**Chelsea Supporters Trust**

**Board election candidate manifestos**

**Candidates are listed in random order**

**Julian Beattie – nominated by Nathan Lilly**

I have been involved in the Chelsea Supporters Trust since the first public meeting and have been on the Board for the last 2 years.

One of my roles this year has been the CST representative on the Chelsea Fans Forum. I have enjoyed my time dealing with the club through the Forum and I think it’s a good way of getting supporter’s views in front of the club. I know that the club also find it a very helpful system and have made a genuine effort to deal with and respond to issues across the board that supporters have raised

Our continued affiliation with Supporters Direct and the Football Supporters Federation means we are part of the nationwide network of football club trusts and as such part of the greater supporter community. At the current time there is a growing sentiment throughout the sport that supporters are being priced out and their views on their clubs ignored. Being part of Supporters direct allows us to have a powerful voice in how we can collectively bring football back to the fans. Although we all appreciate this is going to be an uphill task, the weight of numbers in the organization means that as long as we stay committed we can expect to see progress in the future.

In the coming year I would like to see the trust continue to push the Club and Premier League in regards to the Safe Standing Campaign as well as pushing for the allocation of more money from all Football clubs and organising bodies to go towards reducing supporter costs. The future of Stamford bridge is going to be a big issue over the next few years and we as a trust want to ensure that supporters are consulted and their views heard in hopefully building one of the best new stadiums in the world in our home.

**David Johnstone – nominated by Neil Beard**

My name is David Johnstone and I have been a Chelsea supporter ever since I became interested in football when I was a young boy. I was seven when I attended my first game at Stamford Bridge. I have been a season ticket holder since the North Stand reopened in 1995. Prior to that, I was a member and I am also a Chelsea Pitch Owner, having purchased three shares in 1993. I have attended every 1st team match save two for the last 11 years.

I have been involved in the 'politics' at Chelsea for more than 21 years after I both joined the Chelsea Independent Supporters Association (CISA) and started writing for the Chelsea Independent fanzine. It was then that I first met Neil Beard who is also standing for a position in this election. After several years’ involvement with CISA, I became the vice-Chairman in 1998.

After he made derogatory comments about CISA in the matchday programme in 1999, I sued Ken Bates for defamation and became the first person in the country to beat him, eventually winning my libel case against him in 2002.

With the (sad) demise of the Chelsea Independent imminent, in 1999 I started a fanzine entitled Matthew Harding's Blue And White Army which, upon the arrival of Mr Abramovich, changed its name to cfcuk.

I was offered a position at Chelsea FC in 2003 and helped set up the first museum at Stamford Bridge which was then located in the Shed End. My time working for Chelsea FC ended when Ron Gourlay was given the job of Group Operations Director.

I was the person who founded the Chelsea Supporters Group in 2004 and it was through that organisation that I met and first began working with Cliff Auger who, like myself and Neil Beard, is also standing in this election.

Whilst we are here today to establish a Supporters Trust for Chelsea FC, it was me who, in 2002, originally went to Supporters Direct - the people who oversee all the Supporters Trusts - to discuss the foundation of such an organisation. However, with the arrival of Mr Abramovich, myself and those involved at the time, decided not to proceed.

Two years ago, along with Neil Beard who was also involved in the original discussions, I again contacted Supporters Direct with a view to establishing a Supporters Trust at Chelsea FC and it is, after several months work by myself and the others also standing for a position on the soon to be elected board, that I put myself forward to ask for your vote.

**Charles Jackson – nominated by David Chidgey**

I am founding and active member of the Chelsea Supporters Trust (CST). I am reasonably well-known supporter across the generations of support. I have decided to stand to continue the journey of building the CST and representing fellow supporters.

We are at a very important stage of Chelsea’s long-term history, where the redevelopment of Stamford Bridge and interests of supporters have never been more important. My professional skills and knowledge from analysing and business transformation, along with my passion for watching sport and Chelsea: can help the development of Trust at this crucial point in our Club’s history.

