

Dons Trust Board 2018 Election

Manifestos

Please note: The candidates will appear in the reverse order on the ballot paper.

Hannah Kitcher



To open my manifesto to stand for the Dons Trust Board stating I grew up supporting Southampton FC isn't the best way to try and win your support. I can't declare my loyalty credentials as having been a Wimbledon (FC or AFC) season ticket holder for more than 80% of my life. I can't claim to have experienced the hurt of 2002 nor sing with the same nostalgia and longing to go home, back to Plough Lane.

Sometimes, I do feel that because of this, I am somehow a less of a fan. Perhaps I'm trying to compensate for this by standing for the Board? Perhaps I shouldn't start psychoanalysing myself in my manifesto?

But supporting a football club isn't about racking up the loyalty points. We'll leave the point scoring to those on the pitch please! One fan is not better than another. We do not come with FIFA scores. We are the mass in the stands. We are a community that comes together at the games to get behind the team. We may disagree with one another about tactics, players and performance. We may also disagree with one another about what goes on off the pitch. But that's ok because, (warning: I'm about to quote Gandhi), "honest disagreement is often a good sign of progress."

We need more disagreement. We've recently seen how the lack of disagreement, contestation or interrogation to the proposal season-ticket holders who don't attend at least 80% of matches wouldn't be allowed to automatically renew their ticket, has led to the club having to backtrack. I was in the Dons Trust Board meeting when this was proposed by the Football Club Board. But, as a member of the Secretariat, present to write the meeting summary, I felt it wasn't my place to say anything. I have been a bystander in these meetings for nearly two years now. I know what happens in them. It's taken me this long to get used to the dynamics of them but I've now reached a point where I don't want to be a simple bystander making the notes. I want to have a voice.

Why should you give me that voice?

Yes, I may not have experienced what many of the fans who had their club taken away from them have. But then much of our younger fan base didn't either and nor will our (very much needed) future fans. And that's what makes this club so special. It's a club that has managed to bring a Southampton girl into its folds and feel part of it. Because there are so many opportunities to be part of it.

I started out distributing fixture lists to businesses in Wimbledon. I then moved into supporting the 2017 Election Steering Group with online communications, before minuting the monthly board meetings. I now write and share the summaries for those meetings, I am the Webjam Webmaster (awesome title!) and I've been working hard to make the Dons Trust website more user friendly and navigable. All because, as a Communications Manager in my day job, I have these skills that the Trust has been lacking. But you can also find me selling programmes on matchdays because I want to meet and talk to other fans too.

I hope you can see that I am certainly passionate about this club and what it stands for and I do not want that to be lost. Most certainly not at this key transitional point for the club as we move into our new stadium.

I don't want the Club to lose the spirit that gets people across the globe wanting to know more. As a London club we sure have some competition for both player talent and fans. This makes keeping the spirit that makes us unique even more important.

Therefore, my priorities are:

- To maintain and build our volunteer capacity and fight for us not to lose our strong community ethos as we transition to the new stadium.
- To ensure all fans feel they have a voice and are listened to. In particular helping to capture opinions in a consistent and meaningful way via regular, robust surveys.
- To share my passion and build our strength as a fan-owned club through growing the Dons Trust membership. (How can it be that a fan I know who camped outside the FA's headquarters in 2002, is not a Trust member?)
- To promote the values upon which the club has been built, and share them with other clubs that are interested in, and wanting to learn from us.
- To champion diversity and inclusion at the club and wider football, particularly through supporting Women in the Game.

Talk to me:

Twitter @hankitcher

Email han.kitcher@hotmail.co.uk.

On matchdays: pre-match top of Jack Goodchild Way and in the main bar post-match.

Anna Kingsley



Who am I?

I have followed the Dons since I first sat on my father's lap at Plough Lane. He took my brother and I to Wembley in '88. Later, I had a crush on Marcus Gayle, my sister had a soft spot for Neal Ardley. I had a 'Dons' sticker on my wreck of a car when I went off to university.

I now live and work in Wimbledon. My children go to school here too. They have sat on my lap at Kingsmeadow and would wear their AFC kit to bed if I let them.

I would like to do something positive for AFC Wimbledon during the crucial months leading to the club's return to Plough Lane. My job as a psychotherapist means I am good at listening for detail and I don't shy away from

difficult conversations. I know I could make a difference.

Why vote for me?

I am a fan but not an uncritical one.

I am a team player but I make up my own mind.

I get stuff done. When you're self-employed, work full-time and care for two children, you learn what's essential, fast.

This is my first bid to join the Dons Trust Board. I think it's time for a new face and another female one.

What I'd like to achieve?

Work with the club to raise its profile in Merton.

Involve local schools to build the next generation of supporters.

