

## **Dons Trust Board 2019 Election**

### **Manifestos**

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

#### **Anne Williams**

**Proposers: Hannah Kitcher, Mark Davis**

##### *Who Am I?*

I have always believed in the benefit of sport and the positive impact that it has on any community. Although I coach tennis to juniors, I could not coach football to my nephew and so my first interaction with Wimbledon AFC, was by taking him to a junior training session when he was about 7 (now 21) and we have been card carrying members of Wimbledon AFC ever since that day.



I am an armchair supporter, but a supporter nonetheless and so I've decided to get out of that chair to offer the only things I can which is my time, expertise and enthusiasm to help continue the very exciting story of Wimbledon AFC.

My experience as a Visiting Professor at University College, London has taught me to listen very carefully to my students and adapt the way in which I teach them for the greater good of the planning professions' future.

As a Barrister, my main strengths are to argue the case for the best possible outcome for those I represent and I would have the greatest pleasure in employing this skill for the benefit of the Dons Trust and it's members.

##### *What I Can Offer*

Being self employed affords me the skills to get on with the job at hand, as well as a flexibility to offer my time

You will always be assured that I will take a balanced and fair view on matters arising from the Board, and fight for the best interested of our members.

I can think of nothing better than to use my skills and determination to be a small part and building our Club's future in it's rightful place, in our home of Wimbledon.

##### *What I'd Like To Achieve*

The ongoing success and growth of our Club has stemmed from it's humble and small beginnings driven by the community, and a band of determined individuals. To me, it is of vital importance that our the Club continues to thrive, that the main core values that

got it to where it is today are not forgotten, and so regular communication our fans, the local community, and the wider Borough are paramount.

During my 35 plus years of living in the Borough, my belief in the benefits of sport has continued and my main focus is that it should be concentrated on the young. Not only will we deliver a healthier generation through sport, but allow a safe haven for that generation and the positive environment that is our Club. My main aim would be the development of wider young people and youth programs regardless of their sporting ability to become part of our success story.

## **Mark Sturges**

### **Proposers: Maria Butler, Grace McMillan**

I am 42 year old Wimbledon FC/AFC Wimbledon supporter and father of two young aspiring Dons fans.

I have been supporting Wimbledon FC/AFC Wimbledon for longer than I can remember, who believes that as we enter the next chapter of our remarkable story and return to Plough Lane, it is time for a fresh voice with a different approach to things



That is not to say that previous elected members of the Dons Trust Board, should not be recognised in all their hard work and efforts, in fact I would like to thank and applaud all they have done to get us to this point.

While I would like to real off a big list of qualifications and what I have done in the past, I am looking to the future. I will be open and honest as I can be and this is my first time seeking election and I will not be afraid to offer a voice to challenge others.

I believe the Dons Trust Members deserve to know what is happening and to be kept updated, and this is what I intend to champion.

There are so many ways to release information today, and I will be aiming to release this information as accurately and as quickly as possible.

I also welcome open and diverse conversations and while we may not always agree as a fan base, I will represent the grit, determination and passion of what this fantastic football club has, as it continues to rise to achieve where it once stood and beyond.

While AFC Wimbledon is still young in terms of football clubs, we have to learn quickly from past errors of judgement and adapt to the ever-changing landscape of having a say in the running of the club.

As a Dons Trust Member, I will be supporting:

- An effort to recruit new members of the Dons Trust and strengthen fan ownership.
- This would include to reach out to previous Dons Trust Members to understand why they left and what the trust might be able to do, to support them to re-join
- Make sure the whole history of the club (Wimbledon FC and AFC Wimbledon) is documented and not forgotten, This includes games, programmes and social media
- Updates and effective communication through various channels (because not everyone has social media or use of electronic platforms)
- A possible question and answer session with interviews on a regular occurrence
- Promoting and seeking the supporting of talented Dons Trust Members and fans with the skills that will help raise the profile of the club and, transform the way we are seen to our fans and others

Whoever you decide to vote for thank you for taking the time to read my manifesto and good luck to all others who are standing for the first time, like myself, or seeking re-election. It is a fantastic thing that we have the opportunity to represent our club and I do not take that for granted!

