

Chelsea Supporters Trust Board
elections 2018/19 Candidate
Manifestos

Candidates are listed in random order

Paul Hay – nominated by Rob Palmer

For the last year, I have been the membership secretary for the trust and having attended many meetings I can see how much value the Trust provides to canvas the views of ordinary supporters and represent those views to the club. I am keen to become a full board member to help with the decisions made and drive the Trust forward.

I have been a supporter for over 45 years and attended my first game in 1973. I have seen the club through the bad times as well as the unimaginable success we have now. So, I feel that I have the experience as a long term supporter and appreciate what we as fans want from our club. I am a season ticket holder in the Mathew Harding Upper and I am very keen to ensure that real supporters have a say in the redevelopment of our stadium.

Theresa Magee – nominated by Cliff Auger

My name is Theresa Magee and, having been a member of the Steering Group which first set up the Chelsea Supporters Trust, and then elected as a founder board member, I am now seeking election to the board again this year.

It seems incredible that CST only started its journey in 2012, given how much they have achieved within that time, and I would like to help the Board build on its progress. I think my time away has also provided me with a fresh perspective on issues that affect supporters.

Dialogue is incredibly important and I believe the ability to communicate fully with our members, Chelsea FC and other stakeholders the Trust deals with is a vital aspect of the Board's work. Whilst inevitably there are good business reasons why certain information must remain private due to commercial sensitivity, this summer has seen an unprecedented lack of communication from the club. It would be wonderful if the Trust could get them to open up more.

As a member of the Trust, I am very proud of the work that they have undertaken over the last few years with other supporter groups in order to influence debate at national level regarding issues such as kick off times, ticket prices and the ongoing campaign for "safe standing".

I do however believe that CST must start putting pressure on the club to make ticket prices more affordable for all supporters, not just subsidise away games. Of course, everyone hopes that we continue to enjoy a period of sustained success, but in the event of that not happening the club will need to stop relying on tourists to fill seats and the only way that can be done is catching supporters while they are young and making match-going a habit. Cheaper tickets for younger supporters and families would help to nurture this aspect.

I want to represent everyone who supports Chelsea – not just the diehards who have been attending for years, but those who can only get to matches occasionally, be they UK-based or abroad. And the championing of diversity will also be an important part of the Trust's work in the years to come – whether we like it or not, the future is diverse. Over the coming years we will see even more women attending games, and I would like to see the Trust offer more support to groups such as Chelsea Pride.

Finally, I'd like to encourage more supporters to become actively involved with the Trust. In the Trust's embryonic stage one of our most important ways of raising awareness was to actually get out on the streets of SW6, and also have a presence on the cfcuk stall on matchdays in order that supporters could discuss their concerns with Board members. Although CST continue to have an extremely good public profile thanks to the fantastic work of Tim Rolls and David Chidgey, it's crucial we don't forget the "home front".

We have the best, most passionate, articulate supporters in the country, and we support an amazing football club. I've been privileged to win your confidence previously to work for you through the board of the Chelsea Supporters Trust, and I sincerely hope you will have faith in me again this year.

Best regards

Chris Rayburn – nominated by Tim Rolls

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 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 of the CST and followed its' progress 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 continued input will carry on highlighting and persuading the club to address these. I've enjoyed last year being on the board and hope to carry on the work in the coming season

The reason I'd like to continue on 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, input into temporary stadium arrangements and new stadium development. I have implemented a system whereby supporters can connect with each other via social media to facilitate sharing of transportation following late return of club transport to London/South East following away trips. I hope to expand this to allow people to connect to car sharing for trips to both home and away games in the coming season.

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.

David Chidgey – nominated by Martin Wickham

It has been an honour and a privilege to represent The Chelsea Supporters Trust for the last six years and as Chairman for the last two years. Whilst it can be hard work and time-consuming; it never ceases to be rewarding.

Regular contact with Chelsea supporters from all over the world tells me how important the work of the CST is and indeed how much it is needed and as such I very much hope to continue to serve your interests and 'make your voice heard' should I be fortunate enough to be re-elected.

As well as the future direction of the club on the pitch, there is the underlying uncertainty off it with the Stamford Bridge redevelopment on hold; whether or not there will be a move to a temporary ground and of course the future of the Chelsea Pitch Owners in this context.