I have supported Chelsea since the mid-1980s and like many of my generation seen the ‘highs and lows.' My first trip to Wembley being the infamous Full Member’s Cup Final. I was a member then season tickets since graduating in the late 1990s. I games ‘over land and sea’ on the European Away Scheme (and last season made it to Leicester and back!)

I have a great passion for the sport. I have and still play: officiated, coached and watched sport and equally involved in community sport since I was a little. I see the benefits and importance of sport.

The Chelsea Community is at its best when supports’ fans; those in need or having a hard time. The CST is here to represent the interests of supporters: to constructively and credibly challenge the Club. I already use my experiences and professional expertise to help communicate as the ‘voice of the supporter’. Many people may have seen me trying to help those, e.g. challenges on European trips and responded to the media (and thanks to fellow Blue) the BBC made my response go viral on events in Paris!

We have a diverse fan base and dynamics is different, whether people arrive at the Bridge from Basingstoke or Byfleet, or when travelling to Basle or Bucharest.

My aim is to encourage, build and listen to the needs of our UK and global fan base. I encourage young fans and recognise the challenge of access and affordable tickets. In an environment of massive TV rights deals flowing to elite football, the costs of travelling to support from across the country. One aspect of supporting Chelsea today is the focus on the needs of TV (and resultant practical impact on supporters.) Equally, the global reach of our fans and supporters.

I have made many friends, who travel across the UK or like the massive Belgium group, or circumstances have led to them moving across the Globe. My friend who took me to Shed as 11-year-old boy lives in Caribbean and neighbouring ST holder is now in Japan. Others regularly travel from New York [players could not believe he travelled to from NYC to the NE for a cold December game!]

I listen to our members and supporters concerns; I have the perspective from observing the way we are treated as football fans (and difference to other sports.) I passionately believe sport can be a force for good in the community, but equally see the way we are treated abroad.

I raise areas of concern in a constructive way. This includes promoting the issues of younger supporters and challenges of ticket prices. Our more historic supporters concerned about the atmosphere and impact of the next generation. I attend or help arranged events with former players from my era, or the heritage of our Club.) I am happy to engage and encourage the expansion of our membership; communicating and raising issues with stakeholders.

I am an active volunteer, formerly Non-Executive Director of Sports Club and active in my professional body. If elected, I can use my Governance & Risk experience along with my passion for Chelsea (and Sport) to support the CST’s growth; to steer supporters need, and to make sure the organisational requirements are met and transparent to our Membership. I already communicate with the Club and community to raise the myriad of incidents/issues impacting our fellow supporters.

In the short term, the CST will have an important role to play. The Stadium plans looked fantastic, meeting many of points we have raised e.g. atmosphere and safe standing, but above all more pricing options for our regular supporters and ‘casual’ fan. This will raise many medium-term challenges as transition the club’s facilities.

I would welcome the opportunity to represent supporters. I know many of the existing CST Directors (many whom I know well). We look forward to the future and challenges for Chelsea FC and supporters of professional sports Clubs. The Development of the Bridge is welcome to help give opportunities for the Club. I recognise these challenges and opportunities for beneficial change, and impact on our supporters, to secure generations to come.

I hope I can count on your support. Up the Chels’

**Celia Mindelsohn – nominated by Marguerite Turner**

I subscribe to the view that the supporters are the football club and owners and players are just passing through. I became involved with CST because I believe that Supporters’ Trusts offer the best way of ensuring that Chelsea supporters define the club. I chose to support Chelsea; I had no connection with the area and my family don’t even like football. My first visit to Stamford Bridge was in 1979 – we lost – and if I had merely followed the team before, from that moment I was hooked. Things have changed a great deal recently but while we are enjoying unprecedented success, I don’t want to see the character of the club that I fell in love with to change. I believe that by truly representing the supporters, CST can ensure continuity and influence those passing through to embrace the culture that is Chelsea Football Club.

