

Dons Trust Board Meeting

Thursday 12 December 2013

The Cherry Red Records Stadium

President's Lounge

MINUTES Redacted Version



Members:

Matthew Breach (MB)
David Growns (DG)
Moorad Choudhry (MC)
Mark Davis (MD)
Sean McLaughlin (SM)
Iain McNay (IM)
Zoe Linkson (ZL)
Jane Lonsdale (JL)

Erik Samuelson (ES)
David Hall (DH) – Dons Trust Secretary
David Reeves (DR) – Secretariat

Apologies:

Kris Stewart (KS)

Ivor Heller (IH)
David Charles (DC)
Nigel Higgs (NH)
Eric Page (EP) – Secretariat

Ref	Item	Action
	The meeting began at 19:30.	
1.0	Welcome to new Board members and appointment of Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer	
1.1	MB welcomed MD, MC and JL to the Board. Members unanimously re-elected MB as Chair, DG as Vice-Chair and SM as Treasurer.	
2.0	Apologies for absence and draft minutes of last meeting	
2.1	Apologies for absence were received from Kris Stewart (KS), Ivor Heller (IH), David Charles (DC), Nigel Higgs (NH) and Eric Page (EP)	
2.2	ES said that had some comments on the draft November meeting minutes, and agreed to pass these onto DR, who would collate them for final approval.	ES/DR

3.0	Football Club Board Update	
	<p><u>FCB Report</u></p> <p>3.1 ES took the Board through the December report. MB asked for clarification on the extension of the lease with KCL for the training ground. ES said that KCL had been negotiating the terms of a deal for first team facilities for some time and we were now ready to commit for a longer period. In the medium term there was the possibility of improvements being made to the facilities, including a 4G pitch that could be part-funded by the Premier League, as long as it was available for community use.</p> <p>3.2 IM asked what Neal Ardley's view was on strengthening the first team squad in the January transfer window and what cash was available for this. ES said that the FA Cup TV money was not available for the player budget as it was needed for immediate new stadium costs. He explained that funds would be available from any player loans that ended in January. The situation regarding Michael Smith's loan was discussed; ES said that this would depend on the position Charlton Athletic took.</p> <p>3.3 <i>This section has been redacted from the published version.</i> In response to a question from SM, ES explained that the issues delaying the development of improved toilet facilities for the East Stand stemmed principally from the need to get access beyond the gates erected behind the east stand by Thames Water.</p> <p><i>This section has been redacted from the published version.</i></p> <p>3.4 JL asked what the position was regarding the new Academy Manager. ES said that an appointment had yet to be made. It had been agreed that NH would act as Academy Manager through the audit process; however there was no question that the post needed to be full-time.</p> <p>ES said that Neal Ardley had written a half-year report for the FCB that he would circulate to the Board.</p> <p><u>New Stadium Update</u></p> <p>3.5 <i>This section has been redacted from the published version.</i></p> <p>There was a discussion on the potential impact of the Club's move to a new stadium on the future of Kingsmeadow. ES said that he had recently met with Kingstonian to discuss this, and to ascertain their hopes and aspirations should the Club move away.</p> <p>3.6 The latest estimate of the financial implications for the Club was discussed/<i>This section has been redacted from the published</i></p>	<p>ES</p>

3.7	<p><i>version]</i> IM asked if it might be feasible to build a stadium for both football and greyhound racing. ES thought it was unlikely, as the increased footprint for such a stadium would probably make the whole site development uneconomic.</p>	
	<p><u>Cashflow</u></p>	
3.8	<p>In examining the latest FCB cashflow forecast, MB updated new Board members on the recent DTB decision to commit Club cash reserves on immediate stadium costs. MD asked if this included Dons Trust cash. ES said that it did not; he also confirmed that the cashflow forecast included FA Cup TV income from BT Sport, although this was still to be received by the Club.</p>	
3.9	<p>ES said that, for various reasons, December was a real strain on the Club's cashflow. It was agreed that if the Club would find it helpful at any time to receive DT cash on a short-term basis to meet its immediate cash needs, ES would let the Board know.</p> <p>ES was pleased to report that 50 half-season tickets had recently been sold, which had not been anticipated.</p>	
3.10	<p>Finally, ES asked the Board to approve the latest £30k transfer from the DT to the football club – this is in line with long-established practice that the DT reimburses the club with the element of repayment in the Barclays loan while the club absorbs the interest cost payment to Barclays Bank. This was passed unanimously.</p>	
3.11		
3.12		
3.13		
4.0	Dons Trust Board items	
4.1	<p><u>Composition of working groups / skills review</u></p> <p>DG said that this was a sensible time to review the WG composition and that the topics were still appropriate. After discussion, it was agreed that in the short term the WGs would continue as before.</p>	