Get in touch to chat about:

Wimbledon or Films (particularly 90's) or, rock music...

Twitter/Instagram: @dawgwithabone

Facebook: Mark Sturges

Email [mstugeyboy@gmail.com](mailto:mstugeyboy@gmail.com)

Come on you Dons!

## **Jane Lonsdale**

**Proposers: Paul Raymond, Charlie Talbot**

**Attended 20/21 Board meetings during current term.**

I am seeking re-election to the Dons Trust Board (DTB). I will continue to work hard on behalf of Trust members.

I believe it is important to retain some continuity and corporate knowledge on the DTB at such a fundamental time for our Trust.



*What do I stand for?*

*I want to ensure that*

- our members' voices are heard;
- our ethos of *Wimbledon* is not lost or diluted as our club continues to grow;
- the DTB itself reflects our diverse fanbase;
- the DTB remains transparent and accountable;
- our youth and younger fans, who are our football club's future, feel a valued part of our club;
- we retain, encourage and recognise the value of our volunteers.

*What have I done and how will I achieve these objectives?*

To **ensure members' voices are heard**, I will continue to seek members' views both formally and informally.

I consciously seek views from a **diverse** range of members and fans. I have set up two DT working groups which include volunteers from across the fanbase. The **Junior Dons** (JDs) working group has one of the youngest volunteers on it and has been instrumental in changing the offer to JDs, including renewed gifts, electronic communications and updated newsletters whilst retaining individually signed birthday and Christmas cards that the children really value.

Following unanimous DTB support for **diversity and inclusion** I have set up a working group which has seen the introduction of Women at the Game events, the promotion of the abuse policy at the club with posters and communications and free sanitary products for ladies at the game.

Telling our members what we do is vitally important to ensure **transparency and accountability**. Ensuring DTB minutes are timely and reflect the meetings and views of DTB members is vitally important. I pushed to improve the timeliness of our minutes, which are now released quicker with less redaction. I will continue to push for full and attributable records so members are aware of DTB views and can make informed decisions. I instigated and established the videoing and live updates via Trust Webjam of our SGM and AGM meetings to make them more accessible.

It is essential that DTB members views represent those of our members. In discussions on the DTB, my views are informed by members. This can be demonstrated in the minutes of DTB meetings. Ensuring DTB member continuity that represents members views is important in our organization so our values are upheld.

Engaging and valuing **our younger fans** is essential to ensure the long-term success of our club and trust. I have organised the successful JDs Christmas Party for the last six

years. I continue to coordinate the Haydon Pages in the matchday programme, seeking feedback from young fans to ensure their favourite elements are retained and new ideas added. Each year has seen changes reflecting those views. This year saw the introduction of a double-page player poster that can be signed and pulled out from the programme with the Haydon pages on its reverse.

With the move back to Plough Lane becoming ever closer and as our club and trust develop, it is essential that our **ethos** does not become lost or diluted. Board members have different views and ensuring fan ownership and not selling influence on boards is essential, whilst retaining and improving player engagement with fans is important. I will continue to challenge and promote these things on behalf of members.

I believe our **volunteers** are essential to the success of our club. We should not take them for granted and we should appreciate their efforts. The value they bring to our club is immense. It is vitally important to me that we treat our volunteers well. I was instrumental in ensuring the Volunteer Charter supported our volunteers and included a complaints procedure for them.

My family and I volunteer at the stadium clear-up weekends, so with weeding, painting, power washing the stadium and car park I am literally happy to get my hands dirty for our club! I believe it is very important my children take part in this, so they understand the ethos of our club.

Additionally, I have demonstrated a wider interest in the supporter-owned football community, by speaking at the Supporters Summit, attending the Board Member Development training, and representing the Club and Trust at events including conferences, meetings and in the media.

#### *About me*

I have been a Wimbledon fan since 1995. I am married with two sons. We are all season ticket holders. I work for HM Treasury, where I am head of Corporate Governance.

#### *Want to ask me more?*

At home matches I can be found helping in the Dons Trust kiosk, volunteering, or outside the back bar. Alternatively, please do email me on [janelonsdale21@gmail.com](mailto:janelonsdale21@gmail.com) or [jane.lonsdale@thedonstrust.org](mailto:jane.lonsdale@thedonstrust.org).

