



## **Michele Little**

**Proposers: Graeme Price and David Rey**

### **About Me**

I first got the itch for Wimbledon in February 1989 in the FA Cup where we beat Grimsby 3-1. I never looked back. My only complaint was the toilets, which even at Selhurst weren't a great improvement! Football has always been my joy. I was the only girl in my primary school class collecting Panini stickers - I'm sure my grandad secretly wished I was a boy. That never deterred me and years later, with my sons starting school, I convinced the local footie coaching place to set up a five-a-side tournament. Starting with two teams it now has over 100. I never say never.

I was appointed Treasurer of the Dons Trust in June 2020 and I'm also a member of the Dons Trust Finance Committee. I have implemented new and improved finance systems. Both the Dons Trust and Plough Lane bondholders are now getting their statements and interest payments on time, and I produce quarterly management accounts for the DT Board.

My background is as a chartered accountant and tax advisor. I'm on the Board of two London charities, one as Treasurer (a mental health charity) and the other as Chair and Treasurer (a charity offering complementary therapies to the elderly, carers and hard to reach groups in society). Therefore, I come to the Dons Trust Board with a solid foundation/grounding in finance and I'm also skilled in Board collaboration, governance, HR, and overseeing operations and staff teams. I bring compassion to understand the mental health issues we all face and also an awareness of what is needed to help individuals build resilience and live fulfilled lives.

### **Why do I want to join the Board?**

- To bring continuity on the finance side. With the £4m MSP debt secured on our ground we must make sure we refinance it successfully in early 2022. I also want to support the Club in delivering on the five-year Business Plan which I worked on as part of the Finance Committee
- To bring strong finance, governance and oversight skills to the Board

- A big motivation for me is to ensure we never have to go through the dramas of 2019, when we so nearly handed over the club, again. That must never happen!

I've been attending the DT Board since I became Treasurer. I therefore am very aware of the issues that concern the Board and you as members. I'm passionate about what I do, what I can bring, and I can't think of any better thing to do in my life right now than help the Club and the Trust move forward and be even more amazing.

We all know there are challenges we face. Recent issues with the reopening of the ground and ticketing have been tough to watch as I know everyone in the staff team and the DT Board want the best for the fans and members. We have a very tight budget – we would prefer to have a bigger staff team and at the same time we also want to plough as much as we can into the playing budget. There is so much potential for non-match day revenues which will take time to develop – let's make it work and both increase the staff resources and the playing budget.

### **How will I represent you on the Board?**

- I deliver. We need a Board that represents you and gets things done. I am not someone who needs to be chased. Look at my record as Treasurer and if you give me the mandate, I'll do more of the same.
- I'm here to listen to your views and act on them. I won't be afraid to say what I think to ensure the Board make the right decisions in overseeing the Club and representing members.
- I have the time and passion to do this. I'm fortunate to be at a stage in my life where I don't need to work full time, so my commitments now are all voluntary. I'm happy to give at least one day a week on top of the time I already spend as Treasurer on DT business.

I'm so proud of the never say die attitude of the fans and now we see the same being played out on the pitch – what an exciting time again to be a Dons fan.

### **Hair or Flair?**

*He's got no hair but we don't care. Alan, Alan Cork.*

A strange end? Surely not. After all, I may not be the most flamboyant campaigner - you may find numbers and finance a bit dull. I hope you agree however that my skills and my passion for the Club make me a good choice for the Board.

*She may be square but we don't care.....*

Contact: [michele.little@mybeancounter.co.uk](mailto:michele.little@mybeancounter.co.uk)



**Adam Procter**

**Proposers: Mark Lewis and Martin Drake**

My family have a long connection with Wimbledon FC and AFC Wimbledon going back to the 1950s and currently 3 generations have season tickets.

I run a successful Games Design course at Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton. The course is designed to be unique, with a focus around Games for Good, Games for Positive Change and a working strategy to increase diversity in game-making. Last year, our students rated the course 100% satisfied after 3 years of study, and our alumni achieved 100% professional employment. I am the Creative Research Engagement fellow for the University's Research Institute in Arts and Humanities.

I advise on the University's Digital Education strategy. I am a Senior Personal Academic Tutor, working with all staff on pastoral support for undergraduates, which has provided me with a particular understanding of young people. I have managed teams of over 20 staff and student cohorts of over 200. I have a high level of experience within large organisational structures.