	<p>Board membership for each would be:</p> <p>Fundraising/Finance - MB, IM, KS, MD, MC People/Values - DG, ZL, JL Branding – led by Mick Buckley, SM to be DTB representative Organisation/Structure –no Working Group, MB leading activity</p>	
4.2	It was agreed that a skills review be undertaken for the DTB to identify potential areas where we should seek strengthening through co-option of new Board members.	
4.3	IM expressed the view that future organisation/structure was of the highest importance and that the work of this WG should be a top priority. From the ensuing discussion the Board agreed that two Board meetings should be held in January 2014 - one later in the month to discuss future organisation and structure (later confirmed for 22 January) whilst the regular meeting would cover the standard agenda plus a presentation from the proposed stadium architects (9 January).	
4.4	MB agreed to prepare an organisation structure paper for 22 January's meeting.	MB
4.5	MB said that Tom Adam had kindly agreed to continue his chairmanship of the Stadium Working Group, which would focus on day-to-day Kingsmeadow issues. He also confirmed that the Constitution, Communication and Election SGs would continue.	
4.6	It was agreed that, at present, no additional WGs were required.	
	<u>Secretary report back from AGM/Election</u>	
4.7	DH reported back on the recent DTB election process, during which some administrative arrangements had not gone quite to plan. He said that Dave Boyle (Chair of Election Steering Group) would prepare a report for the Board shortly, and DH would provide his own observations in addition.	
4.8	Issues around the DT membership group email were discussed, and agreed as important to resolve. DH said he was concerned at the high cost of servicing the 300 mail recipients for the election, which had cost the DT £900 in total. It was agreed that more confidence was needed in the current Titan email system, or that other email options should be explored before seeking to persuade more members to move to the preferred online option. DG said that the Club had a Mailchimp licence that might be an alternative to Titan, although this would need IT expertise to implement. DG agreed to explore this outside the meeting.	DG

4.9	<p>There was a discussion around the need to encourage 'new blood' onto the DTB. Although the recent election had proved successful in this regard, it was agreed that the Board should not rest on its laurels.</p> <p>Dons Trust administration</p>	
4.10	<p>DH said that, in his opinion, the Board could be more professional in the way that they managed its business, for example by using more cloud computing for its document management. He said that once the Club moved to a new stadium, the DT would be looking to recruit more members and it needed to be geared up to achieve this, and to service their needs. DH said he would put forward a set of proposals for Board consideration.</p> <p>Dates of 2014 DTB meetings</p>	DH
4.11	<p>MB led a short discussion around dates for next year's Board meetings. It was agreed that, in addition to the two meetings in January (see item 4.3), the following meetings would be 11 February and 6 March. MB agreed to email the remaining 2014 dates to members ASAP.</p>	MB
4.12	<p>JL asked if it would be possible to Skype into meetings that she was unable to attend in person. DG said that this should be possible to arrange. DG and DR agreed to explore the technical options and liaise with JL over dates where this would need to be arranged.</p> <p><u>Any Other Business</u></p>	DG/DR
4.13	<p>JL asked that the minutes formally record the Board's thanks to Tom Adam for his many years' service to the DT. MB added that Tom's contribution would also be reflected in the DT page of the forthcoming Mansfield matchday programme.</p>	
4.14	<p>ZL asked the Board to note that the DT-funded Children's Christmas Party would now be held on 2 February.</p>	
4.15	<p>ZL said that the second DT Wimbledon Food Bank collection would be made at the Mansfield game.</p>	
4.16	<p>ZL said that arising from the Bring the Dons Home campaign, an 82 year old Wimbledon resident and fan who was unable, for mobility reasons, to get to Kingston, but who had expressed a hope to be able to visit our new stadium in Plough Lane, was to be invited to attend a future match with hospitality at TCCRS as a guest of the DT.</p>	

4.17 4.18 4.19 4.20	<p>DH said that James Mathie of Supporters Direct would like to attend a DTB meeting to brief the Board on recent changes to the Community Share rules. It was agreed that this be arranged for the February meeting if possible.</p> <p>SM briefed new Board members on the DTB member national lottery scheme, in which any winnings are donated to the playing budget.</p> <p>SM asked ES for the FCB's view on the recent football match-fixing revelations. ES said that the FCB had discussed the topic and had arranged for a club sponsor with specialist legal expertise in this area to give the FCB some advice. He said that he was confident that club employees were not involved in any match-fixing, but it was important to safeguard the Club's reputation in this area.</p> <p>MD asked if a recent story about unacceptable young player initiation ceremonies at another league club, from some years ago, was a cause for any concern. ES said that he was sure that the Club behaved entirely properly in this area, but would ask Neal Ardley for confirmation.</p>	DH
5.0	Next Meeting – 9 January 2014	
5.1	The meeting closed at 22.00. The next meeting will be held on Monday 9 January 2014.	