

Kevin Rye



Proposers: Nicole Hammond and Martin Drake

Why I want to stand and what I want to do

As owners, as a club and as fans, we have ambition by the bucketload, but that ambition has always benefited from calm, thoughtful leadership. The recent appointments of both Mick Buckley as AFC Wimbledon Chair, and Danny Macklin as Managing Director are an important continuation of that. The Dons Trust helped drive those decisions, and these appointments will enable that leadership to help the club to grow and develop at the right pace, and with the right focus.

I want to continue that growth and development when it comes to day-to-day Fan Engagement and the relationship between the club as a trust-owned entity, and the fans - whoever they are. Growth & huge changes over the past few years make it critical to incorporate new fans and members, whilst ensuring that existing ones don't get left behind. This will benefit all of us.

If elected, working through the Member Services and Engagement Group and alongside colleagues, I aim to build on our existing engagement and culture by working with the club to create a wider range of engagement with fans of all types - members, season-ticket holders, casual fans.

1. First of all this includes more regular open forums at Plough Lane where club executives, Dons Trust Chair and others can hear from fans of all types, providing their views and insights to them, having regular dialogue about the issues.

2. I also would like to establish a 'fans parliament', drawn from people across the fanbase and those in the stadium on a matchday to act as a wider sounding board. Both of these forms of engagement are common at other fan-owned clubs, particularly Exeter City, but also others including Lincoln City, and Doncaster Rovers, Brighton & Shrewsbury Town.

The clear evidence from my own work in this field (see 'About Me' below) is that whilst they can't affect much on the pitch, they reduce needless tension off it, creating a valuable, two-way conversation between all.

About me

I've been a Wimbledon fan since the 1970s. Like all fans of that generation, I revelled in Wimbledon's rise, but equally felt our tragic and totally avoidable fall.

The reality is that we were mere passengers before 2002, with almost no control over events. I'm proud that this is no longer the case. I'm not arguing that fan ownership merely contributes to our success. It is the very reason for it. It is in our DNA.

A former committee member of WISA (as Publicity Assistant), I worked on publicity, marketing & media during our season-long anti-franchising campaign in 2001/2002. I was involved in some of our most eye-catching work, including leading on the 2002 WISA/ICM opinion poll: <https://www.newshopper.co.uk/news/6376116.survey-shows-support-for-plough-lane-return/>

I now work in football, specialising in Fan Engagement and strategic communications. Since 2004:

- I worked for Supporters Direct (now part of The FSA) & helped establish SD Europe (now part of FSE) from 2004-2015, finishing as Head of Policy & PR, working with fans, clubs, leagues, governing bodies and governments across the UK and Europe.
- I established Think Fan Engagement (TFE), creating the industry leading Fan Engagement Index: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/60510631>, Fan Engagement Pod and Fan Engagement Network.

- Through TFE I advise clubs, fan organisations & brands. I am currently overseeing a major investment from industry-leading audience insights company Bulbshare in a trial of their app with Doncaster Rovers FC.
- I also teach on the undergraduate programme for Football Business and Media at UCFB, Wembley
- I have a PG Diploma in Public Relations specialising in Fan Engagement, and am a fellow of the RSA.

My work to date with AFC Wimbledon & The Dons Trust

Since 2004 I have frequently worked on projects with The Dons Trust and AFC Wimbledon leadership, volunteers & staff, including continuing to support the roll-out and ongoing work of our new voluntary Supporter Liaison Officer (SLO) team of Tim Hillier, Paul Raymond and Anuk Teasdale; supporting the early work of DTB's Graham Stacey to roll out regular surveying of fans; working with fellow fans on the campaign that protected the fan-ownership of Wimbledon and launched the Plough Lane Bond; supporting Charlie Talbot with his work on branding & identity; various other communications and branding projects, including creating the media/PR strategy for our first match in Buckinghamshire in 2012.

If elected, I am certain that my wider knowledge and experience of football clubs and the wider game and my wide-range of contacts will be of benefit to the Trust - and by extension the club - wherever they need it.