Dons Trust Board Meeting January 8th 2025

Agenda

1. Introduction, Apologies and Protocols
2. AFCW PLC Chair Presentation
3. Approval of previous Minutes (B1)
4. Ratification of Email Decisions
   A) None
5. Dons Trust Board Member Roles
   a) Chair
   b) Vice Chair
   c) Dons Trust PLC Representatives
   d) Dons Trust Women's Board Representative
   e) Dons Trust Charity Board Representatives (Foundation, WiSH)
6. Update on PLC Chair Recruitment
7. DTB Actions List and PLC Questions and Actions List
8. Plough Lane Bond Update and Dons Trust Finance Update
9. Board Theme Groups and KPIs (C1)
   1. Community -
   2. Member Services -
   3. Engagement -
   4. Fundraising - (D1)
   5. Culture and Mission and Oversight -
10. Risk Register (George)
11. Integrated Comms (Alex and James)
12. Member Led Revenue Generation (Simon)
13. Constitution Review Update (George)
14. ESG Report (Alex) (E1)
15. Working relationship with PLC (Alex) (F1)
16. Relationship between WiSH, DT and PLC (Simon)
17. AOB
    A) Timing of circulation of draft Agenda, so that Board members can comment ahead of papers being published, in case they have items to add
    B) Timing of circulation of Board Papers
    C) Timing of Board Meetings for 2025

In attendance Angus Fox, Graeme Price, Martin Drake, Alex Folkes, , Simon Hood, Hannah Kitcher, James Longhurst, Sean McLaughlin, Ian Robinson, George Jones, Reece Wheeler-Kelly, Michele Little and Ivor Heller

1. **Introduction, Apologies and Protocols**

The meeting began 6.10

Angus welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new year and welcomed the new board members. Earlier in the day the Board Induction Day took place where presentations were given by Mick Buckley (PLC Chair), Michele Little (PLC Vice Chair), James Woodroof (MD), Andrew Stead (Head of commercial), Elouise Gillete (Head of Hr), Laurie Hill (Head of Finance), James Wilcox (Head of Operations), Marc Jones (Head of brand, marketing and comms), Luke Stevens (Head of Ticketing) and Sophia Axelsson (Women's GM). Presentations regarding the club charities were circulated over email.

A confidential discussion began relating to an elected member taking up their role on the board.

2. **Approval of previous Minutes (B1)**

The minutes from the December board meeting were approved unanimously.

3. **Ratification of Email Decisions**

   A) None

4. **Dons Trust Board Member Roles**

a) Chair

A discussion took place on the role of Chair. Two board members put themselves forward for the role. It was agreed that each candidate should leave the room whilst the other makes a presentation and the board asks the candidate questions. George ran the process for this agenda item. Sean was the first to make a short presentation. Following this Angus made his presentation.

A vote then took place on the chair. With both candidates outside the room and not voting.

Following a vote Sean was elected as Chair by 4 votes to 2 with the candidates not voting and one abstention. It was agreed this change will come into effect at the conclusion of the meeting.

The board thanked Angus for everything he has done as chair.

b) Vice Chair

A discussion took place on the role of vice chair. It was agreed unanimously that Angus Fox would become vice chair.

c) Dons Trust PLC Representatives

A discussion then took place on how to fill the three Dons Trust vacancies. It was agreed unanimously that the representatives would be Sean, Angus and Graeme.

d) Dons Trust Women's Board Representative

A discussion then took place on the DTs representative on the Women's board. It was agreed unanimously Hannah will continue in this role.

e) Dons Trust Charity Board Representatives (Foundation, WiSH)

A discussion then took place on the DTs representatives on the Foundation and WiSHs boards.

It was agreed unanimously that Hannah will remain on the Foundation board.

It was agreed unanimously that Graeme will remain on the WiSH board.

5. Update on PLC Chair Recruitment

Angus provided an update on the recruitment of a new PLC Chair. The external candidate has met with Michele, James Woodroof and Craig Cope and it was hoped that he would meet the rest of the PLC shortly. Once that has happened a final interview panel will take place. The next stage will take place towards the end of January with the panel reporting to the next board meeting.

A discussion took place on who should be on the interview panel.

Angus took the action to progress this with the executive search company.

6. **DTB Actions List and PLC Questions and Actions List**

Angus then provided an update on the actions list. The updated included, the latest on the implementation of a procurement policy and that the PLC have started a strategy action committee to ensure implementation of the strategy document. An update was also given on the flood.

