

## **Dons Trust Board**

### **Draft Minutes of Meeting Thursday 16 February 2017**

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

#### **Members**

Mark Davis (MD)

Jane Lonsdale (JL)

David Growsns (DG)

Tim Hillyer (TH)

Roger Evans (RE) (part)

Colin Dipple (CD)

Nigel Higgs (NH)

#### **Invited**

Erik Samuelson (ES) (part)

John Dolan (JD) (ESG) (part)

Rob Crane (RC) (Secretariat)

Michael Hayes (MH) (Secretariat)

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Matt Breach (MB), Matt Spriegel, Sean McLaughlin and Rob McGlinchey. In MB's absence, MD deputised as chair.

#### **2. Update on Election Process**

JD presented the report from the Election Steering Group (ESG) that had been circulated. Some key points were:

- Disappointment with low voter engagement at the 2016 election, despite use of modern media. There is a need to find ways of engaging with those who are not currently engaged, particularly new members with no knowledge/history of WFC.
- The lack of diversity on the board. One suggestion to address the age issue would be to approach former young(er) DTB members and ask why they are no longer engaged. The ESG could not agree on how to respond to the "same old faces" comments. One voter always comments on their voting slip on the lack of female representation.
- Veracity issues in election manifestos. The ESG has no way of verifying statements, but candidates should be responsible for providing truthful manifestos.
- Improving the election process. Revised rules for 2017 were tabled.

- A missing nomination paper that had been received on time but had not immediately come to light.
- Whether nomination forms could be signed electronically in future.
- The possible need for a different way of engaging with “Nerdfighter” members.

JD noted that the report contains revised rules for the 2017 election which attempt to meet some of the issues raised. JD asked the DTB to approve the suggestions made in the report or to suggest amendments, and to advise whose responsibility it will be to implement. He also needs to know the name of the new DTB Secretary when appointed.

**Action: DTB members to comment on the report and revised rules, to approve the suggestions made subject to any amendments, advise who will implement agreed changes, and supply details of DT Secretary when appointed.**

JL noted that, she believed, the number of “Nerdfighter” members was 165, which suggests that although their needs should be accommodated so far as possible, they are not a significant proportion of the membership.

It was noted that some candidates who don’t use social media, or whose employment may restrict use of social media, could be disadvantaged in the election process.

TH suggested that it is the DTB’s job to deal with diversity issues, by co-option or otherwise. He also suggested that DTB meetings could be opened up to DT members (indeed this had been agreed by a previous DTB) and mentioned that, within the EFL, the issue of having a limit on continuous board membership is being addressed with a suggested limit of nine years. Applying that principle to the DTB membership cycle would mean that no board member should exceed four or five terms.

Acknowledging an issue previously raised by SM, MD asked whether the ESG had considered having a three year term instead of two year term with elections in the summer. JD said that this had come up in the context of considering trial terms.

DG did not think it was the ESG’s job to check the veracity of candidates’ statements. This should be self policed and open to challenge.

Given the need to respond to the questions posed by the ESG, MD asked when the ESG resumes the election process. JD said this is normally in the summer, but could be earlier if required.

In response to a comment from JL, JD said that (apart from members of the ESG) anyone who is a DT member may nominate a candidate and anyone who is a DT member may stand for election apart from the ESG and some members of the FCB.

JL suggested that the April General Meeting would be the time to ask members for their views. She suggested that the ESG paper and draft rules should go on the DTB section of Webjam for comment, with an edited summary for the DT Programme page, with suggestions brought back to the March DTB meeting. Some issues might need to be referred to the constitution or membership working groups.

**Action: DTB members to submit comments on the ESG report and revised draft rules. A summary to be prepared by JD, to go on DT Programme page. The ESG report and revised draft rules to be posted for comment on the DTB section of Webjam.**

The DTB thanked JD and the ESG for their work on the election, following which JD left the meeting.

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

There was discussion about the issues to be raised with ES under the subsequent agenda items, following which ES joined the meeting.

