

Dons Trust Board Meeting

Wednesday 15 July 2015

The Cherry Red Records Stadium

President's Lounge 7.30 pm

Minutes – redacted version

Members:

Matt Breach (MB)

David Grouns (DG)

Jane Lonsdale (JL)

Mark Davis (MD)

Sean McLaughlin (SM)

Invited:

Erik Samuelson (ES) (part)

Ivor Heller (IH) (part)

David Hall (DH) Dons Trust Secretary

Rob Crane (RC) (Secretariat)

Michael Hayes (MH) (Secretariat)

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Nigel Higgs (NH), Moorad Choudhry (MC), Kris Stewart (KS) and Zoe Linkson (ZL).

2. AFC Wimbledon Commercial Operations Update – Ivor Heller

IH circulated a paper and went through the figures (circulated paper to be attached to minutes).

Actual corporate sales for the 11 months to 31 May 2015 were £290,532 compared with £283,279 for the 12 months to 30 June 2014. Match and ball sponsorships are strong. Main corporate partners are more or less at the same level as last season. We have lost Nongshim as stand sponsors (*this section has been redacted*) but John Green has replaced them at the same level. *This section has been redacted*. IH indicated that where sponsors advertise their services we are hoping that fans will consider using them – and that what matters most is the number of enquiries as sponsors recognize that after an enquiry it is up to them to present a good offer.

Academy sponsorship is a difficult sell but progress is being made.

The new stadium will offer opportunities but also presents challenges for existing sponsors. *This section has been redacted*.

SM asked if we are could do more to secure sponsorship from our existing suppliers and to plug our existing sponsors – IH agreed. It was suggested we should make greater use of our social media to plug our sponsors and that DTB members also have a responsibility to spread the word.

IH said that the bar has been given a challenging target for 2015-16, but has made a good start, the Ale Festival having taken £18K and demonstrated that it has to take place over a home game weekend. New beer deals will improve profitability. *This section has been redacted.* The “recipe” for the Plough Lane beer has been reconfigured and improved now it has passed to Wimbledon Brewery. *This section has been redacted.*

This section has been redacted.

There are plans to extend the Dons Draw to supporters who do not attend games and to involve Academy parents. MD asked whether Neil Messenbird is being kept in the loop and IH said yes, via ES.

KM Live is profitable when bar income is taken into account. It has become clear that the acts have to be a draw, due to relative remoteness of the venue. Soul Fusion has been a big success. There is a change to bigger bands such as King Kurt, and a move away from the club night theme.

The Vintage Days are also going well.

SM asked whether the KM Live budget is fully costed e.g. does it include Jim Piddington. ES said yes.

SM asked whether KM Live can be replicated in the new stadium – answer yes.

IH said that profitability for both Functions and KM Live will improve in that we have varied our Licence so that we no longer have to provide security for all events involving music, subject to risk assessment. This will reduce costs.

JL asked whether there are plans to upgrade the club shop website. IH said that he has been pushing for this but it will cost. *This section has been redacted.* DG has ideas and said that off the peg packages are available which can be easily customised. IH thought that the design side could be done without cost to the club. ES did not think this was a high priority compared to everything else that is currently going on.

In response to a question from DG, IH said that the DTB could help by having a much greater presence at events. Also, he would welcome an introduction to individuals with businesses who are AFCW supporters.

The DTB asked IH to record his thanks to Jim Piddington, Pietro Palladino and all members of the commercial team.

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3. Final Draft Minutes from 16 June Meeting

This section has been redacted.

Action: DH to revise minutes and post on DT website, subject to any comments from ES.

4. FCB Report

(a) ES reported that NA is hoping to sign a centre back and the team will then be complete.

This section has been redacted.

A new deal has been struck with South Thames College. *This section has been redacted.* This moves away from the expectation that pupils will succeed in getting into the Academy, into a recognition that what pupils are offered is the chance to achieve a BTEC under the aegis of AFCW. However, the most talented will still be able to switch to the Academy if they meet the relevant standards.

Ideas are being developed for possible creation of office space at KCS, which could involve converting the space above the squash courts to accommodate staff from KM who will not be moving to the new stadium.

Daniel Agyei has not yet had an offer from another club, although he trialled with West Ham. His contract has expired, but we would be entitled to compensation if he secures a move. We may also lose an under 14. *This section has been redacted.*

ES concluded by saying there is a strong air of positivity around the club at the moment.

(b) Post FCB meeting report from MB

MB asked ES to talk about the Open Training Day which had been discussed at the FCB meeting. ES said that the idea is to hold this on 4 August just before the start of the season. After the team photo, there will be open training with a PA box commentary on what is being practised, followed by an under 18 only Meet the Manager event. The shop will be open, and other events and campaigns (eg WAW, Dons Draw, AFCW Foundation) publicised. The Junior Dons will be entered into a draw and two or three will be able to be photographed with the team, and the idea is to combine the event with the Wimbledon Park awayday. The occasion will be open to all. ES noted that not all these ideas had yet been shared with NA, but DC will taking this forward with others who will be involved.

