

## **Dons Trust Board**

**Minutes of Meeting Thursday 19 January 2017**

**Cherry Red Records Stadium President's Lounge**

### **Members**

Matthew Breach (MB)

Jane Lonsdale (JL)

David Grows (DG)

Tim Hillyer (TH)

Roger Evans (RE)

Colin Dipple (CD)

Sean McLaughlin (SM)

Matt Spriegel (MS)

### **Invited**

Erik Samuelson (ES) (part)

Rob Crane (RC) (Secretariat)

Michael Hayes (MH) (Secretariat)

### **1. Apologies**

With the meeting having been rescheduled at short notice due to adverse weather (from January 12<sup>th</sup>), apologies were received from Mark Davis, Nigel Higgs and Rob McGlinchey.

### **2. Election of Officials and Co-opted Member**

With DG acting as Chair for the vote for the Chair, the DTB voted unanimously to reappoint MB as Chair, MD as Deputy Chair, and SM as Treasurer. RE suggested that the DT Constitution should be checked as to its requirements on these three roles. MB said this would be discussed at the forthcoming additional meeting which will focus on strategy and DT organisation / methods of operation (currently planned for late February).

TH was welcomed to his first DTB meeting. He asked whether there had been any board assessments, skills grid/gaps identification or measurement of how far the board represents DT Membership. MB said this had been looked at around 2 years previously, but a review should be undertaken at the strategy meeting.

The DTB unanimously voted to co opt MS as a DTB member for a further year, recognising he had made progress on his remit without yet having had the time to fully deliver.

**Action: DT Constitution to be checked to ascertain precise roles and terms of officers with resultant "Terms Of Reference" to be published on DTOS and Webjam.**

**Action: Skills gaps to be discussed at strategy meeting to assess need for further co-option.**

### **3. DTB Discussion: FCB Papers and Current Issues**

[A brief discussion over the key points to ask ES relating to the FCB report was held.]

(ES joined the meeting).

### **4. FCB Report/Stadium Update**

ES updated the DTB on Stadium issues since his written report of the meeting with Merton and Galliard on 6 January.

JL said that DT Members should be updated on S.106 timing. After discussion, it was suggested that this should be done by a paragraph in RC's meeting summary.

MB asked ES about an updated cash flow statement. ES had just updated the spreadsheet based on the out-turn of the Cup games and agreed that it would be circulated after the meeting.

#### **Action: ES to circulate cash flow statement**

ES then highlighted a number of opportunities to further improve the cash position from that baseline.

SM asked for an update on naming rights. ES said that MBu has taken this on and reopened the conversation with our consultants. A paper on this issue is to be discussed at the FCB in two weeks time, and will be shared with the DTB when ready.

Regarding football matters, ES reported that Paul Robinson was likely to receive a 2 game ban resulting from the Sutton game. The right back Johnville Renee-Pringle is being signed until the season's end. The next round in the FA Youth Cup will be away to Preston on 1 or 2 February.

DG noted that the Chemflow End Matchday experience has been much better since the new stewarding arrangements.

MB and JL asked about the potential overburdening of the office staff, and what they and ES feel about it. ES said that the Sutton games placed a heavy burden on the staff, with procedures that were over-complicated in hindsight. The DTB unanimously decided that the Minutes should record a vote of thanks to all staff concerned. ES has said to the FCB that there should be an investigation of what went wrong, and a plan for dealing with a similar situation in the future. In answer to a question from TH, ES said this should be completed before next season. TH urged the FCB to take account of suggestions from the office staff.

**Action: FCB to investigate Sutton ticket issues and formulate plans for the future, taking account of suggestions from office staff, and with input from the DTB.**

[The Club's position regarding the upcoming game with Milton Keynes was summarised by noting that a visit by two representatives from Milton Keynes had led to provisionally agreed arrangements for the game which would be presented to the Safety Advisory Group at a forthcoming meeting].

RE asked about pitch condition and how many matches will Chelsea play. ES said that he has been told that next season only Chelsea Ladies and possibly some Ladies European Champions League games will be played at KM, not any Academy games. Chelsea have commissioned some work on the pitch including drainage, and they will upgrade the floodlights and changing rooms (we have an EFL dispensation from floodlight upgrading because we are aiming to move to a new stadium but this proposal is very welcome as the dispensation would no longer be needed).

