

## **Dons Trust Board Meeting**

Tuesday 16 June 2015

The Cherry Red Records Stadium

President's Lounge 7.30 pm

Minutes – Parts 1 and 2 – redacted version

### **Members:**

Matt Breach (MB)

David Growns (DG)

Jane Lonsdale (JL)

Mark Davis (MD)

Zoe Linkson (ZL)

### **Invited:**

John Dolan (JD) (part)

David Hall (DH) (Dons Trust Secretary)

Rob Crane (RC) Secretariat

Michael Hayes (MH) Secretariat

Roger Evans (RE) (part)

### **1. Apologies and Condolences**

Apologies had been received from Erik Samuelson, Moorad Choudhry (MC), Sean McLaughlin (SM), Nigel Higgs (NH) and Kris Stewart (KS). The Board unanimously extended its sincere condolences to Kris on the very recent and untimely death of his mother.

### **2. Minutes from Previous Meetings and Confirmation of May 28 Meeting Resolution**

DH reported that ES had come back to him with some comments on DH's suggested redactions to the 12 May Minutes; DH will make a final check and post on the website.

It was agreed that the Minutes of the 28 May meeting prepared by DG should be acknowledged in, and the resolution made in that meeting should be incorporated in, the minutes of this 16 June meeting. Accordingly, the Board acknowledged the notes of the 28 May meeting made by DG, and formally resolved "to authorise the FCB to go ahead and instruct Andrew Williams on the basis of Erik's email update" *This section has been redacted.*

JL reported that the latest minutes posted on the website are the March Part 1 Minutes. All subsequent agreed and redacted Minutes should now be posted.

JL urged board members to complete their activity reports, but it was agreed that if by the time it comes to publishing minutes there are those who have not completed a report, the blanks should be deleted.

**Action: DH to finalise redactions to the 12 May Minutes and post on the website with the March and April finalised redacted Minutes.**

### **3. Election Arrangements for 2015.**

JD provided the background to the paper he had tabled (Dons Trust Rules for Elections to the DTB). He mentioned issues that had arisen in the 2014 Election. This included:

- a) Timescale issues and JD being unable to be present at the AGM – resulting in DH having to present the results
- b) The problems with organising hustings
- c) Difficulties with the missing original postal submission of one nomination
- d) The Twitter debate which was good but which took place at a sensitive time re the planning application
- e) The drop in voter participation

The revised rules incorporate changes designed to mitigate some of these issues. For example, Rule 8 now makes it explicit that a candidate's Proposers can be contacted, and the Nomination deadline is now different from the Manifesto deadline.

There was discussion about the revised Rules and Form resulting in the following suggestions:

- 1) In Rule 8 it should be made explicit that the Proposers' details be shown and that the Proposers can be contacted, and the Form should include space for the Proposers' contact details.
- 2) The rules about campaigning need further clarification, especially for volunteers. It was suggested that JD should suggest a framework of Do's and Don'ts.
- 3) In Rule 12, it was thought that if the number of candidates is fewer than the advertised vacancies, they should all be deemed to be elected in the same way as for an equal number of candidates and vacancies, as in Rule 11.
- 4) The Nomination Form should be amended so that there is space for Proposers' details. It should make clear that they must be Trust members.
- 5) The Nomination Form should be altered to make it clear that posted nominations should be sent by registered post.

JD noted that DH had provided IT assistance including use of Survey Monkey in 2014 but JD said he is likely to need other assistance in 2015.

**Action: JD to revise the Rules and Form in accordance with these suggestions. JD to seek IT support from outside and/or DT secretariat.**

JL asked whether there are plans to try and increase voter numbers. JD said he hoped to increase the Twitter-type debates, but hustings at games are difficult.

DH said that Neil Springate (from Fulham Supporters Trust) has agreed to be involved again as independent assessor on the ESG.

There was discussion about the lack of a level playing field by some of the current board members standing for re-election this year. JL suggested that some DTB members may be at a disadvantage if

webcast hustings are reintroduced this year having been missed the previous year. It was noted that candidates should not use regular duties at the club (especially as matchday volunteers) to campaign but it was recognised that could put them at a disadvantage where candidates did not volunteer on matchdays. JL suggested that the ESG should consider this issue further.

#### **4. FCB Items**

##### a) FCB Report

DG said he had attended the last FCB meeting but had not done a note as it was a short meeting.