Do more to reach those in the community who aren't fans or who say they just don't like football.

Volunteer to meet residents who worry about the adverse effects the new stadium may have.

Ultimately, I would like the new stadium to be about more than football. I hope the whole community will come together there for a wide range of activities.

Matt Breach



*Dons Trust Board attendance Jan 2016 – Oct 2018
Meetings 27 Attendance 26*

I have been an elected member of the Dons Trust Board (DTB) for twelve years, serving as Chair for seven years and then Deputy Chair for the past year. I'm seeking re-election as I believe that having experience and continuity at the heart of the club's organisation will be vital in successfully delivering the benefits of the new stadium; the experience and knowledge I've gained serving you on the DTB will enable me to continue to make a significant contribution to the success of our Club.

Since I was last elected in 2016, I served one further year as Chair before stepping back to the position of Deputy Chair for the past year. For several years I have typically been allocating upwards of 15 hours a week to club business, but I realised that was going to be unsustainable once I secured a new job as engineering director for a major railway infrastructure company late last year. Whilst this change in job has reduced the amount of spare time I have (hence why I relinquished the role of Chair of the DTB), the experiences that it is giving me in understanding major construction projects will be very significant in enabling me to make significant contributions to delivering the new stadium.

The past two years have flown by, as we get ever closer to moving into our own stadium back in Merton. Whilst the build has not yet started, we have moved on from a position of securing planning permission to seeing the site more or less fully cleared and being in the final stages of agreeing the tender for constructing the stadium. I have been involved in significant activity behind the scenes to ensure that we have funding in place for the stadium, and I have also been involved with the push to get membership approval to issue new shares in AFC Wimbledon plc supporting the ability to launch a crowd-funding campaign, the last piece of the funding jigsaw. I hope that finances will allow fans to choose some features of the new stadium beyond the basic initial build, and I will help facilitate a consultation over those potential choices as soon as we have clear guidance from the tender on what could be possible. There is still much more to do to fully deliver our dream home, but I firmly believe we will get there – "it only took (another) nine years" isn't as catchy as our last achievement, but it is potentially even more important to the long-term future of AFC Wimbledon.

Alongside work on the stadium, progress on other fronts over the last two years has again been more about consolidation and incremental improvements. One development I have led is the further strengthening of our organisation, including the recruitment of Joe Palmer into a new position of Chief Operating Officer. In my current role as Deputy Chair I continue to sit in on monthly Football Club Board (FCB) meetings, and to work with Mark Davis (the new Chair) to act as the link between Erik Samuelson and his team and the DTB.

Recently there has been much discussion within the club about whether fans, and particularly DT members, are properly engaged in our decision-making. As part of addressing this issue, I am now leading a consultation exercise to find out what direction members want the club to take once we have moved to our new stadium, and

then appropriately update and refresh our organisation's strategy. This exercise will be similar to the "NEF survey" carried out in 2011, in which members were asked how well various potential scenarios matched their aspirations for the club. That survey led us to a strategy that focussed on returning to Wimbledon whilst remaining fan-owned; having nearly delivered that, we now have some more subtle questions to address, particularly around our footballing ethos. I intend to seek input from fans based on discussion of the draft scenarios before we undertake the full consultation exercise in the New Year.

We are now very close to achieving the greatest goal we set ourselves, so my commitment to you at this election is that I will continue to work hard to sustain the progress we have achieved and to give the continuity to our organisation that is necessary for us to continue to work towards seeing a successful AFC Wimbledon back playing in Wimbledon.

I believe I've made a real positive difference to the Club in my time on the DTB, and I hope you will vote for me to allow me to continue this work.

If you would like to quiz me in more detail about my time on the DTB, you can usually find me at the DT Kiosk at home games; alternatively, email me at matthew.breach@thedonstrust.org.

Dennis Lowndes



My Commitment to Wimbledon FC & AFC Wimbledon (past & present)

I'm a retired 70-year old who is a founder member of the Dons Trust and a Shareholder. I've been a Dons supporter for over 60 years. I served as Chairman, Vice Chairman and Fund Raising Secretary on the Wimbledon FC Supporters Committee, as well as a general Committee Member for many years. When Wimbledon were in top-flight football, I ran the Wimbledon FC Supporters Club Football Team. Before each of the men's first team matches the supporters team would play the respective supporters team, it was great fun! I had many voluntary roles at Wimbledon FC, but one of my favourite "jobs" included "working" in the club office, the week leading

up to the 1988 FA Cup Final, and selling FA Cup Final tickets to "supporters", many of who weren't very local, with their Liverpoolian accents!

