

Dons Trust Board

Draft Minutes of Meeting Monday 10 April 2017

Cherry Red Records Stadium President's Lounge

Members

Matt Breach (MB)
Mark Davis (MD)
Jane Lonsdale (JL)
Sean McLaughlin (SM)
Tim Hillyer (TH)
Roger Evans (RE)
Nigel Higgs (NH)

Invited

Erik Samuelson (ES) (part)
Tom Brown (TB) (Secretary)
Hannah Kitcher (HK) (Secretariat)
Rob Crane (RC) (Comms)

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Colin Dipple, David Growns and Matt Spriegel.

2. Introduction

[The DTB briefly discussed what questions to ask ES regarding the main FCB report. These included the status of players and pipeline from the academy to the first team and the London Living Wage.]

[Redacted]

ES joined the meeting

3a. Stadium - Contractors

ES explained that stage one of the tender will be based upon the current design, [redacted], but without any work required for Fittings & Equipment, including the pitch itself.

ES informed the DTB that there are three contractors involved [redacted], and that only one of these would be selected to proceed to the second stage of the tender.

ES noted that as of yet he does not have a preference between the three options.

ES set out the plan over the next few weeks as follows:

- Andrew Williams, Mott Macdonald (our Quantity Surveyors), Ivor Heller (IH) and ES will visit a stadium constructed by each contractor prior to receiving the tender. These visits are currently planned for w/b Monday 17th April.
- The contractors will then submit their tenders by the 21st April.
- Andrew Williams and Mott Macdonald will standardise the tenders to make them comparable, question each of the contractors and present to the FCB on 3rd May
- Andrew Williams will then attend the DTB meeting on the 11th May to assist Erik in presenting the proposed way forward and answering any questions from DTB members.

ES explained that whilst the first stage of the tender was not intended to include work on the pitch, 2 of the contractors have indicated they would be interested in including this work in their tender. ES has communicated to them that they are welcome to do so, but that they should include a tender without this option as well to ensure that all bids are directly comparable.

[redacted]

3b. Stadium – Finance

[ES updated the DTB on the latest funding and finance position.]

[redacted]

Crowdfunding

- ES reported that he had engaged two companies [redacted] to investigate possible crowdfunding options.
- In order to attract investors it may be necessary to offer a guaranteed bonus/dividend of sorts, for example upon promotion.
- SM requested clarification on whether the EIS option was still on the table. ES confirmed that this was not an option due to our size.
- MD asked how much ES was hoping could be raised through crowdfunding. ES replied that he was unsure how much we need until the tender review is complete, however going through this process he hoped to be able to present options (albeit limited ones) to the DTB to decide how to proceed.
- [some other points redacted]

Actions: ES to update operational budget and circulate to DTB. Andrew Williams to update Gantt chart. ES to confirm if the communication to contractors of the winning tenderer can be brought forward from 5th June (allowing an earlier SGM).

3c. Stadium – Chelsea

[ES provided an update on Chelsea.]

[section redacted]

RE asked a series of questions regarding Chelsea's proposals:

1. Will Chelsea be making any changes to the floodlights?
2. When do Chelsea want to take control of pitch maintenance
3. Which Chelsea teams will be using the pitch next year?

ES replied that Chelsea would be upgrading the floodlights in line with the requirements for the ladies champions league. They would be spending approximately £90k on the pitch including improving the drainage over the summer, with AFCW to contribute an amount for annual pitch maintenance equal to our typical annual pitch maintenance spend.

ES went on to clarify that for next season the Chelsea teams that will play at the ground are the Ladies and any academy team European games. He is expecting all Ladies league matches to be played at Kingsmeadow with AFCW to receive all the bar takings.

[redacted]

Proposed stadium briefing timeline:

FCB are expecting a briefing on **3rd May**. This is 8 days before the DTB will be briefed on 11th May. The DTB will get that report as it stands plus a note on what the FCB has asked to be looked at again.

Action: The DTB requested to see the report on the 4th May.

[redacted]

SGM content/impact:

There was a discussion as to whether the DTB should schedule an earlier SGM, ahead of 5th June. It was agreed that we would have little to update Members on, so the DTB should wait until we have more things to say, potentially including the announcement of the successful tender. This may also drive the need to book a larger space to host the meeting, depending on foreseen demand for attendance from members.

MB stated that the DTB needed to alert members that there is no longer going to be a meeting on 27th April and in doing so, put an alternative date in the diary almost immediately around that.

MB stated that we can't agree exactly what we will tell members at the SGM until after 11th May, as the outcome of that meeting will set the tone for the SGM.

[redacted]

MB explained that over the next 3-4 days the DTB need to write a carefully worded piece to say there is no longer going to be an SGM on 27th May but make it clear that there are no issues with the Section 106; the Club is going through a soft tender process and we will not be in a position to give members interesting news until June.

Action: MB/RC to draft a postponement announcement & RC to release through appropriate channels. JL to communicate postponement to those who had volunteered to assist on the day

JL asked what engagement there would be from members and whether the DT members will/should vote on anything. MB clarified that, as of now it will be an information giving exercise as we are unlikely to be in a position to present any formal resolution to Members at that point. JL asked what engagement there would be for people who can't come to the meeting and whether the discussion should be opened out wider, beyond simply Trust members? She questioned whether we should do something on Twitter/Twitter to make it more accessible for people as well as the videos on Webjam

[redacted]

Action: MB to look between now and May 11th as to whether there is something they need to ask members to agree to vote on at the June SGM.

