

Bi-Monthly Newsletter

NEWMAN STUDENTS' UNION



September - October
2024



PRESIDENT, GEMMA
VICE-PRESIDENT, CLOUDY

Here's what's been happening and what is to come!

Welcome to our Newman Students' Union newsletter! We are excited to share the latest developments and efforts towards supporting your voice and community here at Birmingham Newman University.

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone who has been taken part in our activities over Welcome Week 24 and throughout this start of semester. Your enthusiastic involvement has allowed us to have a fantastic start to the academic year.

During the start of this semester, myself and Gemma have been visiting as many of you as we can during inductions and some of your initial lectures. We both want to thank you for being so welcoming, and letting us have the time to explain what Newman Students' Union does for you, and how you can become involved.

It pleases me to tell you these efforts have been productive, with most courses having a specific Course Rep, 8 Faculty Reps appointed, new RaG initiatives started and several new societies being launched.

This first episode of our Newsletter is coming to you in late November and you can expect the next Newsletter to be released Early January. We are a student-led organisation, so if you would like to be involved in this letter, I would be happy to talk to you about it so please contact me.

Finally, I just want to remind you that your Union is here for you. Together, we can elevate your voice and enhance your time at Birmingham Newman University. Thank you for your continued support and enjoy this first edition of our newsletter!

Best wishes,

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Your student council officers from top left to bottom right:

- Academic Affairs, Josh.
- Access and Inclusion, Jayden.
- Environment and Sustainability, Emily-May.
- LGBTQ+, Reece
- REACH, Daniel
- Mature Students, Steven
- Union Chair, Poppie
- Wellbeing, Shai

What's New at Newman Students' Union?

You have elected a new Student Council! Firstly, we would like to congratulate every nominee. Running a campaign is really difficult, but they put themselves out there with the aim to support their fellow students and improve everyone's experience at Newman.

Out of fifteen fantastic candidates, you selected eight students to represent your views and interests this academic year. These students will represent you in the Union through our two committees: Voice and Support, and Community and Wellbeing. They will also represent you throughout the University, through involvement in various task groups and committees.

If you have an idea which you think will enhance or improve your experience as a student, and you want your Union to take action on it, you can suggest Your Ideas here: www.newmansu.org/yourvoice/yourideas/ Once you've submitted your idea, your peers will be able to comment on it and support it through votes. When your idea has enough support it will be discussed and debated by the student council in Union Committees. This is a direct way to get your voice heard and you can use it as many times as you like during your studies. So, to enable us to elevate your voice, please use Your Ideas to reflect the current issues you are facing and let us know what is important to you and your experience.



Voice

Your Academic Rep team have a strong start to this year. Most courses have dedicated Course Reps and your Faculty Reps are now active. There were many strong candidates who interviewed for Faculty Rep positions, so congratulations to the successful applicants.

Your Faculty Reps are:

- Alex Wilson
- Hannah Barber
- Ibraheem Butt
- Joedine Scott-Reed
- Luke Mills
- Natasha Davis
- Rebeca Oriana Coanda
- Reece Christie



Support

Cuppa & Chat takes place in your Students' Union on a different day and time each week. Students have felt the Cuppa & Chat is a good space to voice their opinions about their courses and experiences; they've found it to be a friendly environment where they feel listened to. So, come along, grab a free hot drink and have a chat with your Officer Trustees and fellow students about anything and everything. For a limited time, we're offering free reusable Cuppa & Chat cups to those who attend a session. Don't forget, our Advice Service is here to support you with independent academic advice, support and guidance.

Community and Wellbeing



Scarefest, Frights and Fantasy!

To celebrate the turn of the season, you joined us at Alton Towers Scarefest! Before reading week, we hosted Frights and Fantasy. This was a huge collaborative effort with MaDSoc, Senses Lounge and a fantastic student panel which judged our Fancy Dress Competition. We hope you had as much fun as we did. Join us for the next big event!



