

Dons Trust Board Meeting



Monday 8 September 2014

The Cherry Red Records Stadium

President's Lounge



MINUTES – redacted version

Members:

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

Invited:

Michael Hayes (Secretariat)

Apologies:

Kris Stewart (KS)

Erik Samuelson
David Hall (Secretary)
David Reeves (Secretariat)

| Ref | Item | Action |
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| | The meeting began at 19:30. | |
| 1.0 | Apologies for absence | |
| 1.1 | Apologies were received from Erik Samuelson, Kris Stewart and David Hall (Secretariat). | |
| 2.0 | August Minutes (Part I) | |
| 2.1 | It was noted that the August minutes were awaiting final comments from ES. | ES |
| 2.2 | 3.16 of Part 1 should be redacted. The second sentence at 3.12 should be changed. <i>This section has been redacted.</i> The first sentence at 6.1 should read "MB introduced his paper." | |

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| 2.3 | SM said that there was no need to sign a separate minute for the WAW cheques which showed the wrong payee; this has already been dealt with and the cheques banked. | |
| 3.0 Football Club Board Items | | |
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| <u>Football Club Report</u> | | |
| 3.1 | In the absence of ES, MB introduced the FCB report already circulated. | |
| 3.2 | It was noted that the Forecast has some variances but the end result is not significantly different from earlier versions | |
| 3.3 | It was agreed to minute that Mike Richardson’s fundraising initiative was a good one and helped to raise extra money. | |
| 3.4 | SM asked that when ES does the next update to the Forecast he should attach the original budget for comparison. | |
| <u>Stadium Update</u> | | |
| 3.5 | MB reported that there are no further significant developments to report. The planning application is now likely to be submitted end October. | MB |
| <i>This section has been redacted.</i> | | |
| <u>Other issues arising from the FCB report</u> | | |
| <u>Staff bonuses</u> | | |
| 3.6 | SM noted that staff involved in the EPPP have been paid bonuses. He felt that there should be a bonus policy. It was agreed that there is no objection to bonuses but there should be a formal policy. It was agreed that ES should be asked to make available a staff bonus policy. | MB |
| <u>Proposed “Membership Scheme.”</u> | | |
| 3.7 | There was discussion about reasons for this, which were accepted, but concern about the confusion it might cause. There was support for KS’s comment that ideally we should not have a membership scheme outside the Dons Trust. Feedback should be given to ES but ideally if the scheme is to be permanent it should be renamed. MB said that the scheme was to be withdrawn following the Burton game, and it could be reopened afterwards with a new name such as “Supporters Register.” JL thought that in any event the application form would need to be changed. | MB |

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| | <u>Planning for the next JPT match</u> | |
| 3.8 | MB introduced the paper prepared by the FCB for the JPT match. It was agreed that Phil Clark the AFCW Head Steward should talk to his opposite number at Milton Keynes at the statutory meeting they will have, with a view to agreeing firmer stewarding than in the previous game. There was also agreement that if possible it should be all ticket, at least for the away supporters. JL thought that the club should make it clear to supporters the consequences (and potential damages to the club) of going on the pitch. Comps and suchlike should be restricted to the minimum contractually required. MB to discuss with ES. | MB |
| 4.0 | <u>Organisation Update</u> | |
| 4.1 | MB presented his revised paper. He explained how he had attempted to incorporate the comments made at the August meeting. | |
| 4.2 | MD asked why the stadium needs to be in a separate company. MB said that this is an issue to be discussed more fully with ES. | |
| 4.3 | JL commented that the paper does not take account of modern electronic means of communication e.g. for meetings and decision making; MB said that this paper is intended as an overview; in due course when finally approved it will need to be fleshed out with more detail and be made clearer in administrative terms. | |
| 4.4 | MD asked how Foundation Trustees would be sufficiently independent if they are appointed by the DTB. MB said that the DTB has formed the Foundation and therefore is the right body to appoint its Trustees, who will then act independently of the DTB but in accordance with the constitution of the Foundation. It will be advisable however for the DTB in due course to have a meeting with the Foundation. | |
| 4.5 | JL was concerned that reporting for all football matters including the Academy and Ladies and Girls would be to the CEO. MB said that community football would come under the Foundation, all other football including the Academy would report to the CEO. JL felt that it would be necessary to establish clear lines of communication including the Foundation, who reports to whom, etc. | |
| 4.6 | ZL raised the question of the finance function and whether this should potentially be separated from the CEO, who is shown as retaining this function under the revised organization paper. MB pointed to the paragraph anticipating that appointment of an FD and the merging of commercial and marketing functions could happen over the next 2/3 years. MB felt that since the reorganisation is taking place now, it would be premature to appoint an FD now; the paper therefore flags this issue for the near future. | |
| 4.7 | MC asked about the suggestion that a DTB non executive director of the FCB should chair FCB meetings. MB said that this suggestion has been incorporated in the section dealing with the working schedule. The DTB non exec will chair the monthly strategic meetings of the FCB but not the other weekly meetings. The wording should be amended to make sure that this distinction is clear. | |