7. **Plough Lane Bond Update and Dons Trust Finance Update**

Michele provided an update on the Plough Lane bond repayments. A discussion took place on 2027 bond repayments as well as the longer-term bond holders. Michele said she will be writing to all bond holders offering them the option of donating or converting to equity.

Michele confirmed that we have now received over £200k in donations.

Michele informed the new board that she does quarterly DT management accounts. She added that the DTs revenue is going to be higher than normal due to the increase in membership. She then followed up on the topic James Woodroof had introduced earlier in the day regarding if the club should contribute towards the cost of hiring a member of staff to manage the membership offering. Alex informed the board this would likely cost around £35k pa. James then added that he will be writing a job description.

A lengthy discussion took place on the potential hiring of someone to run the membership. A discussion also took place on having a company paid to run future elections.

8. **Board Theme Groups and KPIs (C1)**
    a. **Community -**
    b. **Member Services -**
    c. **Engagement -**
    d. **Fundraising - (D1)**
    e. **Culture and Mission and Oversight -**

It was agreed that the theme groups would they be retitled as working groups.

A discussion took place on allowing non board members on the groups and it was unanimously agreed this should happen.

It was agreed to suspend the community working group. It is agreed to merge Member Services and Engagement and to rename the group Communications.

It is agreed the makeup of the working groups would be as follows:

Communications: Alex (Chair), James, Hannah, Martin, Ian
Culture Mission and Oversight: Angus (Chair), Ian, James, Michele,
Fundraising: Graeme (Chair), Simon, Ivor
Constitution: Sean, George,

Graeme provided an update from the latest fundraising meeting.

9. Risk Register (George)

George provided an update on the Risk Register, introducing it as the method developed by Richard Shepherd to monitor the likely risks facing the trust and potential mitigation. George answered questions on what is included in the document.

10. Integrated Comms (Alex and James)

James informed the board that he and Alex had a meeting with James Woodroof and Marc Jones earlier in the week. James added that he intended to develop a comms calendar and assign responsibility for different areas of comms to various board members.

It is agreed that Alex will write a list of the different methods of comms so people can volunteer to lead on different methods.

Alex then provided an update on the comms calendar and integrated comms with the club to help ensure there is clear messaging for both the club and DT.

An update was provided on the planned meet the club board event on 24th February.

James informed the board that the club staff are keen to simplify the membership offering as much as possible which would include the club benefits and trust rights. It was agreed that James will collect all the figures and report them back to the board for a vote online. James wants to bring to the members for a vote.

James suggested running a member's survey shortly to include this.

11. Member Led Revenue Generation (Simon)

Simon introduced a paper he has put together which is made up of revenue generating ideas that have been submitted by fans. Graeme then said there are potentially 4 or 5 good ideas in there. Sean added there are a lot of non-starters for various reasons. Simon added that their needs to be a space where supporters can submit ideas. George then informed the board that the Discord platform will have a digital suggestions box.

12. Constitution Review Update (George)

Sean provided an update on the constitution working group. He suggested kick starting it with a smaller group. Sean will speak to Nic Cave from the FSA and Dave Boyle. It was agreed to set it up as a formal working group.

13. ESG Report (Alex) (E1)

Alex suggested that the Comms group investigate hiring an external body to run the election and look at how to improve engagement. It was agreed to push this item to the February meeting.

14. Working relationship with PLC (Alex) (F1)

Graeme reminded the new board members of the MoU with club staff and reminded them of the procedure for speaking to club staff/PLC.

Angus informed the board the PLC meeting is next week so board members can expect to start receiving the papers on Monday.

James updated the board on the latest progress of the sponsorship policy.
It was agreed to add PLC Papers as a standing item for DT meetings.

A discussion took place on the procedure for raising issues at PLC meetings.

15. Relationship between WiSH, DT and PLC (Simon)

Simon passed on concerns raised by John Lynch from WiSH about their relationship with the PLC. Angus had already invited John to present at a future DTB meeting and the board agreed and additionally agreed that the Foundation and DLAG also be given the opportunity to present at a board meeting this year.

16. AOB

a. Timing of circulation of draft Agenda, so that Board members can comment ahead of papers being published, in case they have items to add

Sean asked George about the timing for distributing the agenda before the meeting, George responded it was currently being done the same way the previous secretaries did it however if the new board wanted to do it differently he would be more than happy to change it.

b. Timing of circulation of Board Papers

George asked the board for confirmation they wished to continue receiving papers within the current timeframe. The board confirmed this was the case.

c. Timing of Board Meetings for 2025

It is agreed George will send round a doodle poll for the date for the February meeting due to availability on the scheduled date.

Meeting Closed at 9.45

George Jones
Acting Secretary