

Chair: Shaun Lockwood

Present: Len South, Mellony Shepard, Gill Shepherd, Daniel Pearson, Lizzie Robinson, Matty Lovell-Davies

Club Representatives: Gavin Baldwin, Shaun Lockwood

Apologies: Patrick Queen, Derek Daniels, James Errington, Paul Mayfield

1. SL opened the meeting and reiterated previous advice given via email that due to the fixture change from Saturday to Friday, the meeting would be shorter than normal based on time restrictions on people being able to attend but also other activities due prior to kick off.
2. Minutes from previous meeting (29 October 2022)
 - a. The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.
3. Standing item: Health & Safety, EDI, Safeguarding
 - a. Health & Safety
 - i. SL confirmed the club had a RIDDOR reportable incident at the Big Bang fireworks display – a two-year-old had been burnt drinking a hot chocolate and needed hospital treatment. Mum had contacted the club post-incident and thanked club staff and medical officials for their treatment on site. SL said the club had been in touch with mum since to check on the progress of the child.
 - b. Safeguarding
 - i. SL said the club had received positive feedback from Grimsby Town for our support in the recent away fixture (which had high numbers of U17 travelling).
 - ii. There were several police incidents for DRFC fans at this fixture, both in the ground and town centre. Those found guilty will be issued club bans with potential police action (depending on incident). At least one supporter involved had a ticket in the name of another supporter, claiming it was bought for him. Both ticket holder and ticket purchaser will be subject to same disciplinary action as in buying ticket for someone else, the ticket purchaser has made themselves responsible for the action of the other person.
 - c. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
 - i. SL confirmed that DB (comms assistant) is looking at setting up an EDI working group. This action has been praised by the EFL. Some details to be confirmed before this goes live.
4. Non-Disclosure Agreement
 - a. SL presented a copy of a Non-Disclosure Agreement, wording of agreement had previously been accepted by DD and JE, both of which had signed said agreement.
 - b. SL stated that purpose of NDA was to create good practice so that existing and new members of Shadow Board all operated under same principles.
 - c. It was accepted by all present and members can now return a signed copy via email or in person when next at the stadium.
5. Election Process

- a. SL confirmed that an draft election process had been discussed between club, DD and JE that was a 3 stage process
 - i. Stage 1 – nominee to submit CV and/or Bio along with 20 supporting signatures from DRFC fans to stand for election to the Shadow Board
 - 1. Both nominee and supporting signatures must have valid ticketing history (min 4 home games in last 12 months)
 - ii. Nominees to be taken to Shadow Board (with potential to meet) for a shortlisting process
 - iii. Those shortlisted to be voted on the Shadow Board by existing members
- b. Question was asked whether it would be simple majority or a proportionate majority (eg two thirds in agreement) or unanimous.
- c. It was agreed to discuss the election process at the next meeting when both chair and vice-chair are present.

6. Catering Update

- a. SL provided an update on three different scenarios for catering next season based on interested partners.
- b. SL confirmed that club had spoken to many clubs, some who outsource, some who are in-house and concluded there is no simple solution as different stakeholders of same clubs have different opinions on catering standards.
 - i. Eg – one club in-house said it worked well from a club perspective, SLO had very different opinion based on fan feedback.

For the purpose of minutes and agreements in place with potential partners, interested parties have been anonymised.

- c. Partner 1
 - i. Very similar to existing provision with a completely outsourced arrangement.
 - ii. Financially very lucrative for the club as fixed licence fee but club has concerns over lack of control on pricing, staffing and service agreements.
 - iii. Feedback from some clubs already contracting this supplier were not favourable.
- d. Partner 2
 - i. Poorer financial model than partner 1 initially but with scope to grow
 - ii. Partner would see themselves as working with and for the club as opposed to just an outsourced partner, this would see greater control for the club on prices, menu choices and service agreements.
 - iii. Feedback from some clubs already contracting this supplier were favourable.
- e. Partner 3
 - i. Best financial model
 - ii. Local provider with invested interest in existing club operations wanting to grow their market opportunities. Partner looking to invest in the stadium infrastructure with a brewery deal underwriting the agreement.
 - iii. Partner wanting to use local providers inside the stadium and improve the service and reputation of the stadiums catering function nationally.
 - iv. Partner has already discussed improving fan experience with ticket/food combined promotions and improved service facilities.

