provided. The full role description is outlined below.

## **Role Description** - Statutory Duties

The statutory duties detailed below are in line with the Charity Commission, CC3 The Essential Trustee Guidance. To read this guidance in full please click [here](#).

- Ensuring that the organisation pursues its stated objects (purposes), as defined in its governing document, by developing and agreeing a long-term strategy.
- Ensuring that the organisation complies with our Articles of Association, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- Ensuring that the organisation defines its goals and evaluates performance against agreed targets.
- Overseeing the development and effectiveness of the policies and procedures in place.
- Ensuring that the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its charitable objects.
- Reading and scrutinising annual budgets and scrutinising them before and at board meetings to ensure the effective financial management of the organisation and assessment of whether the organisation can meet its present and future needs.
- Considering the financial implications of the organisation's strategic plans.
- Consider, scrutinise and approve the annual report and accounts; and ensure that any recommendations are implemented.
- Protecting and managing the assets of the charity and ensuring the proper investment of the charity's funds.



# About the role.

## Additional Duties

In addition to the duties detailed above, as a Trustee of the Union the following duties will be expected:

- In addition to the above statutory duties, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience to help the board of trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve scrutinising board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, or other issues in which the trustee has special expertise
- Lay trustees must work effectively with Student and Officer Trustees.

## Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship	X	
Willingness and ability to work effectively as a member of a team	X	
Strategic vision and ability to provide scrutiny at the right level, for the organisation, its strategy and finances, and where appropriate, its work plans	X	
Experience of contributing to a committee		X
Impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences	X	
Excellent communication and interpersonal skills for both internal and external relationship-building	X	



# About the role.

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## Time Commitment

- 4 Meetings per year (c.2 hours per meeting)
- 3 Additional meetings if a member of HR, Risk & Finance Sub-Committee.
- Informal meetings with Trustees, Staff or Officers to pursue additional work, as and when required.
- Voluntary attendance at key Union events (Awards ceremony etc.)
- Annual Training Day.

## Location

Union meetings are held on-campus at Birmingham Newman University, Genners Lane, Birmingham B32 3NT. Meetings can also be attended online via MS Teams.

## Term of Office

As per Clause 36 of the Union Constitution:

- The term of office of Lay Trustees will be for a period of up to four years and shall commence immediately upon appointment.
  - a) Lay Trustees may serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms.

# How to Apply

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To apply please send an up-to-date CV and a personal statement or no longer than 2 sides of A4, addressing the following three questions:

1. Why you would like to be a Trustee of Newman Students' Union?
2. What value you can add to the Board of Trustees that will enhance the student experience at Birmingham Newman?

What knowledge, skills or experience you can bring to enhance our Board?

**Please forward your application to [su-jobs@newman.ac.uk](mailto:su-jobs@newman.ac.uk) no later than 5pm 27th May 2026.**

Before you apply please take a look at our website [www.newmansu.org](http://www.newmansu.org) for more information about our work. If you would like an informal chat about the work of the Union or the Board of Trustees, please contact the **Union Director, Robin Pitt** on [r.pitt@newman.ac.uk](mailto:r.pitt@newman.ac.uk)