

Dons Trust Board Meeting

Monday 16 March 2015

The Cherry Red Records Stadium

President's Lounge 7.30 pm

Final Minutes - Part 1 – redacted version

Members:

Matt Breach (MB)

David Growns (DG)

Jane Lonsdale (JL)

Zoe Linkson (ZL)

Mark Davis (MD)

Kris Stewart (KS)

Nigel Higgs (NH)

Sean McLaughlin (SM)

Moorad Choudhry (MC) (by telephone from 8.05pm)

Invited:

Kay Skelton (KSk) (AFCW Foundation)

Erik Samuelson (ES)

David Hall (DH) Dons Trust Secretary

Roger Evans (RE) (Project Planning)

Michael Hayes (MH) Secretariat

Rob Crane (RC) Secretariat

1. Apologies and agreement to accept phone access

There were no apologies. MC joined by phone.

2. Presentation from Kay Skelton

KSk summarised the structure of the Foundation and tabled a paper for the Board to read at leisure. She summarised the principal aims and objectives of the Foundation, what it has been doing since inception, its current staff, and gave an update on funding. The Foundation's vision is to use the motivational power of AFC Wimbledon to effect positive change for the community. The trustees are ES, NH, MBu, and Margaret McDonagh. KSk is the executive director, Paul Foley is her assistant head and operations manager (but shortly to leave), Emma O'Connor is the Female Football Development Officer, Joe Roberts is the School Sports Development Officer assisted by Lewis Westlake, and Charlie Jones is the Foundation Administrator. Three staff are full time and three are on fixed contracts, and there are 15 part-time coaches. A new operations manager is being recruited. KSk wishes to add two full time staff to progress the Foundation's objects.

KSk summarised the progress so far under the heads of Sport Participation (22 per cent increase in coaching delivery and 78 per cent increase in school engagement), Education (four schools and 48 children participating in Maths and English coaching at TCRRS), Social Inclusion (210 young women

participating in organised sport for the first or second time), and Health (Walking Football – 25 individual participants over 50 with 408 hours of football).

KSk summarised the funding so far received and pointed out that this is mostly restricted funding, so that there is a need for more unrestricted funding. She indicated that a further £100,000 per annum would help meet our needs. At present the unrestricted funding consists of £30,000 from the Football League and the profit made from the Saturday and summer coaching and is to help our infrastructure to be built.

JL asked whether the children we help are encouraged to come to games at TCRRS. KSk explained that vouchers for family attendance are given as prizes and that a database is kept.

MD asked what the priority is for spending any additional cash. KSk said that this will be female football development; without extra funding they will not be able to continue weekly sessions.

It was thought that not enough is done to publicise what the Foundation does, but KSk noted that huge interest was generated at the Merton Voluntary Conference and there is a danger of spreading ourselves too thinly.

DH asked if there is support for special needs groups and KSk said she has money from Sportivate to develop this by working with Mencap. The new female football development coach is a specialist disability coach.

All board members thanked KSk for her presentation and were encouraged to support the April 19 Minithon by taking part or by sponsoring ES who is participating.*

KSk left the meeting at this point.

3. Minutes of February 19 Meeting

DH said that the minutes as tabled incorporate amendments suggested by DTB members on the earlier draft. NH said he felt that item 8 of the Part 1 minutes did not fully reflect his point of view on the LLW as expressed at the meeting, and dwelled too much on the negative points made by other board members. It was agreed that he should suggest additional wording. SM said he would email DH with some comments on the minutes but also wondered whether everything in the minutes relating to the JPT should be redacted. ES's comments on this should be taken into account, and he was not present at the meeting.

DG commented that all these extra points should have been raised within the 7 day period from circulation of the draft minutes, and that the DTB is already breaking the rules which it has only recently imposed on itself. KS said that DTB members should not blame DH or the secretariat for omissions or amendments that they had failed to pick up within the time scale they had laid down.

Action: Any further comments on the minutes (including NH's on the LLW minute) to be sent to DH (but no deadline for this was specified). Also ES to provide feedback on the minutes and to review DH's suggested redactions.

4. FCB Report

ES reported that Sam Grayson has resigned to take up a job opportunity elsewhere. He also reported that Dave Winfield's loan had been extended** and Tom Beere and Dan Agyei have been offered but

have not yet signed professional contracts. In both cases, agents are involved but Tom may have personal circumstances that could warrant an improvement in terms offered.

SM asked about the JPT/U21 teams issue. *Section redacted.* The proposal seems certain to go ahead, and is likely to be the subject of a vote before the AGM in June so that it can be introduced next season.

NH asked whether, given that the proposal is going ahead, there is any hope of improving the terms. ES said he does not have any ideas, but would welcome suggestions.

MD asked about the aspirations for the team for this season. ES said that NA's aspiration is just to finish the season strongly and to do better than our wage bill placing. *Section redacted.* NA is disappointed that David Connolly is retiring. NA has tried to recruit a young *[section redacted]* player without success, and is currently trying to get a *[section redacted]* player currently on loan to another club.

