



THE
HAMLETTER
The Official
Newsletter of Dulwich Hamlet
Supporters' Trust
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**CHAIR'S MESSAGE –
EDDIE MURASZKO**

Welcome to the first Hamletter of the new season.

The close season saw major change at the club, with Craig Edwards and his coaching team departing after a disappointing second half of the season. Craig formed a strong bond with supporters, and was very generous with his time to us, giving two extensive and candid interviews for the Hamletter. He leaves with the good wishes of the majority of supporters and we wish him well in his new job at Leyton.

Gavin Rose has now taken over as manager, bringing a new look team with him. At the time of writing results have been mixed, but obviously we're all hoping that as the side settles down they can begin challenging for the promotion we're all striving for.

Off the field, last season ended on a more positive note for the Trust, with the first meeting between myself and club owner Nick McCormack, together with Jack Paine the club chairman. You can read a little more about the meeting opposite, but overall it was good to see that there is now at least a willingness on both sides to explore how we might work together, and the Trust appreciates the fact that there has been some shifting of previous positions.

Many thanks to those who attended the AGM in June or sent in proxy voting forms. Elsewhere in this issue you can read the summary of key points from the Chair's report. There are also features on the 100 Club fund passing the £15,000 mark, the latest on this year's local publicity campaign, and our side of the story regarding the naming of the main stand.

Here's hoping that this season is one during which the club progresses on the field whilst the Trust is able to play a fuller role off the field to help bring a change to the club's fortunes.

Thanks for your continued support,

Eddie

**EXPLORATORY MEETING HELD
BETWEEN CLUB AND DHST**

At around the turn of the year Jack Payne, the club Chairman, started putting out feelers for a meeting between the Trust and owner Nick McCormack. As we had always said we were willing to talk, we were delighted that there might be such a chance. At the 'Red Nose' game against Walton Casuals, the Trust suggested that we could raise money by selling the merchandise that we had spare ever since the shop was closed by the club in September 2008. The club agreed and the sale of hats and T-Shirts in particular went well allowing us to donate £60 to the cause and giving the fans some easier access to our supplies.

The goodwill generated helped lead to a meeting in April. It was an informal get-to-know you session where Nick McCormack covered a wide range of issues at the club, including its rising financial costs.

He pointed out that at this level unless a club has a 'sugar daddy' the only way to really improve the finances is to get more people through the gate, and it was agreed that this was one area where the two sides may be able to work together without getting embroiled in arguments about money and shares etc. By building trust between the sides, there might be room to talk about more substantive matters in due course. Nick also said he would consider giving an interview to the Hamletter - so watch this space.

The sides agreed to meet again after the summer break, and we are endeavouring to build on what, overall seemed a positive initial meeting.

SHARES ERROR CORRECTED

At the April meeting, Nick McCormack promised that the omission of the 'small' shareholders from the 2007 Companies House return was mistake that was being corrected.

This was something the Trust had written to the club about on two occasions and we are pleased to report that the 2009 return has indeed corrected this error. We have written to the club expressing our appreciation of this.

DHST Annual General Meeting - 25th June 2009

DHST's Annual General Meeting (AGM) took place on 25th June. As well as agreeing the minutes of the last meeting and technical changes to the constitution, reports were taken from the Chair, the Treasurer and the Secretary

Five people were elected to the Board uncontested, as that is fewer than the maximum number of elected representatives. Those elected are as follows - Eddie Muraszko (Chair), Andrew Tucker (Secretary), Adam Shahin (Treasurer), Lee Shailer and Mick O'Shaughnessy. Tony Squires and Guy Grater are co-optees to the Board.

Below is a summary of the Chair's report - focused on the four objectives the Trust has.

1) Overall Approach in 2008/9

- Steady continuation of routine activity
- Ownership and ground issues in Summer 2008 raised profile and interest
- Two extra recruits to the Board – Tony Squires and Andy Tucker

Focus is on four objectives - these are set out below, together with latest developments and plans in each.

2) Objective: A thriving Club

Short term:

- Monitoring developments and maintaining involvement on Football Committee.

Long term:

- Stable ownership, with healthy and transparent finances.

What's happened/ looking ahead

- Late 2008, efforts began to broker a meeting
- March 2009 – DHST used Comic Relief game to sell goods, contribute to the charity and raise goodwill
- April 2009, DHST Chair met Nick McCormack and Jack Payne
- Outcome was (1) verbal assurance that shares error was being corrected, (2) agreement to work together on areas of mutual interest, especially raising attendances, and (3) possible future interview with NM
- Offered £200 contribution to stand naming [but subsequently refused]

3) Objective: A thriving Trust

Short term:

- Grow 100 Club funds.
- Increase shareholding in Club.
- Membership up to 100.

Long term:

Invest the funds.
Place on Club Board.
Membership up to 30% of home gate

What's happened/ looking ahead

- Trust membership steady at 70
- 100 Club membership fell slightly, but not related to 1893 Club
- Money raised now over £15,000.
- Informed 100 Club members of position.
- Membership renewal is due in January, options need to be considered.

4) Objectives: Growing Support and Community Links

Short term:

- Promotional activity.
- Gates up to 400 average.
Community.