Action: Secretariat/JL to discuss ways (e.g. live stream/tweeting) to engage members + wider fan base not able to attend

MB noted that there will no longer be a meeting scheduled for 27th April or 4th May, but that the DTB may need schedule another meeting between 11th May and the SGM where they can discuss other matters (the meeting on 11th May will be a single-issue meeting).

RE asked whether the club would be planning to issue a press release after the SGM. ES explained that this would depend on the news as the main news will be when the Section 106 has been signed. As such, at this point the Club is unlikely to issue a press release but will put something on the OS.

[redacted]

4. FCB Update

a) Cash flow and status of budget for 2017/18

[redacted]

ES stated that Neal will have the same playing budget as for this season. [redacted]

London Living Wage:

Action: NH to catch up with ES offline to update on plans.

Questions on FCB report:

[redacted]

MB asked if the Club are looking to get a new bank account. ES explained that they are having someone coming in to assess where to put their money.

Football

[ES provided an update on the playing squad.]

[redacted]

General office

MD asked whether the Equality Code of Practice work would be a significant distraction? ES explained that they have a volunteer coming in who has offered to assist. There is a lot of documentation and getting it done in time for the assessment will be a challenge; if the volunteer is unable to complete it they will have to look elsewhere for further help.

[redacted]

DTB Only:

5. Review of DTB Priority/Working Practice Session Output

TB explained that the Action Log is a live document which can be updated with actions shortly after a meeting and can be used chase things between meeting. TB explained that the log will be updated over next 4-5 days.

All agreed that comfortable with using Google Sheets for updating the Action Log. TB to maintain editorial control with other members able to leave comments.

Activity ownership matrix; for MB to complete.

6. ESG Report Review:

MB reported on key points from the ESG report. This included a lower turnout percentage than in 2015, down nearly 10%, although in absolute numbers there was little change.

JL noted that some of the DTB comments on the report hadn't been taken on board and noted there had been no resolution as to how run a Twitter debate to ensure a level playing for all candidates

DTB agreed that it is up to the DTB to decide what they want to do regarding how they run the elections and if they need changing, but that ought to get members approval.

MB explained that the DTB had promised a discussion about the elections with members at the forthcoming SGM, therefore the DTB need to find time to discuss this issue before then. MD suggested that in the run up to the meeting they could send around a survey before the SGM to provoke discussion in the meeting. The survey would focus on how to get more people wanting to stand to be elected, how to engage more people to vote and how to have a better election process.

JL raised the point that sending out an election survey to DT members will only reach those who are already engaged and who already vote. A further suggestion was made that we should put a link to the survey in the invite to the SGM.

Action: MD to draft possible questions for an elections survey & provide to TB.

Discussion as to whether it makes sense for the election to be held at the end of the calendar year, as opposed to in the summer instead, and whether it is necessary to have them tied them to the AGM, as they currently are.

Action: TB to look at more generally how the election is run and problems there (with support of JL and SM). TB to ensure that an elections survey link is ready to be sent out in mid-May to go out with June SGM email.

7. Dons Trust Board Membership Policy Review:

MD had recirculated a paper he prepared in February 2016, prior to MS's recruitment. He had not reviewed it since then and it may be that some of it has been overtaken by events; however, a lot of basic stuff in it probably does still apply. Suggested ought to have a Board Membership Policy approved by, or taken to the membership. Attached some guidelines to it that wouldn't be binding. Suggested that if people think that should be the sort of thing, to send MD comments and ND and MD will review them together and then bring it back to the board for discussion. MB will roll this into the accountabilities matrix.

Action: DTB to send membership policy responses to NH/MD. Note that this is the DTB Membership Policy circulated to members at the April DTB Meeting.

MB explained that with regards to co-option onto the DTB, communications was identified as an area in need. MB highlighted that the priority is to get the communications strategy from Dave Growns re-circulated and reviewed before ensuring that it is joined up with the club. Given that it will be at least 2-3 months away before we are able to do much more on that. MD highlighted that from the last co-option they still have details of people who may be able to help. Suggestion that it may be task-driven rather than a necessity for someone to join the board.

Data protection:

TH asked if anything has been done with regards to data protection as with the new CRM coming in access to that data is of greater importance.

MB clarified that this falls under TB's remit. DG needs access to the list of members for the mailing list. The only other places/people that need it are the kiosk machine and David Reeves for Webjam. The kiosk hard drive is protected by password. The file is a CSV file and should be password protected. Payment details are held on John Stenbridge's system which will be eventually be subsumed onto the CRM.

Action: TB to follow up with John Stenbridge.

Other:

JL commented that a survey from Supporters Director on behalf of the Daily Mail had been put on Webjam by the Board. This had received both negative and positive feedback and some of the members' posts had disappeared. The DTB were being criticised for censoring members however no one knows why the comments had gone. JL and the Webjam project group were liaising with Webjam to establish what had happened and to reinstate the posts as they weren't against the acceptable use policy. [Post Meeting Note: the posts have since been reinstated].

JL also reminded board members to reply to a forum post on the members forum not the wall and to subscribe to the forum.

RE highlighted they have had no report back re. safeguarding.

Action: MB to chase up on safeguarding reports.

TH explained that a potential meeting with Supporters Direct training in September would tie in with potential candidates for election and will look into booking a date with Nicola Hudson which will suit as many of the board members who want to attend as possible and can then start inviting people.

TH highlighted that the club organised a Dementia Awareness Day and invited volunteers but at too short notice and there were no volunteers able to help. Volunteers keen to do it if held in evening and suggested it should be in held in two sessions.

Meeting Closed at 22:59