

More than a feeling?

This year I have had the pleasure and privilege of serving you on the Dons Trust Board. It is challenging, sometimes exhausting but always fascinating. Promotion at Wembley is a memory I will treasure for the rest of my life (although I missed Hippolyte's goal as I was buying my youngest daughter an ice cream!) Our next challenge is to be competitive and sustainable at a higher level – in a division full of clubs who tend to be on their way up or down.

What does it mean to be fan-owned? We have never really answered that question, as we were so busy reforming and building our club. We are rightly proud of our status as fan-owned, but I believe it should be more than just voting for board members once a year.

Hopefully over the last year you have seen more honesty about our responsibilities as fan owners. Fan owners should now be more aware of our on-going losses and the need to help fund these. Fan owners should also expect events like the awards dinner and meet the manager to go ahead regardless of results or performances. Fan owners should expect to be properly consulted on the most important decisions.

I have written and championed the surveys we have done this year, but I would like to do more. I would like to combine them with club customer feedback. We are one club and one trust after all.

I shall keep to the same principles including:

- Address members' very real concerns about how the club is changing as it grows into its home
- Improve the integration and communication between all the parts of our club (Trust, PLC, Women's team, Foundation, DLAG, WISH, WOPA and WOWSA)
- Investigate all funding possibilities whilst always maintaining majority trust ownership and keeping control of our club and stadium
- Only use new money from equity sales to repay debt or for capital investment
- Only borrow for capital investment to enhance our facilities, improve our stadium and increase its capacity
- Create a vibrant, inclusive and open trust with an enthusiastic, empowered and informed board that makes good decisions quickly
- Lead negotiations to improve football's governance, fix its broken financial model and always consider things from the fans' perspective, as after all we pay for everything!

As I stated in my last manifesto:

I have thirty years' experience working for the largest financial and media companies planning, implementing and supporting large projects. I am now fortunate enough to have the time and commitment to use those analytical skills, helping our football club through the next stages of its amazing journey.

I have been a season ticket holder since 1992. I was an active WISA member; I sold and contributed to our unofficial matchday magazine "Yellow and Blue" when we tried and failed to stop the franchising of our club. I was on the working groups that created the trust. Then I was a member of the original Financial Working Group. Together, we launched the first AFC Wimbledon PLC share issue to purchase Kingsmeadow in 2003, the initial Dons Trust Bonds in 2004 and five-year season tickets in 2005. I stewarded, operated the turnstiles and worked in the cash office at Kingsmeadow until our move back to Plough Lane.

A vote for me will promote a culture of openness and engagement. I will listen to you and represent your wishes, as fan-owners of our unique club.

Thanks for reading. Come on you Dons!

Martin Drake

Dons Trust Founder Member DT-00048