

The Dons Trust's rules for elections to the Trust Board 2018

Wimbledon supporters set up the Trust to be a democratic organisation based on participation from its members. We want to run elections that have the widest possible involvement by members, as candidates and as voters. We must ensure that the way we organise and control elections encourages members to take part. These rules therefore aim to promote active and vibrant elections, keeping bureaucracy to a minimum while ensuring fairness as far as possible.

The election steering group (ESG)

1. From time to time the Board will appoint a Chair of the ESG. On the ESG Chair's recommendation, the Board will appoint other members to the ESG. The Chair's main responsibility will be to ensure a vibrant, fair election.
2. The ESG will work in liaison with the Secretary of the Trust. Members of the ESG are not allowed to stand as candidates, nor to nominate a candidate, in any Trust election.
3. During the election period (which runs from the opening of nominations until the declaration of the results) the ESG will run the election in accordance with these rules on behalf of the Trust. Outside an election period, the ESG will support and advise the Board in matters relating to the conduct of elections; they will also advise the Board on widening and deepening members' participation in Trust elections.

Announcing the election

4. The Secretary of the Trust will formally start the election by announcing its timetable, the number of elected positions to be filled and the nomination procedure.

Eligibility and nomination

5. A candidate must be a member of the Trust and meet the criteria set out in rule 58 of the constitution.
6. A candidate must comply with the nomination procedure announced by the Secretary.
7. The ESG will verify all nominations upon receipt and may require evidence of identity. This includes contacting a candidate's Proposers. Should there be any reason to reject a nomination, the candidate will be informed as soon as possible. They will be entitled to resubmit a revised nomination, addressing, to the ESG's satisfaction, the ESG's concerns either before the close of nominations, or 48 hours after being advised of the rejection, whichever is the later.
8. Candidates are responsible for the veracity of their manifestos and programme summaries. In their material, candidates may not make threats or insults, nor make derogatory, abusive, racist, sexist, or homophobic statements or references. Statements about other candidates should be backed up with evidence in or linked to the manifesto.
9. The ESG will remove any statements that it considers to be in breach of Rule 8 from manifestos and / or summaries before publication. Any text so removed will be replaced by a statement explaining the removal.

No policy statement can anticipate all the questions that might arise. If in doubt on matters not clearly covered by this statement, the ESG should always be guided by the spirit of these rules.

Announcement of candidates

10. The ESG will inform the Secretary of the number of properly nominated candidates.

11. If the number of properly nominated candidates is more than the advertised number of vacancies, the ESG will publish a list of their names and their manifestos, as well as the names of those members nominating each candidate and other information that the ESG considers useful to members.

12. If the number of properly nominated candidates is equal to or fewer than the advertised number of vacancies, the ESG will publish a list of their names and their manifestos and will report to the Secretary that they are considered to be elected.

Campaigning

13. Candidates are encouraged to campaign actively. The ESG will make every effort to ensure that candidates are provided with opportunities to campaign, and will be supported in this by the Board of the Trust. Webjam and twitter debates, hustings, surgeries, programme articles, PA announcements, providing poster sites at the ground and publishing articles on the official website at www.afcwimbledon.co.uk will all be considered by the ESG. Should any candidate come up with a new way of campaigning, they are encouraged to discuss it with the ESG before going ahead.

14. In order to ensure a level playing field for all candidates, the use of any club facilities not open to all candidates is not allowed. For the avoidance of doubt, this does not apply in cases where debates and other similar events are organised on dates at which not every candidate is able to attend. The ESG must endeavour to ensure maximum participation, but where candidates have other commitments which preclude their attendance, such events can still take place. The ESG will seek to give due notice of the event dates to candidates.

15. Candidates will be responsible for the content of all publicity material they publish, which must comply with the rules for manifestos. Candidates planning to distribute leaflets should remember that many will end up on the floor, and should join in and encourage other supporters to help with any required clean-up operation.

16. If campaigning develops in a way that could bring the Trust or club, or both, into disrepute, then the ESG will warn the candidate(s) concerned. If considered necessary, the ESG will bring the matter to the Board's attention. The Board may, if it wishes, issue a statement distancing the Trust from events. The Board will decide on whether a similar statement should be suggested to the club.

Voting and counting

17. Voting will be by a multiple variant of the "first-past-the-post" system. Members will be able to cast as many votes as there are vacant positions. Members cannot vote more than once for any candidate, but they will be encouraged to use all their votes. The candidates will be ranked in order of number of votes received and allocated to the available vacancies in descending order of votes received until all the vacancies are filled. The ESG is responsible for distributing voting instructions and making candidates' manifestos available to all members entitled to vote at the election. In the event of a tie requiring resolution, the result will be decided by an independently observed lottery.

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18. The count will be overseen by an independent person.

19. The results as determined by the ESG are final and will be published as soon as possible after the count. The announcement of election results will include the number of votes cast for each candidate.

Conducting a fair election

20. During the election period:

- Trust and club volunteers and club employees should not be involved in campaigning for any candidate or candidates while undertaking their duties, but, as a general rule, candidates may continue with their own duties. If there are concerns about this in a particular case, these should be raised in the first instance with the ESG;

- any opinions given by anyone connected with the Trust or any of its subsidiaries should be expressed in a personal capacity, and not on behalf of the Trust or its subsidiaries.

21. Any communication about the implementation of these rules should be addressed to the ESG:

- by email to elections@thedonstrust.org;

- by letter addressed to the ESG delivered to the Trust at the Trust Kiosk at The Cherry Red Records Stadium; or

- by writing to the ESG c/o the Trust.

The ESG will endeavour to acknowledge receipt of such communication within two working days.

22. If any candidate breaks these rules, the ESG will judge what, if any, steps to take, in the interests of a vibrant and fair election. The ESG will proceed sensitively, recognising that Trust members may not be seasoned political campaigners and that advice can at times be as effective as the imposition of sanctions.

23. During the election period members, whether candidates or not, who have any complaints about the conduct of the election should follow the procedure in 21 above. Anonymous complaints may not be investigated, but the Board, the Secretary and the ESG will try to respect any request for confidentiality.

24. Appeals against any decision of the ESG may be made to the Secretary; they will be judged by the Board of the Trust.

25. If a successful candidate declines to take up their place after the results of the election have been announced, then the resulting vacancy will be considered as a resignation of a Board member in accordance with the constitution of the Trust.

26. Where reference is made to the Board in 13, 16, 23 and 24 above, any discussion or judgement can only involve Board members who are not candidates.

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