### **4.FCB Update, Stadium etc.**

#### a) Charlton game debrief

ES explained that there had been three incidents:

- coin throwing;
- an altercation between Karl Robinson and a volunteer groundsman. The FA have written asking for a report and the club has responded. The groundsman has resigned and the club is considering what further action to take;
- a banner describing Karl Robinson in obscene terms. The FA have not followed up on this.

#### b) Franchise game

*[There was a discussion of the arrangements for the Franchise game. Some of the discussion has been redacted.]*

ES said that issues from the Charlton game will be built into planning for the Franchise game, including registration of banners. The FCB is to receive a written security plan before the match. The Franchise secretary and CEO were shown round TCRRS and agreed that the game should be a “bubble” game involving Franchise fans and management all coming by coach and receiving tickets on the coach.

#### c) Stadium

*[There was a discussion on the status of the Section 106 agreement. It is now almost complete, although its accompanying development agreement still has some way to go. It was agreed to instigate some processes to help double-check the latest calculations regarding construction costs, with formal tendering starting later in the year. There was also a discussion about the application that had been made to Historic England for the listing of the greyhound stadium.]*

#### d) Other FCB Report matters

ES confirmed that the complaints recorded in the FCB report are for the quarter ended December 2016 and so do not record complaints in respect of the Sutton ticket ballot.

TH asked how the Academy Appearance Contribution Percentage is calculated. ES said that this is intended to demonstrate “performance” in getting Academy players into the first team. ES has discussed with Jeremy Sauer some other ideas for calculating the success in bringing boys through the system.

The six monthly accounts were noted without comment.

### 5.Naming Rights

ES reported that the FCB has been advised to use a “small, hungry” firm. The consultancy firm previously instructed fits this definition and the club has been in further discussions with them again. The aim is to relaunch a nine month marketing campaign with updated marketing material once we have planning permission. We will give the consultants a list of “reserved names” to cover prospects we already know.

### 6.AFCW Foundation

#### a) Executive Director resignation

ES reported that the Foundation’s sponsors have been told about Kay Skelton’s resignation, and there was a short programme announcement. A new Trustee (Karen Peck) has been recruited who will also take on the company secretary role. Advice is being taken as to what sort of replacement is needed for KS; recruitment will commence in around three weeks. There is a trustee board meeting next week, the agenda for which will include the role of trustees and the need to engage key local businesses.

#### b) Set-up costs

ES explained that the current procedure is that the FCB pays bills, recovers expenditure and bills the net cost to the Foundation. ES will check whether all set up costs have been recovered.

**Action: ES to check whether all set-up costs have been recovered.**

#### c) Relationship with DTB

MD summarised his understanding that the DT has, in effect, delegated some of its Aims to the Foundation. ES suggested that there should be a Service Level Agreement between the DT and the Foundation which sets out the relationship but respects the independence of the Foundation. It

would contain provisions such as permitting the Foundation to use the AFCW name on condition that certain principles are respected. Other clubs may have precedents. ES noted that an SLA dealing with operational matters already exists between the football club and the Foundation.

ES reported that between February and May the Foundation will be addressing their priorities.

It was agreed that the Foundation should be asked to put forward its “direction of travel” to the FCB. There was discussion about reporting lines between the DT and the Foundation, either directly or (preferably) with NH as a Foundation trustee reporting at DTB meetings.

**Action: AFCW Foundation to report to DTB on its “direction of travel” either directly or via NH. MD and NH to draw up an SLA between the DT and the Foundation, setting out what DT expects from Foundation while respecting the independent status of the Foundation.**

ES left the meeting.

## **7. Agenda for DTB Strategy Meeting**

The date of the strategy meeting was agreed as 16 March from 7.30pm to 10.30pm.

It was agreed that MD will rough out a draft agenda and DTB members should input additional items.