I am currently a member of the CST Board and was a member of the initial Working Group that set up the Trust. As well as handing out leaflets, manning the stall on matchdays and other general duties, my specific responsibilities have been membership issues, in particular communicating with members both individually via email and also sending out newsletters and other communications to our membership. I have also worked on the surveys we have sent out: everything from their initial formulation through to sending them out, analysing the results and writing the reports. It has been very pleasing to observe that weight of opinion really does make a difference and the results of the surveys have done a lot to influence the Club’s thinking.

I strongly believe it is important to back up demands with constructive solutions. Coming from a commercial background I feel I am well placed to understand the way in which the Club officials think and operate and the experience I have in developing strategy at work means that I can help plan and execute campaigns that will get the Club’s and other authorities’ attention..

With regard to Chelsea ‘politics’ my overriding concern is to preserve the character and continuity of the club for future generations. The current era of amazing success has brought happiness and pride but also many challenges. I have a share in CPO and voted no to the club’s proposal to buy back the shares. I recognise the economic need to extend the capacity of the stadium but ownership of the pitch and the name of the club is a precious thing and any redevelopment should involve CPO retaining ownership of both. The main threat to the club is its aging support; Chelsea matchgoers have the highest average age in the Premier League. The club provide well-priced family season tickets but there are a limited number of these. Younger supporters improve the atmosphere and carry their support to the next generation. We need to work with the club and football authorities in general to enable those at the start of their working lives and students to attend games regularly and get into the glorious habit of supporting our team. Finally, I want to encourage two way communication between the club and support; with the advent of the Trust this seems to have improved, but I want to work towards maximising the membership of CST so that we are seen even more to offer the credible and united voice of the fans.

The role of the Board of the Supporters’ Trust role is to carry out the wishes of its membership and, if elected, I will do my utmost to reflect their views and work hard to make them a reality.

**Neil Beard – nominated by David Johnstone**

My name is Neil Beard and I have been attending matches and supporting Chelsea since early 1970. I am a Season Ticket holder in the Shed Upper and usually attend around 40 or 50 matches a season home and away, domestic and in Europe and Asia. I have been involved with various supporter organisations for many years including CISA and have sat on the fans forum representing CFCUK and am currently Vice Chair of the Chelsea Supporters Trust and have been since the CST was formed.

My reasons for seeking re-election to the CST board are that as one of the founding members of the CST, I feel that this board and this organisation has already done an excellent job in bringing together many of the existing supporters groups to provide a central contact point between all Chelsea supporters and the club on the bigger and more strategic issues that affect all supporters and should be allowed to continue this good work.

My previous experience of working with CST and other supporters groups in dealing with the senior management at Chelsea will continue to help us to provide input and support as we grow the CST and develop respect though the work we do and our relationships with Chelsea FC, which will ensure the views of our members are represented and most importantly we know the club is listening to us as well.

I wish to continue to working with the other board members to build from the excellent platform we have created in terms of our growing membership numbers and visibility in our first full year. Working together with all who seek a positive future for Chelsea FC with those currently in charge of the club, providing direction through input and direction from Chelsea supporters. And especially right now as we enter another very challenging period of the club’s history as we seek to improve conditions for all Chelsea supporters, looking towards a bigger and better Stamford Bridge and build on the all successes that we have already achieved.

The big issues I want to work with on are around recognition of long term loyalty for supporters, improving facilities and atmosphere in the ground, affordable ticket prices for matches home and away, safe standing and unreserved seating in some areas, allowing more children to attend matches and ultimately supporter representation and direct dialogue at decision making level at Chelsea FC.

I am currently leading the CST discussions on atmosphere at Stamford Bridge, meeting and speaking directly with board members at Chelsea FC. With our club just about to commit to the redevelopment of our historic home ground this relationship and dialogue is absolutely critical to ensure we push for the best possible outcomes for supporters on pricing, location and governance for supporters to create the best atmosphere in England at the new Stamford Bridge.

The Supporters own the club and without us there is no club. Through the efforts of the CST organisation we have the opportunity to make things happen and have a greater influence in the future of Chelsea FC.

