

## Candidate Statement - David Maples



### VOTE DAVID MAPLES

We drove back from Plymouth in virtual silence. I should have taken the next week off work as compassionate leave. I never ever want to go to Plymouth again. However, although ultimately disappointing, reaching the play-offs represented considerable progress. We saw the first improvements in playing performances after over six years of decline.

Together we invested £3 million, through the Trust, to save our football club. I am standing for election to the Trust Board because I believe I have the skills, experience and vision to safeguard and enhance that investment. That's why I have gone from standing outside the High Court in February 2010 to standing for the Trust Board.

The Trust has achieved a lot since 2010 - legal establishment, preferred bidder status, raising funds to finance the business plan, including through a widely supported share issue, completing the takeover, laying the foundations for a more successful club and meeting important regulatory requirements.

Under community ownership, the Club Board has demonstrated the determination to tackle a legacy of severe neglect. Demonstrating the ability to operate within prudent budgets has been important to gain the respect needed to develop Pompey.

I stood for election to the Trust Board in 2014 and 2015. I am pleased that many of the things I called for have been done, including:

- More information about the Trust's agreements with other shareholders
- More detailed information on Trust Board members' responsibilities
- Prompt publication of at least summary minutes after each Trust Board meeting

I am also pleased that safeguarding the Club through the Trust owning a 'golden share' is being investigated.

It is important that the Trust Board continues to take more steps to involve the membership. If major decisions such as moving from Fratton Park or accepting outside investment are

proposed, I believe that the Trust should ballot its membership to guide the Trust's representatives on the Club Board. The ballot process should include circulating arguments for and against these proposals. Outside investors would need to demonstrate they have a long term commitment to the Club.

As a Board Member I would expect to keep you informed that:

- The Club was being run within sustainable budgets
- Risks are known and managed
- The need for capital was planned for with plans for the Trust to recover its majority shareholding

I would also like to see a briefing published for shareholders after PFC Board meetings.

As the Club moves back up the Football League, the implications of Pompey playing at the highest level will come to the fore. For me, this includes remaining as a community club.

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 four 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. Without this we will be stuck no higher than League One and will continually lose our best young players.

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.

Raising sufficient funds to buy the club was a challenge we excelled at. Financing the phased redevelopment of Fratton Park would be a similar challenge. We can excel again. This time we could be helped by a mixture of sponsorship, a limited number of long-term season tickets, enhanced hospitality, conferencing and banqueting facilities and prudent borrowing. With a larger capacity, we can play at a higher level and I might never have to go to Plymouth again.

If a philanthropist, with ties to the club, wants to donate to the Trust, I would gladly accept that, but there is no role for 'investors' such as Gaydamak, Al Fahim and the characters who followed them. They brought the club to the point of extinction.

### **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 financial stake in the club. I want to see the Trust Board pursue a clear vision for the development of the club, including urgent preparatory work to significantly increase capacity at Fratton Park, and for you to be fully involved in formulating this.

Football finances are skewed by owners treating clubs as short-term investments and then walking away if they turn sour. During the 2015/16 season players and staff at Bolton, Oldham and Northampton saw late payment of wages. I want the Trust to continue to develop its role in supporting fans to develop trusts at other clubs and for trust-owned clubs to work together. 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.

### **Who am I?**

I am a North Lower season ticket holder. I joined the Trust at its inception. I went to school in Portsmouth. This is my fiftieth season supporting Pompey.

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, email me at [david.maples1@btinternet.com](mailto:david.maples1@btinternet.com)