

Dons Trust Board (DTB)

Minutes of meeting at Plough Lane at 6.00pm on 12 April 2023

DTB members

Kris Stewart (Chair)

Michele Little

Chris Philips

Graeme Price

Richard Shepherd

James Macdonald

Mark Lewis

Matt Lowndes

In attendance

N/A

1. Introduction

Kris welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence from Kevin Rye and the Secretary.

2. Minutes

(a) The minutes of the March meeting were unanimously approved.

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

Strategic Objectives – Noted that joint boards 'awayday' on 21 April could be referenced at the SGM on 30 April.

Dons Draw – The Dons Draw revamp work was continuing with new graphics completed. The club marketing team had updated the website and plans were in place for a video including academy players.

Project to locate and record previous DT policies and decisions – Work was continuing to review work so far undertaken, with feedback then to be given to Charlie Alpera. Noted that consideration was needed on future plans to publicise DT approved policies and that this was worth mentioning at the SGM.

Junior Dons – To be discussed later in the evening.

ESG – Update later in evening and remove from actions list.

Policy on transfer negotiations and fee disclosure – Kris confirmed discussions were still to take place with Craig Cope, etc on the transfer negotiations policy.

Vacancy on DTB – No further action had been taken so far on the vacancy. The skills audit would be discussed later in the evening. Noted that FSA training provided advice on co-options and the DT governance review to be undertaken by them should identify some best practice for this. Discussion then took place on the possibility of a future sub-committee related to the 16 and upwards age group and Matt undertook to come back to the Board with some further thoughts on this.

Volunteers – Kris said that further consideration of the consistency of approach for volunteers was still needed but that volunteer matchday vouchers were being introduced next season.

DT memberships – James confirmed that work was still required in this area and would be submitted to a future meeting.

ProBoard alerts – Richard to organise alerts.

3. **Ratification of Email Decisions**

The Board unanimously endorsed the email decisions taken to (i) publish the ESG report and (ii) reappointment Nick Robertson to the PLCB, with this to be ratified by members.

Graeme spoke about the need for further consideration around the electoral process for minority shareholders to elect their representation on the PLCB and also the DTB members collective 'block vote' on that board in relation to this. Noted that the Nominations Committee should give thought to this.

4. **Strategic Direction**

On Strategic Direction, Kris referred to preparations for the joint boards 'awayday' on 21 April, with outputs identified as 'where do we want to be' and 'how do we get there'. Noted that there would be some individual work for board members to do in advance of the 'awayday'.

Discussion continued and Kris said that it would be useful to be able to say to members that a review of the strategic objectives would be before them every year at the AGM going forward.

The Board were then updated on the latest position on SGM voting.

5. **Board Theme Groups**

Culture and Mission

Vision, mission, values and aims – Richard updated the meeting, confirming that most of the recent discussions had been around the strategy 'awayday', as this would generate the vision, culture, mission, objectives and high-level targets needed.

On culture, discussions had taken place on bringing people 'on the journey together', with volunteer culture also considered. The Board then spoke about volunteer culture at DLAG and WiSH and compared that to volunteering in other club areas.

Richard then talked about gambling advertising and the Board noted that a paper would come to a future meeting on this. Noted that it is the intention of Spain, Belgium and Italy to ban related advertising, with the UK possibly next.

Kris confirmed that the club's staff would be required to undertake mandatory EDI training and noted the intention to ensure a positive culture is embedded throughout. Noted that DTB members were interested in also undertaking the EDI training.

Member Services and Engagement

James said a meeting took place with Isa, Anna and Jane and a press release to all members updating on Junior Dons would be sent out soon.

On ProBoards, James suggested that each DTB member undertake a monitoring role for ProBoards on a weekly rota basis. James said that he had a meeting with the ESG last week to discuss how elections would take place in the future.

Graeme suggested a review of licences held in respect of electronic communications & IT products & services. James undertook to review comms licences held.

On the kiosk, James referred to 'selling' the DT at games in various stadium locations. Michele was concerned about varying the location as it was good to have an area like the kiosk for people to come in, sometimes sit down, and ask questions. James confirmed that it was not the intention to dispense with the kiosk and that the purchase, for instance, of 2 pop-up banners at £30 each would enable different stadium locations to be identified at selected games.

Discussion continued and James asked the Board to note the requirement to fall into better practice around members with disabilities, with the club policy now to offer a free ticket for a companion, assistant or carer but not to discount the price of the disabled supporter.

The Board adjourned at 7.45pm and reconvened at 7.58pm

Oversight

On skills audit, Richard said the information had now been consolidated, with groupings in numerical order, and that recurring weaknesses included legal, HR, diversity, and management of workflow projects experience. Kris thanked Richard for this work and said that thought was now needed on addressing areas identified. Richard asked whether it would be prudent to identify people with particular skills that were needed and to encourage them to stand for election. James suggested that it was more appropriate to co-opt someone with a skill that was lacking on the Board after the election process.

Discussion continued and Graeme told the meeting that a refreshed induction pack for club staff and also playing staff was being produced and it was noted that diversity and inclusion would be covered.

A further issue covered related to comms improvements that were required.

At the conclusion of discussion, Kris asked that Board members come back to the next meeting with some views on addressing skills gaps identified by the audit.

The Board undertook a discussion about the issues of repayment of bond debt and equity.

Community

Noted that nothing further to report at the meeting.

6. D&I

In addition to matters raised earlier in the meeting, James referred to the intense D&I training he had undertaken as part of his employment, which he felt had been extremely beneficial.

AOB

Given recent performances and results, the Board discussed how it ensured the PLC Board conducted oversight of the football side, including the position of manager, role of Head of Football, the operational and strategic responsibilities and processes, and how the DT representatives on the PLC Board contribute to that oversight.

Meeting closed at 8.57pm