

Mark Lewis



Proposers: Paul Jeater and Ross Maclagan

Football to me is about community. The supporters, the people who invest time and money into our club, should be the ones who own it and make decisions regarding what is best for it.

The Dons Trust needs to visibly demonstrate the benefits of a fans-owned club, so that existing and new fans understand and buy into this. It is important we utilise our fans' creativity and energy to help build our football club into something we can all be proud of, on and off the pitch.

Speaking frankly, I do not feel we, as fans, understand what the current business model of AFC Wimbledon is and what the Dons Trust is responsible for. As a result, many feel frustrated about whether the Dons Trust Board (DTB) is a worthwhile group, able to deliver what supporters want for their club's future.

Sadly, it's clear to me there is a disconnect between us, the fans & those who run our club, which has grown since the move to Plough Lane. As one of those frustrated fans, I am standing for election to act as a conduit between disaffected fans and club officials and become a power for good.

I intend to bring my passion, energy and expertise to help the DTB be a force for good, and something every Wimbledon football fan wants to be a part of.

If elected, these would be my priorities:

- As part of the Culture & Mission group, to set out and publish, in plain English, the purpose, values and aims of the Dons Trust.
- Engage with our new CEO to contribute my professional sales experience to assist our current sponsorship activity and therefore increase club revenue.
- To arrange regular meetings between all volunteer group leaders and appropriate club officials to outline and improve existing match-day processes and maximise revenue for the club.

- To speak with existing and former volunteers to understand why some fans have stopped volunteering and how the club could tap into fans' expertise for the common good.
- Compile and circulate a regular email newsletter to all members, to update them on DT activity.
- Put in place a written plan to identify which roles currently done on a part-time or volunteer basis should become full time paid club positions e.g. media, marketing, community engagement, volunteer liaison – and how to do this.
- Introduce annual reviews for DTB members to assess their progress and hold them accountable to their manifesto pledges.
- To recruit new minute takers so that DTB meeting minutes are published within 10 days of each meeting taking place.

The Dons Trust Board needs to be transparent and accountable in their actions. Fans need to be confident the DTB maintains clear oversight on the club's activities and holds club officials to account for their actions. This is vital to help ensure Plough Lane is operated and utilised far better and more efficiently than it has been to date, which will play a crucial role in our future success.

I honestly believe that being – and remaining – a fans-owned club is a unique selling point we should all be proud of and use to our advantage.

I firmly believe the more embedded in our community we become the more secure our future is – as a DLAG volunteer during lockdown I saw the goodwill that this community investment generates.

Professionally, I sell exhibitions internationally, a career choice that relies on me being able to communicate clearly, concisely. Such communication, done with professional courtesy to all, whilst consistently delivering specific financial and operational sales targets are qualities I consider will bring great benefits to any future DTB role.

As a long-term fan, I wrote for the *Dons Outlook* fanzine as a teenager, before joining the WISA committee in our fight against Milton Keynes. I helped to found the *Yellow & Blue* fans' programme and was part of the team selling the first AFC Wimbledon merchandise at Kingsmeadow. Nowadays, I head up our team of match day programme volunteer sellers as well as being part of the weekly "Same Old Wombles" fans' podcast.

As a boy born and bred in Wimbledon, I want the DTB to work with our local communities to create new revenue streams from our stadium leading to long-lasting financial security.

The modern Wimbledon area is rather more affluent than when I was first taken to Plough Lane in December 1977, which our football club should take advantage of. AFC Wimbledon as a club is different and unique in how it came about, how it is run and what it means to have a football club at the heart of its community.

Anyone with questions for me please email: markgraylewis1@gmail.com or find me at home games where I sell programmes around the ground.

Vote Tall Mark!