

Dons Trust Board Meeting



Monday 10 December 2012

The Cherry Red Records Stadium

Back Bar



MINUTES

Members:

Matthew Breach (MB)
David Grouns (DG)
Iain McNay (IM)
Simon Bath (SB)
Zoe Linkson (ZL)
Nicole Hammond (NHa)
Sean McLaughlin (SM)

Invited:

Erik Samuelson (ES)
Nigel Higgs (NHi)
David Charles (DC)
Ivor Heller (IH)

David Hall (DH) – Secretary
David Reeves (DR) - Secretariat

Apologies:

Tom Adam (TA)
Kate Terriere (KT)

Eric Page (EP) - Secretariat

Ref	Item	Action
	The meeting began at 19:30.	
1.0	Apologies/Minutes/Matters Arising	
1.1	Apologies were received from Tom Adam, Kate Terriere and Eric Page (Secretariat).	
1.2	DR agreed to take the minutes and share with DH.	DR / DH
	Matters arising:	
1.3	The previously agreed action to train programme sellers remains outstanding.	IH

1.4	The voting pattern in approving the acceptance of 2 nd round FA Cup tie complimentary tickets for players only was 5 for (DG, IM, MB, TA and ZL), 1 against (SM) with 2 abstentions (SB/NH).	
1.5	The number of youth matches played earlier in the season against Milton Keynes was nine, of which AFC Wimbledon won eight and lost one, and not as reported in the draft minutes.	
1.6	SM asked for an update on the recruitment of the volunteer leaders. ES confirmed that there had been no applicants; consequently the posts would be re-advertised. Consideration would also be given to contacting major employers, who may consider lending the Club suitable people. IM expressed a doubt that this solution would work, unless they were already fans.	ES
1.7	There was a discussion about the 2 nd round FA Cup tie. There was a feeling that many of the 3,000 fans who had attended the match were not regular supporters, and that the Club should explore ways to continue to engage with them. ES agreed, for example they could be encouraged to buy half-season tickets. DC commented that the implementation of a customer relationship management (CRM) system would facilitate this type of activity.	DC
2.0	CEO's Report	
2.1	There was a discussion about first team matters following the appointment of Neal Ardley as manager, including the situation with current loanees and plans for the January transfer window. It was noted that the training routine had now been changed to Tuesday to Friday, which would help improve player fitness levels.	
2.2	The situation regarding accounts support was discussed. ES acknowledged that the recent growth of the Club meant that that the current provision was not sufficient, and was increasing his workload at key times in the accounting cycle. However, there were plans in place to deal with this early in 2013.	
2.4	ES reported on recent developments with a possible new stadium in Plough Lane. Meetings had taken place with the two potential developers; the situation, although still unresolved, should become much clearer in the new year. ES and IH had also recently met Steven Hammond, MP for Wimbledon, and senior Conservative councillors on Merton Council to keep them informed.	
2.3	In response to a question from SM regarding the present stadium, ES	

	confirmed that the capacity was agreed with the council to be just over 5,000 but in practice we would usually operate it with a capacity of around 4,700 because of limited sight lines in certain sections of the ground.	
2.4	ES said that the Football League was happy with the stadium capacity without the need for further investment. It was now up to the Club to decide what, if anything, it wanted to do to improve the experience for fans. The Stadium Working Group would be looking at options and their cost-effectiveness.	
2.5	DC reported on alleged damage by our fans at Milton Keynes. It had been proposed by the other party that the two clubs shared the cost of this and had agreed to send an estimate. It was agreed that unless the estimate is trivial, a Club representative should arrange a stadium visit to inspect the alleged damage before the FCB took a view.	DC
2.6	DC confirmed that there had been three arrests amongst our fans, who had all been charged with affray. The FCB would determine appropriate sanctions once the position was clearer.	FCB
2.7	IH reported on a commercial deal between the FL and Bet Butler, a betting concierge company. The Club stood to gain financially from every bet made by our fans. Bet Butler would be attending the Rotherham game to invite fans to sign up for a free account. IH said that Bet Butler would also feature on all FLi websites, including our OS. ES hoped that, over time, the deal would bring in significant and very welcome commercial income. DR suggested contacting those fans who had bought FA Cup tie tickets about the deal, particularly if many of them did not regularly attend home games. This was agreed.	DC
2.8	ES confirmed that the Club's OS was performing very well in FLi webpage impressions 'league', given that it was new to fans and the launch had been very poorly implemented - <u>implemented</u> .	
3.0	Budget Update	
3.1	ES outlined the current budgetary position and the implications for funding new players in January. Although it was not yet known exactly what the income would be from the FA Cup 2 nd round tie, it was still expected that the overall year end projection would show us breaking even, but that is before allocating money to spend in the January transfer window. ES expressed concern over the budget for 2013/14, and stressed the need for the Club to seek other forms of income to offset the expected increases in some costs, and the need to maintain an adequate playing budget. There followed a lengthy discussion about long-term finance options and	ES

