



Minutes

Title of Meeting:	MK Dons Supporters' Board – Meeting 10	
Date of Meeting:	Thursday 15 th February 2024 at 6.30pm – 9.00pm	
Attendees :		
Name	Attended	Organisation
Pete Winkelman (PW)	Zoom	Chairman at MK Dons FC
Joe Thompson (JT)	A	Head of Media and Communications at MK Dons FC
Robbie Dennafoord (RD)	A	Media Assistant at MK Dons FC
Simon Crampton (SC)	A	Performance Director at MK Dons FC
John Cove (JC)	A	Director, MK Dons FC / Chairman, MK Dons SET
Maralyn Smith (MS)	A	Chief Executive MK Dons SET
Jim Mann (JM)	A	Supporters' Board - Chair
John Brockwell (JB)	A	Supporters' Board - Secretary
John Samuel (JS)	A	Supporters' Board (MKDSA)
Bailey Bedborough (BB)	A	Supporters' Board
David Wright (DW)	A	Supporters' Board
Carol Head (CH)	A	Supporters' Board
Tom Gidley (TG)	A	Supporters' Board
Tina Kenny (TK)	A	Supporters' Board
Apologies:		
<p>Antony Yates (AY) - Supporters' Board Ciaran Flanagan (CF) - Supporters' Board (MKDSA)</p>		

1	Standing Items	
A	All members confirmed that they had no Conflicts of Interest related to matters being discussed. Apologies were received from AY and CF.	N/A
B	Minutes of Meeting held on 12 th December 2023 were unanimously approved.	N/A
2	Matters Arising	
A	SB Chair Interview (3B – 13/9/23) Now that the new Media Manager is in place JM and JT will arrange the filming of the interview for the Dons social media channels.	JT/JM
B	Season Ticket Consultation Update (4B – 12/12/23) JC thanked the SB for their individual feedback on the ticket pricing survey. Most, if not all, comments provided were taken onboard. The survey is planned to go live with supporters on 16 th Feb.	N/A
C	Blue Badge Parking Controls (5A – 12/12/23) JC advised separate passes have now been issued for Blue Badge parking and wide bay Blue Badge parking. This enables stewards to identify any supporters trying to park in a type of bay that they are not assigned to.	N/A
D	16 to 25 year old event (6A – 12/12/23) RD confirmed that the first meeting will take place on 7 th March @ 6:30pm and the invite has been sent to various groups including MKDSA, DonsAction and MK Fellas. Several groups have already responded positively. The club will be holding an internal meeting on 29 th February to put in place an internal Working Group to facilitate this.	N/A
E	Club Red Stewarding (7A – 12/12/23) JC advised that stewards were now in place to control access to the Club Red pre function bar area. DW reported favorably on this and confirmed that his ticket was being checked. It was agreed that there is still room for improvement to ensure compliance.	N/A
F	EFL EDI video on social media (10A – 12/12/23) RD confirmed that this had been put on Social Media (X, Instagram and Facebook) a week after the last meeting.	N/A
G	MK Dons SET presentation screening in Lewingtons (10B – 12/12/23) JC advised that there are currently two video feeds in Lewingtons. One to cover Sky and the other feed covers screening of our match. To dedicate a screen to the SET presentation would likely alienate supporters who just want to watch the Sky match broadcast. MS suggested that A3 prints be made and displayed in Lewingtons. She also revealed that SET banners are being produced for use in Lewingtons.	MS



3	Club Points for Discussion	
A	<p>Introducing Joe Thompson (New Head of Media and Communications) JC introduced JT to the SB. JT has been a lifelong supporter of the Dons and joins the club from a journalistic background in radio.</p> <p>The SB wish to put on record their thanks to RD for taking on the increased media workload during an extremely busy period. Coping with the transfer window and multiple matches during a week alongside his normal role must have been extremely challenging and he deserves much credit for being able to seamlessly handle this.</p>	N/A
B	<p>Website change JC informed the SB that the club have signed up to stay with the EFL website solution. The website will be changing due to the deal with Sky. Next seasons website will have an embedded video option that will allow a direct feed in a much easier fashion than todays version. These are necessary changes with the removal of iFollow next season.</p> <p>Dave Clorley is already working on the graphics and images for the new style site.</p>	N/A
C	<p>Ticketing System JC confirmed that the club will be changing their Ticketing provider next season. Staff training has already commenced on the system and the feedback has been extremely positive. Alongside this the club are exploring an App for Ticketing. Next years season tickets will all be digital with an option to have a physical card which will incur an additional £5 charge.</p> <p>As per previous discussions with the SB BETA testing will include members of the SB.</p> <p>A season ticket/new ticket campaign will be kicked off just before Easter via the new system, dependent on the result of the Ticketing Survey.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>ALL</p> <p>N/A</p>
4	MKDSA ITEMS	
A	Nothing to present	

