

Dons Trust Board Meeting



Tuesday 9 June 2014

The Cherry Red Records Stadium

President's Lounge



MINUTES PART 1 – redacted version

Members:

Matthew Breach (MB)
David Growns (DG)
Kris Stewart (KS)
Sean McLaughlin (SM)
Mark Davis (MD)
Jane Lonsdale (JL)
Iain McNay (IM)

Invited:

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

Apologies:

Zoe Linkson (ZL)
Moorad Choudhry (MC)

Nigel Higgs (NH)
Ivor Heller (IH)
David Charles (DC)
Mick Buckley (MBu)

Ref	Item	Action
	The meeting began at 19:30.	
1.0	Apologies for absence	
1.1	Apologies were received from Zoe Linkson (ZL) Moorad Choudhry (MC) Ivor Heller (IH) David Charles (DC) and Mick Buckley (MBu) and Nigel Higgs (NH)	
2.0	13 May Minutes (part 1)	
2.1	The minutes had been split into two parts, separating the part where the FCB representatives were present from the DTB only part.	
2.2	JL had sent DH some suggested amendments. There were a few further minor amendments. The minutes were agreed subject to agreeing items for redaction. DH to amend following further feedback.	DH
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3.0	Football Club Board Items	
	<p><u>Budget 2014/15</u></p> <p>3.1 ES introduced the paper on the final proposed budget for 2014/15. MD asked about the latest cashflow forecast. ES said that would be updated shortly once season tickets and additional donations had been analysed. It was anticipated that season ticket sales would be broadly the same once some of our new signings were confirmed. Income from the pre-season friendly with Chelsea and kit sales were also expected to help cashflow.</p> <p>3.2 JL had reviewed the money received to date from the Mike Richardson (MR) offer and indicated that there had been a good response although it was suggested this could be further improved if the email was retitled next time. ES agreed to explore. ES said he would be liaising with MR about the timing and amount of his kind donation to the player budget.</p> <p>3.3 The budget for the Academy was then discussed. It was noted that whilst the cost of this continued to increase (mitigated by the DT funding) our present strategy was to support new players coming through this route. IM asked about other clubs that had abandoned or chosen not to run an academy. ES gave some examples where this had occurred. ES said that it may take a while for the Academy to deliver benefits but in the meantime further work would need to be done internally to ensure the Academy and First Team management had similar expectations for this and our approach to the club's development squad.</p> <p>3.4 The recent success of the EPPP re-audit and the Category 3 classification was noted. ES said that all four clubs that had retaken the audit had passed but the remaining four clubs who failed first time had delayed their re-audit. It was noted that the next audit would be in 3 years by which time it was hoped that some first team players would have emerged from the Academy. KS and MB noted that in due course the DT needed to take a wider strategic review on the success of the Academy in terms of its potential wider benefits and given its increasing cost in relation to the first team squad.</p> <p>3.5 The approval of the budget was deferred until after a later item but was subsequently approved by all DTB members present.</p> <p><u>FCB Report – other items</u></p> <p>3.6 ES briefly introduced the other items on the FCB report and invited questions. MD asked about the recent website item in connection with Jim Fenlon. ES said this had been drafted with his encouragement. ES indicated that his broad approach was to allow the website administrator control over what was put on the site but would be consulted where an issue appeared contentious.</p> <p>3.7 ES updated the DTB on latest proposed signings for next season and said that a number of players were being pursued and that it was hoped that various contracts would be confirmed in the coming days including Dannie Bulman and Matt Tubbs. IM asked whether Neal Ardley was making sufficient progress on making the necessary signings ahead of next season and ES confirmed that NA was confident that he would bring in the right players.</p>	<p>ES</p> <p>ES</p>

