

PHIL SANDYS – CANDIDATE STATEMENT



I was born in St Mary's Hospital in 1971, so the decision to support Pompey had already been made for me. Like most boys, my first taste of Fratton Park was being taken there by my father. I then started going to games with my friends and, before I knew it, I became a regular. Despite moving to London, I still made the journey down from Waterloo, and my visits home were largely dictated by whether there was a game on. I've been a season ticket holder in the Fratton End for over fifteen years now and two years ago moved back home to Portsmouth. Football is very important in our house – my wife is a Charlton Athletic fan, but our two children (despite not being old enough to realise yet) are Pompey fans like their dad.

I have been a member of the Supporters' Trust since the beginning – I signed up without hesitation and helped out by handing out flyers in pubs and outside the ground on match days, keen to persuade others to join. I also built the community share website for the Trust, which provided supporters with information about how to purchase shares in the club. Along with friends, I am part of a shareholding syndicate. I have always been a strong believer in fan involvement and ownership in football and, like many others, am saddened at the way that the sport in this country is increasingly leaving supporters marginalised.

For a number of years, I have contemplated standing for election to the Trust board. Now that I am back living in the city, I feel that the time is right for me to put my name forward. My main motivation for standing is that I want to help make supporters' voices heard at all levels and help people to really feel that this is our football club. Nowadays, it is all too common to see fans becoming distanced from the team they grew up supporting. At Portsmouth, we have an amazing opportunity to shape the future of our club. Board members have a responsibility to engage with, and represent, both members of the Trust and the wider supporter network. I would love to have the opportunity to work with the other board members to help build a stronger, and more inclusive Supporters' Trust.

In terms of skills that I believe I could bring to the role, I currently work for a marketing agency, managing the development of websites for charities and membership organisations. The key areas we focus on are acquisition and retention of supporters – something that is absolutely fundamental to the ongoing success of the Trust. In my previous job at a large international charity, I was instrumental in setting up a staff association where, as an elected representative, I discussed with staff their suggestions and concerns which we then presented to the senior management team. This role helped teach me the importance of consultation and gave me the opportunity to develop relationships with directors, acting as an intermediary – again skills that would naturally transfer to being a member of the Trust board.

Looking at the areas of focus from the Supporters' Trust Strategic Plan for 2016-17, I believe that the two areas where I could make a difference are enhancing and developing Pompey's links to the Community, and increasing the membership of the Trust. I believe that every supporter should want to be a member of the Supporters' Trust, but there has to be an incentive for new members to join. It is testament to our great support that we have already sold over 12,000 season tickets for the coming season, yet Trust membership is just a fraction of that. I am keen to work with the various supporter groups to find out what is stopping people from becoming members and then use this knowledge to help shape the Trust into something that more fans want to be a part of.

I am also keen to work with other Supporters' Trusts, so that we can learn from each other and work together to make supporter ownership a success across the country. While we are all competing against each other on the pitch, unity off the pitch will only make us stronger. I was fortunate enough to be asked to speak at the Charlton Supporters' Trust launch alongside representatives from Supporters Direct, where I could see how others are keen to follow our lead.

In summary, if elected, I would like to help achieve improvements in the following areas:

Engagement: Stimulate the current Trust members into action, find out what they can do for the Trust and what the Trust can do for them. I want members to feel proud that they are playing an important role in the future of the football club.

Growth: Work towards increasing Trust membership. We must make joining the Trust a more attractive proposition, and change perception from "Why should I join the Trust?" to "Why would I not want to join the Trust?" The more supporters we get on board, the louder our voice becomes.

Communication: Help to improve the way the Trust speaks to both its members and to all supporters of the football club. I'd like to see an improvement in the clarity and consistency of messaging, and make sure that news of the Trust's work reaches the widest possible audience.

Collaboration: Look at creating partnerships with local businesses and organisations to put the Trust in the heart of the community. Work with other Trusts to increase fan involvement and ownership throughout the country.

Hopefully my statement shows that I have the skills, enthusiasm and determination to work with the existing board and help them build on the strong foundations that they have created. Together, we can make Pompey Supporters' Trust bigger, better and more successful in representing the fans of our great club.

Please come and chat to me at the hustings, or email me at phil.sandys@gmail.com.

PLAY UP POMPEY

Phil Sandys