JL asked when IH is due to attend a DTB meeting. MB said that he is keen to come, but wishes to discuss wider commercial issues rather than just KM Live. It was agreed he should be invited to the July meeting to talk about commercial matters generally including KM Live.

JL suggested that at some stage it would also be helpful for MBu to attend a DTB meeting.

*This section has been redacted.*

There was discussion about IH's involvement in the Dons Draw and the statement in the report about working with the Academy. MB said he thought that this was an attempt to get parents of Academy members to contribute to the Dons Draw, since the profits from the draw are now directed to the Academy, but agreed that Neil Messenbird should be informed, in case he is not aware of these developments. MD agreed to inform him.

The board had previously congratulated those involved in securing the Family Excellence Award. ZL/JL would like to see the "mystery shopper" report when available, and also, if possible, to have a clearer idea of the criteria used to judge the various award categories.

*This section has been redacted.*

**Action: MB to raise with ES the queries raised on the FCB Report.**

**MD to speak to Neil Messenbird about developments with the Dons Draw**

##### b) Budget for 2015/2016

It was agreed that this had come too late for the DTB to make any meaningful comment on it. ES should be asked to give the DTB a better timetable for next year. The draft should be received around February time.

It was considered that the budget generally, and specifically attendances at an average 4,200 is rather "sporty". MD said he would like to see a sensitivity case with a lower figure.

*This section has been redacted.*

JL asked whether overnight player accommodation costs have been reduced following the review, outlined by ES earlier in the year. The budget figures show an increase.

JL asked about the shortfall in player contributions to the YDS, which ES had said at the May meeting was due to incorrect accounting which would be covered in the budget, but did not seem to have been. MB to ask ES to clarify this.

MB said that the aim behind the budget is to have a competitive team to maintain higher attendances.

There was a suggestion that sponsorships might be extended to player meals.

**Action: DTB Members to put questions on the budget to MB and he will seek answers from ES and request that next year the draft Budget comes to the DTB in February.**

## **5. Stadium Update**

### (a) Restricted Actions Comms Process

RE joined the meeting.

MD outlined his paper (already tabled – Restricted Actions Comms Report for DT Board).

The DTB did not think that a vote to acquire a new stadium should precede the Restricted Actions votes, but instead the intention to acquire a new stadium should be implicit within the Restricted Actions votes, by making it clear in the accompanying text that, in voting to sell Kingsmeadow, members are implicitly voting for a new stadium. The reason for this was to reduce the complexity of the process to be explained to members.

There was discussion about the role of the telemarketing company, and whether volunteers could do the job without the expense. It was agreed that it would be worthwhile to undertake telemarketing to do the warm-up calls, but this should be managed carefully by agreeing a script with the company, updating our membership information, and using multiple opportunities to communicate with and generally warm up the membership. It was noted that it would be better that ES and other senior people in the club and DTB do the follow up calls.

MD said that DH had contacted Neil Springate about acting as providing an independent oversight on the RA process. It was confirmed that it would be useful for Neil to carry out that role given his experience with the DT. DH to brief Neil Springate.

JL commented that the membership list would need to be up to date with correct information before the RAs process and telemarketing was used. JL noted that the latest membership list (that she was using for the Webjam project) showed there are 373 DT Members for whom no contact telephone number is recorded. There could potentially be problems with foreign based DT Members, and people who have requested not to be contacted by email.

DH said that John Stembridge (the Membership Secretary) would be sending out a reminder ahead of the new common renewal date of 1 August and the Comms Group would be looking to integrate some information in the renewal reminders. DH indicated that the Membership Secretary had asked for administrative support with the renewal process.

DG suggested that as many communication media as possible should be used eg friendly match programmes (RC to include contacts update request in Watford programme but noted that the deadline for Watford game is 5 July), email, twitter, Facebook asking “Have we got your correct contact details?”

MB suggested that we should ask IH to ask John Green to put the request in his blog which would be useful particularly for American members.

DG suggested that a test email be sent out and any “bounce backs” could be further analysed.

It was also suggested that there might be a separate email address (e.g. details@thedonstrust) for the update exercise so as not to swamp John Stembridge with emails. DTB members could then update the membership database.

It was noted that there is as yet no tag line for the voting exercise – “Bring the Dons Home” would be the default until this has been agreed by the Comms Group.

