

**Dons Trust Board (DTB)**  
**Minutes of a board meeting held virtually**  
**at 7.30pm on 16 June 2021**

**DTB members**

Jane Lonsdale (Co Chair)  
Xavier Wiggins (Co Chair)  
Niall Couper  
Tim Hillyer  
Hannah Kitcher  
Edward Leek  
Luke Mackenzie  
Graham Stacey  
Charlie Talbot (Vice Chair)

**In attendance**

David Growns (DTB Secretary)  
Michele Little (DTB Treasurer)  
Roger Edmonds-Brown (Minutes)  
Matt Stockbridge (Summariser)

1. **Introduction**

**Apologies**

There were no apologies received.

**Protocols**

Jane raised the following points:

- During the meeting, comments should be made using the Teams raised-hand feature, as comments in the chat bar would not be picked up in the minutes.
- Edward had covered the departure of Tom Rawcliffe in an interim arrangement, and was thanked for stepping up into this role. Tom Mak had now started as the new Financial Controller, and Edward had returned as a DTB member. The conflict of interest arrangements imposed by the Board could now be discarded.
- Due to the new Board structure, Joe now reported operationally to the PLC Board, and so this was the first DTB that Joe would not be attending. The minutes of the PLC Board would act as the read-out for the DTB. The CEO report to the PLC Board which had been circulated with this meeting's papers, would also be discussed.
- Xavier was congratulated on the award of a British Empire Medal in The Queen's Birthday Honours List 2021, the citation stating 'for services to the community in South West London during Covid-19'.
- The Board was reminded not to do any formal business on WhatsApp, but instead to use email, so that, from a governance perspective, a proper record existed.

## 2. **Minutes**

The process problems which had caused a delay in the production of the May DTB minutes had now been resolved, and they should now be completed and then circulated for comment.

## 3. **PLC Update**

### **PLC Board 10 June 2021**

The recent PLC Board meeting was the first where Joe reported to the PLC Board rather than to the DTB. Included in the PLC Board papers was the CEO report to the PLC. Five members of the DTB, who are directors on the PLC, had been present at the PLC Board meeting.

### **Comments on the PLC Board meeting**

- Xavier said that at the meeting Hannah had pointed to the Academy Report as a good example of a departmental report, and that it could be replicated by Joe's other departments. After the meeting, Nick had put some thoughts into writing, and the general feeling was that the Board members needed more detail, and to probe deeper on issues. Department leads could be brought in for more in-depth information on, for example, commercial, finance, etc. It was acknowledged that this had been the first meeting and it would take a little while to settle into business as usual. Xavier had agreed to develop a possible structure for Joe's report, and he asked for DTB member feedback so as to assist him.
- Jane said that as a result of her request at the meeting, a comprehensive risk report covering the clubs key risks would be produced. During his time as a DTB member Roger Evans had done a high-level risk report as part of the stadium planning and delivery, and Iain McNay had asked him to replicate a similar structured report to cover the whole club.
- Jane noted that it had been agreed that the PLC Board meetings would be moved back a week to the third week of the month, so as to allow the Executive the time to create and collate the departmental reports to inform the CEO's report . Jane and Xavier's 1:1s with Joe each Friday would continue.

## **CEO report to the PLC**

### **Season Ticket (ST) marketing campaign**

Graham asked if there was a concern that only 170 new fans had bought season tickets. Xavier said the **Season Ticket (ST) marketing campaign** had only just started for non-current people.

Xavier requested more detail on the ST marketing campaign as a whole, noting bus and train coverage did not appear to be addressed. Joe had stated that the target was 3,500 STs, and that he would be happy with 3,000 by the end of June. It was felt that the uncertainty of COVID restrictions lifting was causing some people to delay their commitment in buying. .

Jane and Xavier noted the discussion at the last 1:1 with Joe on the ST marketing campaign, noting the lack of diversity representation, and the word 'Greatest' in the copy could not be clearly seen. Jane added that generally professional volunteers should be involved early in the process of projects, in the same way that Luke was with fan engagement.

Hannah suggested that a fan's group could have been consulted on the campaign beforehand. The DTB noted the requirement for a clear brief and project plan for campaigns along with utilising professional volunteers.

