Dons Trust Board Meeting, Wednesday 11th June 2025, Plough Lane

In attendance	Apologies	Also in Attendance
Sean McLaughlin (Chair)	Ian Robinson	George Jones (Secretary) (Online)
Angus Fox (Vice Chair)		Reece Wheeler-Kelly (Assistant Secretary)
Martin Drake		Michele Little (Treasurer) (Up to Item 10)
Alex Folkes		
Simon Hood		
Hannah Kitcher		
James Longhurst		
Graeme Price		

1. Introduction, Apologies and Protocols

The meeting began at 6.05. Apologies had been received from Ian (Work commitments). No board members had any additional conflicts to declare beyond those previously declared. Graeme had informed the board that he would join the meeting around 6.25pm. The board then congratulated everyone at the club, the players, football staff and non-football staff for the promotion and for the success of the ticketing system for Wembley. Sean confirmed an email would be sent to James W to offer congratulations to him and all the club staff.

2. Approval of previous minutes

The minutes from the May meeting were approved subject to some further redactions.

3. DTB Actions List and Club Board Action Monitoring

The board then began to work through the outstanding actions list, which included issues surrounding comms; finance; and instructions on how to vote at the recent club board meeting. A discussion took place on the establishment of a new calendar. Several items were not discussed due to forming separate agenda items later in the meeting. An update was then delivered on the reactivation of the old club website. It was agreed to continue to try to reactivate the site.

A discussion then took place on the action from April to determine which DTB member should be the ED&I lead to comply with EFL Regulations, and it was agreed that Angus would fill the role.

4. Ratification of email decisions

No decisions to ratify.

5. **AFC Wimbledon Budget Review**

The board then began to review the proposed AFCW budget for 25-26. Sean had previously circulated both the original draft from February and the most recent draft prepared in May.

A discussion then took place on how to fund the reliance on "football fortune" and additional donations, which had been included in the budget to enable the club to give the football management an improved playing budget. Sean explained that the DTB PLC representatives had been prepared to approve the draft budget, based on an initiative being led by Iain McNay to raise circa £300k in donations from a small group of fans.

After discussion, the draft budget was approved.

Graeme raised the question with the board as to whether the club should set a hard cap on the total number of season tickets, considering we have already sold around 5200 which is currently around the maximum other clubs allow based on percentage of capacity. Graeme informed the board that most clubs have caps around 60/70% of total maximum ticket sales, and that we were now in that range. It was noted that we would generate more revenue from selling on a match-to-match basis than from a season ticket, should all matches be sold. Graeme agreed that the issue of a cap was more likely to be a consideration for next season than this season, but that we need to be aware of it now. Graeme then added that it should be data led now we have the new e-ticketing exchange and making it easier to exchange tickets. Graeme informed the board that DLAG, the foundation and the academy are getting better at returning tickets which they are not allocating. A discussion then took place on the usage of season tickets and the level of "no shows", which are currently around 12% higher than other clubs. This had led to games that were "sold out" featuring banks of empty seats and has an impact on other match day revenues (bars; catering and the club shop). Graeme suggested writing a paper and having a discussion with members on how to cap season tickets and to ensure turn up rates improve. Graeme then noted that at Newcastle for example any season ticket holder who did not attend 10 games with the seat not being used could be called to a meeting with the club to discuss why they were missing games.

6. **Dons Trust Finance, Plough Lane Bonds, Debt and equity update**

Michele then introduced the March management accounts and a paper which had the update on Plough Lane bond holders' decisions made for bonds which are due between July and December 2025. Michele informed the board that work is continuing but she has some concerns re cashflow for the repayments that are due in 2027 which currently stands at £3.3m, and her belief was that we might have a lower rollover rate than in 2025. Michele confirmed that she would be looking at contacting the longer-term bond holders soon to see if any are willing to donate their bonds to free up as much capital as possible.

7. B - Corp

Graeme introduced a paper that had been circulated via email to look at the club securing B-Corp status. This has been a topic for an extended period of time which was not progressing due to previous obstacles in the club, including time pressures. Graeme informed the board that the DT would likely need to pay for the work required to be able to achieve the status and he was in the process of pulling together a proposal. Graeme explained there are a huge range of benefits including marketing as well as KPI setting. It also fits well into what it expected from the independent regulator. Graeme confirmed that this would require a change to the articles of association but this is not a major obstacle. Graeme added we may need to get a consultant in to help with some governance elements. Graeme then asked for permission to proceed with the work and place an advert for support on a volunteer basis. A discussion took place about club staff time. It was agreed to continue to progress it.

