

Member called SGM 16th September – Dons Trust board summary and next steps

Once again, the Dons Trust board would like to put on record our thanks to all the members and volunteers that participated in the meeting.

Particularly we want to mention:

- The Trust secretariat (Andrea and George)
- The FSA for joining the meeting online
- Stephen for checking the membership details
- Stuart and paid support from RG Jones for making sure the meeting could be seen and heard online
- Craig for manning the roving microphone
- Merton Council for allowing us flexibility to use the space
- Our AFC Wimbledon staff for resetting the venue for the following days event

The meeting was held in a positive spirit and was a testament to just how invested so many people are in making our democratic processes work as well as they can.

We may not all agree on all the detailed specifics, but whilst the formal processes of a resolution being debated and resolved ultimately requires a binary yes/no, that can obscure what was in reality an awful lot of common ground between everyone, regardless of where they ended up voting.

The breakdown in voting results is show in full below, in summary none of the five resolutions crossed the threshold to pass and become part of our practices. The votes of those who attended were mostly in favour of the motions but when proxy appointment votes were taken into account they were not carried. However, we are listening to members and think we will be able to swiftly take on the intent of most of the resolutions.

The chair's view

I think it's important for members to know why I, in consultation with my fellow board members, exercised my discretion in voting against the Resolutions for the proxy appointments I held as chair on behalf of members.

Listening to the expertise in the room, rewriting the constitution in an ad hoc fashion through resolutions like these does not address the bigger issues. These are, that our voting procedures need to be modernised for the online age and standing orders and related policies do not exist. These are things that can be swiftly addressed as part of the constitution review.

In the meeting I gave a firm commitment that during my term as chair I will do everything I can to ensure that we have this modernised constitution in place, including appropriate standing orders and policies.

The secretariat is aiming to be able to present its output at this year's AGM on 16th December (see below). Given this timing I felt it was best to deal with the suggestions as part of this constitution review rather than as ad hoc changes.

The proposers of the Resolutions have been invited to be part of this constitution review process along with other members who have expressed an interest.

Updating the constitution

What was clear in the meeting, and has been for several years to several boards, is that elements of our constitution need to be adapted to meet the modern age and the vibrant global democracy we now have.

The next steps are for the working group members to meet and organise to deliver that work in a timely manner.

The initial drafting will be done by our Secretary Andrea Knox (a 26+ year qualified commercial solicitor by trade) and George Jones our Assistant Secretary alongside this member working group. They will be basing the drafting on the current document recommended by the Football Supporters' Association (FSA) and asking the FSA for input in this drafting process.

As part of that work, we are planning to work with Dave Boyle (Wimbledon fan, Dons Trust member, ex-Supporters Direct CEO and a member of the Co-operatives UK Expert Governance Panel), to apply for grant funding to cover his professional advice to get the rules finalised and ready for member input and approval. Thanks to Dave for coming forward with this proposal and to the other members who have already offered support. Unlocking some funding will mean this happens far more quickly than relying solely on (our albeit excellent) volunteers.

Taking on board the spirit of the resolutions

Resolutions 1&2 were about the way in which voting online happens. In the last few years, members have often understood the appointment of a proxy as a vote. It was clear in the meeting that that has caused confusion and isn't currently clearly understood by many. We agree that we need to reflect this in the new rules and to allow a period of voting to happen after meetings on important issues.

We will be holding an online poll on the first of the proposed restricted action votes which means that members will be able to vote after the meeting on 28th October online.

Resolution 3 proposed that members resolutions should need the same threshold to pass as board resolutions. The board don't feel they can support this at the current time, but again there is a chance to look at this in more detail and learn from other examples in the constitution work, for example increasing the number of seconders might be a way to add an appropriate balance, but we will leave that to the working group to recommend.