In 2002, I helped Terry Eames select players from over 700 trialists on Wimbledon Common to form the first ever AFC Wimbledon squad. I became AFC Wimbledon's first kit man and players' taxi driver! Over the years, I've held many volunteering roles for AFC Wimbledon including pitch maintenance, stretcher duties and Ladies 1st Team Manager. I am currently the Chairman of the Ladies & Girls, who have grown from one team to 16 teams since the section was formed in 2004. We have over 200 players from the age of 9 up to Ladies. This season has seen more girls than ever progress through the ranks to the 1st Team. The talent coming through looks even brighter for the future.

My Background

I have lived in Merton all my life and I have been on Committees all my life. As a Governor of a Merton High School, Chairman of a Tennis Club, Secretary & Chairman of Amateur Football Clubs. I served on School Parent-Teacher Associations and raised lots of money for schools, sports clubs and charities (including cooking thousands of meals for the homeless in London). I have been a qualified Football Referee since 1972.

What I would like to bring to the Dons Trust table

Dons Trust Liaison Officer

I would like to be the Dons Trust Liaison Officer so the fans have someone they can freely talk with about anything to do with the development of the club and how we can improve the match day experience for fans, this is so important as we need to move back to Plough Lane singing & dancing together in harmony!

Engagement with Younger Fans

We have a great club that needs to grow its fan's base fast in the next few years. We need our younger supporters to get the message out to their mates, so they join our club on & off the pitch.

Ladies & Girls

I would like to fully integrate the Ladies & Girls section in to the club, with the aim to get our Ladies 1st team in to the Women's Premier League, have Elite Girls teams, a Girls Academy & Girls Grassroots community teams.

New Volunteers

We have so many fans that could help us achieve a lot more on and off the pitch, if only we asked them. I would like to ensure we are using our own members' talents to help grow the club.

Sponsorship

We should exploit our history & achievements to get additional sponsorship from local & major multi-national companies. We have a great opportunity now we are moving back to Plough Lane. We are a fans owned family club and we want our club to grow, so let's sell ourselves to the world!

Training Facility

I would like to see AFC Wimbledon with its own training facility, which could cater for everyone at the club including The Foundation & disability teams

Official Overseas Supporters Network

I would like to help the Dons Trust start an Official Overseas Supporters Network so that we can engage with supporters from all over the world. I already have overseas supporters willing to be part of this initiative.

What I stand for

- Making sure all AFC Wimbledon fans voices are heard
- Making sure our Volunteers voices are heard and are valued
- Making sure our future young generations have their voice heard
- Making sure we connect with all supporters via every form of communication and not just electronically or via social media – some of our fans do not use the Internet and we need to remember this!

What I would bring to the Dons Trust Board

- Energy & enthusiasm
- A total passion for AFC Wimbledon to succeed
- Communication with fans
- I am willing to put my hand to anything if it was something needed and required by the Dons Trust and our fans. I have a lot of experience on & off the field of play!

James Macdonald



A Fans Club Wimbledon are the words that embody why our club is so special. As a 42-year supporter and the third of four generations of Dons fans I am determined that, as a Trustee, I ask the questions and provide ideas and actions that ensures your Club moves forwards on all levels. The role of the DTB is to set the direction of our club – from our academy teams to our first teams and most importantly to be accountable to you, our fans and owners: we are special and we should constantly celebrate that.

My core belief is in wide consultation to drive improvement – asking our fans and sharing experiences with other fan-

owned clubs – and I would look to pursue all sensible ideas which emerged without cutting across the responsibilities of the club's management.

My key aims are:

- **We develop more effective ways of feedback with you**, through both use of surveys, meetings and informal discussions so that the Trust supports the club in moving forward in a way that is collegiate, transparent and democratic;
- **To develop better feedback for you by open and fair discussion** about how the first team can be improved through asking questions of the Football Club's board;
- **To better reflect the work of the Trust and the club with all information available on one website;**
- **To ensure we make the match day experience one that all supporters feel is positive** and continually improving because they are involved in key decisions. I want to ensure we maximise our revenues with our return to Plough Lane – a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to embrace both tradition and change;
- **To introduce a vibrant Junior Don Committee** (which is where I first started committee work for Wimbledon FC back in 1987). I see the voice of our younger fans as being under-represented and want to ensure that are consulted on aspects of the ways in which the whole club can change for the better;
- **That the work of our Academy continues to evolve so that we meet our aim of being 'first choice'** for all children in South West London and that the categorisation rises to Category One;
- **To consult on all aspects of our return to PL. and the opportunity to** deliver tangible improvements across all aspects of AFC Wimbledon.

