

## **Dons Trust Board**

**Draft Minutes of Meeting Thursday 13 July 2017**

**Cherry Red Records Stadium Presidents Lounge**

### **Members**

Matt Breach (MB)

Mark Davis (MD)

Roger Evans (RE)

Colin Dipple (CD)

David Grows (DG)

Jane Lonsdale (JL)

Tim Hillyer (TH)

Sean McLaughlin (SM)

### **Invited**

Erik Samuelson (ES)

Michael Hayes (MH) (Secretariat)

Hannah Kitcher (HK) (Secretariat)

## **1. Apologies and Thanks**

Apologies had been received from Nigel Higgs (NH) and Tom Brown (TB). It was noted that this was the third consecutive board meeting that NH had not attended, but it was agreed that the disqualification Rule 60 of the Dons Trust Constitution did not apply since NH's ankle problems counted as good cause for non-attendance. JL suggested that a conference call could be set-up to allow Nigel to participate at future meetings if the problems persist and enough notice is given.

## **2. New Stadium Update**

(a) Down-selection of Preferred Tenderer

ES took the DTB through the paper he had tabled and explained that initially the DCB had split 50-50 with 2 votes for Scott and 2 for [the other tenderer]. After further meetings with key personnel and following more discussions and evaluation, the FCB unanimously accepted ES's recommendation to appoint Scott. There were points on which each tender was stronger, but those which just tipped the balance in favour of Scott included the fact that this would be an anchor project for Scott; that they have a permanent direct workforce of 200; that their culture is more in tune with ours and ES feels comfortable with the people he will be working with.

SM asked what Andrew Williams' view was – ES said AW felt it was very close but ES thinks he is pleased with the outcome. ES noted that the main costs and therefore the main risks are with the subcontractors.

JL (in NH absence) asked whether Scott pay the London Living Wage. ES said they pay permanent staff the appropriate Living Wage (National or London), but this would be difficult to prove further down the subcontract chain.

CD performed an Experian credit check on Scott on the spot, and said it was good. He asked who are Scott's Mechanical and Electrical consultants – ES suggested he ask AW.

The DTB unanimously voted to endorse the choice of Scott as preferred tenderer and to stand down [the other tenderer]. JL enquired if the announcement could be made to Trust members first. After discussion, it was also agreed that the announcement should be made on Webjam first for DT members before a more general notice on the OS.

The DTB recorded their thanks to all concerned in the selection process, in particular AW.

**Actions: ES to ensure that the Webjam announcement will have priority over the OS announcement. CD to ask AW about M&E.**

(b) Status of section 106 Agreement and Development Agreement

ES reported that Merton on 11 July set out some points on which they require reassurance, including that we have rights to services across Galliard's land and details of Galliard's bond. There have been delays on all sides in resolving these issues, but ES feels they will be overcome.

In response to a question from TH, ES said that prior to planning permission being granted it is likely that, as a matter of formality, the matter will have to go back to the Planning Committee meeting for formal approval of the complete "package".

ES undertook to do an email update summary when in a position to do so.

**Action: ES to provide email update summary when things are clearer.**

(c) Stadium Company

ES outlined the alternative ways of holding the stadium land. He feels that the preferred route will be to hold it in a new subsidiary (named "In the Wider Interests of Football"), but undertook to ask Terry Pritchard if it makes any difference to financing issues. TH requested that BDO put in writing the tax implications of the choice. It was noted that the DT Constitution (and MD's Constitution paper) should be checked to see if DT representation is required on the new Company's board.

**Action: ES to provide written BDO advice on tax implications of holding stadium land in the new company. TB to check DT Constitution rules on board representation for the new company.**

### 3. FCB Update

#### (a) 2017/18 Budget

ES said that the changes since the previous version reflected the fee for Jake Reeves, the new coach contract with Andersons, and the recruitment of Callum Kennedy.

MD suggested that the merchandising budget was aggressive – ES said the reasons were the opportunities created by having a new full time manager and use of the new Community Relationship Management (CRM) system.

The DTB voted unanimously to approve the Budget.

#### (b) FCB Report

ES reported that Jimmy Abdou (age 33, 9 years with Millwall) has been signed today on a season long loan. NA is looking for one more midfielder, with Raoul Essenboom in the frame, and for a 4<sup>th</sup> striker.

There was discussion about the likely source(s) of leaks about signings.

Noting that an approach had been made for an academy player in one of the younger age groups, SM asked how it is possible that we can be offered [a substantial sum for a player in one of the younger age groups]. ES said that from age 12 to 18, a transfer request cannot be refused but if the target is a scholar of age 14 or older and has been offered a scholarship, then it is a Bosman type situation and is negotiable with the backstop of going to a tribunal.

SM asked what is the turnover of the Foundation – ES said it was under £200K. SM also queried the number of schools participating – ES agreed to check and to supply a list.

SM asked for further information on the reported teething issues with the CRM. ES put these down largely to unfamiliarity with a new system. DG commented that the new system involves both significant initial set up effort and a different way of working; the set up efforts are however “one offs”. DG said that Harry from Green4 is dealing expertly with staff queries. It was noted that the project has been led by David Gowns and it has been a monumental amount of work for him, ably supported by Alex Feehely, and the DTB wished to record its formal thanks to them for making this project happen on time and to specification

In response to a question about moving the date of the Milton Keynes game, ES said that the Friday date had been suggested by Milton Keynes on Police advice.

