

Chelsea Supporters Trust
Board Election Candidate
Manifestos 2016-17

Cliff Auger

I have, once again, put myself forward to stand on the board of Chelsea Supporters Trust.

It has been a busy year in my work with the CST and I have attended numerous meetings with other Premier League trusts, the Metropolitan Police and senior management figures from Chelsea Football Club. Although, at times, I feel like I'm banging my head on a brick wall, it's been heartening that we have achieved a number of breakthroughs with supporter related issues. The away match ticket price cap of £30 is a very welcome thing to come out of a lot of hard work by many people and organisations but I firmly believe that ticket prices across the board and particularly young supporter concessions still have a lot of room for reduction.

It will be to the Premier Leagues everlasting shame if the riches they receive from the latest tv deal disappear into the trough of greedy players and their agents. In my opinion, it is not just the match going supporters who should benefit from this massive windfall but clubs and players further down the league ladder and into the non league as well.

I welcome the fact that Chelsea FC will continue with their subsidised travel plans for the forthcoming season and look forward to working with them on that. Having travelled to away games last season on several of the cheap trains the club provided it was great to see so many young supporters using them and getting the chance to go to games they might not have been able to attend.

Once again last season the CST were invited to New Scotland Yard to attend meetings with senior Metropolitan Police officers who oversee the policing of football matches in London. The police at least listen to what we have to say although I still feel we have more work to do with them.

Stadium issues, both temporary and the redevelopment of Stamford Bridge will loom large over the next few seasons and I believe the CST has a vital role to play in not only getting the supporters voices heard on these matters but also trying to help out, if we can, the local businesses that may be affected by any temporary move away from the area.

The re scheduling of Chelsea matches for live tv has long been a source of irritation to supporters and this season promises to be more problematic with Friday night games coming on stream.

We are already lobbying hard the Premier League and Sky over this and further, maybe more direct action, needs to be taken this year.

One area that I am particularly proud and pleased about is the work we have started at Brompton Cemetery. There are a number of Chelsea related graves there, including the clubs founding fathers, and we have had a couple of volunteer days clearing undergrowth and generally tidying those graves. The club have helped us by providing the tools and gloves that we needed and I hope, if elected, to carry on this work over the next year with a couple of major events planned in the future.

I hope that I can provide the time and work needed to help the CST in all these objectives and more over the next year if I am elected.

David Chidgey

The Chelsea Supporters Trust now enters its fourth year, and as always it has been a privilege to represent the interests of the membership on the Board. I very much hope to continue to serve your interests and 'make your voice heard' should I be fortunate enough to be re-elected.

The Trust, now well established, has a solid platform to build upon the good work over the last four years. The momentum built must not be allowed to slow as there are still many challenges to face in the years ahead.

Arguably the most important of these will be the redevelopment of Stamford Bridge and the temporary move to another stadium that this may entail. It is imperative that supporters have an input to decisions which may affect us for many years to come, especially in relation to ticket prices, atmosphere, safe standing and access for younger supporters.

Other key issues remain and the pressure from supporters and the Trust in particular must be kept up in championing the causes that affect us 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; kick off times; away ticket and European ticket allocation and so on.

Whilst it has been encouraging that we have been given access to the Chelsea FC Board with regular meetings, and personally speaking I am in favour of constructive dialogue with the club. However, we must not shy away from arguing our case firmly when needed. The Trust's remit is to represent the membership and Chelsea supporters, and 'make their voice heard' whether that is unpalatable to the club or not.

As the campaign for cheaper away tickets proved with the walkout by Liverpool supporters, sometimes actions speak louder than words and working together collectively with other supporters to lobby and make our case to the club, Premier League, Broadcasters and FA we can be stronger together. I am keen that Trust continues to be at the forefront of campaigning vigorously on behalf of Chelsea and all football supporters to make sure their interests are protected and match day experience improved.

One area the Trust has been very effective with is our use of the media to make our case – ultimately this can be an important weapon in 'making your voice heard' and used expertly can greatly enhance campaigning efforts. I hope that we continue the good work done here and build on the excellent media profile and relationships we have cultivated.

Ultimately the Trust succeeds or fails on the growth and engagement of its membership, and this rests on the unique democratic structure used by the Trust. It is the membership that elects the board, vote on the motions and completes the surveys we use to state our case to the Club. Please make sure you use your vote; encourage your friends and family to join up and get engaged. The more members we have, the greater our representation and louder that voice will be.

The Trust has made a solid start but there is still much work to do – campaigns to be waged; interests to be represented and members to sign up. If elected I will do everything I can to help grow the Trust and move it in the right direction.

Debra Coady

My name is Debra Coady, commonly known as Debbie or Debs. I am seeking re-election to the CST board for the second consecutive year.

