Dons Trust Board Meeting, Wednesday 9th July 2025, Plough Lane

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

1. **Introduction, Apologies and Protocols**

The meeting began at 6.05pm with apologies received from Martin and Hannah. Alex also sent apologies but had hoped to join online at some point during the meeting, however he was unable to do so.

2. **Approval of previous minutes**

The June minutes were approved subject to some further redactions.

3. **DTB Actions List and Club Board Action Monitoring**

The board then worked through the outstanding actions list. This included discussion on the potential of a season ticket cap, B-Corp, external communications, the heritage website, and internal planning.

4. **Ratification of email decisions**

Club budget approved over email following its presentation at the June meeting.

5. **Club board meeting summary and questions**

A discussion took place reviewing the minutes from the recent club board meeting. The board were then informed the insurance premiums had increased by around 30% Following an update in the club board papers Ian then asked a question in relation to the policy relating to former MK players.

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

Michele confirmed that the finance report had been circulated. Michele went onto explain that work was ongoing in relation to building the website to help encourage people to swap their bonds for equity or to donate them. Michele went on to say that she expected the DT will likely have a small year end surplus.

The board were informed that going forward the board will receive a monthly totaliser of where the club is in relation to filling the £1.7m shortfall. A discussion took place on how to ensure the board are best informed on how much revenue is coming from the WaW fund.

7. Fundraising

Discussed as previous agenda item.

8. B - Corp

Graeme asked the board to consider when the club should start trying to obtain b-corp status when they are going to be changing the criteria to become harder (club should still be fine to obtain standard). It was agreed to keep working with the club on when would be the right time to do this work.

9. Discord

Reece then introduced the paper showing the success of the launch of the Dons Discord. Reece went onto explain that the purpose of this was to present the data and then have a discussion on what we want from the platform going forward, Reece explained all of the data that had been circulated to the board. Reece confirmed that since the announcement of the live meeting on Discord and the increased promotion, we have had over 110 new members on the platform. Reece then compared the Discord data to the ProBoards data which showed Discords is outperforming ProBoards on every data metric. Reece ended his report by saying that providing the platform continues to be pushed he has every confidence it will continue to succeed.

A discussion followed covering how to maximise the benefits of Discord whilst ensuring there is no burnout from board members. The board thanked George and Reece for all their efforts on the platform and agreed to continue to promote the platform to help drive engagement.

10. Women's team

Due to a conflict for the secretary, the assistant secretary minuted this item.

Sean informed the board he had been speaking to David G, and reminded the board of previous conversations around need for better communication between the women's board and DTB, with discussions of someone else potentially joining the women's board.

11. SGM Planning

George confirmed that the date of the SGM had been moved to Monday 11th August to accommodate the beginning of the football season, with this date being communicated to members a few weeks ago. The PLC will also have their SGM on the same night straight after the DT to allow for the votes on the sale of equity to John Green's consortium (Across the Pond Dons LLC). The plan is to have a similar set up to the previous meeting, with a more informal table set up and with Maddi Sweetman returning to interview a guest before the meeting as a warm up. The meeting will then be held, with the plan being to start at 7:30pm and finish by 9:30pm to allow the PLC meeting enough time. George suggested Aaron Paul as guest speaker. The board agreed with this suggestion. There had been no members' resolutions submitted yet, although some individuals had been in contact with George about writing some. The deadline for this is Monday 14th July. George will write the papers for the meeting by Wednesday 16th July and circulate to the board before publishing to members.

Michele said that the Club were thinking of creating a video with John Green about his investment to send out a week before the meeting and potentially to play on the night. Graeme added that he had seen lots of comments showing support for John's investment but asking questions about who the rest of the consortium were. James asked if it was possible to have John join the meeting live via video. George answered that a recent WiSH event had suffered a WIFI outage and needed to use personal hotspots to get through. The SGM would require more bandwidth than this meeting without also trying to have John join live, meaning the WIFI would be unlikely to cope. Sean added that having a pre-recorded video would also make it easier to manage a tight timetable for the meeting on the night.

James informed the board that he and George are looking to collect a list of members' resolutions that have been passed as there are lots that this board may be unaware of and that have not been followed by multiple boards over the years, setting a bad precedent as a member's organisation. Sean asked how difficult the task is, with George replying that it will be very time-consuming and would ideally have the help of an outside volunteer. George reminded the board of the Blue Book's existence, but that this also has gaps and is only updated to 2022, with the additional challenge of some early General Meetings having no available minutes. It was agreed for George to initially form a list of resolutions passed since the Blue Book's creation, as well as any known resolutions missing from the Blue Book, which can then be reviewed to decide next steps.

12. <u>Board Working Groups</u>

A. <u>Communications</u>

No update

B. <u>Constitution</u>

No meeting. The group have now received the new template from the FSA after FCA approval. The process of cross checking the new one in comparison to the old is now underway. The next meeting was scheduled to take place the day following the meeting. A discussion took place on the process of obtaining membership approval for the new constitution. It was agreed the board should be willing to pay for legal advice in relation to the classification of the vote and for assistance in the ongoing process.

C. Culture and mission and Oversight

Angus informed the board that a meeting had taken place. The most recent meeting was focused on planning the John Green announcement. Angus reminded the board they had to undertake the FSA training. There was also a discussion on having a calendar of statutory meetings to ensure that all our obligations are met. Angus reminded the board to complete the additional OADT which George had circulated information on.

D. Youth Engagement and Advisory Board

George informed the board that the first meeting took place on the Monday preceding the board meeting. The first meeting was a success and there were lots of positive feedback.

16. Replacing Board Vacancy Update

Geroge informed the board that following the skills audit, ED&I skills were highlighted as lacking currently. George suggested this could be solved via a co-option or casual vacancy. Co-option was agreed to be more appropriate. James suggested that, given short-term challenges, the board could also seek someone with corporate finance or comms experience to share the workload and provide insight. Sean asked if co-optees need to stand at the next election, with George replying that it was up to them. The term automatically finishes at the next AGM, but there was also nothing stopping a new board to extend the term of any co-optee to the following AGM upon arrival. Graeme mentioned that an extension for ED&I might be awkward, but for a corporate finance position this could be justified as a providing finite project support in line with short- and medium-term priorities. Graeme said that the prospect of providing time-limited and focused project support might be attractive to lots of skilled individuals who are usually put off the idea of standing for election to play a broader role on the board.

The board agreed to seek two co-options to fill the skills gaps for ED&I and corporate finance.

Note. It was later decided to use the casual vacancy route to appointing these board members.

17. Closed Board Discussion