5	Dons Action	
A	<p>Key staff leaving and not being replaced</p> <p>DonsAction expressed concern that over the last year key members of staff have left and not had a direct replacement.</p> <p>JC advised that when employees leave there is a review that takes place which looks at whether a role can be split amongst existing employees, if the role needs a differing specification due to changes within the club and its affordability. These are all things that any business considers. As an example of this a review of the Marketing function has led the club to focus more on the digital side and a newly created role of Digital Marketing Executive was advertised and the successful applicant will start in March.</p> <p>PW commented that Andy Gibb will be leaving at the end of his notice period to take up a role at the NEC. His role will be advertised as Head of Commercial Services.</p>	
6	Items raised by Supporters	
A	<p>Castore recent issue.</p> <p>CH pointed out that despite the SB being informed in the last meeting that if anyone had an issue with Castore they could utilize the Club Shop to assist. Unfortunately a supporter tried that route recently and didn't get any assistance. It was brought to the attention of the SB via email and the matter has now been resolved.</p> <p>What was apparent from this incident was that there are still issues with the handling of issues with Castore. The incident in question was of little financial value and when it was investigated demonstrated a clear system breakdown at Castore.</p> <p>SC has a meeting with Castore on Monday and has requested that they produce a simple returns/complaints procedure to be published online and in the shop. Copy to be sent to SB members.</p> <p>JC suggested bringing Castore into a SB meeting to discuss their strategy for next season.</p>	<p>SC</p> <p>SC</p>
B	<p>Next seasons EFL TV changes and proposed FA Cup changes</p> <p>TK requested an update on this.</p> <p>JC advised that there is no more information currently available.</p> <p>CH asked if the club would be informing supporters of the potential impact of the new Sky broadcast deal on fixture days and times.</p> <p>JC confirmed that the message would be part of the season ticket renewal message and also for any new ticket applications.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>JC</p>



	<p>PW commented that fixtures are already subject to change and we've been impacted with the movement of both AFCW and Wrexham games where we'd have expected a bigger crowd on a Saturday than we get on a Tuesday night.</p>	
C	<p>Closing Sections of the ground TK asked if we can review closing off parts of the ground to improve the atmosphere?</p> <p>JC commented that there will be a complete review of everything match related next season. The uncertainty of the Sky deal impact will have diminished during the season so that a balanced judgement can be made.</p>	JC
D	<p>Disabled Parking TK - We charge full price for disabled parking for those coming for one off games - is there anything more we can do about that?</p> <p>JC responded that there are no more games this season that our outside of league fixtures. The normal parking charges for Disabled supporters will apply next season.</p>	N/A
7	Supporters' Board Survey	
A	<p>JB conducted a one year survey amongst the current and ex SB members via Survey Monkey. The anonymous results have been collated and distributed to the SB members.</p> <p>The main themes were a feeling that consultation and engagement could be improved between the club and supporter representatives. SB engagement with the fanbase needs to be improved.</p> <p>JC commented that we don't need to be meeting bound. As an example the ticketing survey had feedback from the SB that season ticket prices shouldn't be increased despite the rising costs associated with running the club which the club took onboard.</p> <p>SC commented that in every internal meeting that he attends feedback from the SB meeting is discussed and taken account of. Examples of discussions around car parking, Red Dot bar access and other areas were given.</p> <p>PW requested that the SB bring matters where they feel a strategic focus from the SB would be beneficial to the meeting. JC suggested that focussed subjects like the Academy or the SET could be programmed into the meetings but the SB need to steer this.</p> <p>PW suggested that after every SB meeting an article is published on the clubs media channels regarding some of the topics discussed.</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>JT</p>

