

Dons Trust Board (DTB)

Redacted minutes of Meeting - 15 February 2018

Cherry Red Records Stadium President's Lounge

Members

Mark Davis (MD)

Matt Breach (MB)

Jane Lonsdale (JL)

Colin Dipple (CD)

Tim Hillyer (TH)

Sean McLaughlin (SM)

Charles Williams (CW)

In attendance

Tom Brown (TB)

Andrew Howell (AH)

Erik Samuelson (ES)

Joe Palmer (JP)

John Stembridge (JS)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Roger Evans, Nigel Higgs and Cormac Van der Hoeven (who, whilst not able to participate in the meeting, listened in from abroad via Skype).

JP was welcomed to the meeting as the club's new Chief Operating Officer (COO).

2. FCB Report

ES provided an update regarding the MK charge.

The meeting moved onto diversity and inclusion. ES confirmed that the FCB is happy to assist but a brief outline is required of what the DTB want them to do. MB suggested the DTB getting a strategy together.

JL clarified that diversity and inclusion isn't just about screening the Wonderkid film but that there are lots of other initiatives across the board. She advised that some fans / members are willing and able to participate. JL accepted that it's for the DTB to work out what the club must do but the DTB needs the club to ultimately brand itself as open and inclusive.

ES felt that a lot of what the DTB are talking about on diversity and inclusion is already done by the Foundation, which is independent from the club.

MD suggested getting together one piece of paper setting out an outline of what the DTB want.

The DTB queried whether this is something that JP is looking at in his role. JP viewed his role as looking at things from the business perspective; however, there is an element of looking at how the club is branded and how we want to be seen. This isn't a core responsibility of his but it could

be factored in. JP felt that this is more important than ever at this stage because of the move back to Wimbledon. There is a need to bring the Club and Trust more closely into alignment, with the FCB responsible for content and the DTB responsible for engagement and involvement. A clear and defined relationship is needed.

CW was keen to also look to include the Foundation and felt that there's more that can be done across the organisation for the better.

ES asked that the DTB be clear as to its priorities, as requests to the FCB for additional activities, such as diversity inclusion, compete with other priorities within the time and resources available.

Action: Engagement Committee to produce a short paper on what it wants from the FCB in relation to diversity and inclusion.

The DTB meeting moved onto football performance. MD summarised the situation as having been a good January with four disappointing results over an 11 day period in February and queried the FCB's view of this.

ES confirmed that performance is discussed during FCB meetings. The opinion of the FCB is that Neal Ardley (NA) remains the right man for the club and the main topic of discussion is questioning what more can be done to help him. The DTB agreed that there are positives to focus on and agreed with supporting NA as the right man to take the club forward.

TH queried whether NA was still looking to add to the squad. ES confirmed that NA potentially was, although not actively.

4. Stadium update

MD felt that the SGM may be a good opportunity for consulting members on stadium design. This would be decided at the March DTB meeting, following further advice from the Stadium Committee. MB offered the survey group's assistance for surveying members / fans outside of the SGM.

CW and JL raised the issue of wider community engagement, i.e. finding out what the local community wanted from the stadium and how it might be used for community purposes. Potentially this might also be the subject of a survey.

2. FCB report (contd.)

The discussion returned to the FCB report. ES confirmed that a report into the Spurs ticketing has been received and it's reasonably comprehensive. In summary, ES confirmed that there were 37 complaints and the FCB agree on the cause of the issues. ES felt that the club tried to be impractically helpful, for example the process for trying to let fans sit together. There was also a lack of clarity as to who was managing the process. Ultimately, the process was poorly managed and poorly executed. JL questioned whether communications were adequate or could be improved, noting the videos that had been on line to help people to navigate online buying. ES noted that in some cases the information hadn't been followed. ES felt that some things were out

of the club's control, such as the Wembley staff. However, it was a serious oversight not having somebody at Wembley. The report will be distilled into a one page document for the DTB, covering recommendations and lessons learned.

The DTB moved onto any other business regarding the FCB report. MD raised the DT accounts not having been signed off yet as the Plc accounts have not been signed off. ES explained that the problem is that, with the accounts delayed, we now have new audit staff to work with, since the people who did the audit have now left. An option is for the accounts to be submitted to Companies House and then to take them to the AGM. ES and SM are to discuss the accounts and the options available. DTB members should feed in queries regarding the accounts which can be discussed between ES and SM.

