

Dons Trust Board (DTB)

**Redacted minutes of board meeting held at 7.30pm on 14 March, 2018
The Cherry Red Records Stadium, President's Lounge**

DTB members

Matthew Breach (MB)
Mark Davis (MD – Chair)
Colin Dipple (CD)
Roger Evans (RE)
Nigel Higgs (NH)
Cormac van der Hoeven (CH)
Jane Lonsdale (JL)
Charles Williams (CW)

In attendance

Hannah Kitcher (HK - Minute taker)
Erik Samuelson (ES - Club CEO)
Joe Palmer (JP – Club COO)
Frank Thompson (FT - Safeguarding Officer)

1. Introduction and apologies

Apologies were noted from DTB members Sean McLaughlin and Tim Hillyer and from Secretariat members Tom Brown and Andrew Howell. Frank Thompson (FT) was welcomed to the meeting.

PART 1 – WITH FCB REPRESENTATIVES

2. Safeguarding

FT had been invited in his capacity as the Club's lead safeguarding officer. He presented the Club's safeguarding strategy. Key points he made, drawn from the paper circulated to the DTB in advance of the meeting, were as follows.

First, when thinking about safeguarding, consideration was needed for everything that falls under the AFC Wimbledon brand, including:

- The match day experience;
- Events;
- The Academy;
- The Foundation (governed by a separate board of trustees and subject to EFL and FA rules); and
- Ladies and Girls (governed by Surrey FA rules).

Second, and with the above in mind, FT had drawn up the following safeguarding structure for the Club:

- Senior Safeguarding Panel that meets quarterly;

- Senior Safeguarding Manager - David Charles for the Club. This is an essential position and usually management/board level;
- Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer (Frank Thomson);
- Designated Safeguarding Officer - three in the Academy and Club, including the Head and Deputy Stewards and Amanda Bynon. All have been through relevant courses and are aware of their responsibilities;
- For the Foundation: Karen Peck (Trustee), Philip Rudling (Director) and a couple of the coaches.

Third, the Club was currently working on:

- Improving the visibility of safeguarding across the Club, including via the match day programme;
- Providing safeguarding courses for staff;
- Tidying up the Online Single Club Record (SCR) and FA Whole Game System (WGS).

CH noted that schools announce every year the person who is responsible for safeguarding and suggested that as a practice for the Club, as well as having posters around the Club to highlight who the contact person is.

CH also asked whether FT was confident that stewards at TCRRS are able to identify who to go to if they see an incident in the ground. FT explained that the Head Steward had done a lot of work on vulnerable adults but he would ask the staff that question and follow up.

RE asked what the process was if one of the youth team coaches suspected a child was being abused. FT explained that the coaches are aware of the process and that their role is to approach any staff at the Academy, Frank Thomson or David Charles. Other options would be to contact NSPCC, ChildLine or the police.

JL noted that she had attended a Supporters Direct conference in July 2017 where she attended a seminar on abuse in football and had discussed the way that coaches are now trained. JL explained that in light of this she was reassured that the amount of training and guidance the coaches at the Club receive covers the safeguarding of both children and staff. JL thanked FT for the work he has done. JL noted she had undertaken the safeguarding training for board and committee members and encouraged other board members to do it too.

MD noted that there were various DT activities that require consideration of safeguarding, namely the Junior Dons (JDs) section, including the Christmas party and tours of stadium. JL confirmed that she had worked closely with FT to ensure that the JDs Christmas party had the appropriate level of safeguarding in place. FT clarified that he also acted as the safeguarding officer for the DT and that, with one annual event, there is no necessity for an enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS), Criminal Records Check (CRC), Regulated Activity (RA), Enhanced DBS/CRC with Barred List Checks CRB check for volunteers as this would not fit the criteria for Regulated Activity.

FT recommended that the person who conducts the stadium tours should receive safeguarding training. Since they are different children each time and are accompanied by their parents, the stadium tours are not considered a high risk. Nonetheless, training would serve as a useful insight into safeguarding in general and be an educational prevention mechanism for the person conducting the tours. FT was satisfied that, on review of the DT activities, their current practices and procedures are sufficient to minimise the element of safeguarding risk. JL confirmed this would be picked up as part of the recruitment for the JDs administrator roles recruitment.

MB asked whether a DTB representative was needed on the safeguarding panel now that David Gowns, who sat on the panel, was no longer on the DTB. FT said that was a decision for the DTB but that reputationally and responsibly it would be advisable for the DTB to be seen to be doing this. FT said there was an open invitation to the DTB to attend the next panel meeting. CH volunteered to attend.

Action: CH to attend the safeguarding meeting at TCRRS on 26 March. JL to ensure safeguarding training is undertaken as part of the recruitment for the volunteer undertaking the tours with JDs.

The DTB thanked FT for his work and for attending the meeting. FT departed.

3. FCB Report

No decisions were requested in the FCB's report.

CD noted that the Club was currently £10k behind on **corporate sponsorship**. ES said he would be discussing this with Ivor Heller.