I am passionate about my club, want us to be the best both on and off the pitch and really appreciate your support for my nomination to try and make this happen.

Thanks,

Neil.

**Debra Coady – nominated by Theresa Magee**

My name is Debra Coady, commonly referred to as Debbie or Debs. I have lived in south west London all my life, just 40 minutes away from Stamford Bridge.

I first saw Chelsea play in the late 60s when my dad took me to the Bridge to watch from the old benches in the West Stand. I don’t recall too much about the game apart from shouting out “Come on Charlie (Cooke)” and deciding to become a Chelsea fan there and then. I was a regular matchgoer as a teenager, both home and away, but when married life and children came along the active support had to take a back seat for a while.

In 1999 I returned to the Bridge to watch Chelsea play AC Milan in a Champions League group game that we drew 0-0. I was hooked again and soon after became a member. Five years ago I became a season ticket holder in the West Lower and this season I have become an Away Season Ticket holder. I am also a Chelsea Pitch Owner.

Over the past year I have taken a greater interest in Chelsea as a club, the redevelopment of Stamford Bridge is a massive issue right now and I am well aware how much groups such as the Chelsea Supporters’ Trust have influenced decision making by the club’s board. The redevelopment of our ground is key to many other issues that affect our fans, and the atmosphere created in any new ground will be influenced by other issues such as the possible introduction of safe standing as well as the location of the away fans and the more vocal home fans. Through the representation the Trust affords, I believe we have a unique opportunity to influence the Chelsea board and work with them to take the club forward together.

Since becoming a member of the Chelsea Supporters’ Trust I have met many like minded people, a great team of fans who are willing to give their time and energies for the benefit of our club and fellow fans. I believe I have the time, energy and passion to take forward the positive progress already made, for the benefit of all who have an interest in maintaining our status as one of the best football clubs in the world.

Apart from ensuring we keep sight of the bigger picture I am particularly keen on issues surrounding fans’ match day experience, especially at away games, having experienced and witnessed some questionable treatment both in this country and abroad.

The Trust carries out an annual survey that steers the work of the CST board for the year. Many issues are raised, which gives the board a unique mandate to focus attentions on issues that matter most to Chelsea fans. Ticket touting, for example, is an issue that affects many clubs and I would like to see the CST explore the possibility of creating campaigns to highlight and tackle this and other widespread concerns. Collaboration with other similar organisations should be encouraged so that football wide issues can be aired more effectively.

My working background is in local government as an administrative and operational manager, however, I have recently taken early retirement. This has allowed me more time to pursue my interests, and apart from following Chelsea, I am also an avid photographer and usually have a camera with me at games (no selfie stick!) to capture shots of players for my blog, which I have been running for around 2 years. Mainly photo blogging, I also write short match summaries for each game, which the Chelsea Supporters Group has recently started to publish on their web site. I am a regular user of social media including Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

If you feel I am able to represent your views and make a positive contribution to the Trust on behalf of the fans, I would be glad to receive your vote.

**Cliff Auger – nominated by Karen Kearney**

I have put myself forward and been duly seconded by another member to once again stand for the board of the Chelsea Supporters Trust (CST). It has been another year of hard work for those of us on the board and it remains a pleasure for me to work on behalf of our members, all Chelsea supporters and football supporters in general.

The last year has been a good one as far as the CST is concerned and I feel we are getting more and better recognition with the club, the media and other club’s trusts and supporters groups. As far as the club is concerned I have attended all the meetings that we have had with senior management personnel and hopefully they now have a better idea of the thoughts and suggestions that are given to us by our membership. It was particularly heartening to see Chelsea FC adopt, almost exactly, the ticket exchange proposals that were put forward by the CST. Many hours were spent by the board and George Gray from CFC Tickets on coming up with an idea to take the place of the much maligned Via Gogo. Once again the club have done well by the supporters with their efforts as far as away fans are concerned and have recently announced that their endeavours will continue in the forthcoming season with at least £500,000 put aside for away match travel and ticket subsidies. Although Chelsea FC spend more than any other Premier League club as far as this initiative is concerned, I am of the firm belief that they could do more for both our travelling away supporters and for home fans too. Now that part of the new TV deal has been put in place, with tens of £millions extra for each club for season 16/17 onwards, it’s vitally important that the CST campaign for some of that money to reach Chelsea supporters in the form of cheaper match tickets across the board.

