

Can we have our money back, please?

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Dons Trust to ask for Plough Lane profits
By David Tilley

The Dons Trust, which could one day enable fans to run Wimbledon Football Club, will ask former club owner Sam Hammam for the estimated £8million he earned from the sale of Plough Lane.

The trust to be officially launched at Wimbledon Theatre on Sunday is a democratic non-profit organisation committed to strengthening the voice of supporters at Wimbledon FC and improving links between the Dons and Merton's communities.

The Dons Trust is an Industrial and Provident Society which can own shares or property and ultimately purchase the club or at very least have a significant share holding.

Trust member Louise Carton-Kelly has been walking and talking with Mr Hammam now owner of Cardiff City on Wimbledon Common to gather tips on running a football club.

She said: "He gave me some good advice about running a club.

"He was anxious not to be seen to be involved with more than one team, although he did tell me he used to own Milton Keynes City, which was an interesting quirk considering present chairman Charles Koppel's persistence in wanting to move our club there."

She added: "I've spoken to Sam many times before, he's far more charming and approachable than Charles Koppel. Sam wouldn't meet me indoors so we went for a two-hour walk across the common.

"We will be asking Sam for the money from the sale of Plough Lane."

Wimbledon MP Roger Casale has given the trust his backing. However, he believes a more realistic source of cash to help the club's return to Merton is the Football Stadium Improvement Scheme which offers grants of up to £2.8million.

Despite the serious business of the launch, which will start at 4.30pm, there is bound to be a party atmosphere at an event which includes a chance to meet Dons legends Dickie Guy, Allen Batsford and Terry Eames.

The initial aim of The Dons Trust is to raise as much money as possible to allow it to purchase significant share holdings in Wimbledon FC, a plot of land or possibly to finance the construction of a new stadium.

The cost of membership is £25, but anyone wishing to join the trust can pay more. Everybody over the age of 16 who joins is entitled to one share and one vote.