Community Champions

Anime and Manga Society have been making moves to enhance our open days. Anime and Manga attended our October open day and talked with many prospective students and their families. They were able to offer these individuals unique insight into what it is like to be a student at Birmingham Newman and how being involved in societies can enhance their experience at university.



Society Showcase

This academic year, Warhammer 40k Society gained 24 members. This fantastic growth is in no small part due to the unique experience they offer their members. Sessions are dense with activity, with lore presentations, battles and discussion. Warhammer 40k Society offer a friendly and supportive environment for everyone interested in the hobby. Join for free today!



Raising and Giving (RaG)

We teamed up with the Chaplaincy team to host a Coffee and Chai morning on Sept 23rd. Thanks so much for your company and conversation. Together, we raised £103 for Macmillan Cancer Support. Also, new RaG initiatives are being launched right now by students just like you. Keep your eyes open for our next fundraiser or get in touch and see how RaG can benefit you and the causes you care about.

Spotlight on Community



Black History Month

My Black History

As part of the Union's celebration of Black History Month, we have been producing a short documentary, entitled, My Black History. This film documents students thoughts on Black History Month, their own identity and personal stories and histories. A final version of the film will be available online and at a screening on campus in December. If you would like to find out more about this project, please contact Robin Pitt, Union Director on: r.pitt@newman.ac.uk

Black-Owned Business Fair

During Black History Month, the Newman Community celebrated Black entrepreneurship and innovation at our annual Black-Owned Business Fair. Local traders, including students and alumni, showcased their businesses offering unique products and services. Thank you to all who joined us in supporting and promoting local business. We hope to welcome everyone back throughout the year.





Stories of impact: Newman Students' Union Call for No More Guarantors at National Lobby Day.

On October 23rd, your Officer Trustees, Gemma and Cloudy joined the National Union of Students (NUS) in Westminster to support their No More Guarantors campaign. Collectively, student leaders from across the UK lobbied MPs to call for an end to guarantor requirements. We argue guarantor requirements are unnecessary and negatively impact students. We asked MPs to support an amendment to the Renters' Rights Bill submitted by Alex Sobel MP and ask questions about why guarantors were not included in the bill as it goes through scrutiny. Alongside the NUS we ask for these policy changes:

- Include students and young people as protected categories in the Renters' Rights Bill, prohibiting guarantor requirements in student and youth tenancy agreements.
- Ban Section 21, no fault evictions.
- Support amendments to the Renters Reform Bill to abolish the use of guarantors, or equivalent up-front payments.
- Promote alternative protection measures for landlords, such as comprehensive tenant referencing and rent guarantee insurance.

Cloudy and Gemma joined with Cambridge Students' Union's Welfare and Community Officer, Elleni and NUS Vice President Liberation & Equality, Saranya to talk

with Liam Conlon MP. They discussed the No More Guarantors campaign and also shared issues students are facing around cost pressures. Additionally, they talked about how these issues can become real problems for students thriving at university, and also pose a barrier to underserved individuals accessing higher education.

Your Officer Trustees used the opportunity to talk about the issues they campaigned on. Gemma expressed unique difficulties students faced due to the cost of living crisis. She suggests elected officials could do more to connect students with community based support. Cloudy explained specific difficulties posed by transport costs, quality and poor service across the West Midlands. They pose an essential component of accessing higher education is well-connected, accessible and cost effective public transport. She argues anything less is a disservice to the public, and exacerbates existing education inequalities such as attainment gaps.

Gemma and Cloudy are only just getting started, they both have plans to continue shining a light on the issues you are facing and demanding change. So please keep talking to your SU about difficulties you have experienced, or are going through at Newman.

Thank you for reading!

Have a story you think should be featured here or would you like to be an editor on this newsletter?
Contact Cloudy, your Students' Union Vice-President: su-vice-president@newman.ac.uk