



DEE4LIFE TRUST BOARD MEETING – MINUTES

Sunday 1st November 2009 – Hilton Hotel, Dundee, 11am

Present: Bill Brewster, Dave Forbes, Scott Glenday, George Harris, George Knight, Alex Kidd, Fraser MacDonald, Stuart Murphy, Graham Smith.

Apologies: Nicola Robb, Graeme Adam

1. Approval of Minutes of the last board meeting held on 24th October 2009

Proposed by Alex Kidd and seconded by Graham Smith.

2. Approval of the Report of the Society Board for the financial year ending 30th June 2009

Proposed by Fraser MacDonald and seconded by Scott Glenday.

3. Matters Arising from Last Minutes

All outstanding matters to be carried over to the next meeting.

3. Strategy and membership review, including Club Dundee

Today's meeting was scheduled with the purpose of working out future strategy, including membership policy and how to move forward with Club Dundee, particularly in light of possible promotion to the SPL.

SG gave a summary of how the session would progress, examining where we are as a Trust, how we got there, where we want to be and how we should go about achieving that. FM kicked off a listing of points under these areas, with all board members invited to add to the list.

Where we are

- + We have over 4000 members;
- + A much stronger board than a year ago;
- + A representative on the board of Dundee FC;
- + Improved, regular communication with DFC directors and management;
- + 26% shareholding in Dundee FC;
- + Co-opted members from external groups
- + Database being updated by members with email addresses etc.
- + Clear six key objectives over the last year with owners, action plans and regular updates
- + Club Dundee back up to over 300 members
- + Junior Dees and Community work ongoing with regular meetings
- + DFC has no bank debt

- No succession plan if we need to step up if CM/BB leaves the board
- Relatively low cash reserves (£19k including Club Dundee, but £21k due to Charity this year)
- No annual income from membership fees
- Risk of 26% shareholding being diluted
- Risk of larger shareholding deterring investment or leaving us "holding the baby"
- DFC still has debt to directors
- DFC does not own Dens Park
- Wages:turnover increased considerably, need to be in SPL to be sustainable without additional cash injections

How we got there

- + Dedicated volunteers
- + Large membership to give credibility
- + Big financial input to give credibility and to purchase shares
- + 5% and then 26% give powers of veto
- + 100 mile an hour fundraising
- + Board refreshed with newcomers and representatives of other groups

- £1 membership fee never renewed
- Direct debit donations converted into Club Dundee (depends on DFC goodwill re highlights)
- Fundraising dropped back to almost zero last year, still too much effort on minor areas eg CDs

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Where do we want to be

Should we charge for membership to create a smaller but more committed group?

If so, how much should we charge?

Will DFCTV be run by the Trust or the Club?

Can / should we consolidate the database with Club Dundee? Are all subscribers Trust members? Should DFCTV be separate?

What is our focus? Community involvement? Future of Scottish football?

Is there a change of direction from fundraising, and is a large membership relevant?

How do we get there

It should be a priority to communicate to members exactly what Dee4Life does, especially if there is a change in direction. At present there are a large proportion of fans who are not Trust members, as seen when asking at merchandise stalls, and SD's survey across Scottish football showed almost half were not Trust members – despite the Trusts issuing the surveys.

A "Merry Christmas" message from Dee4Life detailing what we achieved this year should be prepared by FM, not only for the AGM but to use as an advertisement in the club programme, and GH suggested also putting an ad in the Tele.

If we revise the membership fees we risk displeasing members who donated significant sums, bought their £1 share, but may then feel cut off.

If we retain standing orders, donations going directly to the charity would benefit from tax exempt status, and AK agreed it may be possible to transfer ownership of the Club Dundee account to achieve this. Credit card income goes directly to the Trust via Sage.

A lengthy debate on the pros and cons of the membership package, work involved, costs incurred by the Trust (including donations to the youth charity), and various membership schemes incorporating Trust membership or otherwise took place.

It was concluded that Trust membership and DFCTV should be separate. Forcing members to buy DFCTV would be undemocratic, and push the Trust membership price above that recommended by Supporters Direct.

Trust membership, although over 4000, includes only around 300 active members who have been in recent contact, and/or for whom we have valid email addresses. Members will have until the end of this season to update their details, but for next season it was felt that a fee should be charged to rationalise this to a "true" membership, estimated at 300-400. On further reflection though, it was agreed to revisit this decision at the next board meeting.

Next steps

The membership pricing policy would be announced at the AGM, and a message communicating trust achievements and objectives would be produced.

We would also announce we are looking into DFCTV – including pricing – with next season in mind, but no final decision would be communicated until everything is ready to relaunch (including the website, flyers, benefits, and preferably knowledge of which division we will be in), possibly in April.

4. **AOCB**

It was reiterated that co-opted positions are subject to review, and in light of the press announcement of the merger of the Business Club and the Development Club, this situation needs to be clarified and resolved.

5. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next Trust board meeting will take place by conference call on Thursday 10th December, eg in advance of the AGM on 12th December and once audited accounts have been received.