I am the leader of a multi-academy trust where I have delivered improvements in Ofsted judgements to take the schools to 'good' and on a path to 'outstanding'. My work within schools means that I work closely to ensure that all stakeholders have a representative voice, Final decisions based on the best interest of our students. I work particularly closely with our Heads of Schools where my role is to provide support and challenge to deliver the best outcomes. I am used to, and welcome, the opportunity to be held accountable. I ensure that the trust works in a manner that is entirely transparent and open with students, staff, parents and our community.

The experiences and skills that I have developed mean that I have an enormous amount to offer the DTB. I see my role to provide the support and, where needed, challenge to ensure that supporters feel that they have a club that consistently over-achieves at all levels: from our youngest academy team to our first teams in both women's and men's football. I see the commercial opportunities with Plough Lane and the chance to expand our fan base. Finally, I understand the importance of our stakeholders being involved in their club in a democratic fashion so that supporters truly feel that this is their club because its unique setup and way of operating is one that listens to its owners. I share some concerns that, with the club rising through the leagues, with the greater "professionalism" in the club and with PL on its way, the fans-and-club relationships may come under strain (the recent Season Ticket No-Shows incident is an example).

Both of my proposers recognise not just my commitment to the club but also the vision and leadership that I would bring to the Dons Trust Board. Damian Woodward leads on "We are Wimbledon Fund" which has raised many thousands for the club. Daniel Norris has worked behind the scenes to deliver the freehold of Plough Lane as well as the legal agreements necessary for us to return home. I have the experience, the skills and the passion to support all of our ambitions so that we maximise the opportunities coming to us over the next few years to help deliver yet more success in Yellow and Blue. Thank you for reading and I very much hope that you are convinced as my proposers that a vote for James Macdonald will help drive the future success of all aspects of A Fans Club Wimbledon.

Luke Mackenzie



I admire anyone who gives up their time for this amazing football club. At a time when the team is struggling, everything gets put under the microscope even more and there is a lot more pressure both on and off the pitch. And that's why I'd like to pose some questions to you.

How close do you currently feel to your football club and trust?

If you were in charge, what would you seek to change?

How do we balance the needs of a commercial organisation abiding by league rules and the fans as owners?

Tough questions?

Which brings me on to why I'm putting myself up for election to the Dons Trust Board.

Firstly, the move to Plough Lane is amazing and something we could only have dreamt about in 2002. Everyone has worked so hard to make this a reality. But the work has only just begun. As someone who volunteered in the AFC Wimbledon office before, during and after the purchase of Kingsmeadow, I have a unique perspective of what challenges moving to Plough Lane will bring. Having volunteered on a matchday consistently for the last 15 years I feel that I have a sound working knowledge of the requirements of a stadium and I appreciate the needs of the fanbase.

Secondly, my disappointment that the 80% season ticket attendance policy was waved through by the Dons Trust Board and sent to the season ticket holders. The feeling from the open meeting was clear: - there is no way this should have even been presented to the fanbase as a viable policy. I firmly believe that the Dons Trust Board should have stopped the proposal dead in its tracks. But it didn't, and it has made me question the board. How could they be so far removed from the wishes of the fanbase and think that such a draconian measure would be considered a good policy? Why was there no consultation with fans before the letters were sent out? The Dons Trust Board should be leading on policy, not just rubber stamping whatever the Football Club Board decides is a good idea. We, as fans and as owners, deserve a strong Dons Trust Board who are willing to take the lead and set the direction of our football club.

The perception from many is that we have little input in how our club is run; that we are a top down organisation as opposed to a bottom up one. It really makes you question the purpose of being fan owned when the fans aren't consulted on the price of things, whether it be tickets, merchandise, or food, and when we have no say on the matchday experience, stewarding or allocation of tickets for big games. This worries me - Plough Lane should bring us a good boost to our fanbase but we need to ensure we enhance our identity as a fan owned and run club. The Dons Trust needs to be a vibrant vehicle for change at our football club. That's why, as part of this manifesto, I would like to pledge that the fans will be consulted at least once a year in the form of a wide-ranging survey. The results of this survey will be published. It will help drive engagement amongst the fanbase and give the DT Board a sense of direction for the following year.

If we don't regularly ask the membership and fanbase what they want, how can we ever dream of being effective?

I'd like to understand what your thoughts are on the culture surrounding our football club. It appears to me that we are not very receptive to criticism. There is an air of defensiveness around what we do. A high performing organisation should regularly review their operating procedures and make tweaks where necessary. From the outside, it doesn't appear that we operate much differently to when we were a non-league club.

I'm a firm believer that we should strive to make the board more inclusive and diverse. The Dons Trust Board should be representative of the fanbase and give the fans a voice. It's your club and you can help change us for the better.

