

Dons Trust Board Meeting



Thursday 6 Mar 2014

The Cherry Red Records Stadium

President's Lounge



MINUTES – redacted version

Members:

Matthew Breach (MB)
David Grouns (DG)
Zoe Linkson (ZL)
Kris Stewart (KS)
Sean McLaughlin (SM)
Mark Davis (MD)
Jane Lonsdale (JL)

Invited:

Erik Samuelson (ES)
David Charles (DC)
Mick Buckley (MBu)
David Hall (DH) - Secretariat
David Reeves (DR) - Secretariat
Eric Page (EP) - Secretariat

Apologies:

Iain McNay (IM)
Moorad Choudhry (MC)

Ivor Heller (IH)
Nigel Higgs (NH*i*)

Ref	Item	Action
	The meeting began at 19:30.	
1.0	Apologies for absence	
1.1	Apologies were received from Moorad Choudhry (MC), Iain McNay (IM), Ivor Heller (IH) and Nigel Higgs (NH <i>i</i>).	
2.0	Jan (9 Jan) and Feb (17 Feb) Minutes	
2.1	(4.2 - Jan) MB stated that he was happy that the discussion be recorded. ES would look at these and review with a view to minimizing redactions if at all possible. Subject to the redactions the January minutes were approved.	ES
2.2	It was agreed that the February minutes should be published and approved even though it was inquorate due to a diary change.	
2.3	(5.2 - Feb) It was noted that the board were delighted with the Junior Dons party and the attendance of many players.	
2.4	(5.4 - Feb)) DG, MB and JL are planning to attend the SD / FSF Conference in July. Others may attend.	

	<p>MD stated that he had sent apologies for the inquorate February meeting.</p> <p>MB and others to send comments to DH by the end of the weekend (9/3).</p>	MB/ALL
3.0	Football Club Board Items	
	<p><u>2014/15 Ticket Pricing and Survey</u></p> <p>3.1 ES advised the DTB on the background to the proposed survey of fans. He indicated that the ticket prices would need to be increased if we are to provide the manager with a competitive playing budget for 2014/15. He stated that the club board felt it needed more information about fans' (especially the ones who pay for the STs) likely response to a possible price increase and this was the reason for the proposed survey.</p> <p>3.2 KS stated that the DTB had previously undertaken to carry out a consultation before there was a proposal to raise prices, that this survey did not represent an appropriate consultation and that therefore prices should not be increased. A consultation of members should be about pricing in general. He stated that the primary driver of prices was the playing budget, an affordable football team and maximizing other activities. He said there was a need to benchmark ourselves against other clubs. We should try to write to people by the end of March. ES said that if we cannot increase our income then the cash flow forecast would show that we would be in overdraft a year from now. Something needed to be done.</p> <p>3.3 It was noted that in the first SGM of 2012, the membership was promised a full consultation. It was stated that the DTB had not carried out the consultation. MB stated that it had been put on the SGM agenda twice but with little participation from attendees.</p> <p>3.4 MD said that there should be a proper consultation with a survey of some description. MB agreed that this would be a good idea.</p> <p><u>ST Prices for Next Season</u></p> <p>3.5 ES said that the intention was to survey a large proportion of ST holders in the next couple of weeks. In response to a question, he estimated that about 40% of ST holders are also members of the Trust. .</p> <p>3.6 It was emphasized that any survey by the DTB would have to be properly structured and a full consultation would be undertaken. A measurement would have to be taken as to what was best for the club against what was best for the fans.</p> <p>3.7 DH noted that in the May 2012 SGM, a resolution on ticket pricing had been defeated but it had been minuted that there would be further consultation on ticket prices in future and at the May 2013 SGM it was similarly noted that there were no plans to increase children's prices in 2014/15.</p> <p>3.8 It was noted that two years ago, the club put children's ST prices up. JL stated that £20K could be raised from non-using ST holders. ES said that whilst he had said this in a programme article further analysis suggested this was an overestimate. JL</p>	

