

Dons Trust Board

Redacted minutes of 9 November 2017 meeting

Meeting held at 7.30pm

Members

Matthew Breach (MB)

Mark Davis (MD)

Colin Dipple (CD)

David Growns (DG)

Nigel Higgs (NH)

Tim Hillyer (TH)

Jane Lonsdale (JL)

Sean McLaughlin (SM)

Roger Evans (RE)

Charles Williams (CW)

Invited

Cormac van der Hoeven (CvdH)

Erik Samuelson (ES)

Tom Brown (TB)

Hannah Kitcher (HK)

Andrew Howell (AH)

1. Foundation

PR opened his presentation with an explanation of his background and motivations for joining the AFCW Foundation as director. Having grown up in Portsmouth and working with Leyton Orient charity for >20 years he is a member of both the Portsmouth and Leyton Orient supporters trust, and is passionate about AFCW's vision as a fan owned club.

PR noted that he considers the most significant area of work the Foundation is involved with is education as funding is typically more accessible than for other types of project. The work is focussed in Merton, Kingston and Wandsworth.

The largest scheme is 'Primary Stars', for which the foundation receives around £40k/year from the Premier League to deliver. PW stressed that whilst the scheme had football at its core, there was a significant emphasis placed on other sports & subjects as well.

The Foundation also has a number of after school clubs. PR is currently trying to focus on a smaller number of schools at the moment rather than spreading the foundation too thinly as he believes that this will help build stronger relationships with those schools. The Foundation receives strong support from the FA's regional tutor in this area.

PR commented that the club has not had much of a presence in Merton schools for a while, and as such a number of private football schools have got involved making it harder for us to break back into the borough. PR believes that having a strong link with Merton is very important for the foundation and the trust going forwards. The Foundation has a good working relationship with Tooting & Mitcham FC who take a number of the Merton sessions jointly.

At the moment the Foundation employs one full time admin staff, as well as two coaches who are on 25hrs/week. The remainder of the coaching is performed by 8-12 coaches on a more ad hoc basis. PR would like to increase the hours given to a smaller group of coaches in order to deliver a more consistent quality to the local schools who are involved.

Recently the Foundation has worked with Clarion (Housing Association), running courses over 4 weeks alongside Tooting & Mitcham and working with 13-20 year olds to support a Friday night league alongside employability training.

PR commented that in South West London generally there was a good provision of pay-and-play pitches, and therefore there is typically not a significant level of need for this kind of provision.

PR explained that previously the Foundation has run work experience programmes over a 12 week period, however the success of these has been mixed in the past.

PR explained that the Foundation was doing more work with girls & women, which is being led by Emma O'Connor who he believes is very strong. Earlier today a girls' tournament was run with local schools in attendance. Emma also leads the Foundation's work in disability football.

PR noted that there was very limited funding around for health related projects. The major programme run is the walking football which is going well, and the Foundation is currently trying to affiliate the team with the London FA.

MD asked if the Foundation was looking at targeting obesity among our fan base. PR noted that when he was at Leyton Orient the foundation there ran a very successful project called 'Man vs Fat', in which men played in a league against each other with points also awarded for weight lost between games. He would be keen to run a similar programme here if funding was available.

PR commented that the current level of income the Foundation generates is fairly low, and he would like to significantly increase the amount of discretionary income available, noting that the majority of funding to date is linked to a specific project. PR noted that the EFL Trust funding is up for renewal in March 2018.

PR commented he is looking at best practice from other clubs for ideas, noting that Charlton had proved a good example of this recently when a charity match was run by the club, with the proceeds of around £100k being split evenly between the club and Foundation. Crystal Palace have also run a walk from 'Palace to Palace', starting at Buckingham Palace and finishing at Selhurst Park. He is additionally considering options around other possible income streams, including club dinners and corporate sponsorship.

PR commented that he was hopeful that the Foundation would be allocated a full time office at the new stadium. He also observed that he felt it was important for the Foundation to retain a presence in Kingston after the club completes its move back to Plough Lane.

TH stated that from his experience Portsmouth and Leyton Orient's foundations are seen as leading lights, and asked if we should be trying to emulate their success.

PR responded that at its peak in 2005 Leyton Orient's foundation was employing a full-time staff of 35/40 staff, and that it will take some time for AFCW to be able to emulate that success.

RE queried how the Foundation was able to properly prioritise its work given the large number of areas it was expected to cover. PR stated that currently the amount of work performed in relation to health was limited, with more of the focus on educational schemes. RE followed up by asking if it was

typically the case that schools would come looking for us, or if the foundation had to try and recruit schools. PR replied that typically it will be the foundation that makes the first move. The Foundation has written to all schools in the borough previously and then prioritised schemes in those schools which most strongly align with the Foundation's values. Typically schools receive the first 8 sessions for free, and then pay beyond that point if they are satisfied.

