

Matt Lowndes



Proposers: Roger Caley and Daniel Norris

I'm Matt Lowndes and I've been a Wimbledon fan since 1984. I am a debenture and season ticket holder in the South Stand with the noisy lot, a shareholder, Seedrs investor and bond holder.

I have volunteered since 2002 - assistant kitman with my dad, pitch team, We Are Wimbledon Fund, and I set up and coached the match day academy at Kingsmeadow from the very first season.

I have a strongly held view that AFC Wimbledon should be fan owned but not fan run.

The Dons Trust board have done many wonderful things over the past twenty years and everyone who has had the gumption to stand and deliver for our club deserves the utmost praise and thanks. Some of the recent vitriol that has come their way is unacceptable and there are better ways to convey feedback and opinion. Like standing for the DTb which is why I'm writing this manifesto. Time to put up or shut up.

What we have achieved so far is nothing short of remarkable, and I do not believe that our fan ownership structure is a limiting force in achieving our ambitions of being a Championship club. It's my belief that our club is not being run in an optimal manner. We need stronger leadership, better organisational structure, vastly improved communications, and we need to embrace our incredible fan base and volunteers in a more structured and kind manner.

It might be seen as controversial, but I truly believe that a successful men's first team will drive the success of the entire club. It's what puts bums on seats at Plough Lane, it provides us with the profile of being a Football League club and it will generate the most revenue in transfer fees.

As well as being a Don I am also a Surrey County Cricket member. What they've achieved over the same timeframe tells me that a members' club can be winners on the pitch, have the very best facilities, and display commercial excellence. Anyone who has been to the Oval will have seen how impressive the facilities are - it is a money making beast. Surrey's leadership has maximised its revenue streams. We must do likewise.

I have worked in financial services for twenty years during which time I created my own business, grew it with a fantastic group of people, won numerous awards, created jobs, made profit and helped thousands of people own their own home. I'm now back doing my first love - people and technology - as Innovation Director for an AIM listed business. Every day I meet people, problem solve, collaborate and get stuff done. It's what I do and I want to help our club. Now is the right time.

We need to engage more widely with our fanbase. I have mates who are season ticket holders but not DT members, they say they feel sidelined from the fan ownership perspective. I've asked why they don't join and they say 'what's the point?'

We have a wonderful stadium and it needs to be operating at full capacity seven days a week. We need this to be our Oval - the more profit we make, the more funds there are for the men's first team budget helping us get back to consistent success on the pitch.

I want us to grow the trust ownership model, to engage with our members, season ticket holders, fans and the wider community, and to continue to develop the very best home-grown hungry talent. I want us to have a first-class match day experience, conferencing facilities, training centre (for all of our teams), and financial performance that allows us to grow sustainably and exceeds other clubs of our size.

I believe a 'One Club' ethos can be a massive cash generator and not a drain, as some seem to think. The work of DLAG has shown our community the very best of what Wimbledon fans can achieve and I have no doubt that it has brought many new supporters through the door.

If I am successful I would like my time on the DTb to be remembered for the club becoming operationally exceptional and commercially savvy. I welcome the proposed structural reforms, but we must listen, learn, adapt and implement far quicker in future.

We have an amazing story which is incredibly attractive to potential investors. As the minority investments from Nick and Ananth and the bond have shown, investment does not mean selling out - we must leverage our brand at every opportunity.

'Fan owned' has achieved six promotions, (one relegation), two stadiums, an FA Cup win over a Premier League club and numerous awards. That's not bad in just twenty years of being 'not in the wider interests of football'. We should keep that firmly in focus.