



(Paper AGM1216)

Draft Minutes of the Special General Meeting of the Wimbledon Football Club Supporters' Society (the Dons Trust) held at The Wimbledon Brewery on 25th August 2016 at 7.30pm

1. Introduction of Matthew Spriegel

Dons Trust Chairman Matthew Breach (MB) opened the meeting by introducing co-opted board member Matthew Spriegel (MS) to members. MS has been co-opted to the end of 2016 and will focus on youth engagement.

2. Apologies

MB then moved on to give apologies for absence from DTB members Tom Adam and Nigel Higgs, as well as a number of DT members who were unable to attend the meeting.

3. Brief On New Stadium

ES gave an update on the new stadium and the process going forward after new London Mayor Sadiq Khan moved to reconsider the decision to call in the project and hand the decision back to Merton Council. He discussed the likely timeline for finalising Section 106 – legal agreements between the local authorities and developers that sets out obligations for developers covering areas such as transport and affordable housing. He noted that Section 106 was about 80% completed. Once Section 106 is completed, ES set out the timeline as to when the site could be cleared and building could commence. He warned on the potential for additional costs over time as the stadium is built, such as changes in inflation in the construction industry or because of unexpected delays. In the background, the interior design of the stadium needs completing while the tender process among construction companies is ongoing. Agreeing further financing for the stadium through a bank loan is also ongoing.

One DT member asked what could drive potential increased costs throughout the project? ES highlighted that the surveyors appointed by the club that specialise in determining the costs of the project have set out that annual inflation in the construction industry is around 10% and delays are likely to lead to increased costs for the club.

Another DT member asked how much the AFCW supporter base will need to raise for the new stadium? ES said the amount could vary depending on the estimates from the surveyor as well as other factors such as what is secured through the bank loan and whether there are delays to the project.

ES then set out background to the benefit of having an AFCW football stadium and the club in the local community, further information on the definition of Section 106 and the conditions precedent in the Chelsea deal to sell Kingsmeadow. Mark Davis (MD) highlighted

that the support from members through the Back In Two Ticks Campaign in 2015 led the DTB to authorise the Football Club Board to sell Kingsmeadow. The conditions precedent, MD added, protect AFCW from selling a stadium but not having a new stadium to go to.

4. Presentation – Webjam (DTB Member Jane Lonsdale)

JL delivered a presentation to members on Webjam, the exclusive online social network that allows members to be involved, be informed and be heard. The Webjam platform allows users to take part in polls, ask questions to board members and share ideas. The goal of Webjam is to improve communication between the DTB and DT members.

JL set out the the project timeline for Webjam and what information members will receive about signing up to Webjam. Members were given instructions on how to register to Webjam, how to obtain more information and the support available.

JL added that for those that do not have internet access, Webjam will be running in the DT kiosk at home games so members can view the platform then. Following the presentation, JL opened questions to the floor.

One member noted that they had not received an invitation to join Webjam. JL responded by highlighting that the platform is being rolled out gradually and reminded all to check their email spam and junk folders for the invitation, particularly AOL users.

Another member said that they had experienced a few glitches when navigating around Webjam. JL said those issues are being addressed with daily correspondence with the Webjam team. She reminded those members that are users to highlight any issues that they come across when using Webjam.

One member asked for further details around the encryption of Webjam. JL said she will discuss that further with Webjam and provide further details in due course.

5. Presentation – Ethical Sponsorship (DTB Member David Grows)

DG delivered a presentation to members on the need for a policy or set of guidelines covering ethical sponsorship. The reason why such guidelines are required is an overreliance on club ethos and that discussions around a new stadium sponsor are progressing. DG set out the obvious ‘no’s’ as to what potential sponsors the club wishes to avoid but also the potential grey areas when determining sponsors. DG invited an open discussion on a policy covering ethical sponsorship among members.

Prior to questions being opened up to the floor, MB highlighted that he will be considering members’ response to the presentation for the DTB survey working group. The survey working group will then formulate a questionnaire for members before drafting policy.

A question from a DT member that was emailed to JL and read aloud questioned whether the DTB should draft guidelines as opposed to rules so not to price the club out of attracting sponsors? The member also urged that any guidelines rules out companies that refuse to pay the London Living Wage, are active in tax evasion or are associated with MK. MB noted that this is something the survey group will take into consideration.

A member asked whether the policy or guidelines should cover secondary advertisers? MB noted that secondary advertising has not yet been considered in detail and the primary purpose of the policy or guidelines would be to cover primary advertisers and to be able to do due diligence on those advertisers. MB added that when the guidelines or policy is produced it would allow a 'get-out' clause should something be discovered with a potential advertiser that went against a specific policy or guideline.

In response to various questions surrounding what corporate sectors would be ruled out and what grey areas in a policy or set guidelines would exist, Sean McLaughlin highlighted that the DTB have discussed these areas in the past, with one example being PayDay loan companies. The DTB feels that the club should not be associated with such companies. MB added that any guidelines or policy would reflect the ethics of the club – no matter how much money is offered by a potential sponsor that falls foul of the guidelines or policy, that potential sponsor would be automatically ruled out. MB added that all major sponsorship deals are passed through the DTB before being executed by the club.

6. DTB Member Activities

MB updated members on how the the DTB is looking to refresh its strategy as its target of returning the club back to Merton is nearing fruition. He noted the survey working group will be working on a questionnaire to ask members what areas they would like the DTB to focus on going forward.

DG updated members on his role as the designated DTB member to assist and communicate with Kingstonian F.C. and the club's progress in becoming a community-based club owned by the fans.

Colin Dipple discussed the objectives of the members working group that he is in charge of. He highlighted where the club is attracting new members and where gaps occur in specific age brackets, particularly in the 18-35 age category. MS has been brought on to the working group and how the DT can give better value for money to its members.

MD discussed how he and Nigel Higgs are working on a paper setting out the future organisation of the DT, structure and how it can work alongside the FCB.

MB concluded by discussing other activities being pursued by DTB members.

7. A.O.B

One member asked about the progress of hiring a volunteer liaison officer. DG responded by setting how hiring for such a role has become an ongoing process but is progressing.

Another member asked about the response of the DTB to the EFL pursuing the 'Whole Game' solution. MB set out how the DTB has been supporting ES in his response to the EFL and that the DTB and the club are against the proposal. In response to questions around changes at Supporters Direct, DTB members noted that it is still ascertaining the impact of these changes. Further work is planned on creating a working group covering the constitution as well as publishing minutes of DTB meetings to a tighter schedule.

The SGM concluded at 9:28pm.