

Dons Trust Board (DTB)

Redacted minutes of board meeting held at 7.30pm on 23 January, 2019

The Cherry Red Records Stadium, President's Lounge

DTB members

Rob Crane
Mark Davis (Chair)
Colin Dipple
Roger Evans
Anna Kingsley
Hannah Kitcher
Jane Lonsdale
Luke Mackenzie
Cormac van der Hoeven

In attendance

David Growns (Secretary)
Erik Samuelson (Club CEO)
Joe Palmer (Club COO)
Mick Buckley (Club Director)

1. Introduction and apologies

Apologies were noted from Terry Langford (minutes).

PART 1 – WITH FCB REPRESENTATIVES

2. FCB Report

There was a discussion on football matters, including the transfer window and potential player movements:

- Colin asked how Wally Downes (WD) is getting on with the management staff;
- Cormac asked about the basis for WD's concerns regarding soft tissue injuries;
- Regarding the level of complaints about the quality of iFollow and what the club is doing about it (Rob). Joe explained issues around microphone replacement, ISDN line fault and other tweaks being made. We also don't know if some people are having internet issues and blaming iFollow;
- The support and advice from iFollow is not good. Based on the Twitter feed it is happening to a number of clubs (Jane). Joe undertook to ask fans to let us know, perhaps via a dedicated email address or Twitter feed, what is going wrong and when it is

happening so as to see if it is a common problem affecting all users at the same time;

- The DTB wished to thank Jeremy Sauer and his team for successfully passing the EPPP (Elite Player Performance Plan) audit.

Actions:

- **Joe to communicate to fans that they should let the Club know the precise nature and timing of the difficulties they are experiencing with IFollow;**
- **Mark to thank the Academy team on behalf of the DTB.**

3. Quarterly management accounts and 6 month forecast

Erik introduced the quarterly accounts and 6 month forecast during which the following points were raised:

- Luke asked at what point we stop producing a programme. Erik believed we should sell it more assertively. The sponsors see value in it. Hannah reminded Joe that we used to have programme seller bibs and we should invest in point of sale material such as stands and banners;
- Answering Roger's statement that the perception is that the quality of merchandise had improved, Joe said that the investment in staff was paying off and although sales were down they would achieve year-end forecast;
- In response to a question from Luke. Joe indicated that the relatively low margin we are experiencing on bar sales suggested high wastage and that the issue was being investigated. Further training would also be taking place to ensure we are getting the most accurate data from the Epos till, so as to help identify the reason for margin inconsistency;
- Roger requested a cash flow. Erik said he would provide two – one for 'business as usual' and one for the new stadium. He is waiting for a cash flow for the stadium construction and will then circulate both;
- It was agreed that the Dons Trust Board should continue to review the accounts on a quarterly basis rather than a monthly basis.

Action: Erik to provide business as usual and stadium cash flows.

Jane asked how the hot bag offering was going. There was a discussion with Joe about the need to put more variety into the hot food offering and replacement of ageing PDQs (card payment processing) which failed recently and caused a bar queue.

Mark instigated a debate regarding which banks we should use to deposit the proceeds from Chelsea. Sean McLaughlin had been asked for advice.

Mark asked that any further queries on the accounts should be sent to him to collate for Erik to answer and this item was closed.

4. Stadium report

The board held a general discussion around the S73 application for the variation to our planning permission and the stadium design during which the following proposals emerged:

- There is a need for a DTB session on stadium design with the designers / project manager as soon as possible so that member consultation could start (Roger);
- This should be followed by an open meeting with the fans to show them the current status of the core design, to be targeted for two weeks later (Mark);
- As soon as we have a final draft of the core design, we will start the consultation (Roger);
- Erik was asked to obtain a status update on the CCTV/Webcam (Luke).

Action: Erik and Mark to organise a meeting to include Joe G and possibly the construction company to go through the latest stadium design.

Action: Stadium Committee to organise an open meeting with the fans to take place two weeks after the above.

5. MK Mediation

The board was reminded where this process had reached in 2018, and Erik reported on a recent update from the QC representing us, Jim Sturman. As the mediation was subject to a non-disclosure agreement, there was little that the DTB would be able to say publicly at this stage.

6. Betting company

Joe introduced this item, reminding the DTB that a betting company are prepared to give us a sponsorship per season as official betting partner only and without a future bid for stadium naming rights. A discussion took place regarding this proposal in the light of our ethical sponsorship policy:

- Joe did not think they were prepared to wait whilst the membership was consulted.
- We should go back to our members and consult or we will be criticised for going down the betting route without asking them (Roger);
- This is an opportunity to be proactive on consultation (Cormac);
- We should ask the membership via a rapid survey, in addition to face-to-face approaches on matchdays and the like (Luke).

Action: Mark will canvass dates for next week when representatives of the board can meet with the betting company.

Agreed: The board will take sounding from the membership via a survey before proceeding with this proposal.

There were no further issues from the part 1 of the agenda, at which point members of the FCB departed the meeting.

PART 2 – DTB ONLY

7. Succession planning

There was a discussion about succession planning.

8. DTB minutes

Subject to suggested amendments and clarification, the minutes of 10 December were **approved**.

9. Priorities

This item was postponed to a future date.

10. Ways of working

This item was postponed to a future date.

11. 9Yrs Podcast

Following the offline collation of comments by DTB members between meetings, the DTB resolved that it could not condone the recent comments of the 9Yrs Podcast on one of our players as they were unacceptable.

Following discussion the DTB resolved that it would not overturn the FCB decision to remove their press passes. Luke noted he had spoken to some of the 9yrs team and they didn't necessarily want the press passes back.

The DTB also discussed whether the Dons Trust itself should cut ties with the 9Yrs Podcast. It was noted by Jane that the 9yrs Podcast had done good work on the election broadcast.

Colin noted that some sponsors had spoken to him and were disgusted by the remarks.

An emerging proposal, from Roger, was discussed along the lines that:

- There is a period of suspension until the start of next season;
- The DTB would be willing to entertain a resumption of relations but the 9YP would need to make a public apology and agree to abide by the Volunteers Charter (whatever form that may take).

Noting the late time, it was agreed that a suitable form of words would be drafted and circulated to the DTB to vote on by email.

Action: Mark will suggest a suitable form of words, circulate it, and hold an email vote, by Sunday 27 January, the outcome of which would be ratified and minuted at the next DTB meeting.

12. Any other business (AOB)

Mark mentioned Luke's suggestion of starting the meetings at 7pm and/or holding them somewhere else such as Wimbledon. Whilst convenient for some DTB members, it was not convenient for all DTB members, so this suggestion was parked.

Luke asked about the timescale for minutes being circulated. Mark set out the aspiration of seven days to draft the minutes, seven days for Erik/Joe and DTB colleagues to comment, and clearance at the next meeting. Hannah noted she had not yet written up the 7 November minutes.

Jane asked about the notes from the three phone calls relating to the manager appointment she had taken. Mark noted he had these. Jane noted that she had prepared summaries that, if agreed, could be released.

The meeting concluded at 11pm.