JL noted that this is during school holidays and asked if Haydon will be present (yes) and requested photos for the Haydon page.

5. Stadium Update

(a) Planning and Commercial. *This section has been redacted.* More pictures of the proposed changes to the East Wall are needed and they are interested in the crèche. *This section has been redacted.* Although more drawings are needed and being prepared, Merton will probably go to consultation with what they have got. The EA report which apparently re-designates the risk level of the site has been completed, but we have not seen it yet. Two Tory councillors in Wandsworth are already urging people to vote against, without having seen the new evidence. We will be meeting Richard Tracey, GLA Member for Wandsworth and Merton. When Merton go public, we will seek to avoid response overload by encouraging only those in specific postcodes to restate their support.

This section has been redacted.

The meeting with the Football Foundation went well, but we have no assurance yet as to the grant transfer. *This section has been redacted.*

In order to get new stadium capacity up to 20K, the seating needs to be smaller. The design team has been authorised to reduce the seat depth to 780mm and to the same width as the main stand (slightly wider than the John Green Stand seats) – feedback is that 20k can be achieved if we narrow the run off between pitch and seating.

(b) Business Plan and Case for Bank Loan

ES will call MC to discuss the business plan, and welcomes further comment from the DTB (latest versions have been copied to all). *This section has been redacted.*

In response to a question, ES said that a community share issue has not been factored in. ES suspects that the bank would regard this as another form of borrowing, and thinks it better to leave this until last, as a top up if the loan is insufficient. MD observed that it should be possible to present the community share funding to lenders as equity-like funding, given that servicing this funding is discretionary. There are other possible sources that have not been counted. Naming rights have been included in the P and L account without which the relegation scenario will be worse. Other possible sources in addition to community shares might include film rights and possible crowdfunding.

A brochure is being prepared to accompany naming rights marketing. Some innovative suggestions have been made. ES will circulate the draft to DTB Members.

Action: DTB Members to send further comments to ES on the Business Plan and Loan Business Case. ES to circulate brochure re Naming Rights

(c) Restricted Actions Comms Update

MD went through his paper. All agreed that the “Back In Two Ticks” slogan was excellent. ES confirmed that the “drop dead” date for the Chelsea agreement has now been agreed with Chelsea, (*this section has been redacted*), but it was agreed to retain the timing suggested in the paper in order not to clash with DTB elections or Christmas, which means that the formal information pack to members would be received about the same time as the planning approval.

MD circulated the Marc Jones design for the front cover. Some questions were asked about the jigsaw motif and the fact that the cover does not say what it is, although there will be a covering letter. MD will circulate for further comment but there was a feeling that presentation should be left to the professionals.

The final text of the documents will be sent to DTB members prior to the August meeting and should be approved at the August DTB meeting which MD cannot attend***. It was agreed that the DTB should delegate authority to MD to approve any final revisions (MD to refer to MB if any materially substantive issues arise). ES suggested that John Woodruff be asked to cast an eye over the text.

MD said that the recommendation would be posted by mail to all DT members following membership renewal. ES suggested that tailored franking of envelopes should be considered.

There will be two meetings to launch the RA process, provisionally scheduled for Tuesday 22 September and Thursday 24 September, the first at KM and the second in Wimbledon (most likely at Trinity United Reformed Church). DH agreed to notify DTB members absent from the present

meeting of these dates. The Comms team is working on a Q and A brief. All dates may shift if the planning meeting shifts. *This section has been redacted.* MD and the Comms team are working on the format of the two September meetings.

The two votes will each culminate in further SGMs, to be held in October and November. The first of these would include a Q&A session with DTB members on other DT business, given that this is an opportunity for a wider SGM. ES cannot attend the second.

The budget of £15K was approved subject to further clarification of exactly what is included including extent of telemarketing. Some of this could be allocated to the football club.

There was discussion about the PR campaign and the suggestion was made that T-shirts, badges or stickers might be prepared.

Action: MD to provide final text of documents ahead of the August meeting, and to clarify exactly what is included in budget with specific reference to extent of telemarketing.

DH To inform absent DTB members NH, MC, KS and ZL of proposed dates for September launch meetings.

(d) Membership Renewal (including new payment arrangements) & RA Process.

DH summarised his paper and drew attention to the membership renewal date having been fixed last year at 1 August and the proposal that participation in the RA process be restricted to those who have renewed by 1 September. DH also gave feedback from the Neil Springate (providing independent oversight) on the proposals. After discussion, and in view of school holidays, it was agreed that the cut-off date should be 30 September*. This must be communicated to members since in previous years the previous custom and practice had been given renewing members 3 months to pay.

