Dons Trust Board Meeting, Wednesday 12th November 2025, Plough Lane

In attendance	Apologies	Also in Attendance
Angus Fox (Chair)	Martin Drake	George Jones (Secretary)
Graeme Price (Vice Chair)	Hannah Kitcher	Reece Wheeler-Kelly (Assistant Secretary) (Online)
Alex Folkes (Online)		Michele Little (Treasurer) (Online) (Specific Items)
James Longhurst		Chris Atkinson (Observer)
James Ledward		
David Rey		

1. **Introduction, Apologies, Protocols and Directors Interests**

The meeting began with Angus welcoming all. Apologies had been received from Martin and Hannah. Angus then welcomed Chris Atkinson to his first board meeting as an observer ahead of him officially joining the board at the conclusion of the December AGM. The Secretary confirmed Chris had signed all necessary paperwork, and the Owners and Directors Test (OADT) was underway.

2. **Election Update**

The Secretary informed the board that Simon Hood had declared a potential conflict of interest as Simon was under consideration for joining a consortium to buy another club.

This would automatically disqualify Simon from being on the board under EFL regulations. George was yet to hear back from Simon on his decision and would chase after the SGM. In the interim, Simon's onboarding process had been paused. The election rules are clear on how to handle filling the seat if Simon is unable to take up his elected position.

James Lo said that if Simon didn't take up his seat, the board would need to inform the members why this happened given the number of board members stepping down recently.

The board agreed that this represented a clear conflict, with the current course of action being correct.

The draft terms of reference (TOR) for the election review which is being led by Ed Mayo has been shared with the board.

The Secretary summarised the draft version of the ESG report. It contained another request for elections to be outsourced to a paid external body.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes for October were approved subject to further redactions.

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

The board reviewed its outstanding actions list.

Graeme informed the board that the independent football regulator is having a rethink on its timeframe for OADT results which would as they stand cause significant issues for the DT.

5. **Ratification of email decisions**
   a. **Agreed funding for the Women's team**

The board agreed to confirm payment of the previously agreed amount to the Women's team, being an extra £10,000 taking the total to £80,000.

6. **Club Board Meeting Summary and Questions**

Graeme introduced a paper answering questions submitted by DTB members ahead of the most recent Club Board meeting.

Items included the issues surrounding community appearances, training ground purchase.

7. **Debentures**

Angus began by reminding the board that they had previously agreed to support the club debenture policy. It was noted we had received just four complaints regarding the new policy. A discussion took place during which it was noted that only 8% of debentures holders buy a match ticket on average. For our record attendance against Port Vale, we only had 43 debenture tickets purchased, meaning over 500 were only released at a week's notice.

It was agreed that we should ask James W to get comms out ahead of the SGM or request permission to speak about it at the SGM.

8. **Dons Trust Finance, Plough Lane Bonds, Debt and Equity update**

Michele introduced the papers she had circulated which included the latest DT management accounts and the full draft DT statutory accounts.

The board thanked Michele for all her work. The board also thanked Laurie for all his work.

9. **50.01**

No update after a joint board meeting.

10. **SGM Planning**

George confirmed to the board the plan for the upcoming SGM. Craig Cope and Maddi Sweetman would be doing a Q&A session from 7pm with the main meeting beginning around 7.30, The constitution would be the main focus of discussion for around 45 minutes before the foundation begin their strategy presentation at 8.15 before the whole board go on stage for more general questions. During the strategy section of the meeting only J-Led, George and Dave Boyle would be on stage.

It was agreed Angus and J-Lo would prepare a finance slide to show at the start of the second half.

George will produce a FAQ for constitution questions for after the SGM.

11. **Constitution Update**

J-Led informed the board that most of the remaining issues were on member resolutions and member called SGMs. With regards to the proposed Resolutions Policy, The board agreed to change the proposed number of seconders required for a members' resolution to the 5% which is the existing threshold in the current Constitution.

A discussion took place on feedback from members regarding the number of members required for a member called meeting as the CWG had proposed changing from the current 10% or 20 whichever is higher to 5% or 300 whichever is lower. The board discussed keeping the current and proposed threshold of 10%. The board also discussed the proposed voting approach, which is a change from the current constitution. It was agreed that voting will open 2 weeks before a meeting and stay live for a window after the meeting.

The board place on record their thanks to J-Led, George, Dave and the members of the Constitution Working Group.

12. **EDI**

James Ledward informed the board there were no significant updates since the last meeting.

13. **Board Working Groups and KPIs**

a. Communications

No update.

b. Constitution

Discussed as previous item.

c. Youth Engagement and Advisory Board

No meeting this month, next meeting in December.

14. **DTB Experience**

J-Led introduced this topic which he had asked to be added to the agenda. There was discussion about the board and some members struggling with the persistent pressure they feel they are on the receiving end of and that at times comments feel unfair or unnecessary. There was an agreement that the board needs to do more to support people where this happens and call it out.

There was an agreement that the board should do more to communicate with the vast majority members not on WUP and Discord. Graeme suggested DTB appearing on the club podcast.

David Rey added that we should explain the impact their behaviour has to members and remind them we are well meaning volunteers. He suggests also explaining to members they are damaging the society with their behaviour.

Angus reminded the board of the Same old Wombles (SOW) podcast last year which discussed the mental health impact of being on the board.

George and J-Led are preparing a proposal to help with workload, burnout and succession planning.

16. **Women's Team**

George left the meeting at 19:22. Reece took the minutes.

Angus recapped the recent changes to the leadership of the women's team at board level and highlighted issues around funding and sponsorship.

James Lo explained that the team of dedicated volunteers, players, coaches and one full-time staff member have taken the team to a phenomenal league and position, but the financial reality means this is unsustainable without investment. However, being in that league presents opportunities.

Michele and Graeme talked about potential sponsorship opportunities.

James Lo informed the board of conversations he was having with potential investors in the women's team.

Graeme said that the women's team were a benefit to the community, the question was how to give them the best opportunity.

Angus raised that David Growns had previously said the Dons Trust need to provide the women with direction and this still hasn't happened. Angus asked if Tammy has a vision, and James Lo replied that the Dons Trust as the owner needs to provide it.

James Lo asked the board for permission to continue talking with potential investors in the women's team.

The board agreed that James Lo could continue talking to investors for the women's team. The board agreed to communicate this direction to the women's and club boards.

George rejoined the meeting at 20:10.

17. <u>AOB</u>

A. DT Rota

George reminded the board to regularly check and fill in the rota as there had been gaps at recent games. A discussion took place on how to ensure the kiosks was adequately staffed.

B. Walk 92

The DTB placed on record their congratulations for Xavier Wiggins who has completed his walk around all 92 league grounds. J-Lo suggested getting DLAG more involved in supporting Women's games which he said Xavier was supportive of.

C. Resolutions

A discussion took place on if there should be a policy with a maximum number of resolutions at meetings. It was agreed this isn't needed.

D. Fundraising

Graeme suggested increasing the cost of membership as discussed by previous boards. Graeme will prepare a paper to review in December.

E. Instagram

J-Led introduced the item explaining he wanted to make better use of the Instagram account and was working on some content ideas.

Closed at 20.55