

# Dons Trust Board Meeting



Monday 11 February 2013

The Cherry Red Records Stadium

President's Lounge



## MINUTES

### Members:

Tom Adam (TA)  
Matthew Breach (MB)  
Mick Buckley (MBu)  
Iain McNay (IM)  
Nicole Hammond (NHa)  
Zoe Linkson (ZL)  
Sean McLaughlin (SM)  
Kris Stewart (KS)

### Invited:

Erik Samuelson (ES)  
Nigel Higgs (NHi)  
  
David Hall (DH) – Secretary  
David Reeves (DR) - Secretariat

### Apologies:

David Growns (DG)

David Charles (DC)  
Ivor Heller (IH)

Eric Page (EP) - Secretariat

Ref	Item	Action
	The meeting began at 19:30.	
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Apologies/Minutes/Matters Arising</b>	
1.1	Apologies were received from David Growns, David Charles, Ivor Heller and Eric Page (Secretariat).	
1.2	DR agreed to take the minutes and share with DH.	<b>DR / DH</b>
1.3	<b>Minutes of previous meeting</b> There were a small number of comments on the draft minutes of the previous meeting. Board members to send these to DR as soon as possible who would post the final minutes on the DT website.	<b>ALL/DR</b>

<b>2.0</b>	<b>6 Months Financial Report</b>	
2.1	ES presented the report and responded to a number of questions of clarification posed by Board members. He said that there were a number of key issues to report:	
2.2	The forecast had been extrapolated to the second half of the year, which resulted in a forecast year end loss before depreciation of £39,397 which was £7,435 better than budgeted. At the half year we were well ahead of budget and much of this surplus, plus other unbudgeted income, is forecast to be spent on strengthening the team.	
2.3	While there is always a forecast loss for the second half of the year, mainly due to having to pay players' wages in May and June with no match income to offset against them, the additional expenditure means that the forecast is now that we will come in slightly better than the original budget. It was noted that the commercial team have done exceptionally well with new sponsorships for the second half of the season.	
2.4	The Board expressed its appreciation to the We Are Wimbledon Fund volunteer team which had raised more than £11K in annualised donations for the playing budget to date.	
2.5	There was a discussion about the performance of Kingsmeadow Live. IM asked if we were choosing the right gigs. ES agreed that that it was always difficult to get the balance completely right. He was more confident about the remaining gigs planned for this year. He added that there was an issue about ensuring that the accounting for KML is fair, especially in the allocation of costs, which he was working to resolve.	
2.6	MB said that it was encouraging that KML currently made a small profit, but it was important to ascertain whether the current level of return was worth the effort involved.	
2.7	<p>There was discussion concerning the wider strategic value of the YDP. NHi said that the programme's focus was entirely on developing young players for the first team and as such formed part of the Club's vision and strategy. IM questioned the financial outlay and whether the money could more effectively be spent in bolstering the playing budget. NHi argued that bringing young players through the YDP was just as likely to buy success as transfers, and crucially you know your own players.</p> <p>ES said that it was far too early to be able to judge the success of the YDP. The rapid rise of the first team meant that it was hard for the YDP to keep</p>	

	<p>up with its demands. Only time would tell. SMC agreed, and that a year or two more would be needed to assess success. NHi suggested an internal review by the DTB before the Football League external audit. ES felt that the FCB and DTB should review it every year as part of normal business. The Board noted that the YDP would require additional funding in 2013/14 if it was to meet the challenges outlined in the FCB Report (item 3).</p>	
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Football Club Report</b>	
3.1	<p>ES presented the report, highlighting four significant matters:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The club had commissioned a review of all our tax affairs. This had identified that VAT should have been deducted from YDP subscriptions and so a voluntary disclosure of the error had been made to HMRC. As a result, the Club owes HMRC approximately £35,000, representing four year's VAT deductions</li> <li>2. We are waiting to hear if the Club will be charged by the FA as a result of the banana being thrown on the pitch at the televised TV game against Port Vale</li> <li>3. There are significant pressures on the Club's Youth Development Programme caused by a range of factors, all of which mean there is significant pressures to increase the budget for 2013-14 by a substantial amount (see 2.7 above).</li> <li>4. The FCB has concluded that we should only carry out mandatory improvement work on the East Stand and no more until we know how much longer we might be here.</li> </ol>	
3.2	<p>ES explained that the club's policy is to ban fans who are ejected indefinitely until they appeal. At the appeal they must convince a panel, with independent members, that their conduct will change before they can be readmitted. The banana-throwing fan had requested a panel and it would be convened soon. He also expanded events at the recent Chesterfield away game where the club had received a number of complaints from fans about the over-reaction of Chesterfield stewards to minor incidents. These complaints have been passed onto Chesterfield. The board was concerned to hear that, in the words of our own fans, a number of the Wimbledon fans involved in the incidents were described as 'alcohol-fuelled'.</p>	
3.3	<p>There was a discussion about the first team's current league position and the implications of relegation. ES said that there were two budgets being planned for next season, one of which would reflect relegation and the consequent drop in central funding – there is a parachute payment that lasts for two years. The Board acknowledged the hard work being done by the management team to safeguard the Club's League 2 status and assured</p>	