**Action: The Comms Group to follow up on all these suggestions. MB to speak to IH about John Green blog idea.**

(b) Other Stadium issues –Update

It was noted that it now seems likely that we will miss the start of the 2017/2018 season.

*This section has been redacted.*

DH reported that he had attended a recent Wimbledon Community Forum and a Future Merton officer had suggested that the planning application will not be heard until September.

It was noted that ES had promised to let the DTB see the draft business plan to be submitted to Barclays in connection with a loan application by the end of May but this had not happened.

**Action: MB to ask ES for an update on the status of the Barclays Loan application. DT Secretariat to remind MB to do this.**

## **6. AOB**

(a) MB suggested that the member consultation issue could be divided into two separate issues – member consultation and member updating. *This section has been redacted.*

It was agreed that it is essential at this stage to report to members on what we have done and where we are now. RC will prepare a summary which will thank members for their feedback so far, refer to the SGM minutes, report that the design process has started, confirm that all comments already received have been forwarded to the design team, and stress that it is a very tight site. It will welcome further suggestions particularly relating to the look and feel of the stadium, and non stadium issues such as location of the club office.

It was also agreed that the Meet the Manager event should incorporate three or four bullet points getting important points across, including the importance of updating DT contact details

David Lloyd has suggested that formal events focussing on restricted actions should take place nearer the time for those restricted actions. There was discussion about evening meetings as opposed to matchday meetings, the former being poorly attended, the latter taking place when most fans are present but may not stay on for meetings.

DG has access to a van with a generator, screen and classroom, which may be useful as part of the familiarisation process for the restricted actions programme. This could also be a tool for encouraging contact updating.

**Action: RC to do “where are we now” report.** *This section has been redacted.*

(b) DT and Official Website

It was agreed that there should be a full discussion when NH is present.

(b) DT Stall

Options 1 to 6 were considered. The Board voted for Option 1 but not roadgoing. MB will firm up. JL emphasised the importance of having it ready for the start of the season.

**Action: MB to firm up Option 1**

(c) SD Board Election/FSF Conference

The Board resolved to vote for KS and Andy Walker

ZL may be able to attend the FSF Conference, which clashes with the Millwall game.

(d) Request from Leyton Orient Supporters Trust

It was reported that they have asked for DT help and at our suggestion they are contacting James Mathie.

They suggested if we might prepare a guide to setting up a fans owned club. It was thought that this would be very time consuming, but ZL thought that this might emerge from the government led consultation she is representing the DT at, of which the next meeting is 17 June.

(f) Webjam

JL reported that 35 members have been contacted to form a user group, for which the first meeting will be on 8 July. Direct approaches and a request for volunteers will follow if not enough volunteers are obtained from the original 35 approaches. The user group will consist of 20-30 members.

*g) This section has been redacted.*

## **7. Next DTB meeting**

Wednesday 15 July at 7.30 pm.

***Appendix A has been redacted.***

## **DTB MEMBER ACTIVITY SINCE BOARD MEETING ON 20 APRIL**

### **Matt Breach**

- Further research into potential solutions to upgrading the DT Match Day Stall including obtaining two indicative quotes.
- Attended FCB meeting and produced notes.
- Organised additional DTB meeting for May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Mark Davis**

- Organised raffle at Cheltenham match. This raised nearly £1,250, the most successful matchday raffle to date, possibly reflecting the popularity of the Bayo-related prizes.
- Have worked with Restricted Actions Communications working group (Roger Evans, David Hall, David Lloyd) to produce advice for the 12 May board on communications strategy for the Restricted Actions

### **David Growns**

- Met with Kingstonian Chairman to discuss supporter engagement
- Planned and presented a Kingstonian engagement event with Kingstonian Supporters Club



## Jane Lonsdale

- Youth engagement: Haydon Page - Coordination of Cheltenham Haydon page in matchday programme. Undertook feedback survey of some young fans at the Cheltenham game on the Haydon page – fed results back to Editorial team. Video of Bayo on DT website and OS on 5<sup>th</sup> May (1541 views to date (10/5).
- Fundraising: sold raffle tickets before the game vs Cheltenham and at the End of Season Dinner.
- Webjam: collating list of names for User Group, setting strategy for that, Phone discussion with Webjam re ongoing issues of accessibility and glitches on the system.