

Dons Trust Board

Draft Minutes of Meeting Thursday 10 August 2017

Cherry Red Records Stadium President's Lounge

Members

Matthew Breach (MB)
Mark Davis (MD)
Roger Evans (RE)
Colin Dipple (CD)
David Growns (DG)
Jane Lonsdale (JL)
Tim Hillyer (TH)
Sean McLaughlin (SM)

Invited

Tom Brown (Secretary)
Hannah Kitcher (HK) (Secretariat)
Michael Hayes (MH) (Secretariat)

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Nigel Higgs (NH) and Erik Samuelson (ES). This was NH's fourth consecutive absence, caused by his ankle problems. It was agreed that this did not constitute a breach of Rule 60 of the constitution given the medical advice Nigel has received for his recovery.

2. Approval of July Minutes

It was noted that MB had only circulated the draft July minutes earlier this week, so that DTB members had not had adequate time to consider them. JL has made comments by email, MD will do so; other comments to be made as soon as possible to MB.

Regarding the June minutes, MB noted that he had received a number of comments that he will incorporate and then finalise. MB agreed to try to circulate the draft minutes earlier in future. TB confirmed that the April and May minutes have been posted on Webjam, and that the June minutes will be posted there when finalised.

**Actions: Comments on July Minutes to be sent to MB.
MB to circulate draft minutes earlier in future.**

3. New Stadium Update

The DTB reviewed ES's Status Report as at 4 August. MB reported that the tripartite meeting between Merton, Galliard and AFCW on 27 July had dealt with most issues but there are three important issues on which decisions are required from the DTB. [These issues are commercially sensitive and have been redacted from the minutes]

There was discussion about what meaningful information could be imparted to members and other fans to allow for collection of their views on elements of the design and fit-out of the new stadium. MB said that ES has requested the DTB to identify the issues that are of concern to fans, to gather

suggestions and prepare a list to be presented to ES. It was agreed that RE would prepare a list and circulate among the DTB for additions and comments.

Action: RE to prepare list of suggestions and circulate for additions and comments

MB reported that ES is seeking an answer from the Football Licensing Authority to the question whether we can install rail seating/safe standing without losing the Football Stadium Improvement Fund grants, and if not what we have to do to achieve this. TH suggested that MB should approach Brentford and Supporters Direct.

Action: MB to approach Brentford and Supporters Direct for information about rail seating/safe standing

MB noted that the Naming Rights campaign is to be launched in October.

MB reported that the initial payment of our donation has been paid into the K's escrow account.

MB reported that there is a looming deadline to complete the section 106 Agreement. If this is met, the overall stadium timescale can be kept, assuming that demolition proceeds according to plan.

4. FCB Report

MB reported on the latest FCB meeting and the FCB Report.

Charles and Soares (injuries) are improving. Neal Ardley is trying to extend the contracts for Hartigan and Sibbick.

The formal objective for the season is to stay up. The aspiration is to do better than last year. Our improved playing budget is not reflected in our likely wage position (i.e. how many League 1 clubs pay more on players' wages than us) due to the fact that the promoted teams have higher budgets than the relegated teams had last season. ES says we will not know for certain until November, but we are not likely to be higher than 19th.

In answer to a question from RE, MB said we will not get a sell on fee if Harry Pell moves from Cheltenham.

The FCB acknowledged that some elements of planning for the Brentford game cup game had not been adequate; the potential for an early season high profile Cup draw will be considered in future off-season planning.

DG reported on the new CRM system. There have been 2000 registrations. Anecdotally some people have had difficulty registering, which may in part be due to password reset requests going slowly. DG highlighted issues with de-duplicating, although the registration procedure has helped with the process. MB reported that signup will be encouraged by emphasising that the new CRM replaces the old Fans Register, and that if you are not on the CRM you will not be eligible to apply for tickets for the Franchise game. MB reported that the initial priorities for Franchise game tickets will be season ticket holders, shareholders and DT Members (1 ticket only) followed by CRM registered fans. For the Portsmouth game, season ticket holders, DT members and shareholders will be able to

buy a second ticket. ES is planning weekly updates and media briefings on the new system. There will be a CRM clinic in the DT Kiosk at the Doncaster game.

It was noted that ES will miss the September DTB board meeting. The Foundation Director is due to attend that meeting, but Mick Buckley could also be invited.

MB reported that the Charlie Talbot is working with Mick Buckley on a project looking at the Club branding; he should be talking to stakeholders and will be invited to the September DTB meeting. JL suggested that the project could include the logo designs for the DT that were still outstanding from last year.

An update was received on the film [redacted due to commercial sensitivity].

It was reported that David Charles has been elected to the Central League management committee (the Development team play in this league).

TH asked whether the Beer Festival made a profit, and repeated his former question whether the bar made a profit at the end of season event.

Action: TH to put his queries into an email to MB, which MB will raise with ES/Ivor Heller.

JL raised three questions:

- a) Player community appearances. We used to have a report on these. She would like these reinstated
- b) Is the Foundation ensuring the Foodbank collections are taking place this year?
- c) iFollow is poor value for a service we are being forced to use, what can be done?