I offer professional organisational and critical thinking skills from dedicated, systems-orientated leadership in Higher Education over twenty years. I bring knowledge and understanding of technology and how people use it and can advise on systems and approaches to connect people in meaningful ways. I want to help the DTB to think dynamically and question the status quo. I want the DTB to be brave.

I have held the role of Chief Technical Officer at the request of a start-up, hiring, creating organisational processes, and compiling reports to bring new digital services to the d/Deaf community. I can support the work of making our governance structure more streamlined and agile.

I am standing for the DTB as I want to help the club move to the next level. To retain and grow the best talent, both on and off the pitch, we must increase our club's overall revenue. I have already brought considerable funding to WISH by leading the devising and creation of a prototype

Augmented Reality game which pits players against historical goalkeepers. It uses Machine Learning to train the virtual Dave Beasant to react as the real one would to your penalty shots.

I propose several other ways to increase revenue. Firstly, we must enshrine fan ownership. And in doing so, we will be clear about where we stand. This, I believe, will help secure with integrity new types of sponsorship and partnerships with companies that align with our ethos. It will involve taking our brand forward by pitching to new types of organisations in new ways. I would look to support this by auditing companies that would align to our brand and start seeking new connections to add to some I can leverage myself and some you already have. Drawing on my experience working with final year projects and start-ups to brand and market games, apps and experiences, I would propose a series of workshops and outcomes to build up the club ethos for staff and the DTB. This work would align with that of the volunteers in Graphic Design and Content Creation the club is currently seeking, alongside current writers and content creators.

Secondly, we need to generate revenue every day at the stadium. We have already done well with the local food trucks and the education hub, but there is more to do, attracting new groups and events to our stadium. I work with eSports organisations including Women in Games eSports and I am keen to pursue eSports events with the club. The eSports business in the UK is huge. The sector has grown at an annual average rate of 8.5% between 2016 and 2019. It supported over 1,200 jobs in 2019 and represents just under 8% of the global market. It supported £111.5 million in Gross Value Added (GVA) in 2019. A major global esports event could generate 238 full-time equivalents (FTEs) of employment and £12million in GVA for the UK economy. (Figures quoted from the UKIE (United Kingdom Interactive Entertainment) 2020 report.)

I know that when you choose to be different, you can achieve fantastic things. AFC Wimbledon's next big step is to stay different by choosing to be different.

Please use the Dons Trust Pro Boards to reach out to me openly. I am an advocate of transparency and open working practices. To support inclusion, I have also uploaded a recorded audio version of this text with captioning onto YouTube. <https://youtu.be/YHhGfARhZzg>



**Dennis Lowndes**

**Proposers: Craig Wellstead and Roger Hobkinson**

**What AFC Wimbledon means to me:**

That it should be fan-owned forever.

What we have achieved on our journey from the lower reaches of non-league is nothing short of remarkable and has proved beyond doubt that fan ownership is no barrier to success. We have a magnificent new home; we have a wonderful community club; we have hundreds of boys and girls in our youth teams; we have successful men and womens' teams; and we have an incredible charitable Foundation including the Dons Local Action Group.

The power of community is there for all to see.

**A little bit about me...**

- I am a lifelong supporter of Wimbledon's football club
- I am a Dons Trust member, season ticket, debenture and shareholder
- I was AFC Wimbledon's first Kit Manager
- I have lived in Merton all my life and have two children and two grandchildren who are all season ticket holders
- I am a director of AFC Wimbledon Ladies & Life Vice President of AFC Wimbledon Ladies & Girls
- I am a Ground Staff volunteer
- I am a former Chairman of Wimbledon Supporters Club
- I have been a qualified football referee since 1972.
- I am passionate about our club and our community and have always strived to make a difference in whatever I do

**What I stand for:**

A 'One Club' ethos that embraces all areas of AFC Wimbledon, and ensures that progress on the pitch compliments its role as a vital community asset. AFC Wimbledon fans are rightly proud of their club and I want as many people as possible to share my sense of pride.

I want to ensure that all AFC Wimbledon fans have their voices heard whether they be young or old. I'm not as young as I once was but I can bring experience and a hard-working ethic to the Board.

**The future:**

Crucially, I want to ensure that Plough Lane is a successful commercial asset for the club, I know that this is already a key consideration for the Board but it is essential that we clear our short term debt and generate revenue to support our first team and improve our match day experience for our fans.

To grow our fan ownership model I would love to engage more Wimbledon fans from all over the world, and to have more fans everywhere owning the club. Simplify membership and ticketing schemes for clarity.

