

The Dons Trust Board (DTB)
Redacted minutes of meeting held at 7.30pm on 27 March 2019
The Cherry Red Records Stadium, President's Lounge

DTB members

Rob Crane (Vice Chair)
Mark Davis (Chair)
Colin Dipple
Roger Evans
Cormac van der Hoeven
Anna Kingsley
Hannah Kitcher
Jane Lonsdale
Luke Mackenzie (by phone)

In attendance

Erik Samuelson (Club CEO)
Joe Palmer (Club COO)
Mick Buckley
Terry Langford (Secretariat)

1. Introduction and apologies

Apologies had been received from David Growns, the Trust's secretary.

2. FCB Report

Health & Safety Audit

Rob asked what factors had caused us to fail (by a small margin) a recent health & safety audit. Joe advised that they were mixed but that the areas that needed work were not difficult to resolve. He had met with Bob Sherwood, our part time Health and Safety Officer, and they had drawn up an action list. One of the areas was that they wanted to see a stronger connection on health and safety standards between the Academy and the Club. This had never been audited before.

CRM Integration

Mark asked for an update on the Dons Trust's integration into the customer relationship database (CRM). Joe advised that David Growns was looking at a separate solution for the Dons Trust.

Season Ticket Renewal

Joe advised that there had been an isolated issue with the season ticket renewal process where the volunteers had put a small batch of renewal forms into the wrong envelope. The correct protocol had subsequently been followed to comply with GDPR, with completion of the incident form. An email had been sent to those affected with instructions to complete the newly sent correct form and to return both the correct and incorrect form.

Racism incident at home match against Charlton Athletic

Jane asked for an update about an incident at the Charlton game and whether the club had heard from the police. She had received an email suggesting promoting the work of Kick it Out to Junior Dons. She asked whether the Club would be taking any action or relying on the police. Erik advised that David had heard nothing further from the police. Joe advised that the Club's action would

depend on what came back from the police but something would be done around the lines of Kick it Out.

Dave Anderson

Congratulations and best wishes were sent to Dave Anderson of Chertsey Town (a former AFC Wimbledon manager) on his achievements being one game away from a Wembley appearance in the FA vase final and success in the league.

Inclusive, Abusive Policies

Jane requested that thanks be sent to the Club for working on the initiative to promote reporting abusive incidents, and in particular David Charles for the collaborative work with the D&I group and for the timely production of the poster campaign. She reported there had been a number of positive comments (albeit also a negative one).

Milton Keynes mediation

Roger asked about the progress on mediation. Erik reported on the current position.

3. Stadium Update

Earth works Letter of Intent (LOI)

Following the stadium committee meeting on Monday, Mark reported that the LOI had been approved for the preliminary earth works. Mark explained that this was a stand-alone price for a stand-alone piece of work but it would eventually be incorporated into the overall works that are part of the contract.

Mark advised that Buckingham would be responsible for security once they were on site.

Mark advised that there was to be a meeting with Buckingham the following Friday to discuss ongoing work on costing the stadium. Erik had worked with Joe G to look at areas of savings and he was awaiting a response.

Planning Application Section 73

Congratulations were expressed on getting the Planning Section 73 passed. It was passed by seven – nil, with three who abstained/did not vote¹. The six week period for the application for a judicial review does not start until the council issues a determination of intent to award planning permission. There are also some amendments to the S106 agreement to be documented.

Finance

There was a discussion about financing the stadium, including debt and equity.

¹ Editor's note: the published minutes of the committee do not record the votes.

4. WISH

Mark reminded the DTB they had seen the members' resolution for the SGM agenda. Mark had sent them an email broadly advising them what the DTB would propose to do.

The DTB discussed the latest position, noting the recent social media posts, and Mark's recent programme article. Mark advised he had asked WISH to focus on setting up the charity and completing the inventory. Cormac noted he had spoken with John and David and had suggested they pause to listen and engage with fans further.