3.8	<p>ES was asked about the KM Live position. He noted that the report had been produced and he would circulate it soon. Some recent events had done relatively well but one headline event was slightly disappointing as it had clashed with another event that evening.</p> <p><u>New Stadium Proposals</u></p>	
3.9	<p>ES updated the board on developments at Plough Lane and on our current stadium, Kingsmeadow, where the club has been actively exploring its options [<i>this section has been redacted</i>]. He explained that most meetings involved one or more other directors or advisors including Andrew Williams, our overall stadium advisor.</p>	
3.10	<p>ES then asked the DTB if there were any queries on his report on the funding position. MD asked whether in the light of ES's comprehensive paper whether there was a need for the Finance and Fundraising (F&F) Working Party meeting on Wednesday 11 June. It was agreed that this would be discussed separately by MB / IM / MD.</p>	
3.11	<p>SM asked if processes went according to plan when works might start and the club might play at Plough Lane. ES said he was hopeful of works starting next year and the stadium opening in 2017/18.</p>	<p>IM / MB / MD</p>
3.12	<p>KS asked whether it was the club's intention to spend any surplus funds raised from financing on the team. ES said that was an approach which had been taken at other fan owned clubs (eg Wrexham) but this could be considered if there were extra funds after making sure the stadium was adequately funded, although we should also re-examine other approaches for increasing income, (e.g. the Dons Draw). He added that it was essential that the club was not relegated in the intervening period so if we can add to the wages budget we should do so.</p>	
3.13	<p>ES then moved on to update DTB members about the public consultation on the new stadium proposals. He explained that a newsletter had been put together working with Indigo, Galliard's publicity advisers and that this was due to be distributed to local households in Merton and Wandsworth. The newsletter included details of the scheduled public meetings on 27 and 28 June at Lola Jones Hall and on 1 July at Wimbledon Park so that people could find out more. JL said that she knew of a number of people who would be attending the different events. ES said that he hoped that people would come and that the events were well attended.</p>	
3.14	<p><u>New FA Rules on Betting in Football</u></p> <p>The DTB had a discussion about the FA rules which had been circulated relating to betting in football by DC. A number of DTB members said that whilst they didn't bet themselves it was important to get clarity on the extent to which this impacted on staff, volunteers and members at the club as we are fans owned. KS said he was concerned about the enforceability of the rules and SM asked about the penalties which might apply. ES agreed to see what else he could find out.</p>	<p>ES</p>

<p>3.15</p> <p>3.16</p> <p>3.17</p> <p>3.18</p> <p>3.19</p>	<p><u>Football League AGM on 7 / 8 June</u></p> <p>ES said that he was only in attendance for the first day of the FL AGM / Conference in Portugal but DC was there for the remainder. Amongst other things considered at the AGM, was the appointment of Debbie Jevans (a previous Olympic Committee member) onto the FL Board and a discussion on Emergency Loans, the disparity in parachute payments and sponsorship money for season 2015-16. On the last point ES said that this ought to lead to an increase in funds but this would be across all clubs in L2. It had also been agreed that for all games in the First Round of Capital One Cup children would be admitted for £1.</p> <p>ES said that there had also been discussions on artificial pitches and that there had been support by a majority of League 1 and 2 clubs to investigate further. Whilst there would be an initial cost there should be savings in the longer term and more opportunity to hire out the facilities.</p> <p>ES said that on the B Team proposals and the JP Trophy, Greg Dyke received a very negative response on B teams in general and particularly from L2 teams on the proposals re the JPT though slightly less so from L1 teams. He was not aware whether Championship teams had discussed the JPT proposals. The Portsmouth representative who had experience of Spanish B Teams had set out the damage B teams had done to clubs outside the top six in Spain. IM asked whether Conference Teams could be re-admitted to the competition. ES said that it was discussed and it was felt that it hadn't worked previously.</p> <p><u>Morden Girls League (MGL) Sponsorship</u></p> <p>MB introduced this having circulated a letter from the MGL requesting continuation of the sponsorship. It was agreed that this should continue subject to this being funded directly by the club rather than the DT. MB / ES would contact and seek to introduce Kay Skelton (KSk) - from the Foundation - to the MGL officials.</p> <p><u>Other Topics</u></p> <p>ES said that he had not yet had an opportunity to discuss KSk's proposals for the Foundation with her but would be planning to soon.</p>	<p>MB / ES</p> <p>ES</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><u>Dons Trust Board Organisation and Structure (DTB Only)</u></p>	
<p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p>	<p><u>Short Term changes for new Stadium proposals (ES attended for this item only)</u></p> <p>MB explained that ES had been liaising with him regarding changes in the organisational structure in preparation for the increased workload associated with the next stage of the stadium planning process and future structure.</p> <p>ES explained that he would be preparing a paper which would go through the proposals in more detail. The proposals would take account of the responsibilities taken on by Mick Buckley, ES's own role on the stadium developments, a new</p>	

<p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p> <p>4.5</p>	<p>Chief Operating Officer role and the changes arising from activities taken into the Foundation. The appointment of a COO would, if approved, mean changes to the Football Club Board make up.</p> <p>ES was asked if the paper would set out any wider implications including for existing staff reporting lines and ES said it would. It was agreed that it was important to progress with these proposals as soon as possible particularly given the escalation of work on the new stadium.</p> <p>MB indicated that he was also in the process of setting out to the DTB some thoughts on our internal structures in the longer term and recognised and agreed that there would need to be changes. However he emphasised that any alternative staffing arrangements would need to be clearly explained and justified and dealt with sensitively. DG and JL indicated that we would need to see any proposed organisational structure and transition plans and SM asked that the paper was fully costed.</p> <p>ES agreed to address these issues and said that he would be looking to develop his paper further in the coming week so that this could be further discussed as necessary ahead of the next meeting.</p>	<p>ES</p>
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