Resolution 4 asked the board not to make binary recommendations to members on votes. Whilst the board cannot support implementing this in all cases we already committed to use recommendations sparingly and we will produce a clear policy on the criteria under which we will choose to make any recommendations in the future that will be shared with members.

Resolution 5 called for several things around hybrid meetings and voting. The voting elements will be picked up in the constitutional work outlined above. For the meetings we don't feel we can currently commit to 'fully hybrid' but we are strongly committed to make sure as many members can participate in meetings as possible online or in-person and have their say.

We will look to increase the number of online questions during our meetings and commit to publishing these online questions in full with the video recording of the meeting (subject to any legal issues). The recording of yesterday's meeting for example was available only a few hours after the end of the meeting (thanks again to George and Stuart).

Conclusion

We will have an update on the constitutional work in the next few weeks. We have an open meeting for members next Monday 23rd September at Plough Lane in the Legends Lounge from 6pm and a detailed programme of further events and meetings can be found on our website [here](#).

Come on You Dons.

SGM 16th September 2024 Voting Summary – From the secretariat

At the member initiated SGM on 16th September 2024:

- 1034 members out of 6,753 (15.3%) participated by attending in person, attending online or appointing a proxy (substitute) to attend the meeting on their behalf.
- There is a small (<10) number discrepancy whereby some members may not have stayed for the whole meeting, hence total voting numbers change slightly.
- 16 members who attempted to vote twice so the duplicated votes had to be sorted and eliminated.
- Not all members attending actually voted as some decided to abstain on certain of the five separate Resolution votes.

As a reminder to members, Resolutions need different percentages to pass depending on the type of Resolution as follows:

- Directions to board (also known as members resolutions) – Rule 23 - 2/3 majority of those voting
- Constitutional change – Rule 96 - 2/3 majority of those voting
- Other Resolutions – Rule 48 - simple majority of those voting

The results from the members who voted are as follows:

Resolution 1 (Constitution Change)

	For	Against	Abstain
Total	577	440	18
Paper proxy	1		
Online proxy	362	74	
Nominated proxy	1	2	
Chairs discretion		348 (-6*)	
Room	110	3	5
Online	110	16	13
*Corrections	-7	-3	
Total percentage in favour			56.73%
Percentage required to pass			2/3 of those voting
Outcome			Failed

Resolution 2 (Constitution Change)

	For	Against	Abstain
Total	565	448	17
Paper proxy	1		
Online proxy	355	78	
Nominated proxy	1	2	
Chairs discretion		351 (-6*)	
Room	108	4	7
Online	108	15	10
*Corrections	-8	-2	
Total percentage in favour			55.77%
Percentage required to pass			$\frac{2}{3}$ of those voting
Outcome			Failed

Resolution 3 (Constitution Change)

	For	Against	Abstain
Total	467	539	21
Paper proxy		1	
Online proxy	275	178	
Nominated proxy	1	3	
Chairs discretion		331 (-5*)	
Room	103	9	6
Online	94	22	15
*Corrections	-6	-5	
Total percentage in favour			46.42%
Percentage required to pass			$\frac{2}{3}$ of those voting
Outcome			Failed

Resolution 4 (Board Direction)

	For	Against	Abstain
Total	398	593	29
Paper proxy		1	
Online proxy	246	214	
Nominated proxy	1	2	
Chairs discretion		325 (-5*)	
Room	89	17	10
Online	67	40	19
*Corrections	-5	-6	
Total percentage in favour			40.16%
Percentage required to pass			$\frac{2}{3}$ of those voting
Outcome			Failed

Resolution 5 (Board Direction)

	For	Against	Abstain
Total	542	453	10
Paper proxy	1		
Online proxy	348	86	
Nominated proxy	1	2	
Chairs discretion		350 (-6*)	
Room	98	4	6
Online	102	13	4
*Corrections	-8	-2	
Total percentage in favour			54.40%
Percentage required to pass			$\frac{2}{3}$ of those voting
Outcome			Failed

* Double voting corrections