	<p>also noted that the £3646 proposed increase for U18 prices was relatively small in the overall figures and suggested that those who had offered to help to offset children's prices at the SGM in May 2012 should be followed up to see if they were still willing. She also proposed a raffle rather than putting up children's prices. SM suggested that children's prices are reasonable.</p>	
3.9	<p>MD enquired the purpose of the survey. ES indicated that a key purpose of the exercise was to do a market test to see what appetite there is for a price increase.</p>	
	<p><u>Motions</u></p>	
3.10	<p>Three motions were proposed as follows:</p> <p>(1) Instruct FCB to freeze U18's ST prices for 2014/15 but look for a sponsor to cover those costs. This was agreed unanimously.</p> <p>It was noted that the Finance Working Group would seek to find someone to sponsor the difference for the U18s.</p> <p>(2) Accept FCB's recommendation of the survey that they wish to undertake. Meet in two weeks to agree pricing and consider results of the ST questionnaire. This was agreed by four members present (MB, DG, SM, MD). Two voted against (KS and ZL). One abstained (JL).</p> <p>ES to action survey.</p> <p>(3) Undertake a deeper full survey of members / fans to see if we can find additional information on matchday pricing and future pricing strategy – process to be discussed further ahead of SGM. This was agreed unanimously.</p>	<p>MB</p> <p>ES</p>
	<p><u>FCB Items - Other topics from FCB Report</u></p>	
3.11	<p><i>This item has been redacted from the published minutes.</i></p>	
3.12	<p>ES updated the DTB on latest discussion for the new stadium. He said that following the public meetings held by the Planning Inspectorate in January there had been no significant further developments but announcements were expected later in spring probably ahead of the local elections.</p>	
	<p><u>EPPP Status Update</u></p>	
3.13	<p>The EPPP re-audit is scheduled for 24-27 April, 2014. ES stated that the club should know by the end of June whether we have passed or not.</p>	
	<p><u>'Problems' at the Bury game</u></p>	
3.14	<p>It was revealed that the press had contacted us about this incident. MB noted that we have the best record in the division. DC advised that there would be a few more police present on Saturday. It was mentioned that twelve people have been banned this season (although subsequent analysis indicated that this was actually ten). It was stated that there would be a page in the York programme about the steps we</p>	

	take and types of behaviour.	
	<u>Ladies & Girls</u>	
3.15	It was stated that following a meeting with Dennis Lowndes, chair of the Ladies and Girls' teams, Nigel Higgs will now be the football club board director responsible for them., . It was noted that a thriving Ladies and Girls team would be good for the club. A regular review will be given on their progress.	
	<u>Cash flow</u>	
3.16	ES reviewed the cash flow forecast with the board. Cash at the end of March is still lower than he would like.	
3.17	ES said that if the club were to be relegated then, taking account of the consequential loss of income and the cash already spent on pursuing a new stadium, the funds available for the playing budget would need to be very substantially reduced from current levels.	
4.0	SGM Preparation	
	<u>Associate Director Consultation</u>	
4.1	MB said that the DTB should be looking to consult with members on options for an Associate Director role for wealthy individuals who would want to contribute financially to the club. MB said that he planning to meet with James Mathie of SD about what has been done at other clubs in order to help formulate this.	
	<u>Other Topics</u>	
4.2	The DTB discussed a possible agenda for the meeting. MB mentioned the pricing consultation and the planning for a new stadium. An agenda will be agreed at the next DTB meeting. JL noted that we should ask members for AOB items. Email to be sent to members.	MB /DH
5.0	Finance Working Group Feedback	
5.1	It was noted that MBu is leading the FWG with MB. A number of people have actions to progress. MD has added these to the SS. It was noted that two spreadsheets are being developed; one about key influential people and one on sources of funding/finance. MBu is coming up with a roadmap. MB explained that we are seeking to distinguish between funding for the new stadium and fundraising targets for the playing budget.	MBu/MB
6.0	AOB/Round The Table (with FCB)	
6.1	No comments recorded.	
7.0	Skills Matrix Review	
7.1	KS stated that we need input. Board members have individually marked themselves from 1 to 5 with five being top. MB to send out and identify areas with skills gaps.	

	It was stressed that we need to find capability in those other areas. We should also concentrate on developing existing members.	MB
8.0	AOB/Round The Table (DTB only)	
8.1	It was stated that a list of games is needed for stall manning. MB said that he wouldn't be there for the Cheltenham game on March 22 nd . JL recommended that we rotate responsibilities. It was suggested that there should be a copy of the previous months' DTB minutes at the stall.	
8.2	JL was sending an email about Collaborate Software and its possible use. It was noted that JL would follow up with Webjam and would work with DG (as IT specialist on the DTB). It was noted that the software is a potential tool for the DTB to engage easily with the trust members.	DG/JL
8.3	DR informed the DTB that the Wiggio system is now operational.	
8.4	Working groups and transparency: DG agreed to write a paper on this.	DG
8.5	KS stated that he is happy to work on the future pricing consultation exercise and MD offered to assist with this.	KS/MD
8.6	JL stated that the club doesn't have a child protection officer and that this needs to be looked into. Confirmation is needed as to which key staff are CRB checked.	ES /DC
8.7	WAW Fund: MD to contact Xavier Wiggins.	MD
8.8	Data Protection: MB / DG to talk to John Stembridge.	MB / DG
8.9	It was noted that the recent vintage day had been a great success, with strong bar takings.	
9.0	Date of Next Meeting	
9.1	The next DTB meeting will be held on Thursday April 3 rd , 2014 but a Special DTB Meeting would be held before that in line with the earlier approved motion.	MB / ES