Action: AFCW Foundation to be asked to respond to a) and b). JL to email question c) to MB, who will pass to David Charles and Chris Slavin

SM asked whether we have a complaints register. MB said yes, but that often fans contacting the Club are reluctant to record things as complaints. It was agreed that, in other spheres, it is good practice to record all expressions of dissatisfaction expressed as complaints. Since MB will not be at the next FCB meeting, MD will be attending in his place will raise this with the FCB.

Action: FCB to be requested to consider recording all expressions of dissatisfaction as complaints.

5. Youth Engagement and Diversity Options

There was discussion about how to fill the vacancy created by Matt Spriegel's resignation. It was agreed that co-option was the correct solution and that one of the previous shortlisted candidates should be approached, initially Charles Williams who came a very close second in the assessment of candidates when Matt Spriegel was appointed. The procedure would be that the co-optee would be appointed until the AGM and told that his co-option was likely to be extended by the new board following the election, but this could not be guaranteed. CD suggested that lessons should be learned from Matt S's experience and the difficulties he encountered in the role, and it should be

made clearer to the new candidate exactly what is expected of him. TH suggested that the chosen co-optee should be mentored – this was agreed.

Action: MD to approach Charles Williams to see if he is interested in being co opted; if so he is to be invited to the SGM and what will be expected of him as a co opted board member should be explained to him.

A mentor for the chosen co-optee is to be made available.

MB asked if there are any other areas where the DTB should co opt. There was discussion about LGBTQ representation, Fundraising and Marketing / Comms. It was agreed that TH should ask Di Cunningham from the FSF to contribute a programme article on LGBTQ issues including Pride in Football. It was thought that major fundraising for the stadium was more an FCB matter than a DT matter and that, whilst minor fundraising activities by the Trust may be worthwhile, previous experience showed that that role did not necessarily require a seat on the board. JL commented that Marketing / Comms are weak areas in terms of DTB members' experience. It was agreed that TH will prepare a paper on the Fans' Parliament.

RE suggested there should be work streams on other issues to be brought to the DTB, especially issues relating to the new stadium. JL said that Marketing / Comms should definitely be a workstream in the light of the weakness identified by the skills matrix. It was agreed that ideas for work streams should be sent to MB.

DG queried whether data on matters such as ethnicity, religion and disability should be recorded on the CRM. There was discussion about this and no conclusion was reached but it was recognised that this would need to be considered in light of forthcoming changes to data protection legislation. It was thought that if we are going to record this information we would need to explain the purpose behind recording it.

Action: TH will ask Di Cunningham to contribute a programme article on LGBTQ issues.

TH will prepare a paper on the Fans Parliament.

DTB members to suggest workstream topics to MB.

6. Succession Planning

MB summarised the important issues behind making the COO role work. SM said that as part of their usual post appointment follow up with successful candidates, Sri (the recruitment company) will check with the new COO after 3 months that all is proceeding according to plan and identify any problems.

SM will talk to ES about making an announcement before the section 106 Agreement is signed; RE will talk to David Lloyd about Comms.

There was discussion about who should be involved in the recruitment process. MB thought it important for ES to be involved as the COO will report into him. SM agreed with the principle but said the ultimate decision must be made by the DTB. He further suggested that when the selection process is down to a shortlist of 3 or 4, each candidate should be invited to make a presentation to the DTB as to what they have to offer, having previously been given access to key people in the club such as ES, MBu, NA, IH, DC, whose opinions would be available to the DTB.

Action: SM to talk to ES about making the announcement prior to signature of the section 106 Agreement.
SM To speak to David Lloyd about Comms.
Shortlisted candidates to be given wide access to key personnel.

7. Surveys

a) Membership Survey

CD agreed to recirculate the survey data to the DTB with a view to a summary being presented at the SGM. CD also agreed to prepare a programme article for publication after the SGM. He noted that 91% of the responses thought the subscription gave good or very good value for money.

b) Election Survey

TB noted that there were only 200 responses. He will circulate the survey data to the DTB and to John Dolan and the ESG for comment. MB said those being consulted should be asked to say whether there are any “quick win” changes that could be implemented at this year’s election without requiring rule changes. TB noted that on the question of diversity, the responses did not support this and specifically did not support co-option purely for the purpose of representing a particular group of fans. There were mixed responses on length of term, but a three or four year term was more popular than a one year term. There was 90% support for disclosure of meeting attendance figures. There was 67% support for DTB members and FCB members being permitted to nominate candidates. JL urged DTB members to post their responses on Webjam rather than by email.

c) Ethical Sponsorship

TB noted that there was a good response to the survey. He will circulate the data. On alcohol and gambling, there was a 50/50 split, and a strong majority against payday loan companies. Gambling shirt sponsorship would be contentious for a good number of members. Mixed answers on sponsors that also sponsor Milton Keynes.

