

ARGYLE FANS' TRUST 2018 ELECTION

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

Keith BROWN, MBE

Nominated by: Richard Blight, Tony Hooper

Compared to most members of the AFT, I am a fairly recent Argyle convert, getting the bug during the last years in the Championship. It was a testing time watching the descent to League 2, the near relegation from the League and the financial struggle for survival. I was impressed by the efforts people put in to create the AFT and had high hopes that it would become a positive and influential part of PAFC. Perhaps financial pressures are unavoidable, especially at our level, but I hoped the AFT would be able to ensure that the team, supporters and community would benefit from success, while preventing the Club's assets from being exploited.

As supporters, we all want to see a successful team, but there are also huge positives for the City, Council, business and amateur—especially junior—sport from having a successful football Club interacting with the community. I want to see the AFT representing the supporters and all these stakeholders and, through this, being taken seriously by the Club. Changes to Argyle's ownership present an opportunity for us to move on and I think people should now be prepared to use their time and expertise to strengthen the Board and help achieve some of these goals.

My background is in the financial and further education sectors. I also have extensive experience on voluntary boards, including as chair of a golf club. I ran my own investment management company for nearly 20 years. For eight years, I was chair of governors of a large FE college in North London. I am currently on the Board of Capital City Colleges, trustee of a local authority pension scheme and of a large education charity. I believe I can bring this experience—and a fresh approach—to the AFT Board.

Susan CLARK

Nominated by: Gareth Clark, Bob Foale

My name is Susan Clark and I have been a fulltime carer for my disabled son since the age of 18 months.

We have attended PAFC for over 20 years always having a season ticket and attend away games when we can.

I am very active in disability issues and issues that affect non-paid carers.

I have been part of various committees and belong to groups who deal with disabled issues and access.

I have been on the Carer's Strategy Board for Plymouth City Council, treasurer and secretary for PADSA, member of Plymouth Area Disabled Action Network (PADAN).and member of the AFT board. I was a rainbow guide leader part of the girl guide association for many years.

With this role I am very aware of procedures with health safety, safeguarding etc which committees need to follow.

All of these roles were voluntarily.

I will speak out for the on issues that affect our disabled people.

I am always keen to learn new things and being part of a committee who will help change things for the better

I hope my experience will enhance the AFT board.

I do believe that much more understanding and help is needed so our disabled fans and their carers and families can be able to enjoy a good match day experience.
PAFC disabled fans are important part of the PAFC family.

Chris DEAN

Nominated by: Virginia Pike, John Lloyd

In my early years, my father's army service took me Malta, Germany and Singapore as well as intermediate English bases, but we always returned to Plymouth for a few weeks between postings to stay with my Grandparents – so Plymouth Argyle of course became MY team, with hazy memories of seeing the likes of George Dewes, Jack Rowley and Wilf Carter play ! I am told that my parents, whilst shopping in Reading in 1950, on the spur of the moment took me to my first match at Elm Park to see Argyle play – 68 years ago!

My father was stationed in London when I left school, so I naturally got (my only) job in the City, and bumping into PASALB members when the team were in town, naturally joined! Many of the PASALB stalwarts remain good friends. I then joined the PASALB Committee and subsequently became Membership Secretary and then Newsletter Editor producing "Pasty News" for a number of years. I also conspired with the late Tony Scowcroft to produce "Rub of the Greens", writing spoof articles (some of which have been recycled in later editions!) under the pseudonyms of "Hardly A. Lawyer", "Rick Cowardly" and "Graham Humbly". Graham was kind enough to write a foreword to my "Plymouth Argyle Yearbook '94", published by PASALB and with a print run of only 500, probably now a Collector's item !

When the interest regular PASALB organised rail trips to away games diminished, I became a season-ticket holder, and combined visits to my widowed mother with attending most home games (even when it was a 500-mile round-trip from Folkestone!).

Following retirement from all forms of paid work in 2010, I relocated westwards – first to Lanhedrock in Bodmin (a mistake!!), and last year eventually came "Home" to Plymouth for good.