My first year on the board has been a steep, as well as an enjoyable learning curve. Diving in to my role as a new member, I have attended all board meetings as well as meeting fellow Premier League Trust board members at a number of Supporters Direct meetings. A lot can be achieved when individual Trusts get together in a common cause, as was the case with the Football Supporters Federation's Twenty's Plenty Campaign. While the CST aims to work towards lower ticket prices across the board, the achievement gained with a £30 cap on away tickets is a good start and something positive to build on.

During my first year on the CST board I have been the Trust's representative on the club's Fans' Forum. Taking fan queries and concerns forward to the meeting has been a positive experience, enabling me to work with fellow supporters to help resolve real fan issues, as well as building a good working relationship with key personnel at the club.

Over the past few months I have taken on board the task of completing the rebuild of the CST's new web site, hopefully a more visually pleasing experience for our members when it eventually goes live. I have also taken the reins of the Trust's Twitter account, although I am still trying to improve my social media skills!

I am pleased to see the Trust continue to be involved with the heritage of the club, board members have been organising a series of clear up sessions of Chelsea related graves at Brompton Cemetery. I believe it's an important role of the CST to celebrate and preserve our club's history.

In the coming season the CST board's major focus will be, once again, the redevelopment of Stamford Bridge as we have now moved into the planning application stage, following on from the club's exhibition of the stadium design. It's a slow process being such a large project, but having achieved a commitment to remain at our spiritual home of Stamford Bridge, it is important that the CST (and the CPO in their special status as freeholders of the ground) keep the pressure on the owner and the stadium project team to deliver the benefits members have been asking for. Safe standing and ground atmosphere, to name two issues that regularly feature in our annual members' survey.

I have followed Chelsea since way back when but have only been actively involved over the past few years when I got hold of a season ticket in the West Lower. I'm now an away season ticket holder as well, and the proud owner of a CPO share.

My working background is in local government as an administrative and operational manager, however, I took early retirement around 18 months ago and I've never looked back. This has allowed me more time to pursue my passion as a Chelsea supporter as well as dabbling in photography, collecting photos to go with my match day blogs. Allegedly I have a family life as well!

If you feel I would be able to represent you for a further year, I will be pleased to receive your vote.

Debs

Charles Jackson

I am a founding member of Chelsea Supporters Trust (CST). I am re-standing after joining the CST Board last season. My desire remains to continue the journey of building the CST and representing 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 intention is to use my professional skills and knowledge, e.g., from analysing commercial and sporting transformation and risks, along with my passion for watching Chelsea Football

I have actively supported Chelsea as a schoolboy since 1984/5, 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 and became a season ticket holder since graduating in the mid-1990s. I follow the team 'over land and sea', including the European Away

I have a great passion for the sport. I still play: but give back by administrating, coaching, officiating, and also watch sport. I have been involved in community sport since I was a five years old. I promote the benefits and importance, and improvement in facilities for supporters and players alike.

The Chelsea Community is at its best when supports those in need or having a hard time. The CST is here to represent the interests of supporters: to work collectively and constructively with stakeholders, and to challenge credibly. I use my professional expertise and experience to help communicate the 'voice of the supporter' e.g. challenges on UEFA trips and respond to the media (the BBC made me go viral on our 2015 Paris visit!) I actively volunteer e.g. Formerly Non-Executive Director of a multi-Sports Club and professional bodies. If elected, I can use my commercial and professional expertise (Governance & Risk) to protect the interests of members and use my representation experience, along with a passion for Chelsea.

We have a diverse fan base, where the dynamics and issues are different, whether supporters arrive at the Bridge from Basingstoke, Barbados or Byfleet, or when travelling to Basle or Bucharest. Our support travel to watch Chelsea but are spread, or circumstances, have led to them moving. A friend who first took me to Shed as 11-year-old boy lives in the Caribbean and neighbouring ST holders work in Japan & Canada. Others regularly travel from New York, but we still need to promote local supporter issues.

Supporting Chelsea today: the focus is less on the needs of 'matching going' supporter but TV paymasters (and resultant practical impact on supporters, i.e. like the new, Friday night football!) I'm no fan of Friday football, and TV matches must be arranged, to avoid supporters inconvenience e.g. travelling 100s of miles mid-week and failing always to announce fixtures, six weeks before playing.

I passionately believe sport can be a force for good, but equally get frustrated, where perceptions see the way we have treated abroad e.g. differently from rugby. I have encouraged the expansion of our membership and community engagement, started a communication channel with the Club's local MP. I have raised concerns in a constructive way, includes promoting the issues of younger supporters on ticket prices and TV rescheduling.

My aim is to continue to communicate with the Club and community to raise the myriad of issues impacting our supporters. Our concerns are about atmosphere and impact future/former generations; the focus to:

- encourage, build and listen to the needs of all our UK and global supporters;
- encourage young fans: recognise the challenge of access and affordable tickets;
- encourage engagement where massive TV rights deals are flowing into elite football, the costs of travelling across the country to watch home and away and for Chelsea, issues of temporary stadia;
- Listen to our members, fans and supporters' concerns; with perspective from observing the way we often get poorly treated at football (different to other sports!);
- Promote interest in our Club's heritage;
- Arrange supporter events with former players, support ex-players or supporters in need.

