

Wimbledon Football Club Supporters Society Limited

Draft Minutes of the Special General Meeting held on Thursday, 16 October 2008 **at**

The Cherry Red Records Fans' Stadium - Kingsmeadow, Jack Goodchild Way, 422a Kingston Road, Kingston-upon-Thames, KT1 3PB

These minutes will be submitted to the DTB at its meeting on 17 October on the basis that they will be submitted for approval by the members at the next AGM of the DT

1. Introduction and Apologies for Absence

At 19:30pm the Chairman of the Trust Board, David Cox (DC), declared the meeting open. As well as the 32 members who attended the meeting in person, 60 members had submitted proxy forms¹. Welcoming members, DC conveyed apologies from Sean Fox, Ivor Heller, Nigel Higgs, Tim Hillyer, Sean McLaughlin, Iain McNay and Dean Parsons.

DC drew attention to the changed format of the meeting, with the information and Q&A items coming first. DC said that it was his responsibility to ensure that there would be sufficient time to deal with the formal items of business on the agenda. One member had emailed making the fair point that the meeting should be asked to confirm that it was content to conduct the business in this way. DC asked the members present all of whom were content to work to the agenda as it had been circulated on 1 October.

2. Chief Executive's Report to Members

Erik Samuelson (ES) took the meeting through the major developments at the football club since the last SGM on 21 April.

That meeting had approved the major building project to extend the main stand. The results were now visible. The Paul Strank stand had come in on time (13 September) and within budget (£736k) and ES was pleased that it looked better than he had been led to believe it would.

Other projects for the ground were to restructure the steps on the terrace at the Kingston Road end to make it easier for the people standing there to see over the heads of the people in front of them. The plan was to undertake this project in the summer.

We were going to install a sixth turnstile at the Tempest end so that we would be compliant with the requirements for grounds in Blue Square South (Grading B) by 31 March 2009. Then, before 31 March 2010 we would increase the number of turnstiles to eight to comply with the requirements for grounds in Blue Square Premier (Grading A). In order to do this (the new turnstiles would be in the NE of the ground and give access to the John Smith stand) we would need to get the perimeter lease and ES reported good progress in the negotiations with Kingstonians and the RB of Kingston. He was optimistic that this would be brought to a successful conclusion shortly.²

¹ For resolution 1, 37 cast their votes in favour and 22 made the Chairman their proxy in the clear knowledge that, as made clear in the papers, he would cast their votes in favour of the resolution. 1 abstained. The comparable figures for resolution 2 were: 37, 21 and 2.

² On Friday 24 October 2008 the agreement was announced on a proposal for the transfer of the additional land surrounding Kingsmeadow stadium to AFC Wimbledon. The transfer of the land, which is to be in the form of a lease, will need to be approved by The Royal Borough of Kingston.

A new burger bar should open at the Kingston Road end by mid November.

Promotion had opened up a new world. Season ticket sales were at a record high (1,624) and crowds were up by about 175 a game. Sponsorship was going well as evidenced by the Paul Strank stand. We were having a “superb” year in terms of merchandise. We were going well in the BSS and the FA Cup and the football we were playing was good.

Our accounts for the year to end June 2008 were now in draft ready for the new auditors who would be appointed following a tendering process.³ The management accounts for the first quarter of the 2008/09 financial year up to end September 2008 showed that we were doing ok.

ES explained how football would be affected by the credit crunch and predicted recession. Fortunately our donors gave their money up-front, we did not enter into long-term commitments, and our cash flow position was good.

3. The Board’s Priorities for the Year Ahead

DC said that the Board had taken the opportunity at its forward look meeting to debate its top priorities for the year ahead. The results were set out in the paper circulated for the meeting and he invited comments. There were none.

4. Q&A session

Q. What was the position on the refurbishment of the toilets in the main bar?

A. The original plan had been to do this as part of the main stand extension project. But the timing had proved impossible and so the refurbishment had been delayed. The intention was to start the work (that would take 4 to 5 weeks) on Monday, 12 January.