It is therefore imperative that the CST Board continues to work effectively with the Club and other stakeholders to help ensure such input is relevant, properly represents members' views and is fully taken into account, especially with respect to the future of Stamford Bridge; atmosphere; safe standing; ticketing access and prices; kick-off times and increasing access for younger supporters.

I firmly believe that football supporters, especially those who make a massive commitment and investment in time and money to follow the Club, remain the lifeblood and soul of the game. They are a valuable asset to the Club in terms of its culture, future and legacy.

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.

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.

I am keen that the Trust continues to be at the forefront of campaigning vigorously on behalf of Chelsea and all football supporters, as evidenced by the Trust's work on Kick-Off times and Safe Standing, to make sure their interests are protected and their 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 aim of the CST Board remains to work effectively with the Club and other stakeholders to help ensure our input is relevant, properly represents members' views and is fully taken into account. If elected I will do everything I can to continue this aim, grow the Trust and move it in the right direction.

Robert Palmer – nominated by David Chidgey

My Name is Robert Palmer and I live in South-West London. My first visit to Stamford Bridge was in 1963, being taken by my late father who was a fanatical Chelsea fan, and who himself was the son of a Chelsea fan, who was a regular attendee pre WW2. My love affair of this club has prevailed to this day. I was the first person to get married at Stamford Bridge in the nineties (proper trivia). I have obviously been witness to the dark days, the indifferent days and the successful days and throughout this time I have come to understand the personality of the football club and its fan base.

I run a successful national Facilities Management company and being my own boss allows me to freely give my time and efforts to the CST. I was co-opted on to the Board of the CST early last season, to offer help and assistance in growing the membership of the CST. This is a work in progress and I would like to continue with what is unfinished business, as well as contributing generally to an organisation that I feel is best placed to look after the interests of all Chelsea Supporters whether locally, nationally or worldwide.

What are my credentials and experience that I can bring to the Trust?

Apart from my attendance at Stamford Bridge over the last 55 years and my passion for all things Chelsea Football Club, I have run many local football clubs and set up the very first official Chelsea Supporters' Club in Spain, during my years living there. During this time I was the Football Correspondent for Spectrum Radio and then had my own four hour Saturday sports show on Talk Radio Europe. I was also a full-time sports journalist for two different English language newspapers and a regular contributor to Score magazine

The most relevant experience that I can bring to the CST was my involvement with FC Torrevieja, a semi-pro club who played in the Spanish Third division (Preferente). In 2003/4, after supporting the club home and away with my friend, Eduardo Caggigao, we approached the club and asked why they were not marketing the club to the very large British population. Eddie and I set up the 'Torry Army', and over the next couple of years we grew the attendance from 100-200 to over 5,000.

During this time, we set up the supporters committee; wrote and published a match-day programme; Opened a club shop selling replica shirts and merchandise, which we sourced from China; attracted various sponsorship deals; arranged many functions and events to promote the club and gained national coverage after appearing on Spain's biggest football TV program, El Dia Despues. All proceeds were fed into the club and promotion to the Second Divison (Segunda B) was quickly achieved.

If I am successfully elected to the Board of the CST, I would look forward to continuing to work with some amazing people, who like myself will carry out our responsibilities diligently and conscientiously to look after the interests of all Chelsea supporters and their relationship with the CFC and all vested interests that impact our pursuit of supporting our club in what is challenging times for the 'man in the street' football fan.

Henry Fowler – nominated by Paul Fowler

This has been my first year on the board of the Trust and what a year it has been!

I have been lucky enough to lead the work on the Safe Standing campaign on behalf of the Trust.

From the start, it was always clear that we need to build strong consensus in Westminster that Safe Standing is an idea whose time has come.

Our members and the wider Football community are unanimous that Safe Standing is coming home.

Chelsea Supporters Trust played a crucial role in the amazing success in moving this debate forward.

What we have achieved together:

- Been a major part of parliamentary roundtable with other supporters trusts on Safe Standing.
- Successfully led lobbying of the Labour Party to publicly support and change policy to be in favour of introduction of safe standing (we also attended the policy launch).
- Promoted national parliamentary petition that reached over 100k, leading to a parliamentary debate.
- Lobbied local MPs to take part in parliamentary debate on Safe Standing.
- Gained a commitment from government to a public inquiry into introduction of Safe Standing.
- Contribution to consultation by SSGA (sports safety ground authority) 'green guide' to include safe standing for sports grounds.
- Successfully supported the 'crowdfunding' and introduction of Shrewsbury Town Safe Standing area.