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| 4.8 | <p>MB reported that he has had some comments on the paper from ES. ES is talking to Kay about the possibility of putting Girls football into the Foundation. He noted that Kay's correct job title is Executive Director of the Foundation. ES has also commented on whether the stadium should be in a separate company; his answer is that advice should be taken on this issue before deciding. ES was not very keen on the Finance Director suggestion. <i>This section has been redacted.</i> He also suggested that the monthly figures which the FCB get should be shared with the DTB (headline performance numbers, KPIs et cetera).</p> | |
| 4.9 | <p><i>This section has been redacted.</i></p> | |
| 4.10 | <p>MB will revise the Organisation paper to incorporate the comments made, and will study the remarks which DH has made as to constitutional changes which may be necessary if the reorganization proceeds. MB stated that he does not intend to present the revised paper to the SGM. He will prepare a simple summary which he will present at the meeting, having first passed it by the consultants.</p> | |
| 4.11 | <p>There was discussion about proposals in the paper which might prove to be controversial to some sections of the membership and how to deal with these. MB will say that proposals such as associate directors are included in the paper as possibilities only and are for discussion and are not matters on which the DTB has a firm policy, but are a hook to which the proposal could attach should a decision be made in the future.</p> | |
| 4.12 | <p>Depending on feedback following the SGM, constitutional changes would be voted on at the AGM on 10 December. JL was concerned that there should be a mechanism to deal with the possibility that DT members opposed to controversial proposals might choose to vote down uncontroversial but necessary amendments included in the same resolution. It was agreed that ideally the issues should be separated in some way; MB said that depending on the SGM discussions he proposes a second paper after the SGM dealing with alternate directors. This would test the water and if no major objections were received all proposals requiring constitution changes could be included in a single resolution.</p> | |
| 4.13 | | |
| 4.14 | <p>There was discussion about changes to the election rules. It was agreed that these would not need to be discussed until early 2015 when the new board is in place.</p> | |
| 4.15 | <p>MB reported that KS has indicated that he is broadly OK with the paper. MB will circulate a revised version.</p> | MB |
| 5.0 | <p>All present agreed that they also are broadly in agreement with the paper subject to the comments made which MB agreed to incorporate.</p> | |
| 5.1 | <p><u>SGM Preparation (Thursday 18 September)</u></p> | |
| 5.2 | <p>The agenda items are New Stadium, Organisation Structure Update, Matchday Representation and Future Ticket Pricing.</p> | |
| 5.3 | <p>Organisation Structure update will be in accordance with 4.9 above.</p> | |

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| 5.4 | <p>Regarding Matchday Representation, ZL agreed to take this forward with KS. IM said he had discussed the idea with KS and they felt that there should be an initial trial for home games, extending perhaps to away matches against fan owned clubs and other clubs known to be amenable to the idea. For home games, the issue may be space in the Presidents Lounge which will vary according to individual games. The trial might start with a President's Lounge pass for half time and post match, but not including pre match and food. ZL and KS will take these ideas forward and will discuss with the members who put forward the resolution (John Stembridge and Gerry Hever).</p> | ZL/KS |
| 5.5 | <p>Future Ticket Pricing has not been taken forward since the last SGM. JL reminded the meeting of the issues around pricing that had been identified already (general principles behind pricing, restricted views, value of community ownership, New Enterprise Foundation format, sponsorship issues etc). It was agreed that at the SGM there should be a request for volunteers to assist in a survey. An advertisement should be placed on the OS this week. MD to lead on this and will liaise with KS, Chris Slavin, and Nicole.</p> <p>Other issues for the SGM would include feedback from; letter writing re Bring the Dons Home PeopleStream (perhaps getting Charlie Talbot to come to the SGM); ES to show the Flythrough on screen; and putting the Boards up (need to do this before the SGM).</p> | MD/KS |
| 6.0 | <p><u>DTB Election Process Discussion</u></p> <p>DH's summary and timetable had been circulated. In response to a question from JL, MB said that Dave Boyle's report had not been published but it had been summarised in a matchday programme. It was not intended to follow the report's recommendations and the timetable would therefore be similar to last year. DB has stood down as chair of the ESG together with Geoff Seel. The remaining two members of the ESG are prepared to continue but they need assistance. It was agreed that a request for new independent volunteers should be placed on the website; ideally two new volunteers are needed. DH to take this forward.</p> | DH |
| 7.0 | <p><u>AOB/Roundup</u></p> <p>Joiners Pack</p> | |
| 7.1 | <p>This should summarise the things that a DTB member should know and be prepared for, e.g. Dons Trust Stall. MC to circulate a draft for comment.</p> | MC |
| 7.2 | <p>DT Programme Pages for 2014/2015 Update</p> <p>MD will write a page (up to 600 words) for the Burton Programme to include a</p> | MD |