## **Edward Leek**

**Proposers: Rob Crane, Anna Kingsley**



*My current role on the Dons Trust Board*

I was co-opted to the Dons Trust Board earlier this year following a request in the match day programme for someone with financial expertise to assist them to oversee the club's funding plans for the new stadium. I responded to that request and have enjoyed enormously providing that financial expertise and working hard with the club and the DTB on the business and funding plans for the new stadium over the last 6 months.

I have established a good working relationship with key individuals both within the club and on the DTB.

*Who am I?*

I have been a Wimbledon fan since I was a boy, used to stand at Plough Lane, went to the Cup Final in 1988, and had a season ticket throughout the period at Selhurst Park. I was a founding member of the Dons Trust, although I was living in Brazil for much of the time that the club was non-league. I have been living in Wimbledon again since 2014 and am a season ticket holder. My 7-year-old daughter is a Junior Don and is aiming to keep the club shop going single-handedly.

Professionally, I am a chartered accountant and now work as a part-time finance director for small and medium size companies in a broad range of businesses including software, clean-tech, business services and manufacturing.

Previously I worked for KPMG for approximately 20 years in the UK and in Brazil, becoming a partner in Brazil and working mainly with overseas companies investing in and acquiring Brazilian businesses.

I have been involved in a number of charity and not-for-profit companies. I currently chair the Apples & Honey Nightingale nursery (the only intergenerational children's nursery currently operating in the UK), and previously in Brazil was treasurer and vice president of the British Community Council (quite a big British community charity in Sao Paulo), and was on the board and finance committee of the Samaritano hospital (a large not-for-profit) hospital.

*Why vote for me?*

The next 2 years are critical in the financing and building of the stadium and then the start of operations there. It is vital that there is continuity in the work on the stadium. I have built up a good knowledge base of the project and the funding of both the club and the stadium.

The future of the club depends on the success of the new stadium and on taking sensible long-term financial decisions related to the funding and operation of the stadium. I believe that I have already provided much-needed expertise and perspective to the DTB and would like to continue to do so as an elected member of the Board.

It has been a huge privilege to be able to work with the club on the plans to move back to Plough Lane. I am proud that the club has achieved everything whilst remaining a fan-owned club with a strong volunteering culture and want to do my bit.

I have given up time from my professional work this year in order to work on this, and will continue to dedicate my time over the next 2 years if elected.

## **Dennis Lowndes**

### **Proposers: Lawrence Lowne, Stephen Chandler**

#### *My Background*

I have lived in Merton all my life and a supporter of Wimbledon FC & AFC Wimbledon for 66 years. I have been a qualified Football Referee since 1972.

#### *What I would like to bring to the Dons Trust table*

I would like to see our Club become a Member's Club so season ticket holders should be given a membership (to The Dons Trust) so everyone should be known as a Member of AFC Wimbledon, so we won't have season ticket holders, just members(Owners). Let's be bold and radical, we are different to any other club in football.

I would like to see all members given benefits/Discounts for being a member

Examples:

1. Free entry to all Ladies 1st Team Games
2. Access to Members Only Events
3. 10% Discount in the Club Shop/Online
4. 10% Discount on all away travel
5. Discounted drinks in Members Areas
6. 10% off all club Functions
7. 10% off all Pre- Match Meals
8. Bring an Adult Friend for a Tenner or a child for £1
9. Club Voting rights
10. Ticket Priority to any Game



**Plough Lane** is Key to our future, we will need to hire out our Club Facilities 7 days a week, so we get regular income though out the year. The local community will play a big part in this area, so we will need regular social events (Weddings, Birthdays, Anniversaries Funerals, Charity Events etc.) to make it pay its way. Our Bar Facilities need to be open 7 Days a week with live sport to encourage regulars in.

I would like to see the Dons Trust more active in developing our **Overseas Supporters Network**. This would allow them to be official Member's clubs in places such as Sweden, Norway, USA, Canada, Australia, Ireland, France, Germany etc. they would now how the club was doing, plus we would charge them a membership fee. We would produce a quarterly update on how the club was doing plus they

could do an article for the magazine about how they were doing, plus we could promote our shop apparel to them. I already have overseas supporters willing to be part of this initiative.