	the FCB that it would provide all the support it needed.	
3.4	A claim by Northampton for expenses incurred as a result of the postponed Boxing Day game is in dispute; the Football League would be determining the validity of the claim.	
3.5	ES reported on a meeting with representatives of the group who are proposing to create a Paralympics legacy at the athletics track. Their plans could mean that any further development at the current site would be made difficult or even impossible.	
3.6	ES updated the Board on the proposed new stadium in Merton. A market survey of likely demand for various 'offers' at a new stadium was being devised, and was scheduled to be launched in the near future.	
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Set up of Charitable Trust</b>	
4.1	ES presented a paper setting out recommendations for the new AFC Wimbledon charity. Its recommendations were approved by the Board, including the name which will be AFC Wimbledon Community Foundation. NH indicated that she would be interested in being nominated as a trustee.	
4.2	TA asked for clarification of any upfront budget commitments. MBu confirmed that there were none at this stage, adding that there are examples of other successful football club charities that could usefully be used as models.	
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Strategic Working Groups feedback</b>	
	<b>a) Finance and fundraising</b>	
5.1	MB said that, recognising the We Are Wimbledon Fund's recent excellent work, the group had decided to initially focus on how best to strategise, coordinate and communicate the wide range of existing and future fundraising activity. A discussion paper on this was presented to the meeting. MB said that one issue that needed to be addressed was organisation of one-off events following Mark Davies' departure. It was important to keep the momentum going. ES said that some events could be regarded as commercial activity and run by the FCB eg the Mumford & Sons gig.	
5.2	MBu commented that more could be done to engage and energise younger DT members. It was agreed that this important topic should be considered further by the People working group.	
5.3	ES said that diverting the use of current funds raised by the Trust to be	

	<p>primarily for the playing budget would simply move the burden of reducing the debt to the FCB with no net overall benefit.</p>	
5.4	<p>DR said that from a communications perspective, it was important to provide clarity to fans on the complete range of fund-raising/donation opportunities available to them, what their money would be spent on, and so enable each individual to make an informed choice.</p>	
5.5	<p>MBu asked if thought had been given to re-branding the Dons Draw and DT subscriptions, for example adding DT membership to season ticket applications. MB said that these ideas had been looked at previously, but revisiting these would form part of the group's remit.</p>	
5.6	<p><b>b) New Stadium Structure</b></p> <p>TA presented a paper for discussion. MB stated that the driver behind setting up these workstreams was to focus our efforts and that the paper tried to cover too much ground in one go. He suggested that the primary focus of the group should be a) Setting up and organising the club's business model to accommodate the growth and change in the business that would be caused by the New Stadium and b) Organising the Trust's management model to match the club's growth. Other issues identified in the paper would shake out in due course. This approach was agreed by the Board and will be adopted by the group.</p>	
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
6.1	<p><b>a) Ladies Team</b></p> <p>ES said he had received a request from the ladies team for additional funding. He was in discussion with them about providing detailed financial statements before the request could be considered further. They would be invited to the next DTB meeting and asked to provide their latest accounts beforehand</p>	<b>ES</b>
6.2	<p><b>b) Constitution &amp; Community Shares</b></p> <p>DH said that a paper will be presented at the next meeting.</p>	<b>DR</b>
6.3	<p><b>c) Action Plan &amp; Outstanding Action</b></p> <p>DH asked board members to review offline the outstanding actions list distributed before the meeting and confirm if any actions had now been</p>	<b>ALL/DH</b>

<p>6.4</p> <p>6.5</p> <p>6.6</p> <p>6.7</p>	<p>completed.</p> <p><b>d) BetButler</b></p> <p>MBu said that several members had expressed concerns at the recent BetButler launch at the club, which appeared to be encouraging fans to gamble. MB said that this was not the intention; in fact just opening an account, whether or not you subsequently placed a bet, could still bring valuable income to the Club.</p> <p><b>e) HR support and advice</b></p> <p>TA asked if the Club was looking to ensure that sufficient HR advice was available when needed. ES said that the FCB was able to call on expert, free advice eg on standardising staff employment contracts, but acknowledged that more needed to be done in this area.</p> <p><b>f) Conflicts of interest policy</b></p> <p>TA reminded the Board that there was still an outstanding issue of establishing an appropriate conflicts of interest policy and statement for Board members. DH agreed to investigate further.</p> <p><b>g) Football Supporters Federation</b></p> <p>MB confirmed that he had completed the paperwork and that the DT was now an associate member of the FSF. It was agreed that we should increase awareness of the FSF amongst our members in recognition of the useful and pertinent campaigns that they are currently running.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 10.20pm.</p> <p>The next meeting is on Thursday 14 March.</p>	<p>DH</p>
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