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| | <p>reminder about the SGM, a request for volunteers to assist the small fundraising group, and similar requests for volunteers for season ticket pricing and for the ESG. Other topics for future pages to include elections, Webjam and Supporters Direct topics (DG/MB to chase up the updates we used to receive from SD).</p> <p>Stall Manning Rota</p> | DG/MB |
| 7.3 | <p>MB to correct the MC error. ZL volunteered to do Burton.</p> <p>Webjam Update</p> | MB/ZL |
| 7.4 | <p>JL reported that preparations are well under way and it should be rolled out to the DTB for October and to the FCB for November/December, thereafter to Members. She emphasised the importance of using Webjam once it is up and running and not emails. There is a training day scheduled for 15th (September) and Webjam are also scheduled to be coming to the club on 19th (September) to demonstrate to ES and DC. There will be a programme article nearer to the launch. Webjam are providing this free in return for the Trust providing introductions and recommendations as appropriate for other fan owned clubs.</p> <p>Morden Girls League</p> | |
| 7.5 | <p>MB reported that we are sponsoring this. We intend to link this with some publicity e.g for Bring The Dons Home. It has been pointed out that if we were to receive other similar sponsorship requests we need a sponsorship policy. Agreed we should ask Supporters Direct for evidence of what other clubs do.</p> <p>WUP</p> | MB |
| 7.6 | <p>WUP have offered the Dons Trust their available cash (could be £7000/8000) for a suitable project. It has been suggested it could pay for paving the area where the Dons Trust Stall stands and erecting a canopy, subject to cost, title and planning considerations, to be used by the Dons Trust and charities. It was agreed that DG would liaise with ES and go back to WUP with approval and grateful thanks.</p> <p>Junior Dons Party</p> | DG |
| 7.7 | <p>ZL and JL to progress plans for the Junior Dons Party.</p> <p>16 to 25s</p> | ZL/JL |
| 7.8 | <p>JL is to meet the Spurs Supporters Club to learn how they engage with their 16 to 25 year old supporters.</p> <p>Branded Beer</p> | JL |
| 7.9 | <p>JL raised the possibility of a brewery producing a branded club beer. MB said a deal with a third party brewer might cause problems with our existing suppliers, but a real ale may be possible and it is worth exploring with our suppliers.</p> | MB |

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| | <p>Vintage Day</p> <p>7.10 JL had attended the Vintage Day which was very well attended by non-football people and well organised. It was agreed to record the Board's thanks to the organisers.</p> <p>Fundraising</p> <p>7.11 MD raised fundraising issues, a repeat of Goals for Glory this year, and a Minithon but the suggested date clashes with Walk Further for Wimbledon. It was agreed that this was not really a problem.</p> <p>Regulatory</p> <p>7.12 MD drew the Board's attention to the fact that there is new consolidating legislation for mutuals, co operatives and community organisations. This should not have a major impact on the Dons Trust constitution except that it is likely to mean a change of stationery. DH to advise more fully.</p> <p>Email Problems with Dons Trust address</p> <p>7.13 It was noted that there have been problems with emails to and from the Dons Trust address. Some members have not received material and others have received multiple copies, but no delivery failure notices have been received. DG explained that the Dons Trust is to be brought into the cloud system used by the club. There will be a switchover day when the old system cannot be used. Ahead of this, the DT contacts list will be circulated and board members are encouraged to check and where necessary update their details. The cost to the DT will be a maximum of £488 per year, but this would halve if a kiosk only subscription is sufficient for our needs. The board authorised DG to proceed up to a maximum of £488 per year. It was also agreed that something should be said on the OS about the email problems and what is being done about them.</p> <p>8.0 Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>This was confirmed as 6 October.</p> <p>9.0 The meeting ended at 21.31.</p> | <p>DH</p> <p>MB/DG</p> |
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