

Dons Trust Board Special Meeting



Saturday 22 March 2014

The Cherry Red Records Stadium

Board Room



MINUTES

Members:

Matthew Breach (MB)
David Growns (DG)
Mark Davis (MD)
Sean McLaughlin (SMc)
Iain McNay (IMc)
Zoe Linkson (ZL)
Jane Lonsdale (JL)
Kris Stewart (KS) – by telephone

Invited:

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

Apologies:

Moorad Choudhry (MC)

Ref	Item	Action
	<p>The meeting began at 12:00.</p> <p>As this was a Special Meeting which had been called at less than seven days notice DH explained that in accordance with Rule 65 he needed approval from everyone for this to be a formal meeting.</p> <p>DH said that MC had given his approval even though he had to give his apologies that he could not attend.</p> <p>DH asked for confirmation that all attending accepted it was a formal DTB meeting. All attending agreed.</p> <p>DH then explained that in accordance with Rule 68, KS would join the meeting by phone if agreed by all attending. This was agreed by all. DH confirmed that MC had also agreed this.</p> <p>DH then rang KS who joined the meeting through a conference phone. KS also agreed that it was a DTB formal meeting.</p> <p>DH then handed over to MB to Chair the meeting.</p>	

1.0	Season Ticket pricing for 2014/15	
1.1	<p>MB explained that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss Season Ticket pricing for the 2014/15 season. As agreed at the DTB meeting ES had conducted a survey of current season ticket holders and had circulated a paper to DTB members with details of the feedback and proposals for the next season.</p>	
1.2	<p>MD opened up the discussion and proposed that the DTB review the concession arrangements for next year. KS suggested that it would be inappropriate to consider these in detail now and proposed in common with SM that this form part of the 'deeper' consultation agreed at the previous DTB.</p>	
1.3	<p>SM explained that the biggest concessions are available to the Central Block in the main stand and that our current pricing policy effectively encourages this and should be brought in line with other areas. IM said that around 40% in this block were concessions.</p>	
1.4	<p>MB explained that the pricing policy for this block had been in place for several years. ES said that there were 275 tickets in this area of which 32% were concession and 45% at discounted prices. ES proposed that we don't give any more discounted tickets for this area though this would take several years to see through.</p>	
1.5	<p>KS suggested that there were two issues. The DTB needed to address this year's season tickets now but consider separately the longer term position.</p>	
1.6	<p>ES explained that the proposals in his report would generate around 40k. If similar proposals were introduced for matchday prices this would generate around 20k. Further income / savings would be needed for to meet the current 30k gap in next season's budget.</p>	
1.7	<p>IM suggested that we review and come forward with some alternative proposals. MD sought confirmation that there are no concessions for the Presidents Lounge. ES confirmed this was the case. MB indicated that we had agreed at the last DTB that we would not be increasing prices for U18s.</p>	
1.8	<p>MB indicated that a renewed focus could be put into asking some Season Ticket (ST) holders, including concessions, to pay more if they could afford it. ES indicated that the current forms were difficult to change and any such proposal needs to be clear in the notice. MD offered to look at the existing ST form for ES. ES explained that it was going to print on 26 March and so would need to be changed by then. Around 600 Direct Debit forms also needed to be changed by hand. Subject to this MD's offer to assist was welcomed by ES.</p>	<p>ES / MD</p>

1.9	DG indicated that we do need to look again at price differentials – taking account of sight lines (for example in the Your Golf Terrace). ES explained if this was introduced as an option we would need to introduce better segregation possibly through a separate turnstile to the Your Golf Terrace. ZL said we needed to think about setting a limit on any increases.	
1.10	KS proposed that the DTB vote on the detailed proposals for season ticket increases included in ES paper. It was agreed to proceed to a vote.	
1.11	Seven members voted in favour of the proposals (MB, DG, SMc, IMc, MD, ZL, JL) and one member (KS) voted against. ES to implement.	ES
1.12	MB then raised the issue of the wider consultation about future pricing policy. MD repeated his offer to assist KS with constructing a survey. MB agreed that the format of the survey would be included as an item for discussion on the SGM agenda in May.	MB/KS /MD
1.13	KS indicated that careful thought was needed about what is presented at the meeting as expectations had been raised regarding a deeper survey. MB indicated that we would be looking to adopt the New Economics Foundation (nef) format which had been successfully used on an earlier consultation..	
1.14	JL indicated that a clear timetable needed to be set this time. MB agreed it had to be done this year. KS supported this.	MB
1.15	IM asked about the expected budget shortfall of 30k. ES said that further work needed to be done on this and that certain assumptions were being made about the WaW Fund. ZL said that additional effort was going into generating extra donations from the WaW Fund. MB indicated that there were also other funds to be looked at (eg the B&Y Club).	ZL
1.16	MD enquired about the cash position and the use of DT funds. ES confirmed he was discussing with SM.	ES/SM
1.17	MB suggested that the club needed to start bringing in funds from new people and IM suggested that there be more targeting of more affluent fans.	
1.18	ES suggested this be a matter for a future agenda but briefly updated the DTB on recent conversations with a Dutch representative and someone from Abu Dhabi.	

1.19	MB repeated that it was important to distinguish between fund raising for the playing budget and the new ground.	
1.20	IM asked for the latest position on the Associate Directors and MB explained this had been overtaken by events but should be included as part of the debate for the SGM. MB said he was due to meet with James Mathie at SD to discuss what other clubs had done and would look to feed that into the survey process. SM asked if there had been any feedback to his programme article and MB said he would be checking this.	MB
2.0	Any Other Business	
2.1	MD agreed to canvas some dates for the next Finance Working Group.	MD
2.2	JL indicated that she and DG had been to see the Webjam software demonstrated and the company were keen to work with the club as a potential site. JL indicated that it could help with future consultations.	
2.3	DG confirmed that this could be looked at in conjunction with the OOMI CRM which was also being explored and would report back in due course.	DG/JL