What sets the CST apart, is the mandate given and prioritisation driven, by the Membership Survey, to raise these important issues. CST have an important role to play. The stadium plans looked fantastic, meeting many areas we have raised e.g. atmosphere and access. Hopefully the 'new Bridge' will give more pricing options for our regular supporters and 'casual' fan alike, but we face many challenges as we transition facilities.

I would welcome the opportunity to continue to represent supporters on the CST Board. We look forward to the future and challenges for Chelsea FC and CST. The Bridge development provides opportunities for the future of the Club. I recognise these challenges and need to secure the Club, we love, for generations of Chelsea supporters to come. Please vote for Charles and 'Up the Chels'

David Johnstone

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 26-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.

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.

Five-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.

Over the past two-years, together with Neil Beard and Iain Rodger, I have been involved in meetings with the higher echelons of the Chelsea FC Board with regards to attempting to improve the atmosphere at Chelsea matches at Stamford Bridge.

I, like those who were elected last year, feel that, collectively, we have worked well together as a team and hopefully, those voting will give not only myself but the others who have worked hard over the past 12-months another year in order that we may continue to progress with the task of furthering the aims of the Chelsea Supporters' Trust.

Should I be elected, I will – as I always have done – act to represent the best interests of the Chelsea supporters when carrying out any duties relating to this Supporters' Trust.

Celia Mindelsohn

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 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. 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 (I'm sure last season was just a blip!) but also many challenges. I have a share in CPO and voted no to the club's proposal to buy back the shares. I support and look forward to the redevelopment of Stamford Bridge, 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.

Chris Rayburn

My first game was in 1970 and I've been going regularly ever since, with a long gap when I worked overseas in the late 80 and all of the 90's. I've had a home season ticket since the mid 80's and away season ticket since they were introduced. I've been a member and followed the progress of CST since its inception.

I joined the CST because I felt there was a growing disconnect between the club and its' match going supporters. I believe the CST has already identified and brought to the clubs attention several issues behind this and hope the trust, with my added input can continue to do so to improve the experience.

The reason I'd like to join the board would be to assist in addressing issues that are close to the hearts of many mainly match going Chelsea supporters, such as ticketing arrangements, ease of travel, match scheduling, fair treatment for fans and input into new stadium development, with a view to suggesting introduction of a few simple initiatives that I hope will improve the experience on match days – both home and away.

The experience of going to games in the old days has been diluted by various laws, regulations and club policies, but I believe there are still some aspects that can be maintained/revived so the next generation of fans will find the attraction of following this club as strong and rewarding as I have.

Dan Silver

My name is Dan Silver and I am a home season ticket holder and away regular. I am part of a Chelsea loving family – my grandfather was a Chelsea supporter in the early 20th century – and have supported the club since childhood.

I am a regular on the weekly Chelsea Fancast podcast and have a strong passion not only for supporting the team but discussing all issues concerning supporters on the show, both on a weekly basis and with a long term view such as with ticketing, atmosphere and Stamford Bridge itself.

I am passionate about Chelsea Football Club and its future and believe that the Chelsea Supporters' Trust is key to not only helping move the club forward but principally, to encourage its dialogue and valuation of Chelsea supporters as a community. Supporter engagement is key for any football club - whether we are called 'customers' or fans, we know what we are! Without supporters there would be no one backing the team, paying for players' wages or sharing together in the team's famous moments, both brilliant and bad – there would be no club.

I have been a member of the CST since it was founded in 2013 and have strongly supported its stance on many items since. As a director of a successful company, I wish to bring my professional skills to any position needed to help further the CST's stated aims as voiced by our members, such as access to and cost of ticketing, especially for younger supporters who are key to the club's future success and the transition to a new Stamford Bridge, all of which has been fantastically well handled by the board to date. I want to continue this and represent Chelsea supporters of all backgrounds – we are one voice - in improving our standing with the club and by extension helping Chelsea improve on the field, not least by striving to improve the atmosphere at Stamford Bridge. Us supporters are that important!

If elected, I will take on any role requested by the board and focus 100% on contributing to the goals of the CST on current and any future briefs and issues.

-- Daniel Silver

Richard Weekes

If I were to be re-elected to be on the Chelsea Supporters Trust Board, my main focus would remain the atmosphere at Stamford Bridge with a strong focus and drive for all other Trust related aims and objectives. I personally feel the trust could be more 'active' and engaging with both the member base and the wider Chelsea community and this is something I would also strive to push.

I founded and run We Are The Shed, 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). The 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 the group, the club take notice of what we have to say and, last season, we 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 many 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.

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 them 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.