RE asked how for an update on how much was being spent to update the **floodlights**. ES clarified this as £35k.

JL advised that the **back bar** now opens at 1.30pm, as opposed to 12pm on match days but there had been no communication on this to fans. She had received queries and complaints about it. JL asked if the Club were planning to communicate the change. ES noted this suggestion.

MD noted that the summary of the **Spurs report** had been circulated.

- JL said that the ticketing and CRM (customer database) issues appeared to have been rolled into one - the report only covered the ticketing issues on the day and not the actions underway to make the CRM more user friendly. ES explained that this was covered in an annex to the FCB report. The Club had met with the CRM supplier (Green 4) to discuss the platform issues. The supplier had explained that a number of changes were to be made to the platform and would be reverting with its plans for implementing them over the next six months. The Club were also making their own changes, as outlined in David Charles' report.
- JL asked whether this had been communicated to fans and how the Club should target communications in future for these kinds of issues. ES explained that Club communications should be reminding fans that, if they have problems, then they should call the Club directly.

The DTB noted their thanks to David Charles for writing the report and were content with it.

Regarding issues with **iFollow**, ES reported that Chris Mappley was reasonably certain that the problem was not at the Club end. **JL agreed to put an update about this on Webjam, where members had raised concerns.**

Action: JL to post an update on Webjam.

4. MK Update

There was a discussion about the EFL charges in relation to Milton Keynes. In summary, the Club had not yet heard from the EFL about the next steps. However, it was important that members should be aware that: (i) we had been talking to the EFL about the charge; (ii) we had not heard from the EFL recently; but (iii) the Club were prepared for this and would enter into discussions in order to get the best possible outcome for the Club and Trust.

5. Stadium Update

The DTB noted that agreement was needed on the level of detail of reporting and discussion on stadium issues in DTB meetings, given the need to contain the amount of board time occupied by this issue and in light of the newly formed Stadium Committee. The role of that committee, made up of RE, SM and CD, was to enquire about detail and then report back to DTB.

ES reported that he had sent an application to the Football Stadia Improvement Fund (FSIF) to transfer existing grants from TCRRS to the new stadium and for a further grant. Having spoken with the FSIF, he was content with the application submitted to them.

It was noted that holding an open meeting or SGM in May would allow the DTB to discuss with members options for dressing the stadium and use of crowdfunding.

CW asked about proposed communications regarding the planning being unappealable. He noted he had previously floated the idea that the DTB/Club should do a monthly stadium update even if there were no news to report, so that fans would know to expect an update at a particular time of the month. JP reported that there would be communications later that week in connection with demolition of the greyhound stadium. There was potential for a micro-site [on the OS] and the installation of a real-time webcam, giving rise to further regular communications. JL felt it was important to include in communications the role being played by the DTB. CW reiterated that it would be helpful for all information on the stadium to be located in one place and updated to a regular schedule.

6. Approval of AFCW PLC Accounts

MD reminded colleagues that the DTB had been given authority, at the Trust's AGM, to exercise its votes in favour of approving the AFCW PLC accounts at the AFCW PLC AGM. The DTB needed to decide how to exercise that authority, now that the final accounts had been received.

The annual report (which had been circulated to the DTB before the meeting) was very close to the draft that had been circulated some time previously except that, following discussion with auditors, the termination payment and donation to Kingstonian were now recognised in the 2016/17 profit & loss account. The narrative had been amended accordingly.

Whilst MD was intending to attend the AFCW PLC AGM, and to exercise the DT's votes, he proposed that the DTB resolution should be phrased broadly enough to allow another DTB member to exercise the DT's vote, as a contingency measure.

MD proposed a resolution that MD, MB or any other DTB member nominated by the DTB in their absence should be authorised to cast the DT's votes (whether upon a poll or proxy vote) at the forthcoming AFCW PLC AGM in favour of approving the AFCW 2016/17 annual report.

The DTB voted unanimously in favour of the resolution.

ES observed that the DTB had established a number of committees but no committee had responsibility for reviewing the Club's accounts. MD replied that Sean McLaughlin (SM) and Tim Hillyer (TH) were both qualified accountants and that, whilst a formal committee might not be needed, they might be invited to play

such a role. MD further noted that accounting qualifications were not needed to raise questions on financial performance and invited DTB members to forward any questions on the Club's half-year accounts to him for forwarding to ES.

Actions: MD to contact SM and TH regarding review of the Club's accounts (actioned). DTB members to forward any questions on the Club's half-year accounts to MD in time for the next FCB meeting.

7. Approach to 2018/19 Budget

ES tabled a paper proposing the Club's proposed approach to setting a budget for 2018/19. He was not seeking an immediate decision but would need to know soon if the DTB had any objections. In summary, the proposal was for a substantial increase in the playing budget for the coming two seasons, to protect our League position - in effect an early investment from the higher turnover expected at the new stadium. This would be drawn from some of the contingency built into the stadium budget.