**Action:** It was agreed to raise at the next PLC Board meeting how to get wider expertise earlier into campaigns and projects, with reference to the current ST campaign.

Hannah also stressed the added value of fans' focus groups, especially as they were the target audience.

Luke asked who was taking responsibility for this campaign

Although concerns had been raised with Joe about the outcomes of the ST marketing campaign there was wide agreement that the DTB now needed to have an understanding of the process.

**Action:** At the next 1:1, Jane and Xavier to ask Joe to review the current ST marketing plan and give a report for the next PLC Board.

## **Performance Measurement and Reporting**

The general question of how the club should be measuring success of people and processes was raised. On the pitch target setting was mentioned, and Xavier liked Norwich's target of being a 'top 26 club'. However, the impact of players' form and injuries on predictions was acknowledged.

The DTB discussed accountability and performance reporting noting the importance of performance reviews.

At the last 1:1 with Joe, Jane and Xavier met with the Club HR Consultant to introduce the performance reviews. The DTB had agreed at an earlier meeting that the process should start in June, and interviews of main reports completed by July. Joe was happy to do 360 degree reports straight away, but not with the performance reporting of other people until completion of the Strategy Review and three months after KPIs had been brought in. Jane saw the merit of starting immediately after the Boards/Staff/Volunteers event on 19 July, and Xavier, who on reflection thought the KPIs were not a requirement to undertake a review, but also favoured a start as soon as possible after the 19 July event. Michele agreed as the job descriptions had been in since this January, and the reviews could identify the KPIs. Jane said the PLC Board should view and manage the reports under its operational remit.

The importance of KPIs was discussed.

Xavier agreed that KPIs were not needed to carry out performance reviews, and suggested Joe should be asked to do 360s straight away, and the appraisal process informed by letter from the club HR consultant, started as soon after the 19 July as possible. Following feedback of a couple of weeks, review meetings would take place from about 4 August. KPIs may need to be updated following the Strategic Review, and then reviewed every 6 months. The meeting agreed with the process and the timings.

**Action:** At the next 1:1, Jane and Xavier to advise Joe of the Performance Review process and timings: 360s straight away, the appraisal process informed by letter to staff from Anita and started as soon after the Boards/Staff/Volunteers event on 19 July as possible, feedback of a couple of weeks, review meetings from about 4 August, KPIs may need to be updated following the Strategic Review, and then reviewed every 6 months.

## **Boards/Staff/Volunteers 19 July event**

Jane and Xavier said the 19 July would be an opportunity to introduce the Performance Reviews and KPIs, and provide a Strategy Review update. The purpose of the day would be to improve the Boards/Staff/Volunteers collaborative relationship, through having shared values, vision and behaviours.

### **4. Management Accounts**

Edward said there was no change to report on the management accounts from last month. Tom Mak was still working on the May management accounts.

Edward agreed to speak with Tim outside of the meeting on a merchandising matter.

Luke had been looking at outstanding stadium fit out work which may require expenditure. Edward said that there maybe a little more stadium capex budget than he had indicated last month.

### **5. Stadium Sponsorship voting outcomes**

Results of the DTB vote, as shown in Paper I, were as follows:

The DTB ask the club to negotiate for Reston Stadium as first option.

Yes: Jane, Xavier, Charlie, Tim, Niall, Edward, Graham, Luke

Only if push for all alternatives that don't have waste before agreeing this: Hannah

If Reston Stadium is not possible the DTB authorise the club to agree to The Reston Waste Stadium?

Yes: Jane, Xavier, Charlie, Tim, Niall, Edward, Graham, Hannah, Luke

The DTB authorise the club to go ahead with any Reston name (e.g. Reston Waste Stadium, Reston Waste Management Ltd Stadium.

Yes: Jane, Xavier, Charlie, Tim, Niall, Edward, Graham, Hannah, Luke

Supplementary note from Luke: 'I would therefore like to utilise this time to understand how much the club really generate, how much we give away – a box? etc. and also how it came to pass that the DTB looked like it had to make a decision in under 12 hours'.

Jane said that the latest indication was the 'Reston Stadium'.

## **6. Dons Trust Plus and VAT**

Jane advised that after the last DTB, it became apparent there was a VAT problem related to Dons Trust Plus membership and a potential compromise to the Ladies budget of £40k for next year, as agreed at the last DTB.

