

Julian Ehrhardt



Proposers: Mick Adams and Pete Hotchkiss

Who I am

I'm Julian Ehrhardt (45), born and raised in Wimbledon. Since then, I have lived and worked in the UK, Japan, Australia, and have spent the last decade in the United States in New York. That means my application and participation would be remote when I am not in London. My family and guiding purpose are my two boys (that sleep in their AFC kit) and whose teams I coach, and a wonderful (and patient) Australian wife.

My Dons 'creds'

I went to my first Dons match aged eight, taken by my father to Plough Lane. I had the pleasure of returning the favour by taking him and my two boys to the first match back at Plough Lane that allowed fans. I've experienced the ups and downs of being a lifelong Dons fan, and the pain of losing our club, which drives my absolute belief that unless our very survival is at stake, we should never be in a position where this can be done to us again. Despite my international travels I have made it to a fair few games and significant events, including 'that' Danny Kedwell penalty resulting in tears of joy. I have a season ticket, participated in Seedrs, both Plough Lane Bonds, and recently joined the trust with my two boys. I am "all in".

Relevant Professional Experience

My professional background is in the digital sector. I've also enjoyed broad experience in areas relevant to the running of our beloved club. I have hospitality experience, having owned bars and restaurants in Japan & US. Extensive sports marketing experience, working with the sponsors of the FIFA World Cup and UEFA Euros, helping to run activation programmes with Budwieser, adidas, Castrol, McDonald's. This involved working over 50

games, and six finals working directly with FIFA and UEFA representatives. This has given me a good first hand look at the commercial side of the sport. I've been President of a sports members club in Japan that introduced football to the country. Here I learnt a lot about what volunteering for committee roles involves... One: it's always for the cause, not for the prestige. Lesson two: aside from being elected, it's not a popularity contest and you need to remain consistent and transparent in your convictions because people will interpret things any way they like. However, my life's work has been in the digital space, where I owned a 300 person international digital design studio. Today I run a creative investment firm working with early stage startups, as well as helping multi-billion dollar concerns with their needs across brand and product. All relevant as our club goes on its journey to fulfil our potential as a club and commercial entity.

Trust members should vote for me because...

I want to be open about my absolute respect for every member of the trust past and present, as well as every volunteer over the years. That service, a thankless and unrecognised task conducted on top of already busy lives, got us to where we are today. With deep respect to those who have served, I believe that it is crucial for us to now become a fully professional club in all aspects of our operation. That is the work I'd love to lend my perspective and commitment to.

Like any family, this club does best when we work together. A great deal of our current strife is due to the results on the pitch, which I do recognise are not completely unrelated to the Trust. However, we are a family club and a community club, and we need to do the work to come together again. When we're screaming and hugging it out after a last minute winner, no one cares about who is what or from where. It's about the club. Always has been.

We can achieve that through transparency in every area we can offer it, save for commercial matters that could be exploited by other clubs. We must also do the work to make AFC Wimbledon the 'my club' team for Merton and South London and pack our stadium enough to justify a new Movers stand in the years to come ;).

If I were successful in my nomination, I would gladly lend my commercial perspective, and brand marketing experience and network to the Dons Trust and the club. My mostly remote participation would offer a valuable perspective not mired in the day to day. I believe we are at the beginning of our journey and that we have so much more of our potential to fulfil, and value to create. The thankless task to serve my club is one I am up for.

Thank you,

Julian Ehrhardt

You can engage me in Twitter at www.twitter.com/ezyjules