Dons Trust Board Meeting, Wednesday 19th March 2025, Plough Lane

DTB In attendance	Apologies	Also in Attendance
Sean McLaughlin (Chair)	Simon Hood	George Jones (Secretary)
Angus Fox (Vice Chair)	Hannah Kitcher	Reece Wheeler-Kelly (Assistant Secretary)
Martin Drake	Graeme Price	Michele Little (Treasurer) (Left after Item 13)
Alex Folkes		John Lynch (WiSH) (Item 3)
James Longhurst		
Ian Robinson		

1. Introduction and Apologies

The meeting began at 6.00 with Sean thanking everyone for attending the meeting. Apologies had been received from Simon, Hannah and Graeme as well as Mick Buckley who had been scheduled to attend.

2. WiSH Charity Update

Sean welcomed John Lynch to the meeting. John thanked the board for the invite to the meeting and explained it was his first presentation to the DTB since November 2018 and expressed a desire to present more frequently going forward. John informed the board that WiSH had been recently named the best sporting history organisation in the UK by a major awards body. John added this is testament to hard work by his entire team. The board congratulated John on this achievement.

John then handed out a document pack to all the board members which included details on all of WiSH's active projects including the Club Memorial Area on Wimbledon common; the Greyhound Parade trail and benches; the Heritage trail across three local boroughs; the Speedway event on the 5th July which will be live streamed around the world and which is being entirely funded through previous speedway focused fundraising events; an exhibition in Wimbledon Quarter and the wider Wimbledon area during the tennis tournament which will be supported by DLAG; and the full digitisation of all the WiSH archives. John then explained the organisational structure of WiSH including specialists in grants and project management. WiSH currently has 52 volunteers. John then explained that we are one of only 18 out of the 92 EFL clubs who have a museum and are the only League 2 club to have one.

John gave a review of the recent events of the Batsford dinner and International Weekend which had both been successful events. John stated it is his intention to have future events to be pencilled in much further in advance to help grow them in future years. John then provided an update on some long term projects including litter picking and branding in the areas surrounding the stadium.

Sean congratulated John on the international weekend and asked John if he would be interested in the DT helping with the event in future years. John confirmed that he was happy for this to happen.

John then went on to explain how WiSH was collecting items for this digital museum, and what sort of items it is currently missing. He explained that at the start of the project most people were just lending WiSH items whereas now it has moved more to donations. John then explained that whilst there are potential monetization opportunities he would prefer the full digital archive to become a free museum for fans.

A discussion then took place on how to bring the heritage website back.

Angus asked John what WiSH needs from the DT. He responded by explaining they need help communicating with the fans and the club to ensure they continue to have trust and confidence of the club to help continue to grow given they have the widest remit of any similar organisation. James asked John to get in touch with Simon so we include WiSH content in the monthly DT newsletter.

John Lynch left the meeting at 6.35.

3. **Approval of previous Minutes**

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

4. **Ratification of email decisions**

The board formally ratified the decision taken over email earlier in the month to ratify the appointment of Fran Merrylees and James Macdonald to the Club Board as Non Exec Directors.

It was noted that the advert for the Legal NED role had gone out on the club website and Social Media. There had been a number of really strong candidates coming forward already. The board confirmed they were happy with the recruitment process. It was agreed that if there was not a suitable candidate identified then the Club Board should use an external agency.

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

The board then worked through the outstanding actions and oversight list.

It was confirmed that the board social would take place on Friday 4th April.

A discussion took place on the volunteers away day and it was agreed the DT would pay for one drink for each volunteer.

A discussion took place on papers being made available to the DTB from the Club board and how the board can use the block vote if the board have not had all of the papers made available.

6. **Debt and Equity Update (Including PLB)**

Michele provided an update on the latest process for a survey of Bond holders regarding appetite for either equity swaps or donations. There was also a discussion about possible options to sell the remaining equity. Sean asked Michele if there were any high value bond holders who we could speak to about equity options. Michele said there are a number of people who have £30k plus Bonds.

7. **Dons Trust Finance Update**

Discussed as previous item

8. **Sky TV Games**

James confirmed that the FSA were speaking to the EFL about the issues arising from the late changes of games, and explained that he believed their views are aligned with the views of the board regarding the four week window. James added that whilst it is a sensitive subject he would be supportive of going to the members to ask for their views. It was agreed that this was a topic that the DT should be seen to be leading on. It was agreed that James would put together a list of questions that could be shared with the club, with a view to surveying members. The board agreed that attempting to get the window extended to six weeks notice would be a good target.

Reece suggested a potential contact who could help gather information on rail price change dates.

It was agreed that the board should ask the club for more information regarding potential losses and gains for all the games that have been picked for TV, and in particular those where the kick-off time and/or date was changed.

Angus reminded the board it is important to raise the positives of the Sky investment.

9. **Women's Team and DT Contribution**

The minutes for this item were written by Reece Wheeler-Kelly due to a conflict for the secretary.

Sean informed the board that he would be joining Michele in a meeting with the Women's team on 23rd April to discuss next season, including finances.

James shared that he had spoken to a volunteer who was working with the women's team on creating a strategy and would be having a call with them soon to get an update on their progress. The objective is to get cost projections for the next three years to feed into a three-year vision which includes any investment that was needed. James said that the board should use that to feed into the strategy for the DT, and that it promises to be a well-researched piece of work.

Sean asked if the DT could afford to match the current funding again next year, and Michele replied that it should be possible assuming membership numbers remain broadly unchanged. Sean asked the,board to decide if it was happy to continue the funding next year subject to being happy with the outcome of the upcoming meeting, and there was agreement to continuing the funding level, subject to the meeting outcome.

