



Candidate Statement

DAVID MAPLES



Vote David Maples

I was the spokesperson for *NoToTheTakeover* in the period up to the Trust vote on the takeover. I am standing for the Trust Board because I still believe in fans ownership. I have supported Pompey for fifty years and we made more progress in the last four years than in any previous period. At our AGM in September 2016, we adopted the PST

Strategic Plan 2016-2021. This included, in the Future Opportunities section *'We wish to remain a truly "community" club, reflecting the aspirations and loyalties of our local fan base in SE Hampshire and W Sussex as well as our supporters throughout the world - and not beholden to wealthy foreign owners with no long term commitment.'*

I was therefore surprised that the takeover proposal was put to shareholders without any prior discussion about abandoning this aspiration.

I shared a particular concern that although we had a vote on this change of ownership, we have no guarantees about subsequent ownership. I was also sceptical about the financial case put forward for a change of ownership and felt that the information about the potential cost of safety work to Fratton Park should have been communicated to shareholders when it was first known. Huddersfield were promoted to the Premiership with the nineteenth largest budget in the Championship. We could have been in the same position. Spending money well beats larger budgets.

What role does the Trust have now?

Our Club only exists because the Trust, supported by the Presidents, saved it. With no guarantees about the conduct of future owners, the Trust might have to save it again.

A Heritage & Advisory Board is being established as a forum for the Trust and Presidents to discuss key issues with Mr Eisner's representatives. I believe the Trust Board should consult widely about issues discussed to ensure that all key issues are covered and Trust members feel fully informed about the development of our club. At the Guildhall meeting, Mr Eisner stated that Pompey would only move if it outgrew Fratton Park, so one key area is the redevelopment of Fratton Park.

Our ability to compete in the Championship would be restricted by having a relatively small ground with dated facilities. Fratton Park's current capacity is less than almost all Championship clubs. Even with poor facilities, we had attendances of over 18,000 last season. This is despite less regular attendees

knowing they may get a seat with a restricted view. We need to close the gap between what we have and what we want to become. Increasing capacity and improving facilities is now an urgent necessity.

The increase in season tickets to 14,500 is great news and demonstrates enormous potential. However, with home capacity limited to 16,000 when the opposition bring more than 1300 supporters, unfortunately there is some danger of deterring casual fans and the next generation.

Detailed work by Trust members has demonstrated that there is no current alternative site for a replacement ground within the city and there is unlikely to be one for the foreseeable future. The phased redevelopment of Fratton Park should be a top priority. I would expect to see the Tornante Group, which clearly carried out detailed research before tabling a takeover bid, bringing forward proposals for this.

Why do I want to be a Trust Board member?

Football without fans is nothing. The Trust Board are the collective custodians of the fans emotional stake in the club. I want to make supporters' views heard at all levels and to help fans really feel that this is our football club.

Football finances are skewed by owners treating clubs as short-term investments and then walking away if they turn sour. During the 2016/17 fans were in conflict with owners at Blackpool, Charlton, Coventry and other clubs.

I want the Trust to continue to develop its role in supporting fans to develop trusts at other clubs and to work with trust-owned clubs. This should include campaigning for financial rules that promote fair competition.

I welcome the higher profile for equality issues at Pompey. This makes the whole community welcome. I want to see this developed further. If we no longer own a shareholding in Pompey, we could offer shareholders an option to redirect share proceeds to Pompey Ladies.

Who am I?

I am a North Lower season ticket holder. This is my fifty-first season supporting Pompey. I went to school in Portsmouth. I joined the Trust at its inception and was a member of the group looking at long term stadium options. I am standing for election to the Trust Board because I believe I have the skills, experience and vision to contribute to the next steps in re-building our club. That's why I have gone from standing outside the High Court in February 2010 to standing for the Trust Board. Together we invested £3 million, through the Trust, to save our football club.

I have experience of membership involvement through being a trade union branch officer. I have experience of property development, including managing significant capital budgets. I believe that this experience would complement the skills and experience possessed by existing Board members. To discuss this statement, please come and chat to me at the hustings or email me at notothetakeover.wordpress.com