As you can tell, the reason for standing is that I am looking to change the status quo. I think Plough Lane gives us a great opportunity to review our model and we have lots of areas where we can improve. I hear many complaints – whether it's the lack of bar staff, the poor variety and quality of the catering, the consistently high merchandise pricing or poor website and communications. The Dons Trust Board should take ownership of this and make sure the football club improves it or else hold them to account. The dog needs to start wagging the tail.

Nigel Higgs



*Dons Trust Board attendance Jan 2016 – Oct 2018
Meetings 27 Attendance 19*

About Me

Since our formation in 2001/2 I have been a volunteer, a Dons Trust Board Member and an Executive Director of the Football Club. My proudest achievements have been to guide the growth of the youth and community football from our earliest beginnings to the fully-fledged Boys Academy and Foundation we have now and to be part of the Football Club Board that guided our progression between 2006-2014. It has been a fantastic privilege to play my part in our journey to where we are now, a League One club on the verge of a return to Wimbledon – where we belong!

I am asking members to support me once again so that I can use my commitment to and experience of the Trust and Football Club to support our continued growth and success. I have demonstrated over the last 17 years I will work hard to ensure we stay true to the Dons Trust's values and aims. I am a passionate believer in the fan ownership model and that the members should be treated with as much respect as a multi-millionaire owner would receive at another club.

My term of office 2016-18

As a Board member I am not shy of challenging the executive and have successfully secured greater oversight of the Youth Academy, triggered a conversation at DTB about the perceived disconnect communicated to me by members, questioned whether we are retaining Wimbledon's football DNA, actively supported fairness and diversity, e.g. policies on ethics and diversity, ensured that the club's player recruitment strategy is defined, managed the MailChimp email accounts and the 2018 mailouts and represented the Dons Trust as an AFC Wimbledon Foundation Trustee.

A DTB member's role demands they balance the practical realities of oversight of a competitive football club striving to better its status year on year whilst remaining financially sound with the desires of the members and wider fan base.

As a Board we have generally achieved that but have at times we have taken our eyes off the ball. An example is the recent ticketing proposals and communications. I regret that we failed to identify that this would have a negative effect on large numbers of loyal fans who rightly felt they were being acted upon without sufficient consultation.

My Objectives to 2020

The ticketing issue showed me that we need to work much harder at understanding what members want. We need to provide the channels for members and fans to make their position on key issues known. More frequent surveys, including an annual 'satisfaction survey' and feedback mechanisms would be invaluable to ensuring we are aligned with our members

We need to evolve our strategy and secure consensus about 'what sort of football club we want to be'.

We need to oversee the development of business model based on our founding principles and values.

To manage and operate the new stadium will mean bringing in more external employees. At the Football Club Board level, the way we have run football is an area that will need careful attention to ensure we manage risk and ensure the Wimbledon DNA is preserved when our current leaders move on.

We must also take greater care that we continue to value our volunteers and involve them in the coming changes.

Matters on the pitch have a massive impact on how people feel about the club, but I am conscious there is a more general sense that we are starting to lose some of the things that make this club so special. It is essential that we give much more attention to preserving our character.

We also need to ensure we remain open to ideas and to bring through younger supporters who have so much to contribute.

My priorities for a further term are:

1. Ensuring the return to Plough Lane does not lead to a sense of disconnect between fans and club officials.
2. Engaging with the membership and fan base and widening democracy through surveys, digital communications and the encouragement of feedback and exploring like a wider fans advisory group, or elected Chair of the Trust/Football Club.
3. Working towards a fixed percentage investment committed to our community work.
4. Supporting the continued funding and progression of the AFC Wimbledon Academy.
5. Promoting fairness and diversity across the organisation.

I am limited to 800 words here, but I am always around at games and I am on Twitter <https://twitter.com/nigehiggs> , Webjam and other social media.

I feel that I have the experience, drive and track-record to continue as a board member and help the Dons Trust achieve its aims. If elected I will aim to listen to and represent the views and interests of the whole fan base and I will continue to work hard. Please vote for me.

Mark Brewer



Why me?

I am putting myself forward as a candidate for this exciting role, as I believe I have the skills and expertise to bring to the running of AFC Wimbledon football club. Importantly I also now have the time to commit having recently left full time employment and taken up part time consultancy work. I can honestly say I would not be applying if I did not feel I could offer something that would benefit our Club for the longer term.

My preferred match day experience is to stand on the terraces with friends, family and fellow supporters, discussing the game, wider matters going on which affect our club and other events more broadly within the EFL.

In terms of my relevant skills and experience, my work background has been in the management of change (transformation programmes), project management and the insourcing and outsourcing of both core and operational services, including the procurement of goods and services. I have been the direct line manager for front line services, e.g. those customer facing as well as those more commonly known as back office, e.g. personnel, finance and strategic, and in both instances in the contract management of outsourced services.

