

Dons Trust Board (DTB)

Minutes of hybrid meeting held at Plough Lane and online at 6.30pm on
12 January 2023

DTB members

Kris Stewart (Chair)

Michele Little

Chris Philips

Graeme Price

Richard Shepherd

James Macdonald

Matt Lowndes

Kevin Rye

Mark Lewis

Freddy Flaxman (online)

In attendance

Martin Newton (Secretary)

1. Introduction

Kris welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes

(a) The minutes of the December meetings were unanimously approved subject to necessary redactions to be completed.

It was noted that the meeting summary had not been produced since July 2022, when Matt Stockbridge had stepped down from the comms role. The newsletter now was filling a void between formal minutes being produced. The MS&E group would be looking at how to expand membership via various forms of engagement and further work was needed in this area.

(b) On actions, the following was noted: -

Strategic Objectives Document – the Strategic Objectives needed to be further considered and adopted formally by members.

Directors and Executive Boxes – no further update.

Membership Secretary – noted that Stephen Godfrey was still working with John Stembridge on the transition aspects. Graeme suggested that this be a topic for a later newsletter. It was unanimously agreed that the item be removed from the outstanding actions list.

WAWF and Dons Draw - noted that Michele had met with John Lynch. Work would take place with Michael Hamilton on possibilities for an academy revamp in relation to Dons Draw funds. Graeme reminded the meeting that WAWF had originally been set up to boost the playing budget and for additional expenditure not budgeted for, including matchday experience, such as the possible provision of a canopy behind the Movers Stand. WAWF was an unincorporated body separate from the DT and the club. Kevin offered to assist with any marketing around the Dons Draw and WAWF to re-promote these initiatives.

DLAG de-merger from Foundation and DT Charity Approach - it was unanimously agreed that the item be removed from the outstanding actions list.

WiSH – scrutiny of future proposals – noted that WiSH cuts across both the Oversight and Community theme groups. It was unanimously agreed that the item be removed from the outstanding actions list.

Closure of PLB – Kris undertook to progress the thanks due for administering the PLB. It was unanimously agreed that the item be removed from the outstanding actions list.

Options for future equity sales – noted that Graeme would now be responsible for oversight of the action.

Annual appraisals for board members – noted that this would be discussed at next Oversight theme group and at January awayday.

Project to locate and record previous DT policies and decisions – noted that it was likely Charlie Alpeira would update the Board on this in March.

Women’s Team 2023 Plan – noted that Danny Macklin’s forthcoming presentation to the PLCB would include an update on the women’s team, their sponsorship and games at Plough Lane. Unanimously agreed to carry forward the action as women’s games at Plough Lane.

DT Newsletter – noted that Mark had undertaken responsibility for the newsletter. Action closed.

B corp – noted that Graeme had undertaken responsibility for B corp. Action closed.

D & I - noted that Chris had undertaken responsibility for D & I. Action closed.

Master ‘Timeline’ - noted that Mark had undertaken responsibility for the timeline. Action closed.

3. **Ratification of Email Decisions**

The approved appointment of Graeme Price to the PLCB, under the urgent email decisions process, was endorsed.

4. **Strategic Direction**

Noted that the discussion relating to Strategic Direction, had taken place earlier in the meeting.

The Board adjourned at 7.48pm for a short break and reconvened at 8.00pm

5. **Board Theme Groups**

Kris commented that the expectation was that theme groups would meet on a monthly basis. He said that the groups would not have an equal workload and that there may be need to re-work memberships later to reflect that.

Community

Michele suggested that contact be made with ex-DTB members to see if they might be interested in being part of the theme group. It was noted that an invitation to continue should be extended to Isa Dabrowska who assists with Junior Dons (JDs).

James and Matt then agreed to share oversight of the JDs area.

Co-ordination work required around JDs included the Christmas party, programme content relating to birthdays, making sure JDs receive birthday and Christmas cards and that new joiners get their gifts.

Kevin undertook to oversee the FSA liaison.

Culture and Mission

Richard referred to 'the big step' - the DT were being asked by them to sign up to an initiative aimed at ceasing gambling adverts at football. He also spoke about the plans to ensure the DT mission and values are up to date. On volunteers, he commented on the possibility of having an end of season 'recognition' in some way to appropriate individuals. It was noted that Danny had introduced an initiative for staff.

Discussion continued and Kris referred to the need to get people 'signed up' to the culture and mission and the importance of appropriate induction was noted. Michele referred to good examples from Exeter of 'who we are, what we do, aspirations to be, what is the vision'. Matt then made reference to Union Berlin, with 40k members, and very well attended meetings in a large conference centre.

Chris made the point that volunteers should be seen as equivalent to paid employees and looked after to feel valued. In response to a question about whether volunteer liaison officers should be part of DT oversight, Kris said that this should be part of Danny's culture, mission and values remit.

Noted that teams groups could be established for communication internally.

Member Services and Engagement

James reported that a theme group meeting would be convened.

Discussion then took place on current administrator access to DT accounts such as twitter, Instagram, smart survey, survey monkey and mailchimp.

Michele referred to the requirement to reduce the list of 120 members still asking for paper copies of agendas, etc and said that she would forward that list to James.

Kris then referred to the proposed SGM to deal with restricted actions updates and noted that a possible date for this would be Sunday 26 March.

On membership integration with the club's ticketing system, the Board noted that this was a significant project to finalise, with the need for a project manager to progress the scheme in a timely fashion. Noted that only around 40% of current season ticket holders are members and so this would be a good opportunity to try to grow membership amongst the wider fan base.

Unanimously approved that the Board approve -

(a) a 'contingency' budget of up to £10,000 for the membership integration;

(b) that the project be implemented as soon as possible, whilst recognising that anyone purchasing season tickets between the expected commencement of sales in Spring 2023 and the

completion of the integration project would not be able to purchase a membership at that point.

Oversight

On the PA breakdown at the Newport game, Kris made the point that the DTB needed to understand its role in matters relating to the club's procurement and tender rules for works, and what assurances it required from the PLCB to give the Board confidence these were being adhered to. James considered it would be useful for an update on what works did go out to tender, etc. Chris said that the club were confident the current PA system is now as good as it can be.

James and Graeme left the meeting at 9.22pm

Kris referred to the monthly report Danny submitted to the PLCB and said that this would be shared with non-PLCB DTB members as soon as it is received, followed by a summary of that meeting, etc following the PLCB. Noted that PLCB minutes and actions are usually available a week after the meeting.

During further debate, it was noted that Danny is working through risk register matters and would feed this information back to the PLCB for assessment.

6. **Diversity and Inclusion**

Kris reminded new Board members of the importance of both the DTB and PLCB covering this item appropriately at each meeting to meet regulatory requirements.

7. **Any other Business**

Noted that further discussion would be needed on the balance between online and in person Board meetings. Discussion on arrangements for the February meeting would be held offline.

Meeting closed at 9.29pm