I will continue to actively seek training facilities to support the 'One Club' ethos (Mens and Ladies Sections, Boys & Girls Academy, Disability Teams, The Foundation, Elite Girls) as I think it is essential that we create a unified location for all.

To continue my work across the Ladies Section with the ambition that the first team will play at the highest level of the English game.

To encourage local businesses to embrace our community ethos and to invest and sponsor our football and non-football activities such as Dons Local Action Group and all the valuable activities of the Foundation.



**Mark Engelbretson**

**Proposers: Peter Godfrey and David King**

I have long had an association with supporting Wimbledon FC/AFC Wimbledon along with a general love of the beautiful game, which started way back in 1979 as a 4 year old. I regularly started to watch Wimbledon play at Plough Lane when we were promoted from Division 4 & began our meteoric rise to division 1. I had my first season ticket in division 3, I was there to witness us get promoted to division 1 and then saw us win the FA Cup at Wembley. During my mid teens I sold programmes at Plough Lane and helped carry in the players kit bags from their cars to the dressing rooms on match days. As a teen I also qualified as a football referee but it wasn't until we formed AFC Wimbledon that I took this seriously. I joined the Combined Counties League as a match official and as AFC Wimbledon rose through the leagues, I also gained promotions as a match official with them to the Conference and was fortunate enough to officiate AFC Wimbledon on many occasions, with my last being an emergency 4<sup>th</sup> official in a league 2 match against Plymouth ! Since retiring as a match official in the Conference and WSL, I returned to watching AFC Wimbledon as a season ticket holder attending many games home and away.

In my professional career, I have been worked in the pensions industry for 28 years and I am currently Head of Pensions for Network Rail as well as being a Trustee Director of the £35bn Railways Pension Scheme and two other pension schemes with assets of £1bn. As a Trustee Director, I am tasked to be the custodian of pension benefits for over 350,000 people and look to ensure that people are paid their pension benefits in full as and when they become due. This involves making strategic decisions around how to invest money, administer benefits, understand and interpret complex legislative matters, provide professional support and guidance to the Executive Team that sits under the Trustee Board and to challenge processes to ensure we get the best out of our people. Being a Trustee Director has helped me understand how complex businesses operate and should be governed effectively and I am always personally looking to do my very best for all those that we support around us.

I have watched our club grow and seen the amazing work that our fans, our army of volunteers and our paid employees have carried out to get us to where we are now. With us all returning to Plough Lane in the last year, we once again look to take this amazing club forward in crazy and challenging times, ensuring that we can provide a football club of choice for our fans, our community and all those that we welcome to be involved with our amazing story.

What will I add to the DTB and why vote for me ? Well, I have had so much passion for this club pretty much all of my life and AFC Wimbledon is one of my favourite topics of conversation. I love football, whether it be as a fan, a match official or having a kick around with friends and I want this game and this club to be the best that it possibly can be. I am confident that by utilising my professional experience as a Pension Trustee Director and the knowledge and understanding of running multi billion pound pension schemes, I can help add further experience to the DTB in how they govern the club, make decisions on behalf of the Trust members and how we execute important decisions to take the club forward. With a strong background in Administration, Finance and Governance, I want to be able to help take the club and the DTB forward so that they are respected in all that they do by their footballing peers, local businesses and the community, without putting all that we have worked hard for & stood for at risk. I want to be able to challenge our processes, influence and help improve our decision making processes, ensuring we do the right things for our fans and our community whilst challenging the status quo and learning lessons from not only our past but from other clubs too.

Rome nor a football club were ever built in a day, however I would like to think that if you vote to elect me onto the DTB you will be able to see the Trust and the Club taking things forward and becoming more professional in all that we do, making this great football club even greater.

COYD's !

Mark Engelbretson



**Kris Stewart**

**Proposers: Graham Stacey and Stephen Buck**

About me: A Dons fan since 1986, I was chair of the Wimbledon Independent Supporters Association 2001-2002, founding Chairman of AFC Wimbledon in 2002 and have been on the Dons Trust board twice, most recently standing down in 2015.

If I'm elected:

- I'll always argue - and vote - to ensure we remain in control of our club. And I'll always tell you how I've argued and how I've voted.
- I will push to open up board business, so that members know what each board member says and does, so everyone can be held to account and can be judged on their own record when it comes to re-election.
- I will also push the club to be more transparent, with clear and straightforward communications which celebrate our successes and own our mistakes.
- If the DTb enquiry into the ticket system fiasco hasn't yet reported back to members, I'll push for that to happen as quickly and as openly as possible. When it has reported, I'll work to ensure the right lessons are learned for the future – no matter how difficult those lessons might be.