MD asked how the performance of the trust is measured, and if there are any KPIs which are tracked. PR explained that as part of the funding requirements for a number of the schemes the foundation is required to report back on a number of metrics, typically including the number of qualifications/sessions delivered or attendees. For example as part of the Clarion Houses project the foundation was required to deliver the programme to a minimum of 100 participants.

JL commented that she was pleased to see that the website had been recently updated, with the previous issues around bookings fixed. She then asked if the Foundation uses the 'Whole Game Solution' for safeguarding, and also if they are involved in delivering the National Citizenship Service (NCS).

PR responded that the contract for the NCS in London had been won by 'The Challenge', and therefore there is no scope for the Foundation to be involved at the moment. Safeguarding is monitored through the 'Single Central Record' system operated by the FA.

CW asked how we as a club currently choose which areas of fundraising to prioritise, with the Foundation and Club arguably competing for the same donors. PR replied that joint efforts between the club and Foundation have gone well, highlighting the minithon as an example - and noting Eileen Samuelson's efforts as particularly important in this instance.

TH asked if the Foundation was taking advantage of schemes currently well utilised by other charities, including Gift Aid and legacies? PR responded that the Foundation does currently take advantage of Gift Aid, however was looking into ways for making better use of this and legacies in the future.

JL asked if there had been any progress on arranging a foodbank collection at the ground. PR responded that a collection had been organised and would be advertised shortly.

The DTB thanked PR for his efforts, and PR left the meeting.

2. Stadium Update

ES provided an update to the DTB on the ongoing negotiations between the club, Galliards and the council.

3. FCB Report

ES notified the DTB that he is not expecting the PLC accounts to be ready prior to Tuesday, being the deadline for distribution for the PLC AGM. He commented that there had been delays.

He also noted that the disclosures required in the accounts would be impacted if the s106 is not signed prior to the financial statements being released.

TH asked if the EFL has a separate reporting deadline which we could potentially miss? ES responded that the EFL's deadlines were less onerous than Companies House. TH added that it is important that the DTB members are able to see the accounts.

ES commented that it would be useful from a cashflow perspective if the Charlton game was televised, which he believes is currently BT Sport's plan. TH asked if there is an order of precedence with Chelsea Ladies if there is a fixture clash. ES stated that we would try to avoid a clash if possible, although we do have precedence in this kind of instance.

ES provided an update on the recruitment of a volunteers liaison officer (VLO), noting that DG and DC were looking to meet with the candidate again shortly.

ES noted that the current expectation is that the EFL will charge us for the MK scoreboard issue. Jim Sturman has been lined up to put the club's case to the disciplinary board, if one is called.

CD observed that a number of volunteers at a recent game had not been supplied with badges and asked if this was a change in policy. ES replied that he didn't believe this should be the case.

JL mentioned that a DT member had not yet had a formal response to his query raised with the club previously. ES confirmed that he understood that David Charles has spoken with the member, and that he will ensure that he receives a formal response in due course.

ACTION: TB to notify Ivor of the club's obligations to Webjam. CD to contact David Charles to follow up on volunteers badges. ES to ensure the DT member receives a written response.

MD asked if the info@afcwmbleton.ltd.uk email address is monitored, as a number of recent emails had gone without response. NH added that he had also heard of emails to David Charles not being responded to recently. ES replied that the club receives a vast number of emails and does its best to reply to all of them, however he accepted that it was possible that some had slipped through the net. He noted that it would be useful to be told of any specific examples to understand in each case whether it was human or server error. People claiming that they had not received a reply from the club should also check their spam folders.

4. Safeguarding

JL noted she had now completed the Safeguarding training and suggested that other DTB members may find it useful. Separately she noted the training suggested all board and committee members should have the Safeguarding Officer's number.

ACTION: TB to obtain the link to the training from JL and circulate via Webjam.

5. Sponsorship

The next agenda item was to discuss the results of the **sponsorship survey** (completed by 346 DT members) in order to provide clear guidance to the FCB on what sponsorship options were acceptable for the naming rights for the New Stadium or any future shirt sponsors. Completing a debate started on the DTB's Webjam forum, based on the results of the survey the DTB concluded that in the search for a naming rights partner the FCB should exclude companies associated with arms manufacturing, tobacco products, pornography, payday loans or gambling together with any political or religious organisations. Also in line with the survey results, the DTB voted narrowly in favour of allowing the

search to include companies that manufacture alcoholic drinks (four votes to two with four abstentions).