	the need to have a full and open debate with members about these at the AGM on 13 December.	
4.0	Election Update	
4.1	DH explained that as only four nominations had been submitted for the five posts it had been agreed with the non-standing DTB members in consultation with the ESG that each of those four members be ratified at the AGM and this had been included on the Agenda at Resolution 8.	
4.2	DG explained the merits of co-opting onto the DTB, in the light of there being only eight members for the foreseeable future. After a full discussion, during which various opinions for and against the proposal were aired, a proposal in principle to endorse co-optees was passed (six in favour, none against, one abstention). DG then proposed that Mick Buckley (MBu) be co-opted onto the DTB for a 12 month period. This was also passed (five in favour, none against, two abstentions). It was noted that MBu would bring a skill-set not already possessed by current board members, in particular considerable senior marketing and communications experience. ES said that MBu was a long-term fan, and one of a small number of people with whom he consulted informally from time to time. DG said that MBu would be at the AGM and would be introduced to members then (in the end he was unable to attend the AGM).	DG
4.3	MB said that, in the light of insufficient members being prepared to stand for the recent election, the Board should consider the implications for future elections. SM said that he was aware of two members who had been put off by the prospect of the hustings and suggested they be abolished. It was agreed to discuss this further outside the meeting.	DH
5.0	Preparation for AGM	
5.1	There was a detailed discussion about resolution 10 to appoint Associate Directors, and whether it would be appropriate to withdraw the resolution from the AGM. MB said that there had been some negative feedback from members about the resolution. In the light of doubts that had recently been expressed to the Board about the constitutional position, he would prefer to withdraw it, and instead encourage a frank and open debate at the AGM about the Club's long-term funding needs, and the implications this potentially creates for the Club and the DT membership. After further discussion, it was acknowledged that constitutional and procedural issues remained unresolved. It was agreed that a statement would be put on the website pending further analysis of those issues by DH and a recommendation would be presented to the Board offline as necessary. A decision would then be made whether or not to put forward resolution 10	DH/ DTB

	at the AGM.	
5.2	MB said that he had received a request for the plc accounts to be more detailed than at present. He said that the Board should consider whether or not they felt this was appropriate and, if so, how much extra work would be deemed reasonable. ES said that the accounts were not business confidential, the issue was what members needed to know to feel confident about the health of the business. The Board agreed that the accounts in their current form did provide that, and if any members wanted more account information they could informally refer to ES.	ES
5.3	It was agreed that ticket prices and fund raising would be the subject of the next member consultation.	DG
5.4	IM asked if there had been any progress with the purchase of premium bonds. DH said that he had sought the views of Jacqui Forster at Supporters Direct (SD) and was awaiting feedback from Cobbetts. Following the discussion with SD, DH was of the view that premium bonds could be considered an investment as defined in the constitution. Although the capital was not at risk there was no guarantee of a return. It was agreed that SM should go ahead and make the purchase.	SM
6.0	Any Other Business	
6.1	Two papers exploring the issues for the Club and the DT arising from a new stadium were discussed. ES said that there were two separate topics: 1) a future organisational model for the Club and 2) what needs to be done to prepare for and move into the stadium. He added that the Club could be within months of having to take some very important decisions, so these were issues that need to be addressed. MB said that comments on the papers were welcome, but suggested that the next step should be to establish a new working group with 4/5 people including FCB members. This was agreed. It was suggested that Mick Buckley be invited onto the new group, which was also agreed.	MB
6.2	The proposed dates for 2013 board meetings and general meetings were approved, although it was pointed out by ES that the SGM and AGM dates may be problematic as they fell before, rather than immediately after, the adjacent board meetings.	DH/DR
6.3	ES reminded members of the need to keep the detail of Board conversations confidential where requested, especially where these might be commercially sensitive.	DTB/FCB

6.4	ES suggested that a future general meeting agenda item should be how members would wish the Club to manage any future matches against Milton Keynes, based on the recent cup tie experiences. This was agreed.	DH
6.5	DH said that he had been approached by an ex-Observer journalist writing a book about fans owned clubs and wanted to find out more about the club and attend the AGM. As he was not a DT member it was agreed that it wouldn't be appropriate to attend the AGM but ES agreed to meet with him so he could find out more about how the club operates.	DH
6.6	MB formally expressed his thanks, on behalf of the DTB, to Simon Bath and Kate Terriere for their hard work and valued contributions as Board members.	