Sam DOWN

Nominated by: Richard Blight, John Petrie

I was a founder member of the Argyle Fans' Trust board and have served on the board on two occasions, including as vice-chair. I have also recently helped the Trust in a backroom capacity with social media and production of content for our popular fanzine *The Grass is Greener*. I have been an Argyle supporter since the age of 8.

I have decided to put myself forward to the AFT board again. This is for a number of reasons- firstly, I believe accountability is important and I want to have a mandate from the AFT electorate to represent them. Secondly, I feel instrumental changes are needed in the way that the AFT operates and that in order to assist in doing so, I would like a wider mandate than mere communications.

The AFT, far from being the positive body that it was when it was vital in the salvation of the club, has descended into apparent irrelevancy. Having seen it from the inside, I would say the following: this not for a moment due to lack of will to change but entirely due to deficiencies in internal procedures. As such, I would like to suggest a radical shake-up, including but not limited to:

1. A membership drive, with loyalty cards involving local businesses.

2. A greater push for participation of our current members in working groups, following a skills audit.
3. Communication with supporters and the memberbase before decisions are made.
4. Restructuring of internal communications and procedures.
5. Regular liaison with the club as a supportive yet critical friend when necessary.

I would be honoured to be part of a new board to help take Argyle and the AFT forward.

Celia ELLACOTT

Nominated by: Graham Clark, Robby Bullen

I was a founder member of the Argyle Fans’ Trust and have served on the Board on three separate occasions - until recently as Vice-Chair. I started and edit the fanzine, the Grass is Greener - now in its fourth season. I have actively supported Argyle, home and away, for 60 years.,

I am putting myself forward for election on a fresh mandate because I believe significant changes are required in the way in which the AFT and its Board operate.

For too long the Trust has been in the doldrums and lacked vision. Its image has become somewhat negative and irrelevant. It needs a shake up and a fresh direction. With the new regime at Home Park, this is the ideal opportunity for the Trust to reassert itself; to foster a better relationship with the Club, and to put itself at the forefront of campaigning on and for matters of concern to Argyle fans.

New initiatives - such as a loyalty card - and efficient ways of working are needed to attract more people to join the Trust and to become Board members and/or volunteer helpers. A skills audit would help determine where our strengths/weaknesses lie.

A pro-active Trust, with a strong Board leadership, communicating regularly with its members and listening to the fans can positively and credibly be involved in Argyle’s future:

- supporting the Club, but challenging it where necessary
- providing a conduit for all Argyle fans to and from the Club via email questions and regular meetings
- forging links with the wider community and City, especially in the run-up to Mayflower 2020

I would welcome the opportunity to be part of a new Board determined to take the AFT and Argyle forward.

Bob FOALE

Nominated by: Virginia Pike, Roger Willis



I have been proud to have been a member of the Argyle Fans’ Trust for the last four years and its Chair for the last twelve months. I won’t pretend that it has been an easy year, as we have had to rebuild our relationship with the club after they were unhappy at the Trust obtaining Asset of Community Value status for Home Park. I am pleased to say though that we now have a positive working partnership with both Simon Hallett and Michael Dunford, who we meet with on a regular basis.

I would like to pay tribute to my six fellow Board members, who have worked tirelessly to sort out issues relating to both finance and membership. Both these crucial areas are now secure and in safe hands.

We are looking to enlarge the Board to 12 members so that tasks can be more easily shared and more quickly achieved. I am committed to increasing and improving our dialogue with members via our revamped website, votes on important issues and surveying opinions. As importantly, I will continue to man our table outside the Devonport End at each home match, so as to engage with both members and the wider fan base.

I am standing for election again in the belief that I can offer some continuity as the AFT expands its Board membership and seeks to fulfil its role as a Constructive Friend of the Club. Meanwhile, together with the current Board, I welcome Michael Dunford's idea for an Assembly of organisations working together to support our club and hope that other groups will embrace this.

Tony HOOPER

Nominated by: Celia Ellacott, John Lloyd

I was a founder member of the Plymouth Argyle Supporters Board.

I have been an Argyle fan since moving to the City in 1966. Even though I moved to Somerset in 1985, I retained the love of "My" team.