I would like to see Our Ladies 1st team in to the Women's Premier League, to have Elite Girls football teams, a Girls Academy & Grassroots Community Football Teams. I would like to see the Season Ticket Prices increased by £25 to help the Ladies 1st Team budget, so they can compete in the Women's league this would mean all Members would get in to every Ladies Home game "Free".

I would like to see AFC Wimbledon with its own **training facility** in Merton, which could cater for everyone at the club (Men, The Academy, The Foundation, Ladies, Elite Girls, Community teams plus Disability teams)

I am willing to put my hand to anything if it was something required by the Member's as I have a lot of experience on & off the field of play!

As a Club, we have a lot of Member's/Fans that could help us achieve a lot more on and off the pitch, if only we asked them. The Dons Trust haven't approached a lot of fans yet, to see what they could do financially or physically, so I feel we should be using our own member's talents to help grow the club.

We should exploit our history & achievements more, so we can get more **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 go and sell ourselves to the world!!

*What I stand for*

- I would like to see our Club become a Members Club
- To help make our Ladies 1st Team more successful

- To make Plough Lane a great success
- Making sure our Volunteers voices are heard and they are valued
- Making sure all AFC Wimbledon Members voices are heard & that we use their expertise's to benefit the Club (Marketing, Advertising, Printing, Solicitors, Financiers, Builders, Plumbers, Electricians, Cleaners etc.)
- Making sure our future young generations have their voice heard
- To create an overseas Members network

*What I would bring to the Dons Trust Board*

- ENERGY & ENTHUSIASM
- A TOTAL PASSION FOR AFC WIMBLEDON TO SUCCEED

**So Vote for ME : DENNIS LOWNDES**

## **Mark Davis**

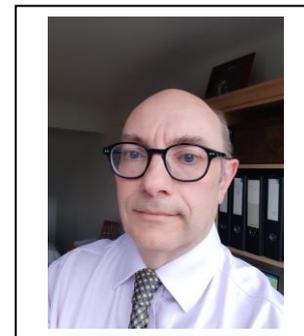
**Proposers: Matthew Breach, David Hall**

**Attended 20/21 Board meetings during current term.**

I'm Mark Davis, a 55 year-old civil servant who lives in Wimbledon. I watch home games from the Chemflow Terrace and go to some away games.

I am seeking re-election, having been a member of the Dons Trust board for six years. I have served as chair for the past two years and vice chair for two years before that. I have previously been DT Secretary and head of fundraising, so I have a long history of volunteering for AFC Wimbledon.

My reason for standing again is that the next two years will be a period of profound change for AFC Wimbledon. We will be moving out of Kingsmeadow and we need to make sure that we have a new stadium to call our home next season. Completing this transformation not only involves financing, building and relocating to a new stadium but also developing our management, resources and governance to support a business with roughly double our current turnover. Those are all massive challenges. I believe the skills and experience I have gained over a 35 year career in finance and government, and my knowledge of how the Dons Trust and football club are run, are much needed at this crucial time. So my priority for the next two years will be to retain a relentless focus on finishing the job we've started and getting us back to Plough Lane, so that we can then kick on into the next phase of the AFC Wimbledon story.



I have had two major responsibilities within the board over the past two years. First, chairing the Trust, including board meetings and SGMs. As chair, it's been my task to work with a diverse group of board members towards agreement on the strategic direction and oversight of the club. We all care passionately about AFC Wimbledon, and we all bring a range of perspectives and experiences to bear, drawn from different walks of life. Ensuring that all board members have a voice, testing board members' progress and maintaining constructive relationships all the while takes a lot of energy, listening skills and, at times, diplomacy.

My chairing style is collaborative. We are an elected board, all of whom have equal legitimacy with members, so it is important to take the time, whenever possible, to reach consensus on issues rather than drive through my own agenda as chair. I have learned over the years that the diversity of backgrounds on the board brings out views and ideas that would have not occurred to me. When the going gets tough, our ownership model gives us a collective wisdom and resilience that we can be proud of.

