



## **Board Meeting Minutes**

**7.00 pm, 16 August 2017**

**Venue – football club boardroom, Champion Hill**

**In attendance** – Alex Atack (AA), Alex Crane (AC) (chair), Peter Campbell (PC), Duncan Chapman (DC), Darren McCreery (DM) (secretary), Mel Hughes (MH), Mark Scoltock (MS), Dominic Smith (DS), Peter Wright (PW), Isaac Parnell (IP)

1. **Apologies for absence** - Alex De Jong (ADJ), Dave Rogers (DR), Nick Pittaway (NP)

2. **Agree July board meeting minutes**

- The minutes from the last board meeting were agreed.

3. **DHFC has a secure long-term home in East Dulwich:**

3.1 Update on progress on ground development

- AC updated on any progress relating to ground redevelopment. The position has not moved on much since the last meeting and remains that Meadow (current company in control of the football club and ground and applicant for redevelopment) have appealed against the LB Southwark decision to refuse permission to vary the S106 that includes protections for the current ground and the failure of the Council to determine the planning application for housing and the new stadium in a timely fashion. The appeal is expected to be heard via a planning inquiry on 12 December 2017 at the offices of Southwark Council. The appeal will be run by the independent Planning Inspectorate, who will make a decision on behalf of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. The inquiry will last up to 8 days. DHST have been formally confirmed as a third party to the appeal and will be able to give evidence at the planning inquiry. The appeal statements for both LB Southwark and Meadow are now available to view on the Planning Inspectorate's website.
- AC retains an action from April to write to the LB Southwark following their meeting with DHST on 10 April. There has been delay in sending this letter due to ongoing consultations on the new Southwark plan (see item 3.2).



- DHST remains concerned about the lack of progress and clarity on the length of the lease that would be given by LB Southwark to Dulwich Hamlet in the new facility, should planning permission be granted for development on land that is owned by the council. This issue is wrapped up in a dispute between Meadow and LB Southwark over the renewal of the existing lease that covers Greendale that urgently needs to be resolved by the two parties so DHST has clarity on the future. AC, ADJ, AA and the chairman of DHFC met with Meadow on 31 July to discuss this issue and raise concerns. The current position is that a hearing is due in September to resolve the position, but Meadow would like the hearing to be pushed back until after the planning appeal is heard in December. Meadow continue to engage with Southwark on this issue at all levels and have also written an open letter to Southwark that has been shared with DHST and could be circulated more widely.
- **ACTION – AC to lead on drafting and sending a letter to LB Southwark setting out the main points discussed at the meeting on 10 April prior to the next board meeting (to also reflect the latest position on the new Southwark plan).**

### 3.2 Update on new Southwark plan consultation

4. AC provided an update on LB Southwark's progress with the new Southwark plan. In February LB Southwark launched a consultation on draft preferred options for area visions and site allocations. If formally adopted the visions and allocations will form part of the new Southwark Local Plan that would be the basis for consideration of future planning applications in Southwark. The consultation included a proposal to allocate the existing Champion Hill Stadium for future development. DHST submitted a formal response to this consultation and encouraged members to also do so. The latest position is that LB Southwark have now revised the policy covering Champion Hill and have launched a fresh consultation that ends on 13 September. The amended policy includes amendments that DHST has campaigned for. However, some of DHST's concerns are still applicable and we will continue to press LB Southwark to change. The board agreed that DHST will send a further letter to respond to the new consultation and will again encourage members to do the same to ensure that DHFC's interests are fully represented in further planning policy that may have an impact on the ground.
5. **ACTION: AC to draft and submit a letter to LB Southwark responding to the latest consultation on the new Southwark plan before the close of the consultation. AC also to draft and publish an article on the DHST website that encourages DHST members to also submit comments.**
6. **DHFC is fully owned by its supporters:**

### 6.1 Update on fan ownership –



- AA updated the board on fan ownership. The group is due to meet shortly to discuss taking actions forward. The meeting between AC, AA, ADJ, the Chairman of the football club and Meadow on 31 July touched briefly on fan ownership but not in enough detail to allow DHST to further any of our areas of interest. In particular :
  - Business planning – DHST still requires greater transparency on finances in order to progress business planning.
  - Working with Meadows' preferred operator for the new facility (Greenwich Leisure Limited – GLL). Engagement with GLL has been exceptionally slow, with no real sign of progress being made on how they propose to run the facility. This again is limiting to the progress that DHST can make on business planning. The board discussed the merits of trying to find an alternative provider – rather than rely on the one preferred by Meadow, given the lack of engagement to date.
- AA set out updates that had taken place to the vision and governance document for fan ownership. This has been updated and condensed into a more user friendly document that can be used to set out DHST's vision for a fan owned DHFC to members and others in a more accessible format. A draft of the document will be discussed at the next sub group meeting.
- **ACTION – fan ownership subgroup to meet before the next meeting and report back on progress.**
- DM confirmed that Supporters Direct (the umbrella body for supporters' trusts) have been contacted for more information on carrying out a health check ahead of any move to fan ownership. DM is to follow this up when relevant people return from leave.
- **ACTION – DM to confirm the requirements for club health checks with Supporters Direct and report back before the next meeting.**
- DHST has discussed with the operators of DHFC-TV to feature more content on the work of DHST. AC is to take this forward.
- **ACTION – AC/fan ownership sub group to agree content for DHFC- TV with the operators and report back on progress before the next meeting.**