I have been involved in several meetings over the course of the last year with representatives from other Premier League trusts and good ties have been made with them on issues that affect supporters of all teams and I hope good things can come from cross club consensus in the future.

The recently released great news from Chelsea that they intend to stay at Stamford Bridge and build a new stadium is another opportunity for the trust to put forward our members views as to what may be included in that development. It is good that the club have held consultations with both the local community and Chelsea supporters but that’s not to say they cannot further be lobbied.

The Chelsea Supporters Trust has lots of work to do in the next few years and if I am re elected as a board member I intend to play my part in that work as much as I possibly can.

**Richard Weekes – nominated by David Chidgey**

If I were to be elected to be on the Chelsea Supporters Trust Board, my main focus would be regarding the atmosphere at Stamford Bridge with a strong focus and drive for all other Trust related aims and objectives.

I founded and run the Shed Atmosphere Group whose sole focus is to gather like-minded Season Ticket holders in The Shed to improve the atmosphere both visually and vocally (you will have seen a number of our displays throughout the season). My group alone has over 50 members and has the ear of the club at the highest level, meaning we have a very strong influence at the very top level at Chelsea. We have met with Bruce Buck independently as well as many others. Due to the success, consistency and size of my group, the club take notice of what we have to say and, this season, we have managed to move some of the complimentary tickets out of the back of The Shed (a known problem for those who sit there and an issue that had been addressed for a number of years) and move in a large group of our members with the sole purpose of improving the atmosphere.

The reason we were able to do this is because I make sure that we are consistent in our actions and not just doing things sporadically. We push to always get more people involved and to always have plans far into the season. We have a constant dialogue with the club and are not afraid to keep pushing on matters where they initially reject an idea.

I will place improving the atmosphere at The Bridge, at the newly developed Stamford Bridge and at the ground we choose to reside whilst the new stadium is under development as a top priority. My group have already managed a great deal and I personally have made many important contacts within the club and have built a solid relationship with them.

The key areas I will focus on regarding atmosphere are;

At the current Stamford Bridge: I will continue with the Shed End project but also seek to establish similar communities and groups within the other areas on the ground. Pushing the club to allow more relaxed stadium rules to trusted sets of supporters whose sole aim is to increase atmosphere

At our temporary relocation: To ensure that atmosphere is taken into account during this move. Making sure the club allow us to create or enlarge sections of supporters, seating them together and encouraging this kind of activity in almost a ‘dress rehearsal’ for when we eventually move into the new ground.

At the newly developed Stamford Bridge: To make sure not only that the club stick to their word with regards to focussing on atmosphere once we have moved back in, but to make sure us as fans have spent the previous 4 or 5 seasons gearing up and being ready for the move in order to make maximum impact – this is a once in a 100 year opportunity.

I also feel at a time when we are proposing to redevelop Stamford Bridge, it is now more important than ever to listen to and engage with all of our stakeholders. I hold the ability to converse with people from all backgrounds, but, as a Trust Board Member, I would make sure to both push and contribute in making sure this process is done to the best of our ability in this very important time for the club. We are all aware the local community has issues with the stadium expansion and this is possibly the most important time to address then and seek to create a positive and productive dialogue.

Another important aspect to focus on is the well-being of match going fans. My passion and confidence in attacking issues head on will mean I actively and consistently pursue issues such as ticket prices, stewarding, food and drink prices inside the stadium and the possibility of introducing unreserved seating areas at chosen games and eventually, safe standing.

