



'I expected to trawl through holiday snaps and the same old sunset. I was wrong'

Photo competition M10 - 11

YUSU silences media following threat of lawsuit

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EDITOR

A MEMBER of University staff is threatening legal action against YUSU for alleged defamation and harassment by the student media dating back over the past several years. YUSU has invoked the most serious articles of its Media Charter to prevent *Nouse* from reporting on the situation, for fear of provoking the individual further.

The staff member contacted YUSU Service and Finance Officer Matt Burton in mid-October to inform the union that he was considering legal action. Burton said the staff member claimed the University, obligated by a duty of care to him as his employee, had agreed to support his case if he did decide to sue.

The call to the Union came days after *Nouse* contacted the University with regards to allegations made against the individual by other members of staff.

In a formal letter to *Nouse* explaining the decision to pull the story YUSU

Societies and Communications Officer Sam Bayley said: "YUSU has decided that until the end of this term, when the situation will be reviewed, it is too much of a risk to the Union to print stories regarding the staff member."

"With legal action being considered, and a well documented case already in existence, we feel it would be unwise to inflame the situation by identifying the individual concerned."

The staff member refused to comment on the situation, saying that he would only speak through the University Press Office. He is rumoured to have built up a dossier documenting the student media's coverage of his actions for the past several years.

The University confirmed that the staff member had contacted YUSU but would neither confirm nor deny the claim that the University would support him in a potential legal action against the student union.

A University spokesperson said: "[The staff member] has indicated to YUSU

that he would take legal action should defamatory statements about him appear in the student media. The University recognises the right of any individual to seek legal redress in those circumstances."

On October 26 Bayley emailed all student media organisations declaring "an indefinite media embargo" on any stories relating to the staff member. In the email Bayley said: "We are getting rather concerned here that [the staff member] is preparing a legal case for continuing harassment due to the number of mentions about him in the newspapers over the past few years." In *York Vision's* November 6 edition no mention was made of the situation.

Concerns have been raised that if the situation does escalate into a court case in which YUSU is facing a lawsuit from a member of University staff it could have a damaging effect on the University's public image. Garner said he would not comment on "a purely hypothetical situation".

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GEORGE LOWTHER

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BNP hit back against YUSU condemnation

The BNP has described the decision to condemn the Oxford Union Debating Society "farical". YUSU Racial Equality Officers have criticised Oxford Union's decision to invite BNP leader Nick Griffin and David Irving to a debate.

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York enters world's top 100 universities

The University of York has been ranked the 74th best university in the world according to a new table compiled by the Times Higher Education Supplement. York has climbed over 50 places from its previous position of 124.

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Which wine?

Nouse's resident wine expert finds out if it's possible to drink good wine on a budget, and discovers that expensive bottles don't always hold the best tipple.

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Rowers begin season campaign with victory

York University Boat Club began new Head racing season with coxed fours win in their division at the annual York Small Boats contest. Novice women achieved 'senior level' time in their first race together in a coxed four, but novice men were unable to compete.

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