- f. Shadow Board agreed that partner 3 was the best option available at present and sounded exciting but required some safeguards contractually to protect the club.
- g. SL provided feedback from Bulbshare catering survey (most responded to survey so far) that suggested 80% wanted to see local suppliers rather than national contracted suppliers in the stadium. Other feedback mainly centred on quality of service.
- h. MD asked if club had considered in-house. It was confirmed that it had been considered and a model had been created, but it was high risk with less financial benefits. Immediate concerns included the amount of upfront capital investment would be required to start an in-house operation. It was suggested that Partner 3 was close to an in-house option due to the existing interest from the stakeholder but with the added financial security.
- i. Partner 2 had also expressed interest in acting as a supporting consultant should they not receive the main contract.

7. AOB

- a. 4Life Product
 - i. SL provided a handout that showed the clubs season ticket pricing model in 2019/20 (the last season before Covid) and the range of benefits received and compared that to the current season ticket model and the 4Life product.
 - ii. In 2019/20 the strategy had been to create more value in season tickets with more benefits available based on the price you paid for a season ticket.
 - iii. Criticism at the time were that people felt they were paying for things they didn't want/need and that the club should just reduce season ticket prices.
 - iv. The document showed that advice had been followed and season ticket pricing was now approx. £100 cheaper than in 2019/20 and that was due to revenues from Club Doncaster providing freedom to change club season ticket pricing.
 - v. Benefits had also been reduced too, although all 18+ supporters still received priority window, LNER discounts and personalised season ticket cards. Season ticket holders now also received a greater match day saving per game compared to 2019/20.
 - vi. It was discussed that during supporters board meetings at the beginning of the calendar year, the club had presented a season ticket model with prices reduced and membership model that had additional benefits for those that wanted it.
 - vii. In those meetings, supporters board members had suggested that a membership model launched with the season ticket would not work and to not launch simultaneously.
 - viii. SL explained that the 4life membership model launched last month was a variation of that model and was a product that supporters could choose to buy if they wanted the benefits, and the model was therefore giving the supporters the choice of buying products with benefits that suited them rather than forcing an inflated season ticket price.
 - ix. The 4life membership model is approx. £100 and has over £100 ticketing benefits plus further discounts and merchandise and due to spread

payments potentially benefited non season ticket holders more in the current financial climate.

b. General

- i. SL stated that he was surprised some members of the SB had speculated that the 4life scheme could have involved the Knights joining Club Doncaster.
 - ii. SL informed that any significant structural changes to Doncaster Rovers or Club Doncaster would be taken to the SB first before being teased.
 - iii. ER queried the purpose of teasing the 4life membership product as it has caused confusion.
 - iv. SL said a valid marketing strategy is to tease information before launching a product, particularly if launching with an opening discount as the audience needs to know what is coming.
 - v. ER suggested the role of the SB needs publicising better as supporters were asking her about marketing and product sign off
 1. GB and SL said they would follow this up and formalise the purpose of the SB more clearly.
 - vi. SL stated he was aware of supporters who had expressed concern about previous incentives not being fulfilled. Having spoken to the comms department some of this was based on Covid restrictions still being in place on first team activities last year, some of it was due to a changeover of staff internally. Either way SL said that he had sympathy with those supporters raising concerns and that actions were underway to ensure fulfilment would be adhered to.
 - vii. SL stated the James Coppinger documentary was slightly different and there was some news coming out soon that would explain all about the pause in activity but the club couldn't publicly say anything at this stage.
 - viii. There was a question about whether the club is struggling financially and a discussion about how the club are combatting increased operational costs such as utilities whilst trying to keep prices low for supporters, who are also facing a cost of living crisis.
 - ix. A question was asked about succession planning for the current owners
 1. It was stated that a number of third parties had suggested due to the clubs operating model and potential for growth the club were one of the most exciting and sound opportunities for anyone looking to buy a club as all overheads are currently covered by the business operations of Club Doncaster, so investment in the first team goes straight to the first team.
- c. LS asked about ticketing for Harrogate away on April 15, due to the limited away capacity. SL said the club would look into the fixture early and communicate any policies.