

Dons Trust Board (DTB)

Minutes of meeting at Plough Lane at 6.00pm on 13 December 2023

DTB members

Michele Little (Chair)
Mark Lewis
Kevin Rye
Richard Shepherd
Ed Leek
James Macdonald (online)
Chris Philips
Angus Fox
Anuk Teasdale

In attendance

Martin Newton (Secretary)
George Jones (Elections item and Observer)
Tim Hillyer (Elections item only)
Hannah Kitcher (Observer)

1. Introduction

Michele welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies from Graeme Price.

4. Elections

George Jones introduced the ESG report on the recent uncontested elections. The Board noted the future savings that were likely to be made using 'Election Buddy'. George confirmed the ESG's view that a by-election to further increase elected Board numbers would not be appropriate. The FSA have provided their input and this will be reviewed in early 2024.

Tim Hillyer then spoke on methods of further reducing elections costs and in relation to the requirement for constitutional review to ensure rules were 'clear and obvious'. Tim referred to the draft work he had undertaken 18 months ago and the need to narrow down the changes that were necessary to around 10% of the constitution.

Further discussion then took place, during which Kevin suggested that the ESG build into their work a conclusion survey that would seek to identify reasons that potential candidates were put off from standing. The Board agreed to look at how this could be built into a wider survey.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Board then unanimously approved the recommendation within the report endorsing the current informal arrangement that the ESG operates completely independently of the DTB.

Tim Hillyer left the meeting at 6.29pm

2. **Minutes**

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

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

Strategic Objectives – Noted that a joint boards away day was planned for early 2024.

(Action – Michele to progress)

Project to locate and record previous DT policies and decisions – the draft was unanimously approved as adopted by the Board, for uploading to SharePoint and for the Secretary to continue updating. Item to be removed from outstanding actions.

(Action – Richard to put in SharePoint and Secretary to update as needed)

Skill Sets – to be updated and then co-option possibilities considered.

(Action – Richard to update skill sets)

3. **Ratification of Email Decisions**

None.

5. **Strategic Direction**

No more to report.

5. **Board Theme Groups**

To avoid duplication, actions under this item would not be added to the 'Outstanding Actions' paper – item 2(b) going forward

Community

Noted that Anuk had taken over as chair of the group. On diversity data, a meeting would take place next week with Anuk, Kris Stewart and Mandy Bynon. A D&I volunteer group had also now been re-established.

MS&E

Mark reported that the pop-up banners had now been completed for use. Angus was drafting a flowchart on service levels for responding on the website, etc. In response to a question from Edward on growing the membership, it was important to ensure that information about joining was available, and sent out, when the club sent out season ticket renewal information in 2024.

Chris asked about a review of the membership 'offer' and the possibility of different tiers of membership. Michele noted that this would require more work to be done on the ticketing system and would best be left to 24-25 as part of a wider review of membership. It was important to focus now on better promoting our current membership in time for March/April when the season ticket roll-out was likely to commence.

Culture and Mission and Oversight

On KPIs for the DTB and PLCB, Michele confirmed that these had been in process with Richard and Angus reviewing the drafts, with an update before both Boards in January. Noted that the theme groups needed to look at the KPI outputs as part of an annual review.

Noted that the draft Boardroom policy would be deferred until January. After some discussion, it was unanimously approved that an exception on Away games should be made for charges for minors. James raised the question of allocation for away clubs at Plough Lane and the need to limit this.

The draft matchday ticket policy would also be deferred until January. There was a need to formalise policy in this area and set out clear understandings.

Kevin introduced his debt consultation report. At the AGM, he would present a summary to members and frame what the next stages would be, with an active discussion and a members' vote in 2024. Michele said that the Finance Committee intended to work on what needed to be put forward to members as well as the website changes needed for bondholders to decide what they wanted to do with their bonds in 2025.

6. D&I

Nothing more to report, apart from noted above in Community theme group.

7. AOB

Under any other business, the Board noted an update from Michele on the recruitment of a new MD and that a public announcement would be made shortly, along with confirmation that a strong list of potential NEDs for the PLCB had been identified by the recruitment agency.

Meeting closed at 8.20 pm