

Dons Trust Board (DTB)

Minutes of board meeting held at 7.30pm on 20 October, 2021

Meeting was held virtually and recorded via Microsoft Teams

DTB members

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

In attendance

Michele Little (DT Treasurer)

David Growns (Secretary)
Matt Stockbridge (Comms)
Conor Daly (Minutes)

1. Introduction and apologies

No apologies.

Tim declared an interest in regard to his involvement with WiSH.

2. Minutes

Agreed that:-

- (a) Minutes of the DTB meeting on 18 August 2021 be confirmed, subject to appropriate redactions;
- (b) Noted a delay with the September 2021 minutes and agreed the Secretary would follow up with the minute taker; and
- (c) Board members would in future have 7 days to suggest amendments to circulated minutes, following which the minutes would be deemed to be agreed.

3. '1 to 1'/SLT Notes

(a) Consideration and discussion took place on the recent CEO '1 to 1' updates including on ticketing, resourcing, fan behaviour at games, away coach travel, stadium catering, first team, Arsenal game, financing, ladies' team, Seeds, 5 in 5 comms updates, kit contract, Donsmakers, Development Group, Stadium name, honours, WiSH museum, Strategy Survey, Meet the Manager and leases on site fronting Plough Lane. It was noted that a more robust procedure around procurement was now being 'firmed up'.

(b) The Board considered the CEO's summary report to the PLC Board on 21 October on the operational matters within the PLCB remit.

On the stadium capacity issue, in relation to the ability to accommodate 1400 away fans, noting the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) and police views, it was agreed this should be raised at the PLCB. It was further agreed that matter of timelines on specific projects and performance improvement objectives should be raised with the CEO.

A discussion on resourcing noted the increase in workload on some departments as the football group has grown, noting that payment processes for the Foundation would be moved to them and additional resource may be required.

On 'Her Game Too' noted that further work would be required at this stage before any sign-up. Jane would follow up with 'Her Game Too' to seek responses to questions following engagement with them in June 2021.

The Board also discussed the migration of DT data and agreed that the Membership Secretary should be invited to forward a paper to a future meeting with a proposal on the DT membership information/club migration issue.

4. **Ladies' GM**

The Board noted their urgent decision undertaken by email since the previous meeting (7 votes to 0 against) to confirm the Club's recommended candidate as Ladies' General Manager. It was reported however that the candidate had subsequently turned down the offer of employment and a further round of interviews for the role were now planned.

5. **Board Room Access Proposal**

The Board considered a proposal on board room access.

Following discussion, it was agreed that further consideration be given to a wider policy on such matters with Luke leading on policy formulation as part of the Honours Committee work.

6. **Junior Dons – Discontinuance of New Member Badges**

The Board agreed to:-

Confirm their urgent decision taken since the previous meeting, to the proposal from the Junior Dons Working Group to discontinue the membership pin badges to Junior Dons, noting the low stock and cost associated with them. The badges had not been commented on in the JDs survey earlier in the year and had never been mentioned within the Junior Dons 'offer'.

7. **Strategy Surveys**

The Board agreed to:-

Confirm their urgent decision taken since the previous meeting by email (by 7 votes to 2, Graham and Tim dissenting), to circulate the entire Strategy Survey questionnaire to members, including the 2 questions on investors.

On engaging further with members, discussion took place on sharing the survey outcomes with reference in the matchday programme, at the Kiosk and online, etc. Copy also to be sent to the CEO. Noted that close results would be considered by Focus Groups. Particular care would be required on some questions/responses in view of the forthcoming DTB elections with the view of the Election Steering Group to be sought on publishing responses in relation to election timetable.

The AGM would offer the opportunity for public member discussion on the survey results.

8. **Constitution Review**

Noted that FSA template document was now available. Tim to undertake 'point by point' mapping with current Constitution. Noted the Constitution Working Group (and their Terms of Reference) would be reviewed. Further paper to come to next DTB.

9. **Date and format of AGM**

Agreed that the AGM would take place on 16 December, dealing with the Board election results; the accounts (subject to final confirmation on the accounts being available) and Strategy Survey. The format was discussed noting the technical issues at the last SGM and the requirement of members to vote. Agreed to work with 9yrs podcast team to see if DTB members and members who were not in the room were able to speak.

Noted that, following David Grown's resignation as secretary, Luke would refresh the previous advert to help take forward the recruitment process.

10. **SLO Update**

The Board considered the work undertaken on creating role profiles and adverts for Supporter Liaison Officers and a recommendation to recruit a new Chief SLO (Supporter Liaison Officer) and separate Home and Away SLOs (voluntary roles). The DTB thanked SD Europe for their help.

It was:-

Agreed unanimously to go out to recruit via advert with interviews to be carried out by Jane Lonsdale, Kevin Rye (from Think Fan Engagement, who led the work on creating the role) and Mandy Bynon (as current Deputy SLO). Due to the close working relationship, the club's Chief Safety Officer would also need to meet with appointable candidates.

11. **Treasurer Update**

The Board noted the Treasurer's update providing details of the draft year end accounts to June 2021 and the management accounts to September 2021.

12. **Investor – Next Steps**

Xavier Wiggins took the Chair for part of this item.

Charlie reported on discussions that had continued on outline parameters of any possible agreement. Discussion took place on potential timelines for any required member engagement. Noted the DTB would need to meet an investor before being able to recommend them to members.

The Board were informed that discussions also continued at the Finance Committee on debt refinancing post-April that included options were the investment not received.

Discussion took place on PLC Articles and noted that these may require reconsideration pending outcome of investor discussions.

13. **Meeting between Club Staff and 9yrs Podcast**

The Board noted details of a meeting between Club staff and the 9yrs podcast team.

14. **Handing Over Responsibilities**

Jane noted that following her advice to the Board in July of her intention not to stand during the current elections, her Board and Trust

responsibilities would need reassigning including Haydon's Page, JDs Xmas Party, D&I Working Group, Junior Dons, FSA Engagement, signatory for banking. It was agreed any Board members who wished to take on any of the roles should liaise with Jane for a handover.

15. **AOB**

(a) Xavier provided an update on progress of the ticketing review noting a plan to advertise for people to lead the review.

(b) Technical problems at the SGM to be followed up by David Grown and Stuart Deacons.

The meeting concluded at 11.30pm.