

James Macdonald



Proposers: Dr Lee Willett and Rosie Caley

As the Chief Operating Officer of a 6-school, £18 million turnover, Multi Academy Trust, I have the experience and skills necessary to play the role of a critical friend to give support and challenge to the club's management to help the club run efficiently and sustainably. I thrive on the challenges that change and delivering results brings.

My core mission is to ensure the governance of the Dons Trust is effective in both supporting employees and holding them to account for performance. I am not standing to "run the club" - I am standing as a Trustee - to safeguard the club's assets – including our wonderful stadium, to support all our teams to reach their potential and our intangible assets, such as our reputation. I want to ensure our assets are used well and that the club is run sustainably. As a member of the Dons Trust Board, I would look to support all sensible ideas which emerged without cutting across the responsibilities of the club's management. We can learn from other clubs, and I am totally committed to sharing ideas and experiences to help us achieve success. I also value 'looking back' and establishing what could have been done better – and how we will ensure that mistakes are not about a blame-game but part of a learning curve that we will address and learn from.

My key principles are:

We remain fan owned. This is not negotiable. But this is not saying we are "fan run". I see the role of the DTB to ask the right questions of employees to ensure we achieve our agreed collective aims.

We celebrate success as a club and work to learn, not blame, from mistakes. This is our club. It does not belong to any one individual.

I totally recognise the value of volunteers who help make us sustainable. The hybrid model we have established is something we should continue to promote, and the club will always be stronger through working this way.

I would like to get past and present volunteers together, listen to their feedback and explore the option of a paid manager of volunteers, so that we become brilliant at looking after them, once more. It is so important we continually remind volunteers of their impact and are better at thanking them.

To support ways of raising finance - and to be innovative in this and to consider using all available options

We develop more effective ways of feedback with members through both use of meetings and informal discussions so that the Trust supports the club in moving forward in a way that is collegiate, transparent and democratic.

We are a responsible employer and ensure that our staff have the opportunity to deliver in their roles. Where it is necessary, I believe we should invest up-front to ensure we have sufficient capacity to support the effective and smooth running of the club. It is a key belief of mine that we should ensure we have structures and processes that offer our employees the freedom to thrive and grow.

To explore the potential option of mentoring in key areas of the club. We have a fanbase dripping with talent and passion. It would be a great use of our own resources to use our fans to create a brilliant learning environment across the club.

We look at all options to build our own training complex to benefit of the teams that represent AFC Wimbledon.

We do more to support the club's asset management strategy as we seek to maximise our revenues at Plough Lane through ensuring we are the destination of choice in southwest London for all events – weddings, funerals, and conferences.

The work of our Academy continues to evolve so that we meet our aim of being 'first choice' for all children in Southwest London

We discuss and agree whether 2 years is enough time to be on the board and make a difference. I believe that a longer term of office would help ensure that projects are completed, would provide experience and stability and ensure more accountability. In my view, the ideal length of term should be four years (with any member of the board able to serve for a maximum of two terms).

The experiences and skills that I have developed mean that I have an enormous amount to offer the Dons Trust Board. I have experience working in finance with KPMG before coming a Chief Operating Officer. I am used to being held accountable, both to the Trustees of the Multi Academy Trust and to the Department for Education. I understand the importance of making sure you can justify how every pound of income is spent and the need to ensure we always get best-value on expenditure. Thank you for reading. James