ES confirmed that budgeting has begun for next season taking into consideration all possible eventualities for this season. The target is to get a budget in an initial form by April. ES also confirmed that the share of net gate receipts from the Tottenham Hotspur game stood at £115k.

Action: ES and SM to liaise over account figures.

JL queried the status of the branding report and noted that there was nothing in the FCB report about it. ES confirmed that he has seen an advanced draft of the branding report. ES wanted a branding strategy to be completed first and then bring the branding to the DTB for approval.

ES and JP departed the meeting at this point.

5. **Membership Secretary update**

After the break, John Stembridge (JS), Membership Secretary, joined the DTB meeting. JS has produced membership numbers which, in summary, demonstrate that since the last membership renewal date, 697 memberships had lapsed, with 387 new members. JS explained that it's not uncommon for memberships to lapse and used the example of having a high number of US students subscribe in the last few years, possibly not renewing their membership with the additional problem being that they are unable to renew by direct debit from the US.

JS explained that the membership types are junior, standard and concession. There are about 30 lifetime members¹ (JL pointed out that boys and girls from the Academy boys and Ladies & Girls section aren't included in the figures JS presented). Members are weighted towards the older age of the spectrum, with the substantial majority based in this country. Almost 1,000 members pay by credit card and JS felt that it would be a useful option to investigate debiting credit cards automatically each year for renewal and perhaps automatically by PayPal for the US.

The handout circulated by JS contained the composition of members which JS took the DTB through briefly.

¹ Post-meeting update: the actual number is 46.

MD moved onto issues with online membership subscription, and in particular the online payment mechanism. JS's view is that the online credit card process is cumbersome. There are two separate forms to complete and a lot of people do one but not the other, i.e. complete payment but not application, or vice versa.

CW raised that there are a number of different plugins to allow a person to subscribe to a website in order to access different areas via WordPress. It would be necessary to look at how to integrate it with PayPal but DT membership could be done through WebJam. MD raised the DTOS refresh as a possible alternative route.

JL queried the issue of membership data for WebJam purposes. JL explained that, to ensure Webjam is member only, having new joiners and leavers information monthly was imperative. The current process is convoluted, with additional volunteers having to conduct a manual spreadsheet comparison exercise on the data received from JS, which may be a problem once GDPR is in effect.

JL is advised by JS that the CRM is the solution to this and it would be useful to find out how JL can obtain details of joined and lapsed members to be sent straight to her. JL also queried when the DT data was being transferred to the CRM. Lapsed memberships need to be removed and joiners need to be known in order to benefit from the membership perks.

TH asked whether, when data moves, it's password protected and encrypted. JS confirmed that it can be, but a process is needed. The date for CRM moving is targeted for August and MD pointed towards a process being implemented to work out what will and won't be solved by CRM. An approach is required to resolve issues that won't be solved. A list of questions needs to be worked through systematically. JS agreed and suggested the DTB find out what they want from CRM.

TH enquired whether details are kept of lapsed memberships. JS confirmed that details are kept and that there are some 4,000 lapsed members. TH believes that there's a good opportunity to get members back with the stadium move.

JS explained that members get two reminders to renew their membership when it's due to lapse. Memberships don't lapse until 90 days after 1 August. JL noted that Webjam is aligned with these dates, noting the clean-up of memberships on Webjam last November.

MD asked what is needed out of the membership system to make sure CRM provides functionality. JS thought that CRM would make the workload more bearable. Once DT membership is in CRM, everyday queries could potentially be dealt with by the club office. The website and payment process is the most pressing issue. Day to day, JS mainly fields emails and queries regarding problems and deals with new members which is continuous. JS notes that it's difficult to pass those tasks on. He's pressing to move to CRM. JS confirmed that the database is backed up to Google drive, however there is no back-up for JS himself (i.e. single point failure risk). JS confirmed that aligning all memberships to August has assisted the workload; however, there is a spike in activity in August. Having all memberships renew in August does cause issues for those who join mid-season.

JS also confirmed that people do seem to like having membership cards and that it has been useful aligning membership renewal with season ticket renewal, with the eventual aim of consolidating them. MD confirmed that the Operations Committee are to consider JS' comments and thanked JS for his time on behalf of the board. It's important to get the CRM online this year even though it's acknowledged that it won't solve everything. JL agreed that it's useful to know who the members are and their make-up. JL's view was that more regular updates like this would be beneficial in tracking membership data.