I consider my background very relevant to issues that are either being faced now, or will do so in the very near future, as we grow as a professional football club in our own new stadium.

I have been a volunteer at the club for many years, and my views have been largely formed by lively discussion while weeding, painting, polishing or sweeping!

My aims:

- AFC Wimbledon as a professional football club is relatively young. My aim would be to help it to be grown steadily and sustainably. We have a history we are justifiably proud of and will not forget our roots. I aim to assist in continuing this growth as we approach a whole new chapter in our future back in our spiritual home of Wimbledon. Our history and how we came into being is important to us, as is our future, which thankfully due to fantastic custodianship to date we have greater control over.
- We need to be considering what best suits us, through wide and thorough consultation with our supporters. The future needs to be moulded by realistic ambitions and all those involved in this great club, which includes our new neighbours in Wimbledon, businesses and residents alike with which we will co-exist.
- There is a lot of volunteer resource put into our current efforts at fundraising, and significant sums raised. We have volunteers that give their time and expertise and do first rate work in this area. I would want to look in greater detail, and install greater accountability into those that have the responsibility, as to how we could better engage with our volunteers and how the funds they raise are used to best effect. The other side of income is always how it is then effectively used and I can honestly say that at present I have no idea how or in what form that scrutiny takes place, albeit information is available as to how funds are raised.

- The achievement of our aims will largely lay in the management of us being realistic with our expectations. We have had phenomenal success in our short history and I believe it would be unrealistic to expect this to continue at its current pace. I would rather we do what we can well and to the best of our abilities. We truly need to consider steady and sustainable growth as a club, both off the pitch as well as on it!
- My own resources will largely come from the expertise I have built up over the years in a variety of highly operational but also management positions, working with the public sector, but also with local small to medium size businesses, larger corporations and the voluntary and charity sectors. I have particular learnt that by working with others greater things can be achieved. AFC Wimbledon does, and should continue to, play an active part in the community.
- We have heard talk of a new strategic plan. I would actively engage with this to ensure that the majority of our support and those mentioned above are represented in this plan. This must be a core objective of the Board, communication is key, and needs to extend wider than our fanbase, again taking into account the needs of our new community interests in Wimbledon.

Want to talk?

I am always open to questions or discussions and can be contacted by e-mail at: mb1sum@gmail.com , via the many facebook forums, and I post on twitter as @DugoutDons

Tim Hillyer



*Dons Trust Board
attendance Jan 2016 – Oct
2018 Meetings 27
Attendance 24*

As a lifelong Dons supporter, it has been a privilege to serve on the Board of The Dons Trust (DTB) for the past two years. I believe I still have much more to contribute and ask for your support and, most importantly, your vote.

Many of you know me from the Club Shop, where I have volunteered since 2002. Latterly I take my turns at the Dons Trust pod on matchdays to ensure that as many as possible AFC Wimbledon fans are signed up as Dons Trust members. It is only through continued membership and participation in decision making with ongoing oversight of the boards that supporter ownership can be maintained.

As a Chartered Management Accountant, I am the Finance Manager of a medium sized charity, which includes maintaining and running a listed historic building.

I have attended matches of AFC Wimbledon and Wimbledon FC since the mid-1960s, home and away since Wimbledon FC were in the First Division. I worked with WISA to resist Sam Hammam's attempts to move our Club to Dublin (and ultimately Buckinghamshire).

Regrettably our campaigning was unsuccessful. Our efforts though brought about the formation of The Dons Trust in February 2002 and the birth of AFC Wimbledon that summer. I am proud to have played an active role, which included working in the turnstiles for our first home league match.

There are a number of Board working groups. I serve on the Strategy and Organisation, and the Operations groups. Monthly reports are made to the full Board.

Important work during the last two years has included: the appointment of our Chief Operating Officer; compliance with GDPR; and the development of an updated Privacy Policy. I am the Data Protection Officer. Implementation of the CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system continues. Of greatest interest to us all is our new stadium. The DT Board scrutinises and takes decisions when required. The current focus is on ensuring that finances are in place and that DT members have the opportunity to learn about the options available and prioritise how to spend the available funds. Some projects which seem simple have proved time-consuming eg the webcam at Plough Lane.