The Workstreams from last year should be reviewed to find out what worked and what did not. Priorities for 2017 should be agreed. How the Board works and how its working could be improved (e.g. by delegation to committees) should be considered as an early item on the agenda. The skills matrix prepared last year could be refreshed. CD noted that he had been assigned to a work stream that did not match his skills instead of being matched to one which does. In future, there should be a mid-term review of progress.

Individual issues which might need to be addressed among the priorities for the year included:

- Board co-option
- Constitution
- Supporter Liaison Officer role
- Volunteer Liaison Officer role and Volunteer agreement
- Communications
- Fundraising
- VAT issues

Matters agreed at the 19 January DTB meeting to be on the strategy meeting agenda (January 19 agenda item 6) should also be included on the agenda in so far as not covered above.

**Action: MD to prepare draft Agenda for Strategy meeting with input from other DTB members.**

## **8. Voting in Supporters Direct Board Elections**

TH declared an interest (as a board member of SD).

MD reported that the DT has paid its membership subscription and he has received a weblink enabling him to cast the Trust's vote. There are six candidates for five vacancies. DTB members should advise MD of their preferences by Saturday 18 February and MD would then arrive at his choice by aggregating these and would then cast the Trust's votes on Sunday to meet the Monday deadline.

### **9. AFC Wimbledon Ladies Update**

DG reported on a recent strategy meeting. The Ladies section currently plays in the Premier League South East Division 1 having gained promotion last year, and aspires to gain promotion to the next league (Premier League Southern Division) within the next three seasons and eventually to be in a position to apply for the Women's Super league in the next five to ten years.

DG plans to put in place a Service Level Agreement with the Trust, Foundation and club. DG had worked with the Ladies and Girls section already to bring them under a single constitution.

The DTB welcomed the emerging proposals from the Ladies and Girls section, recognising that they were at an early stage and needed to be further developed. NH noted in particular that further information would be needed on costs.

### **10. Ratification of online vote to sign the child abuse petition**

MD reminded DTB members that, at TH's instigation, the DTB had agreed by email<sup>1</sup> that the Trust should sign up to an online petition regarding child abuse in football. This had already been actioned by TH but needed to be ratified. This was unanimously agreed.

### **11. Recruitment of Secretariat**

It was reported that following advertisement, three responses had been received, from [*names redacted*]. Other volunteers who came forward are being referred to other work streams.

**Action: MD to follow up, in conjunction with MB.**

### **12.AOB**

a) Rob Crane had raised a question on Webjam about charity collections at games. JL, DG and MD had been in contact with David Charles for information on the charities chosen this year.

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<sup>1</sup> Secretary's note: DTB members who had voted by email were MD, TH, MB, MS, SM, RE, JL and CD (all in favour).

**Action: MD to follow this up with DC.**

b) Team Congratulations.

JL proposed, and the DTB agreed, to record their congratulations for the Under 18 team's gallant performance against Preston North End in the FA Youth Cup.

MD proposed, and the DTB agreed, to record their congratulations to the Ladies for their performance in reaching the fifth round of the FA Cup.

c) Branding for DT Kiosk

MD agreed to remind MB about this.

**Action: MD to remind MB about the branding of the kiosk.**

d) Board Member Training

TH reported that Nicola Hudson of Supporters Direct had kindly agreed to provide board member training for DTB members, along with board members of Bath City's and Newport's Trusts. It was agreed to offer TCRRS as the venue to host this.

e) Football Supporters Federation Meeting

TH reported that he and MD would be attending this meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> February.

f) Supporters' Summit

TH advised that this takes place on Friday 30 June/Saturday 1 July, with one day devoted to SD, one day to FSF. Accommodation would be at St Georges Park Burton, with shuttle to meetings.

g) DTB Minutes

It was noted that all minutes apart from November 2016 have now been redacted and posted on the website. JL said she had been contacted by a member about the lateness of posting minutes, the DTB's own rule being that all minutes must be posted within a month, or the reason given. MD noted that the space for missing minutes on the DT website which reads "to follow" could be the place where a reason could be provided by the Chair once a month has elapsed.

The meeting closed at 10.45pm.