NH asked what the plans are for the Ladies and Girls. ES is talking to KSk about this. A transfer of the girls to the Foundation is the logical course in the long term. *Section redacted.* JL mentioned that only the under 14s girls had signed up for Junior Dons membership following the girls section request in October 2014. *Section redacted.* Next year membership will become part of the signing up process.

The DT Board recorded their congratulations to the Ladies team for getting to the Final of the Surrey Women's Cup.

There was discussion about the Volunteers' Away Day. It was noted that only 50 have signed up so far, but it is expected this should move up to around 100.

5. Stadium Update

(a) Update since FCB Report

ES said that it is now looking like May as the earliest possible for the planning application decision (Savills think this will be the third week of May). *Section redacted.*

ES confirmed that the Merton Planning Applications Committee meetings are held monthly, although it is possible that they might schedule a special one off meeting to deal with this application.

JL raised the issue of communicating to our members that the March date will be missed. ES suggested that the summary of this meeting should be used as the means of communication. *Section redacted.*

Action: It was agreed that ES would talk on Tuesday 17 March with Daniel Francis of Thorncliffe (Galliard's PR company) and liaise with RC to agree suitable wording.

Naming Rights

In response to a question from MD/JL, ES said he would prefer the naming rights to be a revenue stream. The target timing for agreeing naming rights is 6 to 9 months after planning permission.

VAT

In response to a question from SM, ES confirmed that the construction cost figures do not include VAT, but this will be recoverable although timing gives rise to cash flow issues.

Section redacted.

Ground Sharing

SM asked whether the idea of sharing with a rugby club has been dismissed. ES said that Merton would have problems with this.

Football Foundation Loan

ES reported that a legal charge is currently in place. ES hopes to negotiate that the conditions of transferring this grant to a new ground will not be onerous.

(b) Project Planning Role

RE tabled his paper on Programme Management, and said he had been through it with ES. It sets out three Gates for structuring the programme.

NH asked about the meaning of “obtaining Dons Trust Support” in Gate 3. RE said this was intended to mean the obtaining of DT member approval to the final contractual commitments.

MD asked what was the difference between Gates 2 and 3 – he felt that some or all of Gate 2 could be moved into Gate 3. NH thought that what was meant was that member approval would be needed to proceed from Gate 2 to Gate 3 to which RE agreed.

NH also noted that items 4, 5, 6 and 7 from ES’s stadium summary need to be factored in.

Action: It was agreed that RE would prepare a timetable showing what is to be done and in what order and by whom, a sequence of events to which dates could be added when known. RE will meet with MD with the aim of producing one paper and one timetable for the DTB.

(c) Restricted Action Process and Timetable

MD presented his paper “Information needed by DTB for Stadium Approvals.” MD said that it covers similar ground to the Programme Management paper, but from the angle of what the DTB needs to be able to make recommendations to DT members. ES had been sent the paper but had not registered that it was different from the draft information paper for members so had not reviewed it. MB provided ES a further paper copy.

DH said that he envisages that the whole RA programme will take about three months, and one crucial piece of information he lacks is an understanding of the conditions that will be in the Chelsea agreement and the interaction of those conditions with the RA regime. DH reminded the board that in the RA process the DTB must be able to convey to the membership the Board’s confidence in the outcome.

Section redacted.

MD/DH to reprovide ES with the latest electronic version of the “Information Needed” paper if required.

ES to provide DH with the latest draft of the Chelsea agreement.

(d) Ks Engagement

Section redacted.

DG had circulated a paper to DTB members which he said had to some extent been overtaken by ES's update. The principles behind the paper were approved by the board.

6. AOB

(a) London Living Wage

ES's paper had been tabled. ES had drafted his paper after being made aware of this issue following the February meeting although had only recently seen the detailed minute of the February meeting.

NH said that he had replied to ES just before this meeting but ES would not yet have seen his reply.

NH said he would like to have a figure for the cost of putting all directly employed staff on to the LLW. ES agreed he has not done this and will do so.

NH also said that he has spoken to the LLW Foundation about construction workers and there may be a way of dealing with this and that it would not stop us getting accreditation. He had also been informed that employers who sign up to the LLW are not audited and that failure to comply is exposed through whistleblowing – their website encourages staff employed at accredited firms to report any failure to honour their commitments. NH concluded that in terms of barriers to accreditation, the only ones seem to be young players, contract staff, and construction workers, none of which should present a problem.

ES said that his gut reaction was that if the LLW applied to every person working at KM in any capacity whether defined as falling under the LLW guidelines or not, there would be a fairly hefty cost. He needs to know whether he is being asked to evaluate the cost of putting everyone at KM on the LLW, or the cost of getting accreditation. SM said that at this stage, the board had only asked for an estimate of (1) the time it would take to provide the information requested and (2) the cost now of moving any and all directly employed staff up to the LLW.

Action: ES to provide an estimate of (1) the time it would take to provide the DTB with the information to enable it to take the next step and (2) the cost of moving all directly employed staff up to the LLW.

Section redacted.

*The Minithon has subsequently been postponed till later in the year.

**Post Meeting Note – prior to his subsequent recall by York.