## 7. DHFC is a transparent and well run football club:

- 7.1 Update on match day operations at the football club (including joint working)
- NP had his first meeting of the season with Chris Taylor (general manager of DHFC) to discuss operations at the club and circulated a note before the meeting. Issues raised at the meeting included:



- Adequacy of general external lighting around the ground.
  - Raised standing areas behind the goals.
  - Bag searches at the turnstiles and general security issues and turnstile operations.
  - Bar and food.
  - Toilets – especially the ladies.
- Also raised was the club policy around admissions later in games. This appears to have changed by the football club without being communicated as widely as it could have leading to some confusion with supporters. DHST understands that the policy is now that no discount is offered at any time that the turnstiles are open. Once the turnstile is closed later in the game, entry is still permitted at the main gate, with an optional donation to the 12<sup>th</sup> man fund applying.
  - **ACTION – NP to publish an article regarding match day operations at the football club before the next board meeting.**
  - **ACTION NP to highlight to the Club’s operators (Meadow) the importance of communicating match day changes to supporters prior to implementation.**

## 7.2 Commercial activities role

- AC was approached by a member of the football committee about creating a specific commercial role for a DHST board member and helping to generate sponsorship income. The board felt that DHST was already doing this informally through the poster partners work and speaking to supporters in the shop on match days and that a specific role for this was not required in order to meet DHSTs objectives.

## 7.3 Review of latest financial accounts for DHFC Limited.

- IP has carried out an appraisal of the latest set of accounts for DHFC limited that were published in July and cover the period to the end of September 2016. The published accounts are abbreviated accounts, rather than full accounts. This is thought to be legally permissible, but means that the accounts do not include a profit and loss account and there was no requirement for them to be independently audited. Key points that DHST can draw out are that no fixed asset investment has been made in the club over the year, and both debtors and creditors have increased. The question of why debts are continuing to increase was raised with Meadow at the last meeting with DHST on 31 July, who attribute this to the wage bill and running costs.
- As DHST is a shareholder in the football club it is thought that DHST could insist on seeing a full set of financial accounts that may say more about to whom the



debt is the debt is owed and what the terms are (e.g. Whether there is interest accruing on it).

- **ACTION - IP to consider the case for insisting that DHST see a full set of accounts from Meadow and report back on progress at the next meeting.**
- Following the last meeting and a question raised by a DHST member at the AGM in June, Meadow have confirmed that DHST can, in principle, publish the information it holds on their group structure.
- **ACTION – IP to confirm the information on the Meadow group structure with Meadow and publish on the DHST website prior to the next meeting.**

#### 7.4 Update on merchandise:

- MH updated the board on merchandise, In particular:
  - A matchday procedures list for the board members and volunteers working in the Mega Container has been placed in the container.
  - There continues to be a steady flow of online sales, with some lines being deliberately held off line to be used a shop exclusives for matchdays.
  - The pre season discount on replica shorts for adults and children no longer applies.
  - We are low on stocks of replica shirts in some sizes. More have been ordered and are due towards the end of September.
  - Mascot competition (related to purchase of youth replica shirts) is proving successful and popular with both parents and mascots alike.
- **ACTION(from July) – IP to ensure that all new board members are given a key to the Mega Container before the next meeting.**

#### 8. DHFC has a growing Supporters' Trust that communicates regularly with its members.

##### 8.1 Update on DHST website

- DR has been carrying out work to the DHST website to ensure that it operates effectively. DR circulated a paper prior to the meeting setting out the costs and benefits of moving to a new system altogether for the board to consider further. The main issue with the alternative system proposed is the lack of auto renewal functions for memberships. This makes alternatives unsuitable for DHST's needs. The board view was that DHST should stick with the existing system until such time that the auto renewal functionality is included within the proposed membership system (in progress).



## 8.2 DHST comms

- AC flagged the success that DHST is having on social media engagement, with Twitter followers recently exceeding 1100 followers, although Facebook is less popular.
- The board discussed refreshing the existing comms plan from August 2016.
- **ACTION – AC and MS to update the comms plan from August 2016 and report back on progress before the next meeting.**

## 8.3 Promotion of 100 Club / future 100 Club plans

- The board discussed the future of the 100 Club. AC has held preliminary discussions with members of the football committee regarding the potential to merge with the 1893 lottery. This is in response to the belief that having 2 lotteries running at the club is not beneficial to either. Intention is for the 1893 Club to be ringfenced for the Intercity 125 scheme and to use this season to work out a way forward for both schemes. Existing members will be consulted on the proposals before any changes can take place.
- **ACTION – IP/AC to discuss further with 100 Club promoters.**

## 8.4 September newsletter to members

- **ACTION - PW to draft and send a newsletter to all DHST members before the next meeting.**

8.5 AC suggested running a possible survey of members and fans which provides us with feedback on DHST in general and fan ownership. AC raised the issue of gaining insight on what supporters currently know about fan ownership and how this might inform our strategy going forward. This would involve a survey at the start of the season and one at the end carried out on a matchday and an online survey of our members. Survey will need to be designed.

