

WIMBLEDON INDEPENDENT SUPPORTERS ASSOCIATION

Ordinary General Meeting

Wimbledon Community Centre, St George's Road, Wimbledon

Thursday 19 August 2004 at 7.30p.m.

MINUTES

1. Apologies for absence:

Apologies had been received from Charlie Bell, Ray Downham, Richard Fraser, Mike Howard, Mark and Jo Lewis, Ross Maclagan, Sandra Lowne, Colette Mulchrone and Ian Pollock.

2. The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 12 May 2004 were agreed, with no matters arising. Sean Fox observed that the AGM minutes had said the conflict of interest clause (referring to the eligibility of AFC Wimbledon employees to stand for WISA committee) was to have been reviewed at the current OGM. Since however the OGM was not quorate, the proposed rewording of the conflict of interest clause could not be approved on this occasion.

3. The proposed conflict of interest clause was however read out, for the information of those present.

4. Sean Fox gave the Treasurer's report. The WISA bank balance at 30 June was around £7,000, with expenses of £700 not yet accounted for.

5. Sean Fox reminded those present that the members had mandated WISA to buy more shares in AFCW PLC. The share issue was now closed, but WISA had approached the club on the basis that a further share purchase could help pay off the debt to Mr Khosla. The club said that it needed to consider whether it could issue more shares. A proposal to sell some of the unissued shares would be reviewed at the Dons Trust AGM in November. The Dons Trust itself was considering that approach, i.e. buying more shares rather than making donations to the stadium fund.

The number of shares, which WISA proposed to buy, was worked out according to a formula based on the amount that WISA has in the bank. Any share purchase would not reduce the bank balance below £2,500.

One member asked whether WISA could buy a bond. Sean Fox said the committee could see no advantage in lending the club money it would be better to buy shares so as to give WISA a say at the PLC meeting.

6. Match sponsorship

AFC Wimbledon's commercial director, Ivor Heller, had reserved a Saturday game for the WISA sponsorship, in which members will be entered in a free draw for a place as a match sponsor. The draw will be advertised on the WISA page in a future match day programme

One member asked whether the number of places available had been reduced from 20 last season to ten this. Nicole Hammond said that requirements for the Ryman League meant fewer places for sponsors in the President's Lounge.

7. MKDons and Wimbledon FC history campaign update

Simon Wheeler said that the case for AFC Wimbledon to be recognised as Wimbledon FC's legitimate successor had been proved with the recent change of Franchise's name to MKDons. At the same time, its Supporters Club had also changed its name, to MKDons Supporters Club.

Representatives of MKDSC had turned up at the Football Supporters Federation conference and there had been a row. Meanwhile, Lee Scriven, the Franchise's pet journalist, had interviewed Pete Winkelman, who had attacked WISA for not buying back WFC.

WISA had recently written to the FA and Inter MK (Winkelman's company) requesting a meeting with both parties to discuss the return of WFC's history and honours to AFC Wimbledon.

There was a two-page letter to the FA, outlining why AFC Wimbledon deserves WFC's history. Attached to it was a nine-page appendix, which included the report of the FA Commission, with the recommendations broken by Franchise highlighted in red. We had also attached evidence that MK was simply a property deal, including a letter from Winkelman to MK Council making it clear that the whole deal was not about saving WFC, but about getting a club for MK, and a recent article from Property Week which confirmed that WFC was the key to Asda/Walmart's superstore going ahead. There was a shorter letter to InterMK, again explaining why WFC's history and honours should be returned. There had as yet been no reply to WISA's letter from either party. As the FA's letter had been sent to Mark Palios just before he resigned, it could well have been left unopened. Nicole Hammond said that if the FA did not respond, we would write again to the new chief executive. If that did not elicit a response, we would take the campaign to the national stage and get other football fans to write to the FA. Many of them were on our side.