Following a conversation with David McKnight their concerns were mollified after they heard the DTB plans to have an open meeting after the SGM so the members could hear from WISH direct. Mark understood that the FCB were to have a meeting with them on 4 April to establish the ground rules. Mark suggested to them that they should be focusing on setting up the charity and completing the inventory.

ACTION: Mark to respond to WISH with full text of the SGM paper.

5. Abuse of staff

There was a discussion about how to respond to fans abusing non-football AFC Wimbledon staff, following an incident on social media.

Joe reported that a member of staff had found a post on a Facebook closed AFC Wimbledon page describing staff in the ticketing office using an extremely offensive derogatory term. The person who posted this was not a season ticket holder.

Jane said that as soon as she had seen it, she contacted the administrator of the AFC Wimbledon Fans page, which was a closed membership site. He noted that as soon as it had been reported he had contacted the poster to point out the offence and to ask them to amend their post. In the meantime, another moderator had removed the post, within 30 minutes of posting. Jane was advised that, as with most social media, they rely on people reporting and look to remove people from the closed group if they misbehave. Jane was concerned that it would be difficult to police everything on social media, particularly a post on a fan-run group that wasn't made direct onto the club social media channels.

Roger considered that the Club had a duty of care to its staff, especially as Joe had explained that the person felt they had been abused and was upset. As a club we were trying to be at the forefront of consideration to disabled people and this was abuse about people who were disabled.

Mark asked how corporate employers would deal with this issue. Luke said that his own employer would pull the staff member aside and support them. They would then phone the perpetrator to ask what the staff had done to upset them and how to resolve the problem. They would personalise the issue, explaining that the staff member had been upset and that an apology was appropriate.

Rob reported speaking to the head of a school where they had experience of a confrontational attitude from parents towards staff. If a parent posted abuse about staff then they would call them in and work to try and resolve it. Again, personalising the issue. He queried whether, if we were going to start policing fans, would we also have to start policing the sponsors.

Roger explained that when he was working in the NHS if a visitor made some comments to a nurse the ward sister would explain to them that such behaviour was not acceptable and if they did it again they would not be let onto the ward. They would also be asked to apologise to the nurse.

Cormac explained that in the school environment abuse had been present for a number of years. Rather than formalising the complaint, especially as it had been taken down within half an hour, a quiet word would be in order.

Mark felt that what Luke had described was a company policy and that the Club needed to have such a policy in order to respond to such incidents in a consistent fashion.

Hannah considered that a policy needed to be written about how abuse was dealt with when it was brought to the Club's attention along the lines of how Luke described, contacting the person and asking them to explain their problem, and apologise. Sanctions should be put in place for a repeat offence.

Erik suggested that, when DTB members were next in the office, a message of support to the staff would help them feel appreciated. He considered that the Club should contact the person who had made the abusive Facebook post. Joe advised that, although he was not a season ticket holder, the Club do have a record of him. Erik considered that the policy should be that, when we see abuse like that, the Club should speak to them and make sure they understand how much offence they have caused.

Joe considered that there needed to be a consistent approach and if the staff were abused they should know they were supported by the Dons Trust Board.

Actions:

- **Joe to draw up a proposed policy on how to deal with abuse.**

6. We are Wimbledon Fund (WAWF)

Jane reported on the meeting she had had with the fans who were volunteering to run WAWF, noting the way they now wished to be set up independently from the club but reporting into the Trust. The DTB discussed the operation of the current and new system.

It was agreed that WAWF should be invited to have a discussion with the Club and DTB to agree how they would operate, including a Service Level Agreement. We should require the existing contributions to continue to the DT and for WAWF to work closely with the DT on how the money would be used.

Action: Joe and Jane to meet the new WAWF representatives.

The DTB thanked Erik, Mick and Joe for attending, at which point they departed.

PART 2 – DTB ONLY

7. Minutes of 13 February

The minutes of the single-purpose stadium DTB meeting of 13 February were approved. Mark clarified that these minutes would not be published for reasons of commercial sensitivity.

8. Minutes of 27 February

Mark apologised for the delay and reported that these would follow.