Tim had asked the opinion of Nick Igoe, Chief Financial Officer of Supporters Direct on a pro bono basis, and Nick had agreed with the reading of Michele and himself. This was that the £25 Dons Trust was for membership and so non-VAT rated, and the extra £20 to make up to the Dons Trust Plus/Stadium Card was for benefits and was VAT rated, and which the club should account for. Tim suggested that the club ring fence £15k from the Ladies budget, particularly as the extra income they had received, had not been budgeted for.

Michele, who had originally identified this issue, said she would work with Joe and the finance team so that the club would have proper accounting procedures in place when the DT finances were migrated.

(Tim added that the DTB should be looking at the success of the Stadium Card in September when all the sales were in, and there should be a target set to indicate success).

Michele and Tim were thanked for all their diligent work, and Tim was asked to thank Nick Igoe for such wise counsel.

As regards the Ladies Budget, Tim's suggestion that the club ring fence £15k towards the Ladies budget of £40k for the 2021-22 season was agreed to.

**Action:** Following a unanimous vote to firstly ask, and if not successful, instruct the club to ring fence £15k for next year's Ladies budget, Michele would draft an email for Jane and Xavier to check, and for Michele to then send to Joe.

## **7. Foundation Trustees**

Jane introduced the paper noting the new Chair of the Foundation was Jenny Scott, The Sackler Director of Dulwich Picture Gallery, who was due to start on 21 June. Jane noted the current vacancies noting they were due to Erik retiring (and the chair role, rightly, moving to an independent role) and Mick Buckley retiring. Separately Alex Mitchell has moved from

DT rep to being independent. Current DT trustees were Xavier Wiggins, Sophie Hosking and Nigel Higgs (whose term would be ending next year).

Both Jenny and the Foundation Board had identified its lack of diversity, and Niall said there was an opportunity to recruit a person from the fan base.

It was agreed that the DTB would like to appoint further Trustee(s) but this would be done in consultation with Jenny Scott on the future composition of the Board. Jane would follow up with Jenny.

## **8. DT Data Collection (D&I)**

Jane thanked John Stembridge, David and Hannah for the help on facilitating this item. Diversity data collection was something the DTB had wanted to do for a number of years but was waiting for the data to migrate to the club systems. However, as part of this year's membership renewal, diversity data would be collected to help understand the make-up of the DT membership and to enable identifying gaps. As the membership database would not be migrated into the club's database, it would be done on the DT database.

## **9. D&I working group minutes**

The D&I working group minutes were noted.

## **10. Fair Game**

Jane began by thanking Niall for leading on this item and all the work that he had already put in. As a result, both the club and DT had received widespread encouragement and plaudits. On 23 June there was an AFC Wimbledon-specific official presentation to the Fan-Led Review, the Government's review of football governance led by MP Tracey Crouch. Jane advised that the presenters, Niall, Xavier and Joe, should give a prepared and themed presentation, identifying beforehand the issues to be emphasised, such as 50+1. Fair Game had had a similar session as had the FSA.

Niall said that 15 clubs had signed up to Fair Game, 5 were expected feedback from, 3 were awaiting board decisions, and he was in conversation with another 20. He would be happy with a final total of 30 clubs. Fair Game was all based around the Fan-Led Review, and Fair Game workshops had identified 9 different issues around football governance. Fair Game had now a wide circle of influencers with 44

advisers including top football academics, Ashley Brown, FSA, and Alison McGovern, Shadow Minister for Sport.

Niall believed there should be an end to parachute payments with the money being redistributed to clubs like ours that are governed well with community ethos and engagement, financial sustainability and with inclusivity and equality as core beliefs. The potential money into the club could run into millions of pounds.

Niall added that he felt that legislation to bring in 50+1 was not feasible. Tim said that Niall had been successful in bringing in clubs to Fair Game, which would help in the drive for supporter engagement and supporter directors. Tim suggested that a slide deck of the key points be used at the 23 June session for maximum impact.

Xavier said that to justify a one club community involvement ethos, he had spoken to Joe about increasing the support from staff and players in the community such as visiting the DLAG hub.

To publicise further this important Fair Game initiative amongst fans, Niall would arrange to be interviewed by Mike Dunn to provide an update for the OS.