Another aspect of being chair is that I am the main point of contact for the football club board and I am the CEO's line manager. The football club and Trust boards have a history of collaborating well, when it comes to the crunch, and I'm proud of the role I've played in maintaining that relationship. We have had some challenging things to deal with over the past year, including changing the football club manager and managing the transition from Erik Samuelson, as our long-serving CEO, to Joe Palmer. I have, at times, had to draw on every ounce of my experience to manage those situations. If re-elected, I will offer to continue as chair, although that will be a decision for the rest of the board.

Besides being chair, my other main responsibility since March has been chairing the reinvigorated stadium committee. This committee, made up of members of the football club and Trust boards plus our project manager, meets weekly and is the body through which we drive and monitor progress on the stadium project, including raising financing for it. We meet weekly on Monday mornings, going through a set agenda rigorously. This provides the proper degree of scrutiny for such a major project and also enhances accountability to the Trust board. At times, it feels like Groundhog Day but we are definitely making progress.

I recognise that changes are needed to drive the Trust from strength to strength. We need to get a new generation of supporters to see that joining the Trust is relevant to them, so that we can future-proof our ownership model. The work that various board members are leading, to improve our communications with members (in both directions) and social media presence are important and I'm grateful for the contributions of our newer board members. That isn't where I've concentrated my own efforts but I am in full support.

At times, the combined responsibilities of chairing the Trust and stadium committee, on top of a busy day job, can be stressful. Watching our first match at the new stadium in 2020 will be ample reward. Let's make it happen!

## **Tim Hillyer**

### **Proposers: John Lynch, Nicole Hammond**

In asking for your vote, I request that you cast your preferences whether or not you are voting for me. Contested elections are core to the democratic process ensuring that those elected reflect your vision for our control of our football club. Our ownership of our football club is envied by supporters throughout the world.



The passion shown by those focussed on results sometimes conflicts with the longer-term objectives of those who see the sustainability of our club as the priority. Setting the balance between these objectives is the responsibility of the Dons' Trust Board (DTB). It is not a matter of one or the other. Success on the field of play is of great benefit in achieving our dream of a stadium back in Plough Lane.

In asking for your vote, with due modesty I outline my relevant experience and skills:

- Two years' on the DTB, when the vision of our new stadium became a real prospect
- Serving as a volunteer since the formation of the Trust, matchdays working in the Club Shop, which I co-ordinated for many years
- Attending Dons' Trust SGMs and AGMs, as an ordinary member and Board member with a high percentage of attendance (and participation)
- Currently on the National Board of the Football Supporters' Association (FSA) the successor organisation formed by the merger of the Football Supporters' Federation and Supporters' Direct
  - Served on the joint working group which developed a document on football governance addressing Clubs in Crisis, such as Blackpool, Bury and Bolton Wanderers. It has been supported by MPs on the All Party Parliamentary Group for Football Supporters
  - The FSA is leading the campaign to bring back safe standing, Stand Up For Choice. There is support even from those who prefer to sit. Change will not happen before the first phase of construction at Plough Lane, but is definitely on the way

- Watching Football is not a Crime is the campaign to ensure that decent football supporters are treated properly. The presumption amongst some police and stewards that supporters are hooligans is fundamentally wrong.
- I attend meetings of the Metropolitan Police Independent Advisory Group for the policing of football. Significant reductions in arrests and Football Banning Orders have enabled action to address serious abuse, mainly racist and anti-semitic, especially on social media
- I am honoured to know and work with those amazing people who work at Kick It Out, Level Playing Field and Pride in Football
- The encouragement of diversity by the distribution of match tickets to local groups who might otherwise not come to matches and to bring their children and friends is vital. This extends to improving matchday experience, work in our communities and school holiday camps
- The Constitution Working Group may seem boring and administrative. It is vital to get this right to secure that our club stays in our hands and within our control for generations to come
- I conduct an annual audit on the accounts of Football Supporters of Europe, involving a visit to their Hamburg office
- The history and traditions of AFC Wimbledon and Wimbledon FC belong to all of us. Together with Wimbledon Sporting History, I am working with private collectors, in conjunction with The Dons' Trust, to assemble proposals for the new museum at Plough Lane.