Six years from my last stint on the board, we've come a long way (again). I've lost count of the number of times people have said, over the years, "what an exciting time this is to be a Wimbledon fan". And it's true once again today. I was lucky enough to stand on the West Bank as a teenager. Now at 54 I've got my seat in the West Stand.

What has been done to get us here - from despair in Soho Square on 28 May 2002, via Gander Green Lane and Bottom Meadow to the City of Manchester and Wembley, and finally home to Plough Lane once more – is just incredible. And isn't it great? Doesn't everyone you bump into at Plough Lane tell you how much they love it?

While we might not be top of the league yet, I love what Mark Robinson is doing and I am sure we have the best possible person for the job of pushing us on. And the work of the AFC Wimbledon Foundation, including the Dons Local Action Group, makes us all proud. Now we need to make sure that every part of AFC Wimbledon is as well prepared and as clear about its purpose.

We've had our issues. The funding crisis in 2019 led some to propose we give up control. Thankfully members said no. And the cash raised then was instrumental in getting us to Plough Lane. But there's more to do – there's a big chunk of a loan to pay back this April, and currently there isn't a firm plan in place.

And the teething troubles we've had – with ticketing above all, but in other areas too – show the need for a strong board, always representing the wishes of members and the interests of fans generally.

Now is another crucial time for us. If we can keep members engaged, stay on top of financing issues and get the stadium working as hard for us as we have worked for it, we will be well on the way to ensuring we have a sustainable fan-owned club which will last longer than any board member.

This election sees the end of an era, with Jane Lonsdale having decided to take a well-earned break. Jane has been a champion of members ever since she joined the board in 2013 and with her standing down, we are losing that powerful voice for members. While I wouldn't claim I can fill Jane's shoes, I'm standing this year to be one of those on the board who is passionate about fan ownership and about member engagement. I am determined that our club will always be in our control.

The recent survey of Dons Trust members showed once again that we want to play at the highest level we can while remaining fan-owned. It also made clear that members want those in leading positions to be committed to fan ownership and that we want a club that is environmentally sustainable and embedded in our local communities. If elected, I'd work to make those things happen.

Hats off to everyone who has done so much to get us back home. We have new generations watching us who weren't born in 2002. Let's keep our club safe and sustainable for them and generations to come.

I hope you're able to support me in these Dons Trust board elections. But if not, please make sure you use your vote anyway.



## **Graeme Price**

**Proposers: Damian Woodward and Marc Jones**

### **Why I wish to join the Dons Trust board**

Going home to Plough Lane was an immense achievement that we should all rightly bask in the warm glow of. There is however so much more to be done to keep our unique club moving forward.

You won't find me shouting the odds on social media, as I prefer to be a doer, previously having striven to help in the background with several of the fund raising initiatives that you may have seen. These include the creation of the We Are Wimbledon Fund, which is still the biggest regular fan contribution to the overall budget, (in conjunction with Xavier Wiggins, Marc Jones, Damian Woodward and Matt Lowndes) and the set up and running of the Plough Lane Bond ( with Charlie Talbot, Damian Woodward and Xavier Wiggins). Currently I sit on the Finance Committee which reports in to the DTB and helps advise the PLC board.

We're at a critical point in our journey. We need to ensure that every decision we make drives us towards being a financially sustainable business as this is the best defence of all within the current structure in guaranteeing continuing, non-negotiable fan ownership.

- Refinance the MSP loan which is secured against the ground
- Increase our match day revenues
- Develop our PL 365 commercial activities
- Plough Lane as the hub for the Foundation and DLAG at the heart of our community

### **My vision for the Dons Trust Board**

I believe that we are one indivisible club, from the first team to the academy, from the ladies to the foundation and DLAG, rooted in and serving our community. I am passionately against the removal of fan ownership, but we do need to further professionalise the day to day running of the club. This cannot be at the expense of our wonderful and often under appreciated volunteers. They are an

integral part of what makes us special and one of our greatest strengths. We need them, as the business model we should run to is a hybrid one, both now and into the foreseeable future. Far too much onus has been placed on the members of the DTB to fill gaps in the day to day running of the club. This is not fair nor tenable, particularly if the required time commitments cannot be given or skill sets are not available. The DTB should look to complete the ongoing strategy review and publish for comment as soon as possible. The board should be representatives of the members but seek to consult with fans on all essential matters of fundamental principle. The DTB should be given the tools to improve their governance and oversight abilities, particularly as the transition of the PLC board to the operating board occurs. This is one of the reasons that I'm strongly in favour of us seeking B Corp status, as this provides a framework to judge how we are operating on a day-to-day basis but also how we are matching up to our ideals. An area where we are currently falling short is in the provision of the living wage and I would support the implementation of this as soon as practicable.