I will also make it a priority to further engage overseas supporters travelling to The Bridge by looking to provide them with a greater and more realistic match day experience, including ideas such as placing large groups of travelling overseas supporters closer to the more atmospheric areas, giving them greater access to information about the real match day experience and preparing and informing them that they can contribute to the match day experience. Overseas supporters can be just as passionate as local fans and engaging them and integrating them with local fans benefits both parties and the club.

Thank you for taking the time to consider me in becoming a Chelsea Supporters Trust Board member,

Richard Weekes.

**David Chidgey – nominated by Beth Wild**

As the Chelsea Supporters Trust enters its third year I still feel hugely privileged to have had the opportunity to represent the interests of the membership and Chelsea supporters as a whole by serving on the board.

We, as a Trust, have achieved a lot in those three years, but there is still much to do. For that reason I am seeking re-election to the Board to continue that good work.

Under the Chairmanship of Tim Rolls, we have a core of dedicated and hardworking people on the board, whose aim is to do what we are elected to do. Namely represent your interests and concerns to the Club. I would like to see some continuity in terms of the Board but equally I think it is important that we have some new Board members to freshen things up.

We have continued our efforts in terms of “making your voice heard” and one of the biggest successes this year has been our regular meetings with members of the Chelsea FC Board, vital if constructive dialogue is maintained and the Club gets a feel for what matters most to the membership we represent.

We continue to build on the success of our regular membership surveys which both inform us and the Club as to where the membership stands on various issues as well as validating our democratic structure being instrumental in formulating policy and campaigns.

On a personal note, as Head of Communications and Media, I am pleased that we continue our good relationships with the Press and Media, and are frequently approached for comments on Chelsea related matters. It helps to keep our profile high to Chelsea supporters as a whole, but also helps to make the Club aware of our work and concerns.

Going forward, the biggest issue on the horizon is the potential move away from Stamford Bridge whilst the existing ground is redeveloped. The Trust and its members need to be at the forefront in getting our concerns across to the Club to make sure the transition is carried out as smoothly as possible and as many of our needs and requests as possible are catered for. I hope that the relationship of trust that we have established with the Club will help in this respect.

With Chelsea enjoying a very welcome period of stability to go with winning trophies, it is easy to sit back and let things roll along. People only tend to get fired up when things are not going so well. At times like this it can be difficult to get supporters engaged in getting involved with organisations like the Trust.

If re-elected I am determined to re-double my efforts in making sure that the Trust does not fall in to complacency and go off the boil. There are still so many issues which affect us all and which we need to champion such as the atmosphere on match days; safe standing; cheaper tickets; increasing the number of 16-24 year olds who have access to tickets; overzealous stewarding and banning orders; loyalty point issues; away ticket and European ticket allocation and so on. There is still so much to do and we must keep the pressure up.

But perhaps the single biggest issue for the Trust itself is to continue to grow the membership. Without a growing membership our voice will become meaningless. Both as a Board and membership as a whole I believe we need to dramatically increase our efforts to recruit new members and make our presence felt with even greater validity.

If re-elected I hope to represent far more of you than I have over the last three years, and will continue to work hard to do just that.

**Tim Rolls – nominated by Martin Horne**

There is one issue facing Chelsea supporters that stands out above all others in my view. The redevelopment of Stamford Bridge has profound long-term implications for both club and supporters. It is essential that there is credible, and regular, supporter input as the process moves from outline plans to detailed plans, the receipt of necessary planning approvals, a temporary move to another stadium, construction, completion. Other issues – atmosphere, safe standing etc – will (or should) be addressed in the redevelopment process and though short-term improvements can doubtless be made in these areas, the primary focus should be long-term.

I got involved in helping set up the CST because I believe that supporter dialogue with the club, and input to key decisions, is essential. I also believe the CST should be a ‘critical friend’ of the club. A default stance of hostility achieves nothing, but similarly there are times when coherent and robust challenge is required, and blind obsequience achieves little apart from damaged credibility.

The process of members survey, AGM motions, board elections and regular member dialogue can be time-consuming for CST board members but is absolutely essential if an supporters organisation is to have credibility. If you do not ask members what they think, in a structured and coherent manner, and don’t give them a chance to vote you out if you don’t do what they want, how can you claim to speak for them? How can the Fans Forum claim to be the supporters voice when the majority of members have little or no dialogue with those they claim to represent?