6. DT Finances

SM presented the draft financial statements for the trust. JL asked if there was anything that the DTB should note specifically.

SM stated that whilst membership had increased the income had decreased slightly. This is due to the fact that the accounts are prepared on a cash basis, and therefore cash paid towards the end of the season in 15/16 for 16/17 memberships is not included in these accounts.

SM observed that the increase in expenses from £55k to £78k is a result of the Dons Draw money being donated to the academy.

The trust is still generating enough cash in order to be able to pay the club's loan principle with Barclays (via intercompany debts which are later capitalised).

TH asked if CW's co-option would be disclosed in the annual report. SM responded that it would not as it fell after the trust's year end.

The DTB noted it's thanks to SM for his time taken in preparing the accounts.

ACTIONS: TB to add draft accounts to Webjam

ES left the meeting

<Break>

7. DTB Agenda

MB noted that as there was limited time remaining the agenda sections relating to Data Protection and the DTB's 17/18 priority review would be moved to the December meeting.

ACTION: TB to book in time with DG and David Reeves to organise the transfer of DG's current IT responsibilities.

8. Member Engagement

CW presented the results of his paper on membership engagement. He noted that a discount in the club shops had proved a popular option, with this already being offered by Exeter Supporters Trust.

TH commented that he felt a discount in the club shops would be impractical to implement with the current till system, and that in his opinion this would currently not be possible to deliver.

TB noted that we should be wary of any potential corporation tax/VAT implications for the Trust if there is a perceived benefit being received in return for members' donations. MB responded that the VAT implications had been considered previously, although there was currently no known resolution to the issue.

JL commented that the trust currently sets its Junior Don age limit at 16 whereas the club offer reduced ticket prices to anyone younger than 18, in line with Full Time Education status that has changed in the last few years. She suggested that the age should be consistent across the club and trust at age 18.

MD noted that some current Junior Dons would be unable to vote in the DTB elections if the age for senior membership was increased.

NH remarked that the DT doesn't currently do enough to encourage non/lapsed members to join the Trust.

RE stated that it was important that the DTB put together a proper action plan to ensure that steps are taken.

ACTION: CW to compile an action plan on member engagement for discussion at the January DTB

9. Webjam

JL provided an update on the Trust Webjam, noting her thanks to the Webjam project team (originally David Gowns and David Reeves and more recently David Reeves and Hannah Kitcher) for their work over the past year. She added that it was encouraging to see increased engagement amongst the board recently on the board member site, and advised that Webjam have recently resolved the timeout issue which was previously causing some frustration.

She reminded colleagues of the original scope of the project and noted the progress so far with 575 members registering to the site of 2800 originally invited. She noted the plans for re-inviting members who had not responded to the original invitations along with inviting new members to use the site.

JL noted the annexes of her paper noting the engagement so far with the site, number of blogs etc and she reminded board members that regular content on the members site was key to the success of the site as recommended by all the comms experts who had provided advice both in the run up to the launch and since (including David Lloyd, Charles Williams, James Booth and Rob Crane).

TB commented that he believed that the Trust should not be limiting itself to Webjam at the expense of other platforms in its communications. He added that yesterday he had met with Shaf Mansour alongside HK, and that they had a very positive discussion on the issues with the current DTOS and how they could be improved.

CW expressed the need for more regular comms to members, potentially via email. JL noted that the original comms plan had noted that recent activities on webjam could be highlighted as part of a wider regular email update to members which might help to drive more members to the site.

JL noted that it is also important to engage our members who only receive Trust correspondence via post.

JL noted the project team were due to meet with the Webjam client manager for a regular update in December and the project team would collate issues / experiences to report back to them. **ACTIONS: All DTB members to add any issues they experience using Webjam into the thread on Webjam. TB to post results of website/social media discussion with Shaf onto the board Webjam and discuss next steps.**

10. Any Other Business

JL explained that members of the Trust board had been invited by Supporters Direct to visit other fan owned clubs and would circulate the invitation to board members. She also stated a need for the DTB be engaged with the discussion around a new logo for the Trust on Webjam. Additionally Simon Hood has offered to assist the DT with marketing matters.

MB added that John Stembridge (Membership Secretary) and Roger Dennis (Junior Dons) should be invited to a DTB meeting early in 2018.

RE confirmed that the final interviews for the COO position were being conducted on the 30th of November, and that the interview panel would include Sean, Roger, Matt and Erik.

ACTIONS: JL to circulate the invitation from Supporters Direct to meet other fan owned clubs

MD to recirculate the DT Organisation Paper. NH to organise an FCB/DTB drinks social.