- The board agreed to work up a survey to send to DHST members, with the aim of providing further insight into the views of members about key areas of DHST's work.
- **ACTION – AC, AA, and PW to develop an insight survey of DHST members and report back on progress at the next meeting.**

## 8.6 Membership Update

- PW updated on DHST membership numbers, which currently stand at 325 members. This is an increase of 4 from the previous month and followed a big spike in new members in July.



- Membership promotions – existing and new members can now obtain a free card holder along with their membership card. All new members' cards will be sent to them. Liam Hickey confirmed that the agreement for Trust members to gain concession price admission to Streatham Ice Hockey matches is still in place.
- **ACTION - PW to revise membership page on website to include details of what members get for their membership.**

9. **DHFC has strong links with all fans and the surrounding community:**

9.1 Update on plans for community engagement and supporting other causes

- PC, MH, DR, PW, AC and NP met with the community leads at the football club to discuss planned community work for the year and areas that DHST could support. A preliminary programme of events has been drafted and is still to be confirmed. The Club confirmed that they will be participating in Non League Day again and that Meadow have agreed to a 'pay what you like' admission policy as previous years with profits to go to the Club's official charity partner, the Copleston Centre and also , Lambeth and Southwark Mind charity. DHST will support the promotion of Non League Day.

9.2 Replica shirts

- See item 7.4.

9.3 Fixture poster partners scheme

- PW and NP updated on the relaunch of the poster partners scheme – an initiative where DHST develops links with local businesses, who agree to display fixture posters for games in return for DHST offering exposure to local businesses. The plan is to roll out the initiative on an area by area basis. NP has already started to develop to network of local business contacts in East Dulwich, and PW is doing Camberwell.
- **ACTION - NP to continue to develop the poster partners scheme and co-ordinate the areas that are targeted. NP to put an article on the DHST website to promote to initiative and report back on progress before the next meeting.**

9.4 Volunteering

- AC confirmed that he is trying to arrange a meeting with Gavin Rose to discuss DHST activities. This will include taking forward and action from March around involving ASPIRE volunteers further on a match day.
- **ACTION (from March) – AC and AA to discuss involving ASPIRE volunteers further and report back before the next meeting.**



#### 9.5 External communications (local newsletters/press/website/programme articles)

- AC updated on recent DHST external communication activity. DHST had articles in all home pre-season programmes, and mentions in the local press regarding ground redevelopment. These have been uploaded to the 'DHFC in the media' section of our website. DHST published 7 articles on the website covering planning and merchandise updates. 31 new followers on Twitter and 26 tweets published within the last month. The leaflet promoting the Club has been revised to incorporate changes to admission prices. 10,000 leaflets have been produced and will be distributed in the bar/reception at the Club, local businesses and at events throughout the season.

### **10. Trust governance and miscellaneous items**

#### 10.1 Review of board policies and constitution

- At the July meeting the board agreed that DM (supported by ADJ) would review DHSTs policies and rules over the course of this year. DM provided an update on this work. The latest set of model rules for Supporters' Trusts have been received from Supporters' Direct (the umbrella body for Trusts). The model rules need to be reviewed, alongside other standard policies that DHST has.
- **ACTION (from July) – DM and ADJ to progress review of the DHSTs rules and policies and report back prior to the next board meeting.**

#### 10.2 Christmas party

- The board carried over an action relating to the Christmas party.
- **ACTION (from July) – MS, NP, and PW to report back on preparations for the DHST Christmas party before the next meeting.** Chris Taylor to be contacted with regard to booking bar. Preliminary date is Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December with the party following the Brightlingsea Regent match. Football Committee, DHFC staff and first team and academy to be invited once venue is confirmed.

#### 10.3 Other matters

The Board reviewed and agreed the proposed changes to the objectives covering the period up to June 2018.

- ACTION – AC to upload onto website.
- **ACTION (from April) – AC to trial his iPad in the Mega Container as soon as possible and report back as soon as this trial is complete.**





## 11. AOB

- The board discussed whether an alternative bank account was needed to ensure that DHSTs financial affairs could be managed more effectively. IP agreed to look in to this.
- **ACTION – IP to look into options for new bank accounts and report back on progress at the next meeting.**
- DHST have renewed their sponsorship with the Football Club. This includes pitchside banners, programme advert and player sponsorship of Dumebi Dumaka.
- The board agreed to carry forward one action from the last meeting.
- **ACTION (from July) - AC and AA to take forward inviting a member of the Football Committee to a future DHST board meeting and report back on progress prior to the next meeting. – Carry forward**

### 9.1 Date of next board meeting

- The board agreed to meet next on Wednesday 20 September.

Meeting ended at 21:09.