One of my areas of interest is external relations on behalf of the DT Board. Prior to joining, I was already an elected member of the National Council of the Football Supporters' Federation (FSF). I have also been a co-opted member of the Board of Supporters' Direct. Working for national organisations has provided me with invaluable

experience and excellent opportunities to build a wide network of contacts. These have included:

- Campaign for Safe Standing – as a supporter representative, I attended the recent Committee meeting in the House of Commons, at which the Minister for Sport announced the independent investigation (due to report before Christmas)
- EFL working group for League One clubs – topics include iFollow, Governance, Concessions, Structured Dialogue (fan engagement), EFL live streaming (midweek), Away ticketing / Twenty's Plenty, Skybet Away Fans Support, Stewarding and Safe standing
- Kick It Out – working on matters of diversity including racism, sexism and anti-semitism in football
- Pride in Football – many clubs have active groups displaying the rainbow flag
- FanTastic Females – a European project celebrating football fandom amongst women
- Meet the Met – supporter representatives from London football clubs meet football policing officers
- Rail Football Forum – representatives from rail companies and the British Transport Police meet supporters
- Independent Football Ombudsman –this group is the final stage in the complaints procedure. Subjects include alleged ticket touting and the treatment of disabled supporters.

AFC Wimbledon and The Dons Trust are undergoing major transition. The move to the new stadium will test our systems and staff. Excellent planning and flexibility of response to changing situations are prerequisites. Events in the recent past have shown that every adjustment must be thought through thoroughly to prevent unintended consequences. Here are a few of my ideas, including some easy wins and others to be discussed by the new Board and/or the members:

- learning from mistakes
- actively co-opt to DTB from under-represented groups bringing additional skills
- establish matchday consultation groups (already agreed, yet to be implemented)
- set term limits for Board members
- more meetings in Wimbledon
- listen to ideas for fitting out the new stadium
- an affinity cash/currency card
- "gamesmaker" volunteers
- updating the constitution ensuring that no-one can ever take our Club away from us again.
- encourage prospective DTB members to attend DTB meetings
- consult on priorities for away tickets for season ticket holders (increased numbers require setting revised thresholds)
- should season ticket holders automatically become members of The Dons Trust (opt out)?
- membership benefits
- Dons Trust merchandise (eg badges)
- postcode of the new stadium (SW19)
- continue recent progress to set up a Historical Society encompassing the Old Players' Association.

Thank you for reading. Please cast your votes, no matter in whose favour.

Sean McLaughlin



*Dons Trust Board attendance Jan 2016 – Oct 2018
Meetings 27 Attendance 20*

WE ARE GOING HOME, WITH WORK TO DO!

I have been Treasurer for twelve years, and if successfully re-elected, I would offer to continue in this role.

The next two years

The past two years have been momentous for AFC Wimbledon, with planning permission obtained and demolition of the Greyhound Stadium completed. The next two years will bring their own significant challenges and the Dons Trust must ensure that its members are properly consulted in particular with regards to the options for the new stadium. We must also gear up operationally, so that we are set up to deal with managing a 10,000-capacity

stadium for our fans and visitors as well as function rooms and bars, and raise vital funds to complete the stadium.

With regards to a new structure, I led the discussions and recommended the appointment of a Chief Operating Officer to work with Erik and to transform the operations of the club ahead of a move to a new stadium. Once the structure was agreed, together with Roger Evans, we led the recruitment of our COO, Joe Palmer.

In 2018, I volunteered with Colin Dipple and Roger Evans to form the Stadium Oversight Committee on behalf of the DTB, to ensure that there is proper oversight of the stadium design and fit out, and that DT members are consulted on aspects of the stadium (e.g. pricing, catering, building options etc, as I detailed in my article for the Bradford programme).

However, there is still work to do. The new stadium will take AFC Wimbledon to another level financially and bring substantially increased expense and risk, in addition to the day to day operations.

The Club must also stay true to its roots as a fans-owned, community-based club, and on behalf of the fans, the DTB must ensure that the Club is run on a sound business footing, so that the financial future of the Club, and as a result its ownership structure, are not jeopardised.

Role as Treasurer

As Treasurer for the last twelve years I have been diligent in maintaining the financial records of the Trust, as well as challenging the activities of the Board of AFC Wimbledon, paying attention to the Club's Management Accounts and Budgets, to ensure that the DTB fully exercises its oversight role.

My Background

I am a Chartered Accountant with over 27 years' experience as Finance Director across a number of banks and financial institutions. Currently I am the Finance Director of a trade finance bank in the UK. In 2008 with two other founding directors we set up the bank. From three people we have now built a bank with over 125 staff, and with total

profits of circa £22m per annum. I have brought all the financial and managerial experience that I have gained in my various roles into my work as DTB member and Treasurer.

I am a passionate supporter of the club. A season ticket holder since 1989 (first game 1985), I even went to watch the first trials for AFCW on Wimbledon Common. I attend almost all home games, and am a regular away fan with many enjoyable trips (Barrow and Fleetwood are fondly remembered), and, in particular that day in Manchester, when we regained our rightful place in the League, demonstrating that as a fans owned, family and community-oriented football club we are indeed "*in the wider interests of football*".

