

Chelsea Supporters Trust
Board Election Candidate
Manifestos 2017-18

Cliff Auger (551 words)

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 (719 words)

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

I was lucky enough to see this at first hand on a recent visit to the Hastings Blues AGM where I had the opportunity to meet fellow supporters and talk about the work the Trust does. It was a timely reminder of why we put the work in but also how much work there is still to do 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.

Whilst 2017 sees Chelsea as Premier League champions and the probability that we will continue to see Chelsea play at Stamford Bridge in a redeveloped stadium the envy of all, there remain many issues that may affect the continued enjoyment of Chelsea supporters.

But we face significant challenges to come, not least with the move to a temporary stadium and the redevelopment of our home at Stamford Bridge and it is vital that the supporter's voice, as represented by the Trust continues to be heard.

When one considers that match going supporters now contribute only 20% of the Club's total revenue, one might conclude that our importance to the Club is potentially diminishing.

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.

It is therefore imperative that supporters have input to decisions which may affect us for many years to come, especially in relation to ticket prices, the redeveloped and temporary stadium; atmosphere; ticketing access and prices; kick-off times and encouraging younger supporters to follow the team and that these concerns are heard by the Club.

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.

I am keen that Trust continues to be at the forefront of campaigning vigorously on behalf of Chelsea and all football supporters, as evidence by the Trust's work on Kick-Off times, 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 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.

Henry Fowler (485 words)

For the last 20 years (since the Age of 7) I have been coming to Stamford Bridge. Over the past five years I have been a Chelsea FC member, going home and away, before last season finally getting the season ticket I have longed for all my life. I have recently also become a Chelsea Pitch Owner.

I have supported and been a member of the Trust since it's foundation and have recruited several fans to the organisation. The Chelsea Supporters Trust is a fundamentally vital vehicle for fan voice and control in our football club. I have been proud to see the Trust successfully remove the vultures of viagogo and replace this with a fan exchange, liaise with club over safety and policing, as well as offer fans information about safe standing.

As a board member, I would prioritise three campaigns; safe standing, putting fans at heart of football, encouraging younger fans in the Trust and the club.

My priority campaign would be for safe standing in our new ground. Right now clubs across the country, including Liverpool are discussing introduction of rail seating, safe standing. A campaign that would involve you as Trust members, wider fans, politicians and also other fan groups, can win for all fans. This would be a challenging campaign, but its ultimate achievement of a safer viewing experience for those who stand, or have people who stand around them, as well as improving our atmosphere is a campaign worth fighting for. Safe standing is always an issue that has always scored highly in the Trust's annual members report.

Over the past few years, the increasing sidelining of fans whilst TV companies move our kick off times has stopped fans from being able to attend games, normally due to work. These dedicated fans have been alienated from the game they support, all in the name of TV companies' profits. Another campaign I would like to prioritise is putting fans and local communities at the heart of the game, re-balancing the game for fans not profits.

As a young season ticket holder it would be a privilege to join your board and work on encouraging younger fans to be part of the trust and ambassadors for our club. This would include campaigning for a 12 month repayment via direct debit for season tickets, making this more affordable, and a more progressive pricing for younger audiences, such as students. Some surveys put the average Chelsea season ticket holder as 55, we must attract a younger audience to continue growing our club and ensure a strong atmosphere, another important issue for Trust members in most recent survey.

Previously I have had the privilege in being actively involved in different political and campaign groups and remain an active trade unionist.

I hope to use my campaign experience alongside my love of this football club to stand up for you, the fans, you the club.

Charles Jackson (800 words)

I am a founding member of Chelsea Supporters Trust (CST). I am re-standing for the Board and continue the journey of building the CST and representing our supporters.

Last season was great on the pitch - winning the League and qualifying for the Champions League. We are at a very important stage of Chelsea's history, where the redevelopment of Stamford Bridge and interests of supporters have never been more important.

I have 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 Full Member's Cup Final. I was a member and gained season ticket after graduating in the mid-1990s. I follow the team 'over land and sea' including European Away

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

The CST is here to represent the interests of supporters: to work collectively and constructively with stakeholders, and to challenge credibly. The Chelsea Community is at its best when supports those in need or having a challenging time.

I use my professional skills, qualifications and knowledge, e.g., from analysing commercial and sporting transformation, governance and risks, along with undertaking an Executive MBA course in the USA/UK business school. This includes helping 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 representation experience, along with my 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 other sports. I have encouraged the expansion of our membership and community engagement, started a communication channel with the Club's local MP and visited overseas supporters in Chelsea in America. 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. We have an important role to play as we face the many challenges of transitioning ground. The planned stadium looks fantastic - meeting many areas we have raised e.g. atmosphere and access – hopefully the 'new Bridge' and massive TV rights will give more pricing options for 'regular supporters and 'casual' fans.

I stand again to represent supporters on the CST Board. We look forward to the future 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

David Johnstone (541 words)

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 for 3 in the last 11 years.

I have been involved in the 'politics' at Chelsea for more than 27-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 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 year, I have been involved in various aspects of representing the CST Membership in ways such as having regular meetings with those employed by and involved in the running of Chelsea Football Club.

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.

Chris Rayburn (295 words)

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.

Ramzi Shabbas (219 words)

I am a season ticket holder in the Shed and also an away season ticket holder, born in Middlesex and living in Hertfordshire. My first Chelsea game was a home win against Manchester City in 1969 and I have followed the team all my life. I was co-opted onto the Board in October 2016, providing assistance with the annual survey, and I would be delighted to be elected to the Trust Board.

It seems to me that the redevelopment of Stamford Bridge is becoming the major issue for Chelsea supporters. With the changes to Stamford Bridge and the prospect of several years at a temporary stadium, it is vital that supporters' interests are strongly represented to the Club over the next few years and that the Trust takes a leading role in this. The earlier that issues and ideas are raised with the Club, the greater the likelihood that they will be taken on board. I also feel strongly that the Trust should continue to campaign for the introduction of safe standing in the redeveloped Stamford Bridge.

It is also my opinion that attempts to spread the football weekend to Friday and Monday are misguided and, along with the rearrangement of games at short notice to suit the TV companies, should be challenged in the interests of match-going supporters.

Daniel Silver (391 words)

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. 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.

Richard Weekes (693 words)

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) - atmosphere will be my main focus if re-elected onto the CST board.

The reason We are The Shed have been able to do so much is because we make sure that we are persistent; and so too should the CST be. We should always be pushing to get more people involved and to plan for our future moves. The CST have a constant dialogue with the club and should not be afraid to keep pressing on matters where they are initially rejected by the club.

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.