There was discussion of the paper on MBu's role on the FCB. The paper proposes that MBu's role, which hitherto has been a non-executive role, should be expanded to include some executive responsibilities around marketing and fundraising strategies, for which he would be paid. JL asked how this fits in with the report made to the 2014 DTB AGM that consideration was being given to appointing a Marketing and Communications Director, a follow up question to this having been posted by RC on the "Ask the Board" section of Webjam. ES said that the proposal was an extension of MBu's current role and would only be temporary. SM suggested that the extended role should include finding a naming rights partner. JL suggested that it should be made clear that this is not a new role, but effectively formalises some of the extra responsibilities he has been incurring in his present role. On this basis, the DTB unanimously agreed to endorse the enhanced role for MBu for a 6 month period.

ES was asked whether we have had any enquiry about historical child abuse. ES said we had received one specific enquiry about an incident in the 90s, which we responded to by noting that we did not have any of the internal papers or records of the club prior to the formation of AFCW.

DG noted that he has encouraged the Ladies to report on safeguarding as the Academy has already done.

DTB approval was given to ES's proposal that £180K of the DT loan be capitalised in order to strengthen the FC balance sheet. This does not require a general meeting resolution.

There was discussion about fanzines and quasi fanzines and NA's concerns about some of these. In the first instance ES will talk to the editor of an online fanzine.

## **5. FCB Related AoB**

(ES left the meeting).

## **DTB Only**

## **6. Strategy Meeting and DTB Administration**

MB suggested that the Strategy Meeting (Post Meeting Note: now being rescheduled due to clash with FAYC on Wednesday 1 February) should major on the priorities for 2017 and how to deliver them better, and how to communicate better with DT Members. Specific items would include Kiosk and Branding, Ethical Sponsorship, administration, skills gaps, terms of office and Communications (possible co option or appointment of someone to manage Comms for the DTB).

MB reported that pressure of work is forcing RMcG to stand down in March, with an offer to assist where possible thereafter. RC has increasingly taken on extra work, but for similar reasons he has decided he has to reduce his input, but will continue to do the meeting summaries and help out elsewhere when possible. MH indicated that after 3 years of minute taking he would like to stand down at the end of the season.

JL suggested that the adoption and publication of minutes should be a priority, as well as ensuring archiving of other relevant documents including those prepared by the previous DT Secretary.

SM suggested that the strategy should review the election timetable and consider issues such as restricting the number of candidates that a member can vote for (e.g. each member can cast up to 3 votes when there are 7 candidates standing for 5 spaces).

RE suggested that there should be a review of MB's Organisation paper of a couple of years back as updated by MD.

DG suggested 360 degree appraisals for DTB members.

MB invited suggestions from all concerned including RC and MH. A call for volunteers will be made shortly with the exact organisation to be implemented depending on the out-turn of the workshop and the capabilities of the respondents to the call.

**Action: comments on agenda for Strategy meeting and on administrative matters to be made to MB.**

## **7. AOB**

JL reported on the Junior Dons Party. She offered her thanks to all who had helped, and regretted that there were no other DTB members present. IH had offered a TV company the opportunity to film the party, which he arranged without consulting the organisers. For safeguarding reasons this was not possible.

The DTB recorded its thanks to JL for her hard work in making the party a success, and to all concerned in its organisation.

TH tabled a letter from Supporters Direct to the H of C Commons Home Affairs Committee urging the establishment of a statutory enquiry into child abuse in football. He urged the DTB to sign this. The DTB agreed to do so, subject to comment from ES.

The DTB agreed that MB should attend the EFL end of season conference as official representative of the Club's owners..

JL suggested that a conflicts of interest register be maintained.

DG suggested that there should in future be a December DTB meeting in addition to the AGM. MB agreed to add on to the meeting schedule.

**Action: DTB to sign SD letter to Home Affairs Committee, subject to ES's comments.**

**Action: MB to attend EFL end of season conference.**

**Action: DTB December meeting to be scheduled.**

**[Meeting Closed at 23:00]**