

**Dons Trust Board (DTB)**  
**Redacted minutes of board meeting held at 7.30pm on 8 October, 2018**  
**The Cherry Red Records Stadium, President's Lounge**

**DTB members**

Matthew Breach (Vice Chair)  
Mark Davis (Chair)  
Colin Dipple  
Roger Evans  
Nigel Higgs  
Tim Hillyer  
Cormac van der Hoeven  
Jane Lonsdale  
Sean McLaughlin

**In attendance**

Tom Brown (Secretary)  
Hannah Kitcher (Secretariat)  
Terry Langford (Secretariat)  
Erik Samuelson (Club CEO)  
Mick Buckley (Club Director)  
Rick Thomas (Volunteer Liaison  
Officer - VLO)

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**1. Introduction and apologies**

Apologies were noted from DTB member Charles Williams, Andrew Howell (Secretariat) and Joe Palmer (Club COO) who was representing the Club at a sponsor's event.

**PART 1 – WITH FCB REPRESENTATIVES**

**2. Volunteer Liaison Officer (VLO) – Rick Thomas**

Mark introduced Rick Thomas. Rick explained that he started his post in January 2018 and went on to describe his background.

Rick explained that, when he started, his initial aim was to meet all the teams, both the matchday teams and the teams who worked behind the scenes. So far, he had met all the team leaders and all the match day teams. Rick had previously arranged three team leaders' meetings. These had been well attended and covered how they operate, what they want from their teams and from the Club.

Rick was planning another team leaders' meeting shortly and had asked the leaders to set the agenda for this meeting. He aims to meet with David Charles every six weeks.

The main issues that had arisen, in discussion with volunteers, since he started are: code of conduct; social media; changes to protocol and the way things are run on match days; and how these have been perceived by both the team leaders and members. As part of the code of conduct, volunteer team leaders had requested the Club provide a document outlining the commitment and support, along with training opportunities for volunteers, so that it was a two-way arrangement for Club and volunteers. Some teams would also like some form of accreditation for volunteers and formal training, e.g. stretcher carrying from the pitch side team. They also want to know who the main contact was, should they wish to contact the Club directly rather than going through Rick.

About three weeks previously Rick had attended an FA safeguarding training session with a volunteer who is leading the stadium tours as part of the new Junior Dons volunteers, and felt that this was a good session. Since Rick started two special needs schools have enquired about work experience for their pupils, suggesting one day a week.

Looking to the future, when we move to the new stadium, a lot of the volunteers have advised him that they are going to take that opportunity to stand down. This was for a number of reasons: some feel that, as the Club was going to be at the new ground, they would prefer to go and enjoy the football as a fan rather than a volunteer; and others raised the lack of parking (a lot of the volunteers do not use public transport and drive to the ground).

There had been a drop in the volunteers in the turnstile team, so Rick currently had adverts out to fill these roles.

Some volunteers had been upset by things that had been said on social media, so this had recently been a major issue. They would like a statement from the Club stating what the Club's commitment/support was to them when things had been said about them, particularly on social media. Some team leaders had said they would not accept the Code of Conduct in its present form.

The other issues Rick considered important were recruitment and retention - particularly when moving to the new stadium. However, he advised that there was a waiting list to work in the shop.

There then followed a general discussion between the DTB members. Roger suggested that the DTB ought to have a policy about how we respond to social media. Jane advised that the team leaders consider the Code of Conduct very one sided, with no mention of what support the Club would give to volunteers such as training and provision of uniform. In consideration that three volunteers had left from the turnstile team and anecdotal remarks, she asked whether the total number of volunteers had gone up or down. This was not known as there was not a single list of all volunteers. She noted the recent recruitment of four new volunteers for the Junior Dons team.

Cormac suggested using some pupils from Wimbledon College who are required to do voluntary work under their Duke of Edinburgh award. However, Jane advised that safeguarding would need to be considered as they would need someone with them who had been DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) checked if they were under the age of 16, as was required within the Junior Dons volunteer team.

Tim suggested that the Code of Conduct should be signed by the Club, the volunteer, the team leader and Rick and that a log should be kept of these documents. Rick suggested these should be handed out at a Saturday home game with a view to getting them back at the following Saturday home game.

**Actions:**

- **A list was to be made of all volunteers. This should be compiled by Rick, with input from Team Leaders – including**

**from Mark, as Team Leader for the Dons Trust Board and its supporting networks – Rick.**

- **Rick to establish from the team leaders what they want from the Club to support the partnership between Club and volunteers to support the Code of Conduct – Rick.**
- **Volunteer recruitment to be added to the “To do List” for the new stadium – Erik to task David Charles.**

On behalf of the board, Mark thanked Rick for all his hard work and for coming to the meeting, at which point Rick departed.

### **3. FCB Report**

Mark, on behalf of the DTB, noted that they were pleased to hear that Ivor Heller was recovering well from his operation.