In answer to a question from RE about floodlights, ES said Chelsea are not going to upgrade them because for the games that will be played next season they do not need to.

JL asked if the number of formal complaints about Sutton ticketing had been discussed at the last meeting and enquired how many complaints there had been. ES said there were only 1 or 2. She asked when the post mortem paper that had been agreed at a previous meeting would be available. ES noted that there wouldn't be a paper but the DT should outline what it would like if it is different to what is advertised.

JL noted that she was concerned that there may be some inaccuracy in what is stated on the website, compared with what is done in practice, and what is noted on the DT OS with respect to ticketing priority. She felt that DT members should be second in line to season ticket holders. ES said he believed that plc shareholders have equal treatment. It was noted that the priority ticketing system will need to be reviewed in the light of the implementation of the CRM (which effectively subsumes the Fans Register).

JL asked that the DTB should meet the new Foundation director.

JL asked about the situation with the 9 years podcast. ES said that all parties are reasonably happy at present. It has been agreed they will do some "behind the paywall" videos with shorter "free to air" YouTube tasters (working with the club), but will continue as before in other areas such as the core Podcast.

RE asked about progress on reclaiming a PAYE rebate of around £10K that had previously been noted. ES agreed to chase this.

The DTB formally approved the change of name for the K's escrow bank account; all other details are as agreed at the previous meeting.

JL raised the Checktrade/EFL Trophy issue. Having drawn Tottenham Hotspur, she would like the DTB to tell the Tottenham Supporters Trust about the line we are taking. MB reminded the Board that losses on Checktrade games are reimbursed provided that club making the loss has not publicly opposed the competition. ES said that the reimbursement received in 2016/2017 was not significant and is unlikely to be so in the current season, so that in his opinion the DTB could decide to take a stand without fear of serious financial loss.

JL noted she had been in contact with the Blackpool Supporters Trust following the 'Clubs in Crisis' presentation at the Supporters Summit. MB suggested that the DTB should support them in publicising their position ahead of the games this season. It was agreed that JL will ask the Blackpool Supporters Trust what position they would like away fans to take, to ask whether they would like our Directors to accept or decline hospitality, and to provide appropriate material for use on the DT website and potentially a match programme article.

**Action: ES to supply a list of Foundation's participating schools. ES to supply figure for bar takings at end of season event. DTB to invite the New Foundation Director to attend a DTB Meeting. ES to chase PAYE repayment. JL to ask Blackpool Supporters Trust what position they would like away fans to take and obtain media material.**

(ES left the meeting)

DTB Only

#### **4. Feedback from Supporters Summit (attended by JL and TH)**

JL referred to her blog posted on Webjam. Following attendance at a 'safeguarding and child abuse' session at the Supporters Summit she feels that the DTB should be satisfied that it has the right

safeguarding policies and procedures in place. MB said that the new safeguarding officer has a plan and that it is the DTB's responsibility to ensure that it is appropriate. It was agreed that the new safeguarding officer should present to the DTB in September. DG suggested, based on his experience as a school governor, that the quarterly report from the SO to the FCB should come also to the DTB.

JL referred to a short film (Wonderkid) which raises the issues of homophobia in football. This film had been screened at the Summit and she thought it was impressive, leading to the suggestion that the DTB should consider showing it to trust members and offer Neal the opportunity to show to the first team squad (as had been done at Brentford). She agreed to find out more about what Brentford did. MD suggested it might be appropriate to screen it at an SGM. TH suggested that Paul Elliott (a member of the FA's Inclusion Advisory Board) should be invited to attend any screening.

TH noted that Supporters Direct (SD) is concerned that the Football Supporters Federation (FSF) and SD will merge – this issue is covered in JL's blog. JL and TH have slightly different takes on this issue, but both feel the important thing if the merger takes place is to preserve the strengths of each organisation, particularly the campaigning skills of FSF.

TH noted that there is an impending vote for the Chair of SD, with two candidates - Peter Lloyd of Peterborough and Tom Greatorex (an ex MP). MB said he had not received any voting papers, so TH thought it might be an appointment made by the Board.

TH also noted that he has stood down from the board of SD.

TH undertook to prepare a note that will inform DT Members of all the votes taken at the Supporters Summit and how the DT votes were exercised.

The DTB recorded its thanks to JL and TH for their attendance at the Summit.

**Actions: The new Safeguarding Officer should present to the DTB September meeting. JL to find out what Brentford did re:Wonderkid. TH to prepare note to inform members about votes taken and exercised at the Summit.**

## **5. AOB**

In view of time constraints, MB agreed to circulate what he had been going to say about the Agenda AOB including status of the three surveys.

The DTB recorded its thanks to Rob Crane for his contributions to the Secretariat and to Webjam, from which he is now standing down. It was noted that Hannah Kitcher was now helping with Webjam alongside David Reeves.

**Action: MB to circulate material relating to AOB Agenda items.**