9. Election Steering Group (ESG) Report (part 2)

Noting that the report covered an extensive range of issues, Mark proposed compiling a spreadsheet of DTB members' comments on the recommendations for review at the next meeting.

Jane asked for clarification of the proposed nomination rules. She asked who would and would not be able to nominate. Rob commented on the constitutional review that would be held shortly, which could include changing the length of term of a DTB member.

Hannah offered to draw up the spreadsheet and circulate the completed version in advance of the next board meeting. This would identify which issues could be agreed quickly and which ones needed to be discussed.

Action: Hannah to draw up spreadsheet and circulate the completed version a week before the next meeting.

10. Succession planning

Mark reported on arrangements associated with Erik's forthcoming retirement and proposals for Joe Palmer to replace him as CEO.

Mark recapped the findings from Joe's recent interview. The subjects covered were: how things had gone so far; governance; football; new stadium; marketing; finance; engagement; Foundation and women's football; leadership and personal development.

Joe was ambitious for the Club and sees success as a fan owned club achieving promotion to the Championship. The panel were convinced that Joe bought into

the fan ownership scenario and saw that as a key part of our brand. He does not consider it an option to sell out for the sake of reaching the Premiership.

We had already seen Joe's ability to generate ideas for the new stadium. He was the only person in the Club who had worked for another football club, and had knowledge of the football industry. He had a commitment to professionalising the Club and a strategy-led approach which he would agree with the DTB.

Mark summarised that the recommendation of the panel was that Joe should make a presentation to the DTB showing his long-term strategy.

Action: Mark to arrange a meeting for Joe to present his long term strategy to the DTB.

11. Appointment of Treasurer and Co-optee

The appointment of Mukesh Desai as Treasurer of the DT was ratified.

Rob asked whether it would be possible to see quarterly accounts (or statement of income and expenditure) for the DT. Mark undertook to ask Mukesh.

Mark reported on progress in recruiting a DTB co-optee to lead on financial oversight of the Club. Following discussion, it was agreed that the next step was for Colin, Jane and Mark to interview Edward Leek.

Mark explained that, if we followed the approach taken for a previous co-optee, the successful applicant would not need to stand for election at the end of the year but could be co-opted for a further year. This would be reliant on the DTB members in January agreeing to this.

12. AOB

DT Bank account

Currently Sean was the sole signatory on the DT bank account and it was proposed to change this to dual key signatories. Jane identified that it was important to ensure the new signatories could not be voted off the DTB at the same time. Anna, Colin, Mark and Roger had volunteered to be signatories.

SGM

Mark advised that the SGM papers had been finalised. He thanked Rob for the badge paper and Rob thanked Hannah for the help she had given him. Mark requested input from DTB members on current activities that they would like to raise. Mark would run through the main priorities the DTB had identified. Rob requested a few minutes to talk about the Constitution.

Action: Mark to compile 2019 priority discussion for SGM.

Jane asked Hannah to create a Webjam forum for the SGM and Hannah agreed to contact Carlo to video the meeting.

Action: Hannah to prepare Webjam and contact Carlo.

Junior Dons (JDs)

Jane thanked the volunteers who helped to send out the JDs' newsletter. She warned whoever was on the kiosk at the next two home matches that JDs would be handing in their voting slips for player of the year awards and would circulate guidance to those DTB members on duty as to what to do with them.

Kingstonian escrow account

Mark explained that there was an escrow account from which monies were periodically released to Kingstonian for specified purposes associated with their stadium. Currently the signatories were Erik, Mark Sean McLaughlin and Matt Breach. The signatories should change to Mark, Roger and Rob. *[Post-meeting note: the final list of signatories is Mark, Roger, Rob, Anna and Joe.]*

The Wider Interests of Football Limited (TWIOF)

Given that there was currently no Restricted Action preventing the sale of the new ground, Mark recommended that DTB nominees should represent the majority of the board. It was agreed that the TWIOF directors should be Colin, Mark, Erik and (following Erik's retirement) Joe.

The meeting concluded at 23.20