Long term:

Gates up to 500 average.
Strong and ongoing links with

What's happened/ looking ahead:

- Continued successful ad and promotional campaign in SE22 magazine.
- Attendances fell 29% to 224 – not helped by loss of two biggest home gates
- Community Day not possible at present
- Wrote to rail franchise bidders

DHST AGM 25th June 2009 - Continued

5) Objectives: A Secure Ground

Short term:

- Monitor & question Club, Kings and Southwark.
- Question club on Fisher ground-share.
- Seek grants for minor ground improvements.

Long term:

Club have secure freehold/ long term lease.
Groundshare arrangements clear.
Greendales run as Community Facility.

What's happened/ looking ahead

- May 2008. Freehold apparently acquired by DHPD Ltd – Director Eren Muduroglu.
- Security is given to Northfleet Ltd based in the Isle of Man.
- Monitoring the club's proposals for Greendales
- Offered club money for stand naming and help with grants

6) Conclusion

- Club appears to be in real financial difficulty.
- Relations have been poor but there may be signs of a fresh start.
- We will focus on uncontentious areas first
- Thereafter, our growing funds and the club's position mean there may be a chance to invest on acceptable terms
- The next two years will be crucial to the club's future.
- DHST is determined to play a positive role on behalf of supporters.

TRUST RESPONDS TO DULWICH PLANNING DOCUMENT

In June, Southwark Council issued its draft Supplementary Planning Document for Dulwich (SE22 and SE21) for comment.

Although the ground and Greendale are fractionally outside the area covered by the guidance (it falls in Camberwell), the Trust sent in a response in early September.

The Trusts expressed its support for the emphasis in the Dulwich SPD on the preservation of the current designated open spaces (the football ground is designated as Other Open Space following a campaign by DHST). It expressed support for the acknowledgement that sports grounds (such as Greendale) might need upgrades to their facilities which should be granted permission.

The Trust suggested that it would like to see similar principles applied to an SPD for Camberwell, if it is issued in due course.

STAND NAMING PROPSAL

In the summer, the club asked the Trust for a contribution towards their scheme to name the main stand after club stalwart Tommy Jover. The Committee had raised £200 out of the £800 that was apparently needed. The Trust was very supportive of the idea which it felt was an appropriate tribute and offered £200 (from the general fund, not 100 Club) and suggested the rest could be raised by a bucket collection or from the 1893 Club.

Unfortunately the Committee rejected the offer without any attempt at further discussion over the issue, and instead started a thread about it was on the message board. The Trust was naturally disappointed that at this turn of events, but notes that the stand has been named anyway. It was interesting to note that of the limited comment to the message board thread, the general tone was a wish that the club and Trust would settle their differences and work together. Hopefully we are now started on just such a path.

LOCAL ADVERTISING AND PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN 2009/10

For the third year running, the Trust is running a campaign to maintain and raise local awareness about the club and advertise fixtures to try to boost attendances. We are paying for adverts each month with the forthcoming fixtures in SE22 Magazine, a well known local publication delivered free to over 5,000 addresses in SE22 postcode and one aimed very much at the more recent arrivals to the local area – many of whom are unaware of the club's existence. As a result we also get space for a monthly news page, to give local updates about the club and raise its profile. In addition, in the August issue we contributed at two page feature article on Dulwich Hamlet's history, to give some context to why this club is so special and should be supported.

We also place notices about future games on the 'What's On' section of the local internet forum - the East Dulwich Forum. Following the Worthing game, the response below was posted:
"Prompted by this post I ambled along for my first visit and a very enjoyable afternoon it was too, score notwithstanding of course although their keeper made a couple of excellent saves. My first non premiership / first division game for years but I'll be back soon. At one point I found myself having a chat with the chairman, I don't recall that anywhere else. Also the bar with windows looking across the pitch is a thing of genius. Recommended. Give it a go."

Hopefully the first of more local people persuaded to try out their local team.

100 CLUB – 15,000 REASONS TO BE VERY PROUD!

In August the amount raised by the 100 Club lottery fund passed the £15,000 mark. This is a tremendous achievement for a Supporters Trust of a club with such a relatively small fan base and everyone who has contributed down the years should feel very proud about this. Thank you to all concerned and particularly to Mitch who set up the lottery and ran it for the first few years.

At the moment we are receiving about £340 of contributions each month, of which approximately £205 is retained and with the rest distributed as prizes - currently £85 for first prize and 50 for second prize. This is down from its peak but is still a substantial fund raising effort.

Obviously the club have now started their own '1893 Club' lottery and we are grateful that there appears to be no evidence of 100 Club contributors switching over.

The aim of the 100 Club - and why its 'reason for being' continues - is that the Trust's aim all along has been that in return for any agreed investment the Trust should receive shares or some other long term stake in the club. This will allow supporters to have greater influence and transparency on how the club is run and will help ensure their investment is spent to the benefit of DHFC. This is consistent with the advice of Supporters Direct - the government backed body for independent supporters' trusts.

Although the club has yet to come round to this point of view, it is to be hoped that the recent initial meeting between the club might serve as the starting point whereby some future discussions in this area may bear fruit, and the investment of our contributors' hard-earned money can be made.

In the meantime, if you are not already a contributor, please think about joining, and if you are one, please encourage others to join.

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