### **About Me**

I'm married to Maliya and live in Shoreditch but before you ask, I don't own a lumberjack shirt or sport a beard. For the day job I'm the Executive Chair of Jarrovia Group, a Wealth Management business (we're normally the match sponsor for a game during the season) as well as a trustee of a charity and the chair of a not for profits organisation. I have over thirty years' experience of finance and fund raising. My day job has served to give me a sound understanding of how football works off the pitch. Outside of work I have a penchant for coming up with new football songs, have a love of reggae, ska and all things Paul Weller, and a love of good wine, good food and good friends.

My Dad always told me that God gave us a clue as we all have two ears and just one mouth, so we should seek to use them in that ratio. I will seek to listen first as there is a great deal of collective knowledge within our fan base.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. If elected I would seek to do everything in my powers to make your vote count.

**Motto: Be kind. Work hard. Make a difference.**



**Colin Shergold**

**Proposers: John Ivers and Colin Dipple**

One of the main reasons that I am standing in this election relates to the issue of fan ownership. Unlike many of you, whilst I am in favour of us remaining fan owned for the foreseeable future, I am not what I would describe as 'evangelical' about fan ownership. I am absolutely amazed at the success we have achieved as a fan owned club. To have reached League 1 and have built a £32m stadium are incredible achievements. I have always thought that a time might come when financial pressures would force us to sell majority control. However, at this point in time I think that there is less chance we will be forced to do so than I did back in 2019 when the £11m funding gap was announced. I will caveat that and say that the situation could change if we have any problems refinancing the £4m+ bridging loan in April 2022.

So why have I decided to stand for election now, partly on the issue of fan ownership, rather than before when we have been fan owned since Day 1? That is because last year a group of fans, including one Dons Trust Board (DTB) member produced a manifesto where they said they would like to (amongst other things) 'enshrine fan ownership' in our club. So, in other words they want to remove the possibility that we could ever sell majority control whether it be in the next 5, 10, 20 or 50 years. I believe that is a very dangerous proposal because it would remove our 'get out of jail card' as a last resort in case we ever get into financial trouble in the future, as we (arguably) did in 2019.

Potentially we have some fairly major financial hurdles to overcome. Most immediately there is the bridging loan mentioned above. There are also plans for a new training ground which could be very costly. Also, in the medium to long term hopefully we can consider increasing the capacity of the Cherry Red Records Stadium. Meanwhile, who knows what is going to happen outside the world of AFC Wimbledon? What happens if the situation with Covid 19 takes a turn for the worse, perhaps with new, stronger variants meaning more potential lockdowns and empty stadiums again? With all these variables to consider I think it would be foolish to remove our 'get out of jail card' of selling

more shares in the club. It's worth bearing in mind that if in the worst-case scenario, we were forced into administration we would have no control on who took us out of administration,

If there were ever circumstances where we might be forced into selling majority control at some point in the future I would only ever be in favour if the Dons Trust kept ownership of Plough Lane. Also, I would propose that say we were to sell a 51% share in the club, we insist on a clause whereby we have first refusal on buying back 2% for a nominal amount and thereby regaining majority control.

To the best of my knowledge most of the DTB who have another year to serve are either in favour of 'enshrining fan ownership' in our club or if not are 'evangelical' about fan ownership. I think it would be healthy for someone to be elected to the DTB who is more open minded on this key topic.

So, what can I add to the DTB? I believe I am exceptionally good at communicating with people having spent my entire career (over 35 years) in face-to-face sales roles. The DTB and the football club have been accused of not communicating with the fans effectively, for instance on the ticketing problems this season. I think I would be an ideal person to be the 'link' between the DTB and the fans. If elected I will propose to the DTB that if the fans have any complaints about the club, then I should be the default person to deal with them. I would then either direct them to someone at the club or look into the matter myself as appropriate.