The DTB had received the regular monthly FCB report and they raised a number of issues from the report as follows:

#### **Finance**

In response to a question from Mark, Erik advised that the cash flow was slightly different from last month - partly due to transfer fees, and partly due to payment of the backlog of agents' fees. Erik explained that, since production of the cash flow, funds had been received from the League.

In response to a question from Roger, Erik advised that the TV money from the West Ham game had already been accounted for in the previous month and brought forward balance.

#### **Football**

There was extensive questioning from the DTB on football matters which Erik responded to and noted that the FCB are continuing to monitor and review the situation.

Cormac asked about the professional development of the football club staff. He asked whether our Club management were comparable to other clubs in League One. He also asked whether our staff get the professional development they need to be the best they can be. Erik advised that there was nothing unusual about our set-up. He advised that, after removing the top and bottom clubs, we pay below the average for our League and that, last year, the Club had paid for Neal and Neil to obtain their pro licences.

In response to a question from Colin, Erik explained the details of the tribunal for Mitch Pinnock. He advised the decision would go to an independent FA tribunal.

Discussion took place about expectations, and Mick asked what the DTB would consider as success, observing that Neal had traditionally been targeted with a minimum league position of four places above the Club's place in the League One budget table. Erik advised that the current season's spend would have put the Club seventeenth in the wages league last season.

Tim advised that the discontent from fans felt towards the end of last season had carried into the summer and said that one of the reasons for this was due to the Club's away form being better than the home form, so the majority of season ticket holders did not see the better performances. There was a similar pattern this season. Neal had addressed this at the Meet the Manager event.

### **Deji Oshilaja Transfer Bid**

The board considered a paper from Erik setting out lessons to be learnt from the Deji transfer bid. It also included a proposed policy on handling of transfer bids. The board was content that the paper was thorough and well prepared.

### **Betting partner**

As Joe Palmer was unable to attend the meeting, this topic would be deferred until he could report on his meeting with a potential betting partner on 25 September 2018. Jane advised that, contrary to the advice at the September meeting, it was not possible to tell from their website which clubs they were aligned with. She clarified that the website lists all clubs and expects clubs to opt out as they assume all clubs would work with them.

#### **Actions:**

- **Add betting partner to November agenda – Tom.**
- **Ask Joe which clubs betting partner are signed up with - Erik.**

Sean pointed out that the match day sponsorship list was not attached to the report. Erik advised that Joe wrote most of this month's FCB report and must have overlooked attaching the report.

#### **Action: Match Day sponsorship list to be added to November's FCB report – Joe**

Sean also asked for clarification about the direct revenue from the Newsletter.

Erik advised that the integration of the Dons Trust membership into the CRM (customer database) was not something worth doing. Mark clarified that the advice was to not use Green4's own module. Jane noted the ongoing issue and impact on Webjam of not having Dons Trust information on the CRM.

#### **Action: Update at the November meeting about the DTB integration with the CRM – Joe.**

Sean asked if the merchandise targets were aggressive. Erik confirmed that they were. Sean requested that in future, for comparison, the table should show last year's figures.

### **John Green Stand**

Tim noted that the people who had been standing and singing in the John Green Stand had migrated to the back row. Erik advised that letters had been reissued to the three people involved and invited them to come and discuss ways to resolve the issue but that when they are told to sit down they must do so.

The DTB noted their thanks to the Club for introducing free sanitary products in the ladies' toilets at the Oxford game. This would continue for all future games and the DTB thanked Jane Lonsdale and the Diversity and Inclusion working group for initiating this.

The DTB thanked the Club office staff for their help with mailing out the 150 junior Dons gifts after a working party of volunteers had packaged them up. Jane noted that the backlog of known gifts was now cleared but there may be others who have not yet advised what gift they would like to receive.

Jane thanked the Club for the inclusion of stats and data in the FCB report which she considered excellent to support discussions.

#### **4. Stadium Update**

The DTB had received the stadium update report.

Mark outlined that once the Club had taken ownership of the land it would trigger receipt of the funds from Chelsea, for the sale of Kingsmeadow. When considering the risk of the costs of not going ahead with the stadium versus the benefit of receiving the cash early from Chelsea it was the recommendation of the FCB to go ahead with taking over the land, irrespective of whether building of the culvert had been completed. Erik clarified that once the culvert was built the Club are committed to taking over the land.

In response to a question from Tim, Erik advised that the culvert was expected to be finished before Christmas.

Jane enquired about the contractor and noted communications would be required when appropriate.

The DTB voted unanimously in favour of authorising the Club to take ownership of the land prior to completion of the culvert.

#### **Stadium Working Group**

Roger advised that the fans' consultation was on course to go out in January. This was assuming the tender price had been received so we would know the options we could choose.

A paper would be prepared for the November board meeting. Colin asked whether we had advised fans that the consultation was going to be put back due to the delay in the tender being received and Mark confirmed that this was discussed at the SGM.