6. Committee updates

MD had produced a paper after the January strategy meeting confirming the committees. The paper was circulated prior to the DTB meeting and terms of reference for most of the committees had been produced. MD asked for any comments on the overall structure, the individual terms of reference and monthly reporting arrangements.

JL confirmed that she's content but noted the risk that committees might deal with issues that should be brought before the whole board. MB agreed that the DTB must ensure that this doesn't happen, but where everybody's involved in everything things just don't work.

MB suggested that each group look at each area of responsibility and raise it with the DTB if they can't handle the workload or issues.

MD noted a couple of areas of duplication between the groups such as Operations and Engagement & Communications over volunteering and engagement.

CW expanded on volunteering and the opportunity to use this as a tool in engagement now that a Volunteer Liaison Officer is in place. CW stressed the importance of getting younger people involved and making it attractive in a consistent way. CW was interested in how those opportunities are described and in looking at what roles could be filled by young people. The Engagement & Communications Committee's interest was less in the operational aspects of volunteer recruitment than in selling such roles to young people.

JL advised that nobody on the Engagement & Communications Committee is willing to take on the work for the replacement of WebJam. She noted that the Trust's free subscription to Webjam lapses in December 2019. MB suggested that this is where the first volunteer is perhaps required. MB queried whether Webjam could be paid for on a year by year basis thereafter.

JL advised that it takes time to research, negotiate and implement an alternative for WebJam if one is necessary, noting the time taken relating to Webjam.

MD asked the Engagement & Communications Committee to report on the commercial arrangements for WebJam, recommendations for whether to replace or keep it and whether to seek a volunteer to assist. JL stressed that, owing to the workload involved, she won't be involved in replacing it. The group discussed possible alternatives. NH requested the requirements for a solution that had been sourced for Webjam. JL agreed to circulate these from the Webjam paperwork.

Action JL to circulate requirements of Webjam solution to board.

The publication of blogs and ToRs was discussed, noting that each group was requested to provide a blog for Webjam (to Hannah) explaining a bit more about the work being undertaken (where there are no sensitivities) and noting who is responsible for the work.

Action: MD requested each committee to submit final versions of their TORs and to provide a blog to Hannah describing their remit.

7. SGM

MD confirmed that a date in April is to be agreed. TB is unavailable from mid-March and so won't be available to sort papers. MD queried whether more time is required to allow for TB's availability. The stadium issues are however critical and time sensitive.

CW noted that the DT logo is time sensitive as it's needed for the DTOS refresh and kiosk signage. MB was of the view that the DT logo basically entailed asking people if they like something or not which can be done by survey outside of the SGM. JL recalled that there had previously been a view that the logo can't be changed without going to members first.

MD suggested the SGM being on the stadium and perhaps a vote on the logo even if simply formal ratification. The SGM will also include the introduction of JP as COO. An agreement on the SGM will be made at DTB meeting dated 14 March. General meeting dates have not been put to the members yet.

Action: MD will decide on SGM date at the next DTB meeting. The Stadium Committee are to suggest timing.

8. AOB

JL advised that she has been contacted in relation to Women at the Game (WaTG) by a fan who was keen to run an event and had written to David Charles suggesting the Fleetwood game. JL reminded the DTB that she had raised having a WaTG game with the club following meeting WaTG at Supporters Direct conference last July, but that issues around capacity in the stadium had suggested that we wait until the new stadium to run this event. JL noted that she was liaising with the fan who is willing to help and get involved with wider diversity and inclusion.

JL also raised the Junior Dons and advised she was getting job descriptions from Roger Dennis so that a job description can be agreed and advertised.

JL advised that Hannah Kitcher has now taken over from David Reeves in supporting WebJam. She also advised that following the meeting with Webjam a change is being implemented by Webjam so notifications will be sent to users when something new is posted onto the WebJam wall. JL also said that it is key to get list of members from JS so that new members are invited to WebJam when they join.

TH raised the discontinuation of the Wimbledon Village Fair and suggested that the club should arrange for a presence at alternative events.

TH also confirmed that he had attended the Supporters Direct (SD) Council meeting during which it transpired that once subs have been paid to SD for membership, the SD logo demonstrating compliance can be used on letterheads and the website.

MD confirmed that he is to advertise for an additional minute taker and that he was keen to get a list of actions out soon after DTB meetings.

The meeting concluded at 22:20.