Action: All survey data to be circulated/recirculated to DTB members.
Membership Survey data to be summarised as a presentation to the SGM.
CD to prepare programme article on Membership Survey for publication after the SGM.
Election Survey data to be circulated also to John Dolan and the ESG for comment and suggestions for changes including “quick wins” that could be implemented without rule changes in time for this year’s election.
DTB members urged to post their comments on Webjam.

8. AOB

a) Secretariat Organisation

MD reported that Andrew Howell, an in house solicitor with the British Horseracing Authority, has been interviewed and is keen to come on board. TB recommends that the Secretariat be reorganised to create more clearly defined roles for its members, and proposed that Hannah Kitcher be responsible for Minutes and the meeting summaries, with Andrew Howell helping out on issues

around the DT Constitution, data protection, general meetings, and deputising for TB when TB cannot attend meetings. John Stembridge (membership secretary) should be involved more, and this may become easier when DT Membership is added to the CRM. It was suggested that if Charles Williams is co opted to the DTB, Shaf Mansour might be approached to assist the Secretariat with social media issues which are part of his skill set (he was on the final shortlist for the Youth Engagement co-option position). It was agreed that Andrew Howell be invited to attend the September DTB meeting. JL noted that Hannah Kitcher was also helping out admirably with Webjam.

Action: Andrew Howell to be invited to the September board meeting.

b) Rotas (Home and Away)

MB asked for volunteers to represent the DT in the Boardroom at Fleetwood away and Oldham away. TH volunteered for both. CD volunteered to be first reserve as host for home games. MB reported that Blackpool Supporters' Trust have asked us not to attend hospitality at the away game. MB agreed to circulate what the Trust are asking us to do; as a Trust we can say that we are not accepting hospitality. MB undertook to discuss this course of action with the FCB

Action: MB to circulate Blackpool Supporters Trust's requests and engage with the FCB.

c) Programme Pages

MB requested more ideas. It was agreed that RE will do something on the New Stadium for the Bristol Rovers game. TB agreed to speak to John Dolan about timing for election material for the programme page.

Action: DTB members to suggest more programme page topics.

RE to write pages on New Stadium (for Bristol Rovers game).

TB to speak to John Dolan about a page for Dons Trust board elections.

d) Round the Table

It was agreed that the new Foundation Director should be invited to present to a meeting in the near future. Safeguarding to be on the Agenda for the October meeting.

DG noted that the data protection survey is closing.

JL asked for volunteers to organise the Junior Dons Christmas party – the organiser would ideally be a member of the DTB.

JL asked whether DTB members have watched the Wonderkid film that had been mentioned at the July meeting. Unfortunately not all board members had had the time as yet. JL is due to meet the Brentford marketing manager (who is also a Dons fan and season ticket holder) to understand how they organised the showing they made at their club. If the DTB were to organise a showing of the film, its director Rhys Chapman would have to approve. Brentford organised a screening in partnership with Sky, and invited (not instructed) their players to attend. There was a panel discussion afterwards, involving representatives from the LGBT and footballing community. JL suggested that if the DTB decides to organise a screening, this should not be done at an SGM but as

a separate event, or part of a series of events to raise awareness of diversity and inclusion. NA would have to buy into the idea if players are to attend.

JL reported that, following discussion with Frank Thompson (the club's new safeguarding officer) she will undertake a safeguarding course through the FA. Frank has also been in touch with others at the club with a necessity to undertake safeguarding training.

It was agreed that TB should organise a calendar for repeat agenda items such as Safeguarding.

It was noted that the computer in the DT Kiosk is not working, probably due to damp. This means that laptops will need to be brought in for membership assistance and CRM clinics, until a replacement is obtained. JL volunteered to update and recirculate the Kiosk guidance notes.

JL reported that Mark Hendrikx had volunteered to help with videoing of the SGM and HK will create a forum for this on Webjam. JL would ask Nick Draper (9yrspodcast) to provide live updates via Webjam for members who are unable to attend

TH reminded DTB Members to advise if they were able to attend the Board member training on Sunday 24 September (10 am to 4 pm) at Craven Cottage.

MD noted that there is no mention of the DTB on the Club Officials page of the club's website. MB agreed to raise this with the FCB.

TH, having previously reported that he had resigned from the Supporters Direct Board, informed the meeting that he had been co-opted back to the Board.

TH reported that he will encourage Rovers fan Martin O'Hara (Deputy Chair of the FSF and secretary of the Supporters Cooperative) to make himself known at the Doncaster game. Martin is Deputy Chair of the FSF and secretary of the Supporters Cooperative.

Action: Philip Rudling (new Foundation Director) and Frank Thomson (Safeguarding Officer) to each be invited to attend a future board meeting (TB)

Volunteers required from DTB members to organise Junior Dons Christmas party

DTB members to watch "Wonderkid" film and provide comments on Webjam

TB to organise calendar for repeat agenda items

Kiosk guidelines to be updated and circulated

Player attendance at outside community events to be recognised, encouraged and reported by the FCB

Acceptances required for 24 September Director Training Day

TH to introduce Martin O'Hara at Doncaster game

< Meeting Closed at 22:35 >