

**The Dons Trust Board (DTB)**  
**Minutes of Board meeting held at 7.30pm on 25 September 2019**  
**The Cherry Red Records Stadium, President's Lounge**

**DTB members**

Mark Davis (Chair)  
Rob Crane (Vice Chair)  
Colin Dipple  
Anna Kingsley  
Hannah Kitcher  
Ed Leek  
Jane Lonsdale  
Luke Mackenzie

**In attendance**

Joe Palmer (CEO)  
David Charles (Club Secretary)  
Ivor Heller (Club Commercial Director)  
Tom Rawcliffe (Club Financial  
Controller)  
David Grouns (DTB Secretary)  
Roger Edmonds-Brown (Secretariat)

**1. Introduction and apologies**

Apologies had been received from Cormac van der Hoeven, Roger Evans and Terry Langford (secretariat).  
Ivor Heller, David Charles and Tom Rawcliffe were welcomed to the meeting.

**2. Football**

This item had been overtaken by recent events involving Wally Downes.

**Manager Discussion**

As the discussion covered personnel issues, the majority of this discussion has been redacted from these minutes.

Joe said that earlier that day a decision had been made jointly by the Football Club Board and the Dons Trust Board to suspend Wally Downes following an FA charge of an alleged breach of its betting regulations in relation to a number of bets placed between 2013 and 2019.

Following discussion that included external expert HR and legal advice, Mark summarised that the **Board had expressed a variety of views and suggestions** surrounding the recent events concerning the FA charge of misconduct, and those members of the FCB present had listened to. It was agreed that members of the FCB would take back this feedback to inform their further consideration of this matter, and bring back a recommended way forward for DTB ratification.

**Action: The FCB to convene the following Monday to consider the Manager situation in the light of the DTB meeting of the 25 September, and any other that may arise, and then bring back a suggested plan to the DTB next week for ratification.**

**Football**

The meeting then discussed football performances. Joe said Wally has had no complaints about the level of support; he had been allowed to put a number of his requested initiatives in place; and he had said the club's early season poor

performance was due to individual errors; defensive frailties compared to last season; and the team not yet working together. Based on expected goals we should now be 16<sup>th</sup>. Although the morale was low following the Bristol Rovers defeat, Ivor felt that morale was repairable.

### **Blue and Yellow Club**

An invitation to Wally, as club manager, had been made by the Blue and Yellow Club to attend an upcoming event, and it was agreed that, under the circumstances, Iain McNay should be advised that alternative club officials would attend.

## **3. FCB Report**

### **Spreadsheets**

Rob asked if the spreadsheet regarding sponsors referred to in the report could be attached in future.

### **Merchandise**

The above-target July and August figures for merchandise were noted, although Tom said good sales were to be expected during pre-season.

### **Man of the Match**

Jane noted the increase in players and Ivor was congratulated on Scott Wagstaff's contribution at the Bristol Rovers Man of the Match presentation, given the disappointment at the result.

### **Crowdfunding**

Hannah asked whether there would be a countdown to help drive the final push for the crowdfunding campaign and Joe said that there would be, with an extension to 7 October. Jane questioned whether some of the previous suggestions, e.g. number of lower donations would be promoted.

## **4. Stadium Update**

The meeting discussed the stadium report that had previously been circulated by Mark and related issues. As the discussion covered a large number of ongoing topics that would negatively affect the Club's ability to negotiate if they were to become public, the majority of this discussion has been redacted from these minutes.

### **Planning and LB Merton**

The Section 73 planning application has been approved, and a minor Section 96A for the West Stand will soon be submitted which should be approved two to three weeks thereafter.

## **AOB**

### **Bury FC**

Andy Walsh had been lobbying the club to support Bury in its efforts to stay in the EFL. It was agreed that the club would support them if, like us, they had to start again in non-league.

## **Secondary Ticketing**

Hannah provided the groups' feedback from the 9 September SGM, along with her summary which noted that generally secondary ticketing should be separate from DT membership; concern that an array of membership offers would confuse people and could potentially dilute DT membership; not seeing benefit of paying more for DT membership if main benefit was ticket priority; acceptance that Trust ownership was unique selling point and it could be promoted better. The discussion also referred to the 2016/17 survey of DT members and non-members on this topic. It was agreed that this was a key initiative to be introduced during the lead up to our return to Plough Lane.

**Action: Hannah to share the feedback from the 9 September SGM, and Hannah's summary and the 2016/17 survey, with Joe and Klaudia. Then arrange for Hannah and Joe to meet with the Membership Working Group, and come back to the DTB with a proposal that could go out to consultation.**

Joe, Ivor, Tom and David C left the meeting

## **PART 2 – DTB ONLY**

### **5. Minutes**

The logging of phone calls between DT Board members was discussed. Jane noted that, as agreed previously, where decisions were made in the phonecalls they should be included in the next board minutes.