#### What can I bring to the Board?

- A commitment to volunteers. There will be new roles at Plough Lane, including a need for a new role of 'Gamesmakers' similar to the 2012 Olympics at which I was a team leader
- The Volunteer Charter brings clarity both ways, setting parameters and standards expected by volunteers to each other, their team leaders, the Club, and vice versa
- It is not acceptable that our football club does not pay London Living Wage to all employees. It should also be built into our agreements with contactors and suppliers
- I am committed to consultation, including supporter surveys, focus groups and especially to the concept of Board members engaging with all Dons supporters, whether face-to-face, by email and on social media. That demands visibility, beginning with photographs of all Board members on noticeboards and continued encouragement to members to raise issues directly

- There are now limited opportunities for consultation regarding the new stadium, so every chance to engage must be taken
- For transparency, dates and times of DTB meetings should be advertised with members allowed to attend as observers. (Confidential items on the agenda would be heard behind closed doors.) Live streaming is a possible option.

My day job is Finance Director of a charity which runs a listed historic building. Previously I worked in retail for over 25 years as Financial Director of a High Street chain.

With your support I hope to be part of the next DTB making my contribution to the return to Plough Lane.

## **Graham Stacey**

### **Proposers: Marc Jones, Marc Lewis**

It's 3.45pm, I'm missing my first home game of the season and we seem to be 3-0 up against Rochdale. So I suppose my manifesto should be along the lines of 'vote for me and I'll save us from relegation by staying away', or some such.

But while I reckon staying in League 1 is pretty bloody important, I believe results are just the half of it. And that's why I'm standing for the DTB (and refusing to stay away).



I've been a fan since we were marching up the leagues the first time around and most of it has been good times on the pitch. Off the pitch has been mostly fabulous too - especially since 2002.

But things could be better.

Comms have improved, in my opinion, since the last round of elections. But could still be much better, and better thought out.

Speaking as a DT member, I'm sure I'm not alone in feeling a bit out of the loop with what's happening at the club I co-own - whether that's with regards to the facilities at the new ground or the drinks we'll be serving in it.

Having no real consultation on what we, the fans, want from the new ground was just a bit lame. People are busy, I get it, but the fans/co-owners should be the first people consulted - probably *before* we are asked to part with our savings to crowdfund it. And if that isn't practical, let's say why, openly, to as much of our fanbase as possible. Do we want a ground with safe standing for, say, £13m, or would be prefer an all-seater at £12m? Who knows, because we haven't really been asked.

Having no real fan consultation on matchday experience has been a bit half-arsed, too. If there any reason we couldn't be trusted to have an input?

I don't think I really need to mention the issues getting served at the KM bars an hour either side of kick-off. We could barely do worse. But we could at least know what fans put a value on – whether at KM or, more crucially, at the new place. I doubt anything we do will make the KM bars a less than horrific experience before we move, but let's hope we haven't left it too late for PL, eh.

I think it's right that the DTB (and the FCB) are questioned at every level so we as a club can be the best we can be. We can be better. And we fans deserve more than 'we're a bit busy' as an answer to why we aren't.

Vote for me and I'll endeavour to make us better at listening to fans; pushing for much more fan engagement and questioning the FCB and DTB at every turn.

I would personally like to see cheap matchday tickets available to all at the new place. I would rather we played to sell-out crowds paying £10/pop than a half-empty stadium offering £20 tickets. Maybe you would too, or perhaps you wouldn't - I intend to push the DTB to ask you...

Oh, and as for the de rigueur 'dating profile' bit – I have worked in media (mainly showbiz) for the last 20 years, managing teams of zero to 60-odd. Have been involved in big business but prefer to think of myself as not too corporate. Occasionally involved with the Green party (hearing we don't recycle our plastics at the Club was a serious facepalm moment!) but don't knit muesli. I've volunteered for and worked for the Club here and there over the last 17 years or so, and helped edit the OS way before it became dysfunctional. 5'10. The scruffy one in the main stand. No, I'm not Matt Tubbs. Scotch and soda, if you insist.

Happy voting.