The only major negative that I have heard about the Cherry Red Records Stadium is the lack of parking. For the Boxing Day game against Charlton there are no trains so I think the club should investigate the possibility of a park and ride scheme and encourage car sharing.

With regards to on the pitch matters I think it would be a good idea to have a target of promotion to The Championship within 5 years.

Finally, it feels to me like some members of the DTB wish us to become a 'political movement'. I am 100% opposed to that wish!

Thanks for reading! COYD. Vote Shergy! :-)



## **Graham Stacey**

**Proposers: Gary Jordan and Kris Stewart**

Vote Stacey!

I've decided to stand for another term on the Dons Trust Board because I don't think my job is done, yet.

Over the last two years I have always been a voice for fan engagement, transparency, fan ownership and fairness.

My time on the DTB didn't get off to the smoothest start, you might say. I was actually sworn in on the night in 2019 when we were told, completely out of the blue, that we couldn't afford to build Plough Lane and would have to sell the club.

So my first job on the Board was to fight it. I met with the prospective buyers and argued hard against the sale. And I was one of only a couple of people on the Dons Trust Board who pushed for us to support the Plough Lane Bond that went on to get us out of that financial hole.

It was a case of trusting the fans who have always rallied round in the club's hour of need, and have never let this club down. It turned out we had been kept in the dark because not everybody did have that faith - and I like to think that mistake won't be made again. Our fans are the best, without hesitation. Never doubt them.

Of course, the job wasn't done there, and there were difficult decisions to be made to get Plough Lane built, while maintaining focus on other areas of the club that needed to improve.

Back in 2019 I stood on a ticket of improving communication and engagement with fans, and I think I have helped improve those areas... a bit. It's been baby steps, but I've helped set up regular Meet The DTB sessions and helped create Meet The Manager/Meet The CEO and SGM events live online for the first time, making them available to wider audiences.

We've consulted on everything from how to fix the bar service at KM (good grief, remember that!?) to the name of the pub at Plough Lane, and more. You may have also noticed a bit more engagement on DT social media and I like to think the DTB have been a lot more transparent with regards to finances over the last couple of years. And I would hope I've personally been pretty open with any owner who I have spoken to directly. I really don't believe the owners should be kept in the dark and I have always acted with this in mind. Not selling out and not treating the owners like muck: that's kinda my shtick.

Occasionally these principles lead to some lively debate in DTB meetings, and I may often find myself on the losing side, but I'll never be scared to voice an opinion or fight for the owners.

Elsewhere in my 2019 manifesto and in hustings I talked about how ridiculous it was that a League One football club didn't seemingly have any KPIs in place for staff (or even an HR department, as far as we could tell). We have both in place now, and we pay people a living wage. We've done stuff behind the scenes to implement processes for when we hire people, too. I'm not sure we're quite there yet as a great employer, but in many respects I believe we've improved over the last two years. As part of this process, people are more accountable, too. I was one of those who pushed for an inquiry into the ticketing fiasco. I will ensure lessons are learnt from it. That said, the inquiry should have been done by the time of these elections and it hasn't been. That's not good enough, really, and I will always push for better.

We still need more surveys and more proper consultation, not just lip service. More process, to borrow a familiar phrase. The DTB is nowhere near perfect, but we're getting better and I will push for that to continue – if you value stuff like transparency and engagement, and someone who will always argue on the side of the owners, vote for me.

Oh and if anyone is interested, I've been a fan since I was in nappies, I edit stuff on three national newspapers to pay the bills, I'm a single dad by day/night, I'm a bit of a green and I would love to get out more, if only I could get a nap sometime. See you at the game.



**Ben Ransome**

**Proposers: Carl Ransome and Tom Case**

It would be a great privilege to serve on the Wimbledon trust board as a member, following the Dons triumphant return to Plough Lane. To be a very small part of this great club's history would truly be an honour.

I believe I have the ability to contribute towards the future of this club and its fans, and I am a strong advocate for fan ownership of our beloved club. I am a Nurse and frontline worker, during the pandemic and now more than ever I understand the importance of community and teamwork.

I have supported Wimbledon since I was a baby. Watching the Dons rise from the ashes to where they are today is truly humbling. Supporting the club has given me a sense of community like no other and brought my family closer together.

The story of Wimbledon is one well known to all fans of football. The Dons must remain a fan owned club in order to ensure that the mistakes of the past are never relived. We must allow our brand to grow and attract more fans and continue to support our community as we have done so well. Especially during the pandemic and the challenges we have all faced throughout the last two years.