Q. How much FA Cup prize money had we earned and how was it shared out?

A. The Club shared this with the players and to date (replay win against Dover) he estimated that the Club could look forward to 50% of £7.5k.

Q. What fundraising initiatives had there been to date this year?

A. Mark Davis’s fundraising group had been active. The projects were a Dinner, the Buy a Brick campaign, a Silent Auction and a drive to increase the take up of tickets to the Dons Trust Draw. It was inevitable that the recession would affect our support base and so the fundraising effort would need to be intensified.

Q. What was the latest on the CPZ?

A. Despite various reminders from us to them, we had heard no more from the RB of Kingston and the ball remained in their court.

Q. Were we working to improve our arrangements for segregating fans in anticipation of the need to do this more often?

A. Yes, we were working on plans to improve them. But we did not have plans to segregate in the Strank stand.

Q. Was the Board aware of the level of mindless abuse that our own fans could direct to opposition players and fans?

³ BDO Stoy Hayward were the successful bidder.

- A. It was and it welcomes reports from supporters on problems. The policy on banning supporters is clear and well publicised and there must be a reasonable case made before anyone can be banned.
- Q. Was AFCW responsible for incidents at Kingsmeadow when Ks are playing here?
 A. This was an issue that we hoped finally to sort out as part of the new licence to be drawn up when we concluded the negotiations on the perimeter lease.
- Q. What proportion of the members was in attendance?
 A. The membership secretary reported a current adult membership of 1,299. So the 32 members present in person represented 2.5% of the total. If one added in the 60 who had voted by proxy, then 7.1% of the membership had participated.

5. Directors and membership of the DT Board

There was a brief initial debate on the nature of the DTB and how it relates to the subsidiary boards and whether this might change in the future. It was agreed that a paper should be produced as part of the Strategy Review explaining these terms and relationships.

6. Minutes of the AGM held on 26 January 2008

These minutes were approved unanimously.

7. Minutes of the SGM held on 21 April 2008

These minutes were approved unanimously.

8. Resolution 1 – to change our rules for holding general meetings

This resolution was passed unanimously. The Secretary would arrange for the Rules to be changed with the Financial Services Authority. The practical effect would be to reduce the number of formal general meetings from 4 to 3 with the AGM in January and the two SGMs at the end of the season (April) and the beginning of the season (September). The dates for the 2009 meetings would be announced before the end of the year. DC made clear that these would be supplemented by informal events held to inform and consult the membership.

9. Resolution 2 – to complete the restricted actions rule change

This resolution was passed unanimously so concluding the list of actions where the board must come to the membership to obtain their explicit approval before going ahead with something. The Secretary would arrange for the Rules to be changed with the Financial Services Authority. The practical effect was that from now on whenever the Board wants to borrow against the security of the stadium of Kingsmeadow, it will only be able to do so if it first obtains a majority in favour of its proposals of two thirds of those voting (whether in person or by proxy).

It was pointed out that the schedule of Restricted Actions that the Trust had already agreed is not very easily accessible on the official site. This had made it difficult to see how the new Category D restricted action weighed in the balance with the Category A actions where the hurdle for membership clearance is even higher. The Secretary agreed that this was a fair criticism. He intended to put on the official site the up-to-date version of the Constitution. In any future papers, he would then be able to do the necessary cross referencing by pointing members to the up-to-date version of the Constitution.

10. Any other business

Members did not think that the arrangements for this meeting had been properly communicated. First, there had not been any reminders on the official site and the no notices of the meeting had been posted on the boards at Kingsmeadow. DC promised that the Board would review its procedures for announcing and advertising Trust meetings.

Second, those accessing the papers for the SGM electronically had only been able to do so by going back to the email issued as long ago as 1 October - not a simple matter given the volume of email traffic. The Board should make the papers accessible on the Official Site on the Trust publications page. The Secretary agreed that this too was a valid criticism and he said that this would be done for future general meetings.

The meeting closed at 21:35 pm.

David Cox
Chairman of the Board

David Wilkinson
Secretary of the Trust