

WHY YOUR VOTE REALLY MATTERS IN MAY

Dons Trust Secretary David Hall explains why a resolution for the Dons Trust SGM in May matters to every fan, and our hopes to return to Merton.

Last summer, the Dons Trust Board consulted with members about a proposed Community Share offer, a new way of raising funds for major capital projects. In our case, the income raised by the scheme was to be mostly earmarked to keep Kingsmeadow up to Football League standards and avoid any threat of being demoted.

In the event, we were able to pay for the new North Stand in other ways, and after extensive talks with the regulatory authorities we were able to avoid carrying out significant changes to the east stand. So the DTB shelved the Community Shares proposal, although the Board knew that its time would, sooner or later, come again – a time when we needed access to significant funds to help fund a new stadium in Merton.

Scroll forward to today, and first the good news – since the autumn, progress on a potential return to Wimbledon has been such that the DT Board has accepted the Football Club Board's recent recommendation that we should start preparing **now** for the time when we may need to have new funds ready to fund aspects of the new stadium project.

The not so good news is that, before we can launch a Community Share Scheme, we have to make some changes to the Dons Trust constitution. And before you either doze off or flip to the next page, let me explain why this falls into the 'really important' box, and why your vote will matter!

The change - and why we need to make it

The current DT constitution - largely unchanged since 2002 – only allows us to issue membership shares. What we would like to do is have the flexibility to also issue a share which is designed to raise finance for community benefit - known as Community Shares. So we need to ask DT members, through a formal voting process, to agree to an amendment that will enable the DT to do this. And, because the proposed change we'll be making is constitutionally quite significant, we need at least 25% of current DT members to vote, of whom at least **three-quarters** must to do so **in support of** the changes.

And the really important bit

A Community Share issue is our best way of collectively raising funds from the community to help us return to Merton. There are a number of reasons, but mainly because it puts our position of supporter ownership of the Club at the least risk, it is fairest to supporters investing and is cost effective to the Club. Approaching £5 million has been raised from Community Share offers at the likes of FC United of Manchester, Portsmouth and Wrexham, and the money keeps coming.

What next?

The DT Board plans to discuss the constitutional amendment resolution at the SGM on 7 May, and we're exploring ways to enable DT members to register their vote online. We'll let members know the options shortly.

So there will be plenty of communications in the next few weeks about the resolution, and later about the Community Shares proposal itself. We want to make sure everyone has the opportunity to remind themselves – or indeed find out about it for the first time – of how Community Shares work, what it means for individual investors, and perhaps most importantly, how such an offer ensures that ownership of our Club remains in the hands of its present owners, you the fans.

The SGM resolution in a nutshell

- The DT Constitution needs to be amended before the DTB can launch a Community Share scheme
- Only current DT members can vote for or against the resolution to amend the DT Constitution
- For the amendment to be passed, at least 25% of DT members must vote for or against the amendment, of whom 75% must vote in favour.