I wish to bring the many skills I have learned over the years as a nurse to the Dons board room. Commitment, Courage, Compassion, Communication, Competence and Care. I am proud to be a nurse and apply these vital skills to my daily life, I would be proud to be a Dons board member.

The role of a board member must be adaptable with the requirements of the club, fans and trust members. I hope to bring a positive and adaptable attitude to the role so that I can fully fulfil the needs of the club.

As a board member I would be an advocate for the fans and trust members. However, it is important for voters to know what principles I stand for and hopefully agree with.

- AFC Wimbledon must remain a fan owned club.
- All the fans and trust member need an advocate and to be heard.
- Continue to support our local community.
- Support Employees within the club.
- Stand against racism, homophobia and other forms of abuse. The future of football is inclusive.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ben Ransome



**Niall Couper**

**Proposers: Kevin Rye and Lou Carton-Kelly**

I am a current member of the Dons Trust Board, and I am asking you to re-elect me.

My mantra is simple: I want every Wimbledon fan to be able to put on our club shirt proud in everything it stands for, safe in the knowledge that the club will always be there for you and owned by you.

I am unequivocally in favour of the club remaining fan owned. We only have to let go once and it is lost forever.

Over the last 12 months, I have worked hard to deliver for our members and the club.

I have been heavily involved in the strategy review as we attempt to develop a long-term plan that chimes with the values of our members.

I am proud to be a part of the Dons Trust diversity and inclusion working group. There is no place for racism, sexism or homophobia in our club - and I will always strive to make our club a safe and welcoming environment for all the communities we serve.

I am delighted to have helped create a one club ethos, one that has started to bring together all the various elements of the AFC Wimbledon umbrella - from the women's section to the academy, and from Wimbledon In Sporting History to the men's first team.

But this is only the start of our journey.

We can achieve so much when we work together. Our own re-birth, the promotions we have had, and recently the likes of the Plough Lane Bond are all evidence of that.

There is nothing we can't achieve. It is our USP. It is what makes us special. I want every supporter to reach out and tell our story.

Every fan also represents a unique skillset. There is so much potential amongst us. And I want to help unleash that potential. I want our volunteering scheme, Donsmakers, to become the envy of every club. If we can do that then the world is our oyster.

Take our marketing. We need to bring in the best minds and push forward. No more silly errors. I also want us to be more ambitious and if elected I will push for that.

We are unique. There is no other club like us. We should be the most attractive proposition to any business with an ounce of morality in their DNA. I want us to be the first club that businesses want to be associated with. And it is the skills amongst that that can help deliver that - I want to make it easy for fans to step forward and help.

I firmly believe that the more embedded in our community we become the more secure our future is. I want that investment to secure our future and create revenue streams that mean there is never a question around our own financial security.

And we can do it.

I have a strong record of delivering.

In the past I have written two books on the club, I was the editor of the first AFC Wimbledon programme Yellow and Blue, I helped set up the Dons Draw and I was in charge of the media campaign for the Plough Lane Bond.

I am also head of Fair Game, who are campaigning to change the governance of football. Fair Game is a direct result of the Dons Trust strategy review and the Trust's long-term commitment to improving the game we love.

From a zero starting basis, Fair Game now consists of 31 value-driven football clubs, supported by 40 world-renowned experts and backed by politicians of all colours, including the likes of Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham, former Lib Dem leader Tim Farron and senior Conservative Damian Collins.

Fair Game has now developed a wide range of realistic long-term solutions to the problems our national game faces. Among Fair Game's solutions include the abolition of parachute payments (the Premier League gives around £400m to clubs relegated from the Premier League each year) with the money being reallocated to clubs that are run well. The solutions also include details of proper fan and community engagement, a more robust owners and directors test and no moving a club without the permission of its supporters.

But primarily, I am and always will be a Wimbledon fan.

You may not agree with everything I stand for. But if you vote for me you will get an individual who will work hard to get the best for our club.

Best wishes

Niall



**Freddy Flaxman**

**Proposers: Alex Gyr and Brian Flaxman**

I'm thrilled to again run for election to the Dons Trust Board.

My pitch is simple: I would like to use my business experience to help AFC Wimbledon strengthen its financial position and remain supporter-owned.

My entire career has been focused on leading sports and media companies into the next chapter of their history while remaining steadfastly true the core of what made them great. I did this as a consultant at McKinsey & Co. where my primary work was to advise major American sports leagues on finding their next areas of growth, as well as in executive positions at Bloomberg LP and The Weather Channel.