James commented that he would like next season to be the last time funding comes from the DT rather than women's team being centrally funded as part of the club. Ian asked if our women's team were an outlier in their funding arrangement, with broad agreement that women's teams were usually within their respective clubs.

10. SGM Planning

George provided an update on the SGM Planning. He confirmed that the meeting has been scheduled for Monday 28th April (the Monday after the Men's final home game and Women's final game). The meeting will begin at 7pm in the Legends Lounge at Plough Lane. George confirmed he wanted to try out the new room and had several ideas on how to make the meeting a success. George asked the board to confirm that they were happy with the cost of £650+VAT to hire some extra equipment to ensure the meeting was a success. The board agreed that the club should to look into purchasing the kit rather than renting each time but approved the hire if the purchase did not happen. George asked if the club could investigate ensuring the stadium lights (not floodlights) were left on to provide a backdrop for the event. James Longhurst added that he had invited a guest speaker at the event. George suggested Jacqui Oatley would also be a good guest speaker.

11. Board Working Groups

A. Communications

The comms group has not had a meeting since the last full board meeting.

B. Constitution

Sean informed the board that the group was making good progress going through the existing constitution line by line.

Sean informed the board that Nic Cave had raised a question as to whether it had been made explicitly clear to fans, they were becoming shareholders in the Trust when they purchased a season ticket. The WG's view was that this had not been explicit enough. The board agreed that it needed to be made more explicit when season tickets went on sale shortly, and Sean agreed to raise with the club.

Sean also informed the board that the WG had highlighted the additional GDPR requirements where data is being held on under 18s, and that the WG was going to recommend that the Constitution be amended to so that only 18 and over were entitled to become DT members to mitigate any potential issues. Angus also noted that there were additional requirements and implications from the new online safety bill in respect of having under 18s on Discord.

A discussion then took place on the GDPR and online safety bill implications of having U18 members. It was agreed to make Discords for over 18s only.

A discussion then took place on the maximum age of the Junior Dons and creating and new 14-18 group which could have different benefits.

It was agreed that the constitution group would be allowed to make a recommendation and the board will work with the club to plan on a potential future offering.

It was agreed that Angus will share his GDPR review. It was also agreed Angus will work with George and Reece to undertake a risk assessment on GDPR and the online safety bill.

C. <u>Culture and Mission and Oversight</u>

Angus provided an update from the CM&O working group which had met on Monday where the terms of reference was agreed, Sean raised a number of minor issues with the TOR and they were changed.

Angus went over some of the actions which included undertaking a survey of Bond holders; and a plan to further distribute the MP briefing document on the football regulator and a public statement of support for the regulator. Alex offered to edit the existing document for each local MP and to make a public facing document. Sean suggested getting Alex Mitchell involved to help make contact with suitable MPs.

A discussion then it took place on a review of the existing KPIs. It was agreed Angus would review the existing KPIs, noting that some of the existing KPIs were already out of date, for example the membership target. Angus said it is important we end up with something we can publish. It was agreed it will be reviewed at the next full board meeting.

Angus informed the board that the learnings from the review of the 50.01 campaign need to be taken forward ahead of the potential to re-run the campaign in the future, and the board agreed.

A discussion took place on the potential timeline for any future RA vote. It was agreed that any potential vote needed to be held after the constitution review had been completed, and should not clash with the election. Given this it was agreed that it was most likely that any potential campaign would need to be run in early 2026. A discussion took place on how to communicate the cash flow issues facing the club in 2026. It was agreed to communicate that the immediate focus was on selling the available equity but that once the constitution review was finished the 50.01 vote would likely to be re-run. It was agreed that this communication could be done at the Spring SGM. It was agreed that James and Sean would work together to prepare the statement for the SGM.

It was suggested that there should be a joint boards day which Martin would lead. It was agreed Martin would share some potential dates with Michele to share with club board.

Angus confirmed that the membership officer job description had been signed off and will be actioned by the club.

D. Fundraising

Sean introduced a paper that had been prepared by Graeme and which Graeme was scheduled to present to the Club board the following day. It was agreed that Graeme should present the paper.

13. Update on Club Chair Recruitment

Angus provided an update on the chair of club recruitment. It was agreed that Comms will be out no later than the Spring SGM.

14. Risk Register

George introduced the risk register.

Sean raised an issue with access and George agreed to send him an Excel version of the document.

15. Replacing Board Vacancy Update

James suggested to the board that they hold some open meetings with potential future board members to help identify potential future board members. It was suggested that these could focus on various groups including 16-24s, disabled supporters and WOWSA. A discussion took place on how previous co-option recruitments had been run. It was agreed that these meetings should take place once the new skills audit which had been mentioned at the previous meeting was completed. It was agreed that George should complete the skills audit. It was agreed James would lead on organising the meetings.

16. DT Rotas

James informed the board that there are still gaps in the rota for the upcoming games. It was agreed the rota needs to be re-visited for next season.

17. Early Kickoff discussion

Discussed as an earlier item.

18. Secretariat Discussion

It was agreed to discuss at the next meeting.

19. AOB

A. Board Papers

Sean asked some questions on the layout of the minutes. It was agreed to adopt a different template going forward,

It was agreed that all future board meeting minutes will have a separate locked PDF for each document.

B. PLC Board Papers Questions

No questions for the club board this month. It was agreed to add a standing agenda item to DTB meetings to review the club board meetings.

C. Security Passes

A discussion took place on security passes for the board. It was agreed the board needs to have security passes.

D. Budget Document

A further discussion took place on sharing documents between boards.

E. Fair Game

Alex informed the board the Fair Game conference will take place at Plough Lane in May and they would like to know if anyone from the DTB would like to be on the panel. Anuk was on one of the panels last year.

Meeting closed at 9.28