	<p>DW talked about knitting together the club, SB and supporters. Often the supporters aren't fully aware of what the club or SB are doing on certain issues. The communication needs to be via the social media platforms and in person at matches by talking to those involve whether they be supporters, stewards or bar staff. Constant and never-ending improvement (CANI) should be our focus.</p> <p>JC pointed out that the SB shouldn't be a proxy for an individuals complaints process and must focus on wider issues affecting the supporter base.</p> <p>A full and frank discussion was held with the conclusions being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting Structure – Structure the agenda into Strategic and Operational areas. The club will bring an update to each meeting on a particular part of the club, potentially the next meeting will have a section on the Academy. • Social Media - Post more on what the SB are doing and achieving. Post after a meeting with up to three points from the meeting. Request input on items for discussion before the meeting via our social media outlets. 	<p>JB</p> <p>AY, BB, JB, CH</p>
8	MK Dons Supporters' Board Vacancy	
A	<p>JB explained the reasoning behind not placing the area represented by the applicant in the advert. As AJ represented the "General" category it wasn't a requirement to state a defined area of responsibility.</p> <p>Applications will close on Thursday 29th February. The SB interviewing panel will be selected from BB, CH, AY, JM and JS. The applications currently received will be sent to them by RD so that can create a short list that will be added to when the final applications are received. CH will lead on this.</p> <p>RD will put an advert into the programme and potentially on the screen at a match to prompt more applications.</p> <p>Interviews will be held w/c Monday 25th March.</p> <p>Post meeting note: RD provided a spreadsheet containing the details of 36 applications received so far.</p>	<p>CH</p> <p>RD</p>
9	What is the Future MK Dons Strategy?	
A	<p>JM started a discussion on the clubs future strategy. An example that he used was what is the strategy for the academy? Is it about producing players for the first team like the Bournemouth example? The reason for this topic is to move the level of discussion away from reactionary and dealing with the now to looking ahead and working together to pilot a way forward. Discussions on the strategy will enable the club to take advantage of the combined brain power around the table.</p> <p>JC indicated that the club were appreciate of this and are happy to provide focussed updates including on the academy at future meetings. The SET are currently advertising for a Fan Engagement Officer and will look to involve</p>	



	<p>the SB on assisting that role. PW explained that the role is to reach out and engage other communities with the aim of increasing the ethnic diversity of the supporter base, it's not necessarily about engaging with our current supporter base.</p> <p>CH questioned the job title of the role as it doesn't reflect the required specification and was informed by MS that the role is PL funded and the job title was given by the PL.</p> <p>JC committed to bringing the clubs EDI action plan to the next SB meeting for discussion.</p>	JC
10	Any Other Business	
A	<p>Recent Alcohol Price increase.</p> <p>JS asked why beer had been increased in cost by £1 a pint at the Accrington Stanley match.</p> <p>JC admitted that a mistake had been made and that this had been corrected by 2:15pm on the day. It affected the price of Becks and Fruit Juices with the biggest majority of these purchases happening in Lewingtons. At the next two home matches anyone who had been overcharged will be offered a free pint or a refund on production of the credit/debit card that they used to purchase the original. The advice on how this will be managed will be via a notice placed in the bar area.</p> <p>PW noted that the drink prices charged on a matchday are cheaper than those charged for at events held in the ground.</p>	N/A
B	<p>Training Ground and Pitch Update</p> <p>JB requested an update on the Training Ground progress and the proposed end of season Pitch upgrade (SB Minutes 7/2/23 4E)</p> <p>PW stated that the club plan to implement the Planning permission at the Bowl after the concerts in August. Two concerts have currently been confirmed with a possibility of a couple more. The First Team should be able to train on the pitches when they are fully grown which is expected to be around April 2025. There will not be any concerts held at the Bowl in 2025.</p> <p>The club are keen to relay the Stadium pitch. The pitch is currently a hybrid grass pitch which includes fibres and laid onto the prepared surface whereas the original stadium pitch was a Desso pitch. Advances in the technology have opened up several options which are all being explored. The club are aiming to relay the pitch at the end of the season but there is also a backup</p>	N/A