8. Club Marketing

Simon introduced the agenda item and explained that he had requested to ask the club to link up more with the DT to give a heads up when posts are required on both accounts. James L suggested getting Elliot involved in the process to help provide a DT perspective.

A discussion took place on the broken links selling membership on the club website and when membership would go on sale for the new season.

A discussion took place on the upcoming comms events to encourage more donations. It was noted that the campaign will begin the week following the meeting.

James informed the board that the club is keen to continue to grow the membership and general marketing list.

Simon asked about play-off promotion merchandise, The board were then informed the club utilized existing stock to avoid more costs and to maximize profit.

The fundraising working group discussion took place after this. Following that agenda item Michele left the meeting.

9. Women's team

This item took place as a closed session at the end of the meeting.

10. SGM Planning

George then informed the board that the provisional date for the summer SGM was August 20th (Following the meeting this changed to August 11th due to a clash with a Women's game). A discussion then took place on the timing of the SGM given the school holidays. A discussion took place on how to drive engagement at the SGM. It was agreed to proceed for the 20th (Now 11th). A discussion took place on the cost of improving the audio in Legends Lounge. It was agreed the provisional quote that the club had received was excessive, which was the view expressed by George.

James informed the board that he and George were working to host an online open meeting via Discord to discuss the strategy document with members. James added that once Elliot is up and running it will be his responsibility to improve engagement. The board gave their support for the event on Discord.

11. **Board Working Groups**

A. **Communications**

No further update.

B. **Constitution**

Sean raised the issue that had come up in the recent constitution working group that confirmed removing the proxies including the restricted actions would make the new constitution a restricted action. Sean added that it is the view of the group that you can't change half of it and not all of it. A discussion then took place on whether the vote on the new constitution should be run at the same time as a future 50.01% vote. Graeme suggested having them run at the same time. George explained his view was that the only way it could pass was doing it at the same time. James suggested that an alternative was changing the rest of the constitution, but not amending the wording re voting in the RAs and then change this wording when a vote on 50.01% happens. Sean expressed the view that the changes should be implemented independently of hte 50.01% vote. A further discussion took place on the timing of running multiples RAs and the human cost of it, and how this may interact with elections being held earlier in line with ESG recommendations. It was agreed that the Constitution Working Group should consider potential timings of separate RA votes, and James L offered to attend a future meeting to explain the time and involvement that was required for the 50.01% vote last year.

A discussion then took place on the potential timing of when the new constitution could be ready.

C. **Culture and mission and Oversight**

No further update.

D. **Fundraising**

This item took place before Michele left the meeting. Graeme advised that the fundraising for the £1.7m in the budget from football fortune and additional donations was a collective issue not just down to the club. A discussion took place on how to proceed with the fundraising and how to link it with the club. Graeme went onto explain that due to the time constraints on him he would like someone else to take it on with a comms focus at this stage. A discussion took place on how to promote things like the Dons Draw and We are Wimbledon fund. It was agreed to include it in the Newsletter.

It was agreed that the working group now needs to just be a board agenda item rather than a formal working group given the way the group was operating. This is because it is being covered as a standing item by both boards. It was noted to add Marc Jones to the comms group to ensure the integration on comms continues.

E. Youth Engagement and Advisory Board

George informed the board that following the permission given to them at the last board meeting a group is being established. The group will be originally made up of 14 people including the secretary and assistant secretary, as well as having a designated board member (James Longhurst). The group has a 60/40 gender split, has racial and LGBT diversity as well as having international representation. The group will have its first meeting on Monday 7th July online. The group will aim to have a social event on a regular basis to engage younger members.

14. Risk Register

George reminded the board of the risk register and confirmed that there are no changes.

15. Replacing Board Vacancy Update

George confirmed they are working through the skills audit and will aim to report back for the July meeting. But provisionally responded that ED&I was the obvious gap.

16 AOB

Graeme raised an issue from FairGame which related to code of governance and the 29 points that the regulator would like covered. The board needs to begin making steps to ensure we are regulator ready. Graeme added we are in a good place. Alex informed the board that the legislation is still going through committee and might change a couple of times before the final version. Alex informed the board that FairGame are looking to provide support to clubs to ensure they meet the regulatory requirements.

17. Closed Board Discussion

A closed session took place after George and Reece left the room.

In this session a discussion took place in relation to the ongoing secretariat situation where it was noted George and Reece had both been “Acting” since their initial appointments last year. It was agreed by the board that they had demonstrated by their activities since then that they were no longer ‘Acting’ and agreed that they should be made permanent Secretary and Assistant Secretary. The board also wanted to put on record their thanks to George and Reece for their continued contribution to the running of the activities of the Trust.

Meeting concluded at 10pm