Pending agreement of a change to the Junior Dons membership AOB wording, and a note referring to a phone call regarding the temperature test on the Leasing.com trophy, the minutes of the DTB 28 August 2019 DTB were approved.

The board discussed the general style, length and content of minutes with differing views. It was agreed the minutes should be a balance between brevity and accountability.

### **6. Constitution Group Terms of Reference**

The Constitution Group's Terms of Reference (TOR) were reviewed, but the DTB regarded them only as aims, as they did not indicate how the work would be done. The Constitution Group would be requested to create a TOR, as was required by all Working Groups, and would be advised that a template TOR created by David was stored on the Google Drive.

**Action: Rob/David Grows to contact the Constitution Group, thank them for their input (Paper 4- CG TOR), and advise the Group that their paper needed to be turned into a TOR, of which an example was**

**stored on the Google Drive, and for this to be resubmitted to the DTB for consideration.**

The mention of the existence of a Working Group TOR template prompted a query by Luke as to what else had been agreed over the last few years as processes, because it would be useful to identify and store them all together, so as to assist DTB now and in the future.

**Action: Anna agreed to identify all SGM Members' Resolutions since 2002, and Rob suggested they be stored on the Trust website's Policies section.**

## **7. Milton Keynes**

It had been noticed that at the 7 September away game at Milton Keynes, some club officials had sat behind the dugouts in the ground and, at half time, had had a cup of tea in a separate room near the changing rooms and they were visited by the Milton Keynes CEO, who had provided assistance to AFC Wimbledon during his time at a previous club. Some DTB members had questioned whether this represented a change to an agreed but unpublished policy not to accept hospitality at their matches.

Following a discussion that presented a variety of views, it was agreed that the club should continue with the policy that it would not accept any hospitality at away games at Milton Keynes, and that club officials should sit with our fans. It was agreed, though, that the Club Secretary or a representative of club may need to be available on the day to liaise with Milton Keynes with ticket allocation issues and fulfil obligations with match officials.

**Action: Mark to inform Joe that the Board reaffirmed the policy that the officials of the club would not accept hospitality at away games at Milton Keynes. The Club Secretary or a representative of the club should, however, be available to fulfil obligations and resolve on-the-day issues for fans.**

**Mark also to ask Joe to ask the EFL for an update on mediation.**

## **8. Honorary Titles & Privileges**

It was agreed that an Honours Committee be set up. It was agreed with Luke that he would take the DTB lead on this Committee. Jane suggested that the committee could also consider nominations to recognise the work of volunteers.

**Action: Luke to be the DTB lead on the Honours Committee.**

## **9. Next steps with WiSH/History**

There had been two responses to the ad for a person to facilitate discussion on the club's history and honours. The DTB was happy for Jill Stratton to take the role.

## **10. Readout from AFCW PLC**

Mark referred to his notes of this meeting of the 5 September, and felt there was an opportunity to clarify the functions and links between the three boards.

**Action: Mark to outline the functions of the DTB, FCB and PLC board.**

## **11. Results of Members' Survey**

The Members' Survey showed 75% of responses to the temperature test were to retain the club's stance on the EFL Trophy.

**Action: DTB to instruct the FCB not to change its existing stance on the EFL Trophy.**

There were 1000 votes. It was noted that only 15 were paper votes which was insignificant. David said it does not make sense financially to mail out to members for temperature tests and surveys such as this. Mark suggested sending out comms on the cost of paper and posting to encourage people to use email.

**Action: David to communicate with DT Members that for future temperature tests, in view of the low number of paper responses, there would no longer be a paper alternative. They would be encouraged to opt-in to the online process, which will help to free up the Trust's resources, as 50% of the DTB subscription of a paper receiver was being spent on printing & postage.**

Luke said that a matchday experience consultation was being prepared ready to go out in a few weeks.

## **AOB**

### **FSA National Council**

The DTB agreed to vote for Robert Whittaker for the FSA National Council.

### **Wimbledon Remembrance Sunday**

Cormac to be asked if he wanted to attend. Hannah said that she would be available if necessary.

### **DTB 23 October**

It was agreed the next DTB would be 16 October as a number of board members were away on the originally scheduled date.

### **Wonderkid**

Jane said that a date of the 22 Feb had been agreed for Women at the Game, and 18 January for the nominated Kick it Out game. There still was not a Wonderkid date from Joe.

### **Bi-monthly phone board**

The next conference call of the bi-monthly phone board was agreed to be 9 October.

The meeting concluded at 11.20pm.

Signed on behalf of the DT Board.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Davis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "M" and "D".

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Mark Davis, Chair