Wimbledon has always been a family club and I have enjoyed the journey from CCL to League One with my son Patrick, now 23, who quickly inherited my passion for the Dons (and currently works for the Foundation). It is imperative that in the new stadium, we continue to offer heavily discounted prices to children and teenagers, who will be the supporters and custodians of the club in years to come.

My priorities if elected:

- planning for the future financial needs/structure that the new stadium will bring;
- continuing to improve the oversight of AFC Wimbledon by the DTB;
- ensuring that discounted pricing for children and teenagers is maintained;
- a continued commitment to funding the Academy ("homegrown and hungry"); and
- an unswerving commitment to fans ownership.

If re-elected I will bring:

- Strong financial skills ensuring that AFCW remains on a sound financial footing;
- Business acumen;
- Passion for AFC Wimbledon and the Trust;
- DT and other Board experience;
- Continuing drive and determination.

Now more than ever we need a strong DTB, elected by a vibrant and growing membership, to ensure that the Club can grow and be successful in the light of the challenges to come. I believe that I have made a positive contribution to the DTB in the past and have the skills and passion to continue to do so.

Please vote for me to continue on this excellent Board.

Rob Crane



I believe that communication and engagement is an area where the Trust and the club need to improve in order to counter what some supporters perceive as a disconnect between them and the club, a perception that seems to have grown more widespread in recent years.

Before I go further, I want to acknowledge the hard work put in by the existing boards at both club and Trust. They contribute many hours of unseen work. They all want our club to succeed and prosper, and their decisions are made with the club's best interests at heart. We owe them – as we owe all our brilliant volunteers – a huge debt of thanks.

Engaging with supporters

If elected, I will act as a 'critical friend' regarding the club's communication and engagement with supporters, offering constructive criticism and positive suggestions to help it improve. At present, too often the club seems to stay quiet about issues that concern supporters. This could be because they feel there is nothing concrete to communicate, but staying silent risks supporters feeling that their concerns are being ignored.

Recent examples include the delays getting served in the bars at Kingsmeadow and the ongoing problems that some people say they are experiencing in the John Green Stand. Other issues seem to arise on a regular basis. Individually they may seem trivial or minor, but taken together they can make supporters feel that they aren't being listened to.

The club and/or the Trust may be taking action behind the scenes, but failure to communicate and explain things is a guaranteed way of allowing speculation and ill-founded guesswork to grow. We will never be able to make every supporter entirely happy, but that is no excuse for not engaging in dialogue.

I believe that the club and the Trust must:

- Listen to and acknowledge supporters' concerns – only by listening to concerns with an open mind can the club and the Trust really understand what the issues are.
- Communicate openly, honestly and above all promptly with supporters about why a situation exists so that there is a two-way flow of information – from supporters to club and from club to supporters.
- Explain what is being done to try and resolve the situation – or even to explain why nothing can be done. People don't mind hearing negative news: it's a sense of being ignored that can fuel disquiet.

Some time ago there was talk of hiring a communications and marketing director once we got planning permission for Plough Lane. I would like to explore reviving this proposal, with the director responsible for co-ordinating communication across the club, Trust and Foundation (where there are some great stories that don't seem to get widely aired).

By communicating with supporters properly, the club and the Trust can help supporters feel engaged, listened to, and informed. In the process, the Trust's role at the heart of the club can be highlighted.

A fresh voice on the board

This summer the club announced that season-ticket holders who don't attend at least 80% of matches wouldn't be allowed to automatically renew their ticket. Whatever you think about the idea itself, the proposal was always likely to provoke a strong reaction from a significant portion of the fanbase.

I am concerned that the current Dons Trust board didn't pick up on this; from reading the minutes, it seems just a couple of board members flagged their concerns. The fact that a strong reaction wasn't predicted suggests to me that a fresh voice is needed on the board. I believe I can be that fresh voice, and I promise that I will make myself as approachable as possible so that I can hear the views of all supporters and represent them.

About me

I have supported the Dons since the mid-80s and stand on the Chemflow Terrace. I trained as a newspaper journalist and now work in publishing. I have volunteered in several roles since 2002 including as a steward, as part of the team producing the matchday programme, and as a member of the Trust board's secretariat, during which I sat in on board meetings.

Want to know more?

Check out my blog at robcrane.net/blog. Ask me a question on Twitter (@rob_crane) or in the club Facebook group. Email me at vote@robcrane.net. I will be near the Dons Trust kiosk before forthcoming matches (except for the Shrewsbury match, when I will be on a family holiday) with print-outs of relevant blog posts. It'd be good to meet you!

I promise to do my best to deliver better communication and engagement about the things that matter to the club's supporters. Please vote for me.