	<p>plan to renovate using a hybrid system. Our pitch is still one of the top pitches in the league.</p> <p>SC advised that all pitches are marked by the referees after a match out of a top score of 5, our mark currently is 4.67. The pitch was brand new last year for the women's matches held at the stadium. It has performed much better this season and was renovated via the Koro process over the summer. We have been informed by experts that we are one of the shadiest Stadiums. When we get into winter the only part of the pitch that gets direct sunlight is a small area in the away end. The lack of direct sunlight affects the ability of the grass to recover. Another issue that the pitch suffers from is air circulation. The club invested in additional light rigs in the summer and these have really helped this season.</p> <p>JS asked if preserving the pitch was the reason behind women's games not being at the stadium.</p> <p>SC advised the scheduling was front and end loaded so that during the winter the pitch has time to recover. We actually have more women's games in our stadium than some of the big Premier League clubs.</p> <p>JB requested that once the arrangement for pitch renovation/replacement in the summer are in place that an interview with the Groundsman is put onto the clubs website and Social Media channels.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">JT</p>
<p>C</p>	<p>AFC Wimbledon away Ticketing</p> <p>JB asked if the club could advise what the delay is with releasing tickets?</p> <p>JC informed that the delay in releasing the tickets has been caused by the club requesting the reasoning behind the ticket allocation. The volume allocated appears not to meet EFL regulations and is lower than we received the last time that we played there.</p> <p>In view of the ticket allocation and the expected uptake the club will be implementing the Priority Ticket Allocation process that is set out in the clubs Customer Charter. Category 1 will launch tomorrow with Category 2 launching 22nd Feb and Category 3 26th Feb.</p> <p>The match has not been designated as a bubble match and the club are awaiting a response from the Met Police regarding any advice on routing of coaches etc.</p> <p>AFCW supporters were well behaved during their last visit and no damage to our ground occurred. It is hoped that our supporter base will act in the same manner.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">N/A</p>



D	<p>Sarah Price JS asked if the club could assist with the promotion of the tribute to Sarah Price at the Newport County home match during the 49th Minute.</p> <p>JT agreed to utilize the clubs social media outlets for this.</p>	JT
E	<p>Club Shop TK highlighted James for his customer service skills in the Club Shop.</p> <p>MS commented that James is one of the successes of MK Dons SET Kick Start programme for 18-24's. He also supports take over days and other duties and is a great example of the assistance this programme can bring to assist individuals getting into a working environment. MS to pass on feedback to James.</p>	MS
F	<p>Wheelchair Supporters accommodation at Away Grounds CH highlighted an issue that had been brought to her attention regarding the lack of facilities for wheelchair supporters at away games. In eight out of twenty four games this season our wheelchair supporters are located with the away support. At the recent Bradford match they refused to sit amongst the Home supporters and were eventually located in front of the empty stand behind the goal. There have also been issues with toilet access for them this season.</p> <p>JC confirmed that the club had been in contact with the EFL regarding this earlier in the season and welcomed the idea of the SB writing to the EFL to add a voice to the complaint. The EFL has an EDI standard which was launched in 2022 and clubs should be working to remove discrimination.</p> <p>Letter/email to be drafted and sent to the EFL from the SB.</p> <p>JS commented that our club have now put barriers in place to stop supporters using the disabled areas at the rear of the stands as a cut through after the match causing issues for the disabled supporters.</p> <p>JC acknowledged that these had been put in place after feedback from the SB.</p>	CH
G	<p>Lucy Dawson JS advised that the Lucy Dawson appeal has been launched.</p>	
H	<p>Half Time Kiosk TG reported that he'd missed the start of the second half due to queuing at a Kiosk for food. On 27th Jan both the MKDSA and JB checked half time queues and the additional staff put on by the club had succeeded in serving everyone before the match recommenced.</p> <p>Additional checks on queuing to take place.</p>	JB

I	<p>MK Dons SET website</p> <p>JB congratulated the club on the launch of the new MK Dons SET website. When you search for this you can locate a second site under a different domain name that is out of date. Details were provided to MS.</p> <p>MS agreed to investigate.</p>	MS
J	<p>Club Red</p> <p>DW pointed out that the online Matchday guide is currently stating that the Ballroom is open to all supporters as its not been updated since the Boxing day match.</p> <p>Matchday Guide to be updated</p>	RD

11	DATE FOR NEXT MEETING	
	Thursday 25th April @ 6:30pm	JC to book room
12	AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING	
	JB to work on the agenda and circulate with all Board members ahead of the next meeting.	JB to write agenda