

Dons Trust Board Meeting



Wednesday 3 April 2013

The Cherry Red Records Stadium
President's Lounge



MINUTES

Members:

Matthew Breach (MB)
David Grouns (DG)
Tom Adam (TA)
Mick Buckley (MBu)
Nicole Hammond (NH)
Zoe Linkson (ZL)
Sean McLaughlin (SM)
Iain McNay (IM)

Invited:

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

Apologies:

Kris Stewart (KS)

Ivor Heller (IH)
David Charles (DC)
Eric Page (EP) - Secretariat

Ref	Item	Action
	The meeting began at 19:30.	
1.0	Apologies for absence	
1.1	Apologies were received from Kris Stewart (KS), Ivor Heller, David Charles and Eric Page. It was noted that KS was unable to attend due to the late notification to members of the correct meeting date of 3 April.	
2.0	Minutes for meeting of 14 March 2013	
2.1	Proposed changes to items 5.3 and 6.5 were agreed by the meeting.	
2.2	MBu said that the brief discussion on alternative/complementary forms of financing a new stadium should be included in the minutes This was agreed.	

3.0	Football Club Reports	
3.1	IM said it was important for the Board to have a discussion about the first team's current league position, following the disappointing Easter fixtures.	
3.2	<p>ES said confidence remained high that League 2 survival would be achieved, while acknowledging that the FCB and managerial team shared that disappointment. Each of the remaining four games would be taken one at a time, with the aim being to win every one of them. Neal had brought in experienced players and there was now a real strength of purpose across the squad.</p> <p><u>1. 2013/14 Football Club Budget</u></p>	
3.3	Annualised donations of circa £50k from the We Are Wimbledon Fund were included in the playing budget of £1m. 170 monthly pledges had, to date, been made.	
3.4	The YDP budget reflects a net £62k increase on the 2012-13 forecast. There is still a decision to be made about whether some of the funds raised by the DT should be directed to YDP.	
3.5	ES said that if DT fundraising was to be directed to operational areas such as YDP, then on-going financial commitments such as the Barclays loan and other capital expenditure would still need to be funded, and this would have consequences for other DT fund-raising. TA noted that the budget did not reflect the cost of repaying the debt. ES confirmed that this was the case as the method of funding the debt had not yet been resolved.	
3.6	In response to a question from IM, TA confirmed that annual net income from the Dons Draw was circa £74k.	
3.7	DG said that the Board should consider pro-actively targeting Wimbledon households for a £2 per month. MBu agreed. ES added that in the past we had made a preliminary investigation of scratch cards as a source of funds and perhaps this needed to be revisited.	
3.8	TA said it was important that DT members were kept informed of any such fundraising developments. MB agreed.	
3.9	ES summarised the proposed budget by stating that it assumed a loss of £46k which was perfectly affordable. Members should note that this is after reflecting a very prudent budget for cup games, as in previous years, so there is strong potential to outperform the budget. Currently there is £515k	

	<p>in the bank, but some of this reflects the next four years' ST payments so we need to be careful to avoid eating too far into it.</p>	
3.10	<p>DG asked if the financial implications of the new stadium were included. ES said they were not; they were potentially so significant, that separate fundraising would be needed.</p>	
3.11	<p>SM asked if the FCB was "thinking the unthinkable" in terms of commercial income e.g. sponsorship and KML. ES said that in fact KML generated c. £40k profit after taking into account bar sales at KML events, and he felt that we were doing pretty well in sponsorship income compared with other clubs. IM suggested looking for sponsors or other aspects of the Club e.g. the fitness team. SM agreed that we should be examining every possible funding opportunity to further support the playing budget. He asked if it was financially viable to invest in a new east stand, assuming the Club could be at KM for another 5-7 years. ES said that he was satisfied that it was not; it would cost too much and not bring in the income to justify the spend since there is little or no scope to increase the capacity and the incremental income from putting seats in would be relatively minor compared to the cost. TA suggested exploring the temporary stand option as used at the Olympics. ES said that he would review the previously considered evidence for a temporary stand.</p>	
3.12	<p>MBu said that the Club needed a brand strategy to underpin its commercial activity.</p>	
3.13	<p>MB said that commercial activity would be put on the May meeting agenda</p>	
3.14	<p>TA proposed that the Board endorse the proposed budget, although he would like to see more detail on capital expenditure and the YDP spend.</p> <p>The proposed 2013/14 football club budget was endorsed by the Board, subject to the points raised by TA.</p>	
3.15	<p>ES said that he had prepared an alternative budget in the event that the Club was relegated. This needed more work, but would assume a smaller average gate and less central income.</p> <p><u>2. Solidarity Payments</u></p>	ES
3.16	<p>ES reported on the recent League 2 clubs meeting held to discuss the Premier League Solidarity Payments scheme.</p> <p><u>3. New Stadium</u></p>	