There was discussion about how to ensure that correct contact details are held. DG thinks we need to keep reminding people about this. One programme note is not sufficient. Merely requesting members to confirm that up to date information is held may not be sufficient because some members may not know what information is held and incorrectly assume it is correct. DG suggested that the renewal letter should include the information currently held and ask for confirmation it is correct.

Subject to these points, the draft renewal letter was approved.

DH reported that John Stembridge (JS) has some other issues before sending out the renewal letter over the following week. DH will liaise with him about these and despatch of the letter, copying in MB.

It was suggested by SM that there should be a permanent poster or posters in a prominent place or places at KM asking DT members to ensure that up to date contact details are held. IH can organise but will need the wording. MB to action. RC to contact Chris Slavin to keep including in DT programme page until the autumn. DG volunteered to send out reminders if he is provided with text.

Action: MB, DG and RC to ensure that there are a variety of repeated reminders by various media (including posters, emails, DT website, DT programme pages etc.) by which DT Members are constantly reminded to provide their up to date contact details. RC to provide DG with text which DG will send out. DH to confirm inclusion of up to date contact details in membership renewal letter.

DH to liaise with JS and copy MB about despatch of renewal letter. MB to resolve liaise with JS on any outstanding issues.

6. AOB

(a) JL reported progress on Webjam. A usergroup of 21 members has been formed, meeting last Wednesday. The site is live. The trial ends on 19 August followed by a usergroup feedback meeting. The DTB recorded their grateful thanks to David Reeves for his hard work in this exercise. Interesting feedback from the usergroup has already come in and a report will come to the DTB after the feedback meeting.

Action: JL to present feedback from the usergroup following 19 August feedback meeting

(b) MB reported progress on the DT Kiosk. The paving has been done. A former Man City kiosk is available at a cost of £4K plus VAT, which should be easy to rebrand. MB to speak to Marc Jones and IH about rebranding, total cost about £6K. It is presently in Pershore, MB to inspect on 29 or 30 July, so unlikely to be operational until end August, but design work can be done ahead of delivery. It was noted that an extra power line will be needed. *This section has been redacted.*

Action: MB to organise purchase and rebrand of kiosk with design input from Marc and IH

(c) ZL cannot make the SD/SF conference but KS may attend. It was agreed that if KS cannot attend then the DT vote be given to Tim Hillyer who is attending.

Action: DH to inform Supporters Direct to give the DT vote to KS if he can attend and if not to Tim Hillyer who is definitely attending.

(d) DT Secretary recruitment

MB reported that he has received one application from a financial journalist. It was agreed that he should be interviewed by MB and MD (unless MD is away on holiday at the time of the interview). DH offered to speak to the candidate if required.

Action: MB/MD to interview applicant.

(e) Other

The DT Minithon scheduled for 18 October may be merged with the Academy Minithon.

JL asked for the DT Stall Rota and the Away Game hospitality Rota to be agreed and circulated.

Action: MB to circulate Stall and Away Hospitality Rotas.

This section has been redacted. There was discussion about DTB member commitment, and it was agreed to record that the board had had a conversation about attendance and contribution and that at the August meeting there should be an agenda item for this issue. *This section has been redacted.*

Action: Attendance and Contribution of Board members to be an agenda item for the August meeting. *This section has been redacted.*

This section has been redacted.

DG raised the importance of linking the club payment system to Paypal – a volunteer from the membership is needed to finish what DR started.

Action: MB to recruit volunteer: DG to advise how to get in to the back part of the website.

The meeting closed at 10.45.

Next DTB Meeting

Thursday 20 August at 7.30 pm.

*This was initially agreed as 8 September but following further feedback from JS it was subsequently agreed by a majority of the DTB members present at the meeting that this be moved to 30 September in order to vote on the RA process. All DT members at 31/7 and any new members would be sent the information pack during September.

** *This section has been redacted.*

*** MD subsequently confirmed he would be able to attend the DTB meeting on 20/8.

DTB MEMBER ACTIVITY SINCE BOARD MEETING ON 16 JUNE

Matt Breach

- Attended monthly FCB meeting and reported back to DTB members.
- Progressed DT Matchday project to down-select a kiosk design as the basis of the Stall; started negotiations on the availability of a secondhand unit from Rapidretail (the same company that supplied the ticket kiosks).
- Kicked-off recruitment process for New Secretary.

Jane Lonsdale

- Webjam: Invited and set up the Webjam test users network, inviting volunteers as necessary and hosting the kick off meeting on 8th July at KM
- Haydon page: commissioned pre-season material for Haydon page in the programme – negotiating with David Charles on content requirements to represent children's views (ongoing)