## **5. Milton Keynes mediation**

The Board were updated on the EFL-convened mediation with Milton Keynes<sup>1</sup>. The Board noted that the mediation, in which the Club and Trust are being advised by Jim Sturman QC, is underway. Recognising that the Club was required, as is normal in these situations, to enter into a non-disclosure agreement regarding the conduct of the mediation, the Board acknowledged that no further comments could be made until such time as the mediation is complete and any outcome thereof can be put to the membership to vote on. The Board discussed what arrangements might need to be made in the eventuality of a home match against Milton Keynes in either the FA Cup or Checkatrade Trophy, recognising that such a fixture could take place before the mediation is concluded.

## **6. Upcoming SGM**

The DTB discussed the upcoming SGM and the progress towards achieving the required number of votes for the Restricted Action. Tom advised that, of the required 1560 votes, 1087 electronic and 60 paper votes had been received so far, of which a proportion well in excess of 90% was cast in favour. Jane noted there had been some confusion over the proxy vote being the real vote and the secretariat agreed to clarify this ahead of sending out a reminder email to members.

The format of the SGM on 8 November 2018 SGM would be:

- Restricted Action vote – voting slips would be required for those people voting on the night
- AFCW PLC EGM
- Break
- Stadium update
- Q&A for issues members wish to raise
- Opportunity to introduce the 2018 election candidates.

The DTB also agreed to hold an open meeting, with members, at a venue in Wimbledon.

The board confirmed that the AGM would be held on 13 December 2018<sup>2</sup>. Any members' resolutions would need to be submitted by noon on 15 November 2018 and submitted in accordance with Rule 23 of the Dons Trust's Constitution.

The DTB noted the changes to the timetable of the DT election, with the deadline for nominations of 13 October 2018 being put back. This was as a result of an administrative oversight which had resulted in the papers calling for nominations not going out on time.

Mark thanked Mick and Erik for their input and they left the meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> See statement from the Dons Trust board dated 17 April 2018 for background - [www.afcwimbledon.co.uk/news/2018/april/statement-by-the-dons-trust-board](http://www.afcwimbledon.co.uk/news/2018/april/statement-by-the-dons-trust-board)

<sup>2</sup> This has subsequently been rescheduled for 20 December.

## **PART 2 – DTB ONLY**

### **7. Approval of September DTB Minutes**

Mark asked for approval of the minutes of the 12 September 2018 DTB meeting, to incorporate the comments from Jane and Erik.

Nigel commented that there was a misquote in the minutes, relating to a membership tool and clarified that an update would be given by November.

Tim also noticed a typo error. DT merchandise the badges would be £1,200 not £12,000.

The minutes were unanimously approved.

### **8. Working Group Updates**

Due to timing the DTB agreed to postpone all the items under this heading to the next meeting.

### **9. AOB**

#### **Logo update**

Mark reminded the DTB that in April they agreed to consult with the members on the revision of the AFC Wimbledon logo, even though it was minor, and suggested that a vote should take place at the upcoming AGM on the options.

Jane asked why the Club were not offering a roundel option, noting that the Club had advised the Trust to have a roundel as part of its logo so that the two logos would be synchronised.

**Action: Mark would ask the Club to give a choice of a roundel logo.**

#### **Remembrance Sunday**

Cormac and Terry would represent the DT at the Merton Remembrance Sunday Service.

The DTB agreed to have a Christmas Dinner to which the FCB would be invited.

#### **Kevin Rye**

The DTB agreed that Kevin Rye, who had been in touch recently, should be invited to attend and speak at a future Dons Trust Board meeting. Kevin had previously worked for Supporters Direct and now consults on how clubs engage with fans.

**Action: Invite Kevin Rye to a future DTB meeting**

## **Historians**

Tim and Cormac had met with John Lynch and David McKnight to discuss how the Club's historic memorabilia would be handled. Jane asked whether any progress had been made in drawing up a list of items, as had been requested previously, but it appears not.

**Action: Invite John Lynch to December's DTB meeting - Mark.**

## **Supporters Direct (SD)**

All DTB members were attending to other DT related business the following Wednesday so were unable to participate in the conference call with SD, to discuss different funding models. SD had been hoping to hear from the Trust about the Dons Draw and the We are Wimbledon Fund.

Mark brought to the attention of the DTB the SD questionnaire about the proposed sale of Wembley Stadium. Tim advised it was urgent and asked that it be put on the website the following day. Tim clarified that the survey was open to any supporter.

Tim advised the DTB that there had been extensive coverage in the media about betting and restrictions on betting companies advertising on TV and this would eventually affect the income earned by football.

Jane asked if anyone knew of someone who could be Haydon for the Junior Dons Christmas party as the date had been changed and was now confirmed as 9 December.

The next meeting would be on 12 November 2018.

The meeting concluded at 10.40pm.