Winkelman had reportedly approached the FA to ask them to re-engrave the FA Cup with "MKDons 1, Liverpool 0". Allegedly, he had received a somewhat terse reply from the FA. Meanwhile, Franchise's first game of the season, at home to Barnsley, had seen the second lowest attendance in the new League One, and the fifth lowest in the League. When Swindon

entertained Franchise, their fans held a demonstration. They covered Winkelman's car with banners, and took a banner into the ground, which read: "Not welcome, not wanted, not Wimbledon". Meanwhile, the MKDSC wanted to set up a supporters trust, but that would go to a vote of Supporters Direct members.

There was some discussion as to whether the Dons Trust should vote against Franchise fans setting up a trust. Although voting No seemed the obvious thing to do, each club could only be given funds to set up a trust once. So if Franchise supporters were given funds, they would be acknowledging that Franchise was a new club.

A member asked whether WISA could reregister the name WFC now that Franchise had been renamed. Simon Wheeler said that this was not possible, as MKDons still owned the old name.

8. Plough Lane update

Gail Moss reported on the state of play at Plough Lane, where David Wilson Homes had submitted an application to Merton Borough Council to build 571 homes. No date had yet been set for the plans to go before the planning committee. The developers, the council and the GLA were haggling over the percentage of affordable housing within the scheme. The GLA wanted a minimum of 50%, whereas the developers wanted 30%. WISA had sent in an objection, as had some individual members. However, the case officer at MBC had told WISA that there had only been 36 objections, which seemed rather low, given the height of the buildings (four or five storeys with certain sections up to seven storeys), the extra traffic likely to be generated and the fact the development was totally out of character with the surrounding area. There was still time for members to write to the council objecting to the scheme.

One member, Mr Hammond, said he had been to a residents meeting in Wimbledon Park where, alongside the height of the buildings and insufficient parking, the issue of the nearby electricity pylon had been raised. Residents were concerned that the buildings were too close to the pylon and that electromagnetic radiation would be a health hazard. The buildings complied with the National Radiological Protection Board's guidelines, but there was evidence that these were too lax, and much lower levels of radiation could set off, for example, children's leukaemia.

Mr Hammond had written to DWH suggesting they shift the pylon to the other side of the River Wandle, and was awaiting their reply.

On a brighter note, Gail Moss had spoken to DWH about giving WISA the Womble Till I Die gates on Plough Lane, with a view to moving them to Kingsmeadow. DWH had told her informally there should not be a problem, and they said they had ensured the gates would not

be removed in the meantime. WISA had also spoken to AFC Wimbledon, who agreed in principle to taking possession of the gates - it was a case of finding somewhere to put them.

9. Football Supporters Federation Update

Nicole Hammond was still on the Football Supporters Federation Council, and in charge of the anti-franchising portfolio, working to protect other clubs from going through what Wimbledon fans had suffered. Franchise wanted credibility through recognition by the FSF, and this would be voted on at the next FSF conference. However, she said that most FSF members are on our side, and could be helpful allies for the history campaign. Through the FSF, she was pressing the FA to change its rules on club location. The suggested new rule was: "No club should move without the approval of its fans". This had been approved by FSF Council and was now being presented to the FA. Bolton Wanderers, for example, had polled their season ticket holders when they moved to the Reebok.

Nicole Hammond said that if WISA did not get a positive response from the FA and Winkelman on the return of WFC's history and honours, it would help to have the support of the FSF.

A member questioned whether the Committee felt our membership of the FSF was worthwhile. Nicole Hammond, in response, clarified that she believed that Membership of the FSF was useful in maintaining and building links / sharing knowledge with other Supporters bodies throughout the UK.

10. Membership renewal and T-shirt offer

Gavin Ainslie said that 250 membership renewals had been received so far. An offer to buy the "Not In The Wider Interests Of Football" T-shirt had gone out with renewal forms.

11. AFC Wimbledon and Dons Trust issues

No representative was present either from AFC Wimbledon or the Dons Trust. Nicole Hammond, however, pointed out that the club was holding more frequent open meetings, which gave members the opportunity to ask questions direct.

12. There being no further business, those present frequented the Alex.

Gail Moss
Press / Publicity Officer