## **11. Membership database migration**

Michele and John Stembridge had met with Klaudia in March this year to agree a plan to plot the membership database migration. Michele had recently advised Klaudia that as the club's SecuTix database was still not fully functioning, Michele intended to recommend to the DTB to do this year's DT membership renewals on the DT database and Michele was now asking for the DTB to endorse a delay for the migration of up to a year. Luke was concerned that the DT should not accept a delay but should give direction to Joe to fix the problem now. Michele said regrettably SecuTix would not be working for this before the reminders for renewals had to be sent out.

David advised John and Klaudia to collaborate on a proper implementation plan, with parallel running and testing, and for it to be published and checked.

In response to a question from Xavier, Michele said a support contract with SecuTix would allow John to become more effective in his role. John and Michele's SecuTix queries have to be directed to Klaudia. Charlie was worried that there may not be a support contract from SecuTix, a system that the club had not yet fully tested with a fully ticketed stadium crowd.



Charlie said he had raised this lack of contractor support at earlier meetings, and that it was still a problem.

**Action:** At the next 1:1, Jane and Xavier to raise with Joe

1. the need for a support contract with SecuTix (if not already in place) .
2. SecuTix access for John Stembridge to allow him to be more effective in his job. (Hannah was asked to speak with Klaudia to ensure that John gets the access).
3. a review of the level of support that the club had in all critical club operations.

## 12. **Membership renewals**

Not covered at this meeting.

## 13. **Plan Wimbledon**

Tim had had to leave the meeting earlier, so this item would be presented at a future meeting, with Roger Hobkinson and Chris Brodie to be invited to attend.

## **AOB**

### **19 July Kick-off event**

Noted the event for club staff and DTB volunteers on 19 July to set vision, values and behaviours. As participants on the day, an outline only would be sent to DTB members, David and Michele by Jane and Xavier.

### **Pub naming**

Hannah said there had been over 1,000 suggestions from the fan base. Hannah would now send the suggestions along with their numbers to the DTB for consideration. A list would have to be agreed by tomorrow, and then sent by email to DT members to vote on two options by this Friday, with a club announcement this Saturday. With David not available, David Hall was suggested if Hannah needed help with Survey Monkey. The tight schedule was due to the pub fit out timetable.

**Action:** It was agreed the DTB review the suggestions and select the most common suggestions for a shortlist. Voting would be by DT members who had opted to receive email communications. Members could vote for up to two options, with the majority of the votes cast being the name of the pub.

### **Strategy Review**

Xavier said the results of the last set of questions would be published, and then set some more questions and start to assemble the output structure. At the next DTB, this structure and the strategic objectives could be presented, with the first draft out by the end of July if possible. Jane said that that this had been scheduled as a Q1 task, and asked if more support was needed. Xavier would talk with Niall, Hannah and Tim, and work out in the following week if extra resource should be sought.

### **PLC Board SharePoint**

David and David Charles were setting up a SharePoint site for the PLC Board and the suggestion was that the DTB should have access as well.

Jane noted the work to further define the roles and responsibilities of the boards as part of the governance review. A Board Operating Framework would be created which included the Terms of Reference for the boards which would include lines of sight, feedback, memberships etc.

### **Player event**

Xavier noted the email that had been circulated noting the event Mark Robinson was holding for players and staff to meet people at the club to gain a broader understanding of the club. The event was to be hosted by Nick Robertson in his garden. Xavier noted that with the restrictions remaining the event would be postponed from the planned date of 26 June, and would now take place on a Sunday in September, perhaps at the training ground.

### **DTB Meetings**

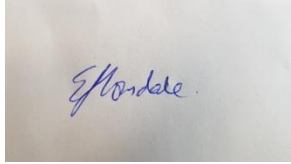
The sequencing of DTB and PLC meetings needed to be considered further but they currently fell with DTB and then PLC.

A decision on the sequencing of the meetings of the DTB with the PLC Board would be made after a number of meetings.

### **Smart Survey**

This was an alternative to Survey Monkey that David was working on, and he asked members of the DTB to respond to the trial messages that he would be sending to them.

The meeting concluded at 10.40 pm.

A small rectangular image showing a handwritten signature in blue ink on a light-colored piece of paper. The signature appears to be "E. Bondale".

Signed on behalf of the DT Board