Action: DTB members to read ES's paper and comment via Webjam. MD to revert to ES with the DTB's position within the following 10 days.

ES and JP departed the meeting at this point.

PART 2 – DTB ONLY

8. Minutes and Matters Arising

MD noted that minutes from the 10 January board meeting had been circulated and asked for final comments from the DTB by 17 March.

The DTB had not yet received the minutes from 22 January or 15 February but a list of actions from the latter had been circulated. Regarding these actions:

- The Engagement & Communications Committee was not in a position to produce a note on a strategy on diversity and inclusion (D&I). It was suggested that D&I would be taken up by the Engagement and Communications committee with a working group being set up. D&I might also be covered in JP's strategy document;
- JL, and possibly a member who had expressed interest in D&I and particularly Women at the Game, were due to meet with Amanda Bynon to discuss the Club's equality code of practice;
- CW was investigating options for a new DT website which could incorporate a members-only area. NH offered to look into a new software / platform for

members only within the context of the IT strategy to be developed by the Operations Committee. JL had circulated the requirements for Webjam after the last DTB meeting.

Actions: MD to enquire whether JP's strategy could cover the issues of diversity and inclusion. NH to investigate options for a new software / platform to replace Webjam as part of the IT strategy.

9. Committee Updates

Strategy and Organisation Committee

This committee had not yet met but were scheduled to meet on 4 April. MB was drafting a Terms of Reference, which would be circulated to the DTB.

Stadium Committee

This committee now had an agreed Terms of Reference.

Operations Committee

One proposal from the recent committee meeting was that TH should be the DT's Data Protection Officer. The DTB confirmed this appointment and thanked TH for taking on this role.

MD proposed inviting the new Volunteer Liaison Officer to a future DTB meeting.

Oversight Committee

MD reported that all FCB members, other than ES, were now reporting to JP. JP in turn reported to ES, who also oversaw the new stadium and football. The DTB reflected on the structure, the accountability to the DTB and the line management reporting lines within the FCB.

MD and MB would shortly be meeting with David Growsns to discuss the Ladies & Girls section and its future reporting arrangements to the DTB.

Engagement & Communications Committee

CW reported that he had posted a paper on Webjam on presentation to members of options for a new DT logo at the next SGM.

Action: DTB members to comment on CW's paper within a week.

JL reported that she had met with Roger Dennis (RD) to discuss the Junior Dons (JDs). She had provided a readout to CH after the meeting as he would be

focussing on the older JDs and the transition post JD membership. CH added that a lot of great work was going on and this was not being advertised effectively to members and non-members. RD performed a lot of work that few people knew about. JL added that RD's work amounts to more than the work of one volunteer and that the DTB need to recognise that he has been doing everything in relation to the JDs, with the help of his wife Linda, since 2002.

JL therefore proposed, in her paper to the board, to advertise for three separate roles to cover the JDs as a replacement for RD. RD had been consulted on and agreed with the proposals. MD asked whether, should only two people come forward, which part of RD's activities would be sacrificed, e.g. birthday cards. JL explained that RD was still happy to get the cards signed after handing over the majority of his JDs responsibilities. The DTB noted this with gratitude and recognised that the issue of cards signed by hand could be reviewed in the future. **The DTB agreed to advertise for three roles.**

JL reported that some of the JDs' joining gifts had been ordered, now that a JD logo had been agreed. Storage of this merchandise was an issue to be addressed and Mat Haylock had emailed MD about this. A working party was being organised to send out the backlog of JD gifts when they had all been ordered and received.

NH noted that Academy players are automatically given JD membership. He asked whether this gave the Academy players a greater sense of affinity to the Club. Their automatic membership skewed the number of genuine JD members.

Action: JL to discuss the issue raised by NH with Jeremy Sauer.

NH noted that the Club itself did not currently have a junior membership section and asked if the DT could work with the Club to promote JD membership. MB noted that JP was looking into this and would make suggestions.

10. Spring SGM

The DTB decided that there should be two separate meetings:

- An SGM in April, at which the DT's new logo could be decided. This would also be an opportunity for JP to be introduced to members;
- An open meeting in May to discuss stadium issues (see above).

Action: MD to liaise with TB to arrange SGM logistics.

11. **AOB**

CH reported that he had attended a Citizens Merton event and that another was scheduled for 19 April. He thought it would be good for DTB members to attend these, and other similar local events, given the Club's move back to Merton.

CD asked about any communications for the commencement of demolition at Plough Lane on 16 March. MD replied that there was an embargoed press notice.

NH asked whether the London Living Wage would be provided for within the Club's budget, in order to push for accreditation.

MD reported that TH had been involved with, and offered help to, Dulwich Hamlet.

JL advised that she and MD were attending a meeting with the Volunteer Liaison Officer (VLO) and team leaders scheduled for 19 March as a first introductory meeting with the VLO.

The meeting concluded at 10.30pm. Date of next meeting: 9 April 2018.