

Candidate Statement - Andrew Smith



My first Pompey game was a 4-0 win over Carlisle in 1970. Many ups and downs since then but overall a common theme has been the mismanagement of the club from the Boardroom, except for the last three years. The achievements under fan ownership - new pitch, irrigation system, training facilities within the city, ownership of land around the ground, good financial management, a commitment to youth, etc, etc - are all the more striking when compared with the state of the club after seven years in the Premiership.

The big challenge now for the club to make progress with the ground. In the time I've been supporting the club Fratton Park has been overtaken by so many other grounds in terms of facilities it offers to fans and the opportunities to raise money on both match days and non-match days. Some will say ground development can wait until we get to the Championship. But a well thought out and affordable stadium development plan will take time to develop - so the time to start the initial work is now. Indeed, failure to improve Fratton Park will hamper the club's chances to survive in the Championship when it gets back there. The club needs a plan that can be implemented in logical steps over time as finance permits.

It is clear from the experiences of the other clubs that, within reason, it's a case of "build it and people will come". With around 12,000 Season Ticket holders in League 2 we should not sell ourselves short. An eventual potential capacity of about 35,000 should be our aim. A key requirement of a remodelled Fratton Park should be that it retains its unique atmosphere.

I doubt whether there is the ability from within the fan base to raise the tens of millions of pounds to finance the stadium in the way the club was bought or the training ground developed. The purchase of our £1,000 shares were a donation to save to the club; an emotional not a financial investment. The total amount raised by fans to date would barely cover the cost of a new Milton End yet alone a new North Stand and expanded Fratton End. A new share issue designed to raise tens of millions of pounds would almost certainly see the PST lose its golden share.

A loan - whether from a bank or other sources and/or debentures - is likely to be the principal way to finance the stadium development. How and when the finance is raised are critical judgments of the club's board and its executives. The role for the PST is to represent "ordinary" fans and act as a critical friend of club's board. Of course, at the present time there is no division between the Trust and the club - long may that continue.

As a longtime fan of the club I would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the continuation of the outstanding progress that the club has made over the last three years.

Andrew Smith

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I had a career in IT and have had experience at a senior-level in non-executive roles within the public sector. I believe I have the right skills to cope with the "politics" of the Trust and its role and relationship with the club.

I serve on the Trust's Stadium Sub-Group for Long Term Strategy as its minutes secretary.