3.17	ES gave an update on a proposed new stadium in Wimbledon. He expressed the view that developments with regard to developer planning proposals to Merton Council would probably come to a head sooner rather than later.	
4.0	Preparations for the SGM on 7 May	
4.1	DH outlined the constitutional amendment resolution for the SGM on 7 May. If agreed by DT members, this amendment will enable the DT to launch a community share scheme as a primary source of new stadium fund-raising. DH said that the main issues was to ensure enough adult DT members voted, in order to ensure the decision was valid within the terms of the constitution. The possibility of online voting was being investigated, although some issues had yet to be resolved, as was the offer of proxy voting at the Fleetwood match.	DH
4.2	MB asked if such a community share scheme might be considered as a restrictive action. DH confirmed that it would only apply if the Club were proposing to sell The Cherry Red Records Stadium.	
4.3	SM queried the wording in point 18 of the proposal that referred to 'business'. DH said that this would be clear in any final community share issue. The wording used was simply to amend the constitution and reflected the model rules.	MB/DH
4.4	ES said that, with regard to the restricted action issue, it might be sensible for the DTB to take a resolution to members at an SGM that (if passed) confirmed broad membership support for a return to Merton.	DH
4.5	MB asked DH to send the SGM pack round to Board members for final review prior to the Board writing to DT members about the SGM.	WGs
4.6	MB suggested that the Working Groups might also wish to meet prior to the SGM papers being issued to members.	
4.7	SM asked for clarification of the member resolution about the volunteer database. MB explained that the database commitment had been made some time ago by the DT Board, however to date no action had been taken. The resolution was intended to remind the Board of its commitment to 'get on with it'.	
4.8	IM said that the Board should encourage members to get involved as volunteers, in addition to proposing ideas. MB explained that, in this case, the resolution had been signed by a number of fans that were already volunteers.	

5.0	Any Other Business	
5.1	<p>(a) <u>We Are Wimbledon Fund - Update by Zoe Linkson</u></p> <p>This subject was covered in the 2013/14 budget discussions (see 3.4)</p>	
5.2	<p>(b) <u>Feedback on the Spirit of Wimbledon article</u></p> <p>DR summarised the feedback received from fans, which had been overwhelmingly positive. A summary will be posted on the Club and DT websites.</p>	DR
5.3	<p>ES said that the FCB had discussed issues of fan behaviour generally, and asked DC and the Club Safety Officer to draft a strategy to deal with known trouble-makers.</p>	DC
5.4	<p>There was a discussion about the views often expressed on online forums, and the extent to which they reflected those of the majority of fans. MB commented that no one had approached him expressing opposition to the article, including fans he personally knew and who actively contributed to fan forums.</p> <p><u>Other/Round the Table</u></p>	
5.5	<p>NH said that the Gibraltar FA had applied to join UEFA, and asked if the Club could consider writing to confirm in support for its application. He added that Gibraltar's application was supported by the home country FAs. ES said that this had earlier been agreed at the FCB, subject to endorsement by the DT Board. The Board confirmed its agreement to this action.</p>	ES
5.6	<p>DR said that a DT member had written asking why the Club was not amongst those league clubs that had formally endorsed support for the Football v Homophobia campaign. ES said that support had earlier been agreed by the FCB, though the club had not yet notified the campaign of the Club's support. This would be done shortly. DR will respond accordingly to the DT member.</p>	DR
5.7	<p>DG confirmed that debit/credit card payment of DT membership could now be made.</p>	
5.8	<p>DH asked about an earlier proposal to send out annual DT membership renewals together with season ticket loan renewals. DG said that the idea had not proved to be practicable this time round.</p>	

6	Next Meeting - 9 May 2013	
6.1	The meeting closed at 10.15pm. The next meeting will be held on Thursday 9 May 2013.	