There is a real opportunity to campaign on ticket pricing, as the new Premier League TV deal starts in 2016/17 and all 20 club coffers will bulge still further. The CST must continue to work with other trusts to try and ensure that the opportunity for PL-wide ticket initiatives, focussing on young supporters and those priced out of the ‘brave new world’ of the PL, is taken.

If elected I will help ensure focus is on these two areas (stadium and pricing), plus of course whatever other issues are highlighted in the members survey, plus those unexpected matters that inevitably arise as the season progresses.

I have been chair of the CST for the past two years. I think the CST has made real strides in that time, thanks to the energies of board members. I do, however, firmly believe that there needs to be a continual renewal of energy and focus in any organisation, particularly in the role of chair. I also believe the skills and energies needed to set up an organisation can differ from those required for the operation and growing of that organisation, and that regular change is needed to avoid the risk of staleness and ‘tried that before’-ism from a meeting chair.

If elected I will be happy to serve in whatever role the board decides, but I said when appointed chair that the role of CST chair should not be filled by any one individual for more than three years and that remains my opinion.

**Iain Rodger – nominated by Neil Beard**

My name is Iain Rodger and I attended my first Chelsea match in 1966 when Peter Bonetti, who lived in an adjoining Surrey village, gave a very star-struck schoolboy a lift to Stamford Bridge in the back of his car. It was because of him that I contracted the ‘Chelsea bug’ which has seen me attend over 1,000 games, home and away and all over Europe, including European Finals in Stockholm, Moscow and Munich (I enjoyed two of those very much). I have been a Club Member since the programme began, upgrading from standing at the Tea Bar at the back of The Shed to sitting on a piece of carpet on the ‘Benches’ and am now a Shed Upper Season ticket holder where I have been since that new stand was built.

I very much enjoyed being a co-opted Board Member last season and now seek election to the Board. My view is that the Board of the Chelsea Supporters Trust (CST) continues to do an excellent job in representing the views of its members and successfully taking those views to all levels of senior management at the club including its Board. I would wish to continue to play a part in that. There is no doubt that, through the very hard work, sensible discussion and commitment of the CST Board and its members, Chelsea FC sees the CST as an appropriate forum with which to interact. Simply put, the club listens to the Chelsea Supporters Trust.

With other established CST Board members last season, I had particular responsibility for leading discussions with the Chelsea FC Board and other senior club officials on matters relating to atmosphere within The Bridge. Last season the CFC Board invited us to present our ideas for improving the atmosphere within the stadium at four 90 minute meetings. Many of the initiatives discussed, particularly with reference to the critical 10 minutes before kick-off have already been implemented. These have included the enhanced use of the ‘big screens’ showing video montages, the sound system playing ‘Park Life’ and the ‘lights out’ before major domestic and European games. Much more can be done and our members and Board are already coming up with more ideas.

All of the above shows that the club listens to the CST. I believe that, with others, I have already helped to set the right tone with respect to discussions with the Chelsea FC Board; constructive, positive and business-like. I want to ensure that I do all I can to continue to take the views of Trust members and our Board to senior management at Chelsea on this and other issues that will doubtless arise especially as we prepare for life in our renovated stadium (and of course life away from it inevitably for a few years).

My professional career for the last 30 years has been spent in Marketing and Public Relations and I feel that I understand the commercial and presentational pressures a global club like ours has to deal with in the 24 hour media spotlight.

When Peter Bonetti gave me that lift in 1966 (a great year for football; Gianfranco Zola was born) little did I know what being a Chelsea fan would lead to with some remarkable highs and lows over the next 49 years. I can’t wait to see what’s still to come and I trust that I will be able to continue to show my passion for our unique, great club by being on your CST Board.

I’m very grateful to you for reading this and hope that you will feel able to support my nomination to be elected to the Chelsea Supporters Trust Board.