We have made enormous process this year. Over the next year, if elected, I want to put you as members at the heart of building pressure further to guarantee Safe Standing at the Bridge.

What I pledge to achieve if elected:

1. Become part of local Sports Ground Safety Authority group and lobby with this group for discussion around safe standing.
2. Speak to the club further about what impact delay to the new ground will have on introducing safe standing.
3. Develop member led activities to contribute to independent inquiry into Safe Standing.
4. Engage further with younger fans and encourage more active membership of the Trust.

I feel I am only just getting started in this role and with your support at this year's AGM I hope to continue that work with you all.

All the best

Henry

David Johnstone – nominated by Richard Weekes

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 five for the since 2003.

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 cfuk.

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.

Along with former Chelsea Supporters' Trust Board member 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, in conjunction with Neil, I founded the Chelsea Supporters' Trust. Now, after several years 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.

It was in 1999 and with the relationship between Ken Bates and the supporters at an all time low, myself and Neil Beard first met with the higher echelons of the Chelsea FC Board with regards to attempting to improve the relationship between the club and the supporters. Ever since then, I have had many such meetings with Ken Bates, his Board and subsequently, with the arrival of Mr Abramovich, I have had meetings with him personally, and many meetings with his close associates such as Marina Granovskaia, Eugene Shvidler and Eugene Tenenbaum.

I know many of the Chelsea players (past and present) and am in regular contact with the likes of Frank Lampard, John Terry and Joe Cole.

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.

Isabella Hislop – nominated by David Chidgey

I wish to be considered for a position on the CST Board. As a female millennial, I believe that I represent the views of 2 totally underrepresented groups of Chelsea fans. Not that I have felt entirely disenfranchised, but football, as both a sport and an industry, needs to be more inclusive – particularly of women.

I have lived down the King's Road my entire life, and Chelsea has always been my club. I am currently a Sports Lawyer (with genuine aspirations to end up on the legal team at CFC), and so I am familiar with the various levels of bureaucracy that exist within club environments. As such, I believe that I am well-placed to bring a fresh and informed voice to the CST Board and, in time, endeavour to encourage other young females to get involved with the best club in the world!

Cliff Auger – nominated by Karen Kearney

Having been a member of the Chelsea Supporters Trust board for a number of years now I feel that I have quite successfully had an involvement in a number of initiatives that have been beneficial to Chelsea supporters, Chelsea Football Club and the local community around Stamford Bridge. These include the setting up of the Brompton Cemetery clean up group where we have successfully cared for a number of Chelsea FC related graves both within Brompton and in other graveyards in different areas. For the first time, in March 2018 we commemorated “Founders Day” within Brompton with a guided tour of the Chelsea graves there culminating with a wreath laying ceremony at the Gus Mears memorial. It was particularly satisfying we managed to get a club wreath laid by Chairman Bruce Buck. The grave maintenance that we carry out is, obviously, an ongoing initiative and one that I hope to continue in the future with further projects and events already being planned.

I was very pleased and proud to have set up a collection point near to Stamford Bridge for the Hammersmith and Fulham Foodbank. All food and money collected was taken by me to the collection point in Parsons Green as soon as I could after each match. Towards the end of last season our storage point was no longer available so collections had to cease but I’m very hopeful that, with co operation from Chelsea FC, that we can re commence collections in the new season.

Along with another CST board member we continue to try to help Chelsea supporters who may have found themselves in a spot of bother with the club and also enlist the help of our colleagues in the Football Supporters Federation. I am more than happy to carry out these duties in the future.

The Chelsea Supporters Trust has, I believe, made good connections both within Chelsea FC and with other supporters trusts and organisations. This work needs to be built on in the future and, if I am re elected to the board, I hope to carry forward the voice of all Chelsea supporters. With the new Stamford Bridge hopefully being built, there is an even greater importance to have supporters views and opinions taken into account.

Thanks you for giving me the opportunity in the past and I hope you can vote for me this time as well.

Dan Silver – nominated by Brian Wolf

My name is Dan Silver and I am a home season ticket holder and away regular. I am a 3rd generation season ticket holder, about to start my 34 season as a fan and my family's 96th season. 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. Having built relationships with various sectors of our overseas fan base I would like the opportunity to continue my work with them and continue to make sure their voices are represented.