Most recently, I served as Chief Digital Officer of Creative Artists Agency, the global talent agency representing the world's biggest stars in Sports, Film, Television, and Music. I ran CAA's media companies, including a \$150M+ ticketing company. I also led the company into new lines of business, including the acquisition of a European football agency.

I would bring the same energy I did to these roles to the Dons Trust Board. As a member of the board, I will leverage my experience to pursue projects that both grow the supporter base and strengthen the club financially, including:

1. Growing the amount of video content the club produces before, during, and after games
2. Aggressively pursuing additional sponsorship around the world
3. More proactively engaging club supporters globally through social media

I originally became a supporter of AFC Wimbledon because it represents what is possible when a community comes together. This year has shown that to be the case more than ever. Between a

new stadium, work with the Dons Local Action Group, and exceptional resolve from the team on the pitch, great strides have been made despite a challenging backdrop.

More is possible. While I have made myself available to help as a volunteer, I would be honored to help usher in the next chapter of an already illustrious history as a member of the board.



**James Macdonald**

**Proposers: Dr Lee Willett and Danny Norris**

As the Chief Operating Officer of a 6-school, £14 million turnover, Muli Academy Trust, I have the experience and skills necessary to play the role of a critical friend to give support and challenge to the club's management to help the club run efficiently and sustainably.

Over the last 18 months, three schools have joined our Trust I have led on many aspects of bringing these schools within the Trust. I have successfully rolled out a new management information system across all schools and helped increase lettings income to above pre-pandemic levels. I thrive on the challenges that change and delivering results brings.

**My core mission is to continually drive improvement.** As a member of the Dons Trust Board, I would look to support all sensible ideas which emerged without cutting across the responsibilities of the club's management. We can learn from other clubs, and I am totally committed to sharing ideas and experiences to help us achieve success. I also value 'looking back' and establishing what could have been done better – and how we will ensure that mistakes are not about a blame-game but part of a learning curve that we will address and learn from.

My key principles are:

- **We remain fan owned. This is not negotiable.**
- **We champion our status as a community club. I totally recognise the value of volunteers who help make us sustainable.** The hybrid model we have established is something we should continue to promote, and the club will always be stronger through working this way.
- **We develop more effective ways of feedback with members** through both use of meetings and informal discussions so that the Trust supports the club in moving forward in a way that is collegiate, transparent and democratic.
- **We must be a responsible employer and ensure that our staff have the opportunity to deliver in their roles.** Where it is necessary, I believe we should invest up-front to ensure we

have sufficient capacity to support the effective and smooth running of the club. It is a key belief of mine that we should ensure we have structures and processes that offer our employees the freedom to thrive and grow.

- **We explore options to build our own training complex to benefit of the teams that represent AFC Wimbledon.**
- **We continue to improve on matters such as ticketing and maximise our commercial opportunities.** I acknowledge that there have been some real improvements here – such as the matchday guide – but more can be done. I want the return of a weekly newsletter by email from the club which summarises the news and provides ticket / travel updates.
- **We must support the club’s management as it seeks to maximise our revenues now that we are back at Plough Lane** through ensuring we are the destination of choice in southwest London for all events – weddings, funerals, and conferences.
- **That the work of our Academy continues to evolve so that we meet our aim of being ‘first choice’** for all children in Southwest London and that the categorisation rises to Category One.
- **We play a major role in working with the relevant authorities to change the current levels in inequality across football clubs** so that we make football fairer and more transparent
- **We discuss whether 2 years is enough time to be on the board and make a difference.** I believe that a longer term of office would help ensure that projects are completed, would provide experience and stability and ensure more accountability. In my view, the ideal length of term should be four years (with any member of the board able to serve for a maximum of two terms).

The experiences and skills that I have developed mean that I have an enormous amount to offer the Dons Trust Board. I have experience working in finance with KPMG before becoming a teacher and then a Chief Operating Officer. I am used to being held accountable, both to the Trustees of the Multi Academy Trust and to the Department for Education. I understand the importance of making sure you can justify how every pound of income is spent and the need to ensure we always get best-value on expenditure. I see my role as that of providing the support and, where needed, the challenge to ensure that we have a club that consistently over-achieves at all levels: - from our youngest academy team to our first teams in both women’s and men’s football. Finally, I understand the importance of our stakeholders being involved in their club in a democratic fashion so that supporters truly feel that this is their club.