I am a Season Ticket holder, member of Vice Presidents Club and London Supporters Branch. I am semi retired having run my own business as well as being Chairman of my Parish Council.

We are setting out under new ownership, one that could be exciting for Argyle fans. It is one that should have the fans voice at its heart.

I would like to help mould the new AFT and ask for your support.

John LLOYD

Nominated by: Andy Symons, Gideon Baker

I was asked to join the Argyle Fans' Trust board at the end of 2017, to assist with communications and other aspects of the Trust's activities, particularly to improve interactions with the membership and the wider Argyle fanbase through surveys and other contacts.

I'm a longstanding Argyle fan, recently relocated back to my hometown after 30 years in London and a six month sabbatical spent travelling.

I've been a member of the London and Cornish Branches for many years, serving as the newsletter editor for PASALB for 11 years and on the testimonial committees for Mickey Evans and Romain Larrieu.

I've also had two books on Argyle published – "Voices of Home Park" and "Plymouth Argyle – 50 Classic Matches".

I hope to offer my experience and publishing/communication skills to the AFT, to improve and widen its reach within the Argyle community.

Virginia PIKE

Nominated by: Ray Stidwell, Chris Dennis

A fan since the age of six, I have been a Trust member since 2011 and a member of the ill-fated PASB before that. I joined the Board of the AFT in order to promote a good working relationship with the Board of Plymouth Argyle FC and the Fanbase and would like the opportunity to continue this work with the club under the new Chairman.

Since June, as Treasurer, I have been working closely with the Membership Secretary on getting Membership and Financial Reports up to date and this is something that I would be happy to continue if we are both re-elected to ensure the AFT continues to operate on a sound footing.

I have previously been a member of the various supporters' groups as my career in hospitality took me all over England and Wales and remain a member of PASALB, the London supporters' group.

Anthony SHERLOCK

Nominated by: Robert Foale, Roger Willis

I have supported Plymouth Argyle since the age of five, therefore for some sixty eight years. Most of my life has been spent overseas, but have always been an avid listener throughout those years through the BBC World Service. My career was spent as a Senior Supply Officer in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service and there were many occasions when the latest score line was passed across the airwaves of the South Atlantic in 1982 to our air crews who were flying during matches after the 1982 Conflict.

I became a season ticket member from 2004, just prior to retirement and have enjoyed a fine view on the centre line in the Lyndhurst Stand.

My favourite players over the years have been many, but some are Wilf Carter, Dave MacLaren, Gordon Fincham, Ernie Hunt, Paul Mariner and Billy Rafferty and on to today with Graham Carey. I joined the AFT Board in February 2016 and I am seeking re-election for the season 2018/2019.

Andy SYMONS

Nominated by: Mike Boyle, Neal Harris

I'm been an Argyle fan since the early '70's, having been introduced to the Greens by my dad. It's an obsession I'm now passing on to my son.

I'm putting myself forward for the Trust Board having previously served on the Board and as Trust Chair. The last 12 months have been ones of consolidation and reorganisation for the Trust, but thanks to the hard work of existing Board members, the Trust can now look forward. With the change of ownership this is an opportunity for the Trust to rebuild the relationship with the club hierarchy, and with the refurbishment of the old Grandstand, and the challenges being faced both on and off the pitch as this refurbishment forged ahead, this is an exciting time to be part of the Trust leadership, particularly as the new chairman/owner was an enthusiastic supporter of the Trust in its early days.

I would hope that I can be part of a Trust Board that engages positively with the club, working together to promote an environment that genuinely puts the supporters at the heart of everything the club does, but not afraid to challenge the club robustly if there are points of disagreement.

Above all the Trust Board needs to consist of people who remember that the Trust is a members organisation and must represent those members strongly, resisting the temptation to succumb to outside pressures from those supporters who wish to see the Trust fail.

I believe my previous experience as a Board member sets me in a good position to represent trust members effectively, building the membership and delivering for its members. On this basis I ask for your support.

Roger WILLIS

Nominated by: John Petrie, Andy Symons



I was born in and live in Plymouth and I have been an Argyle fan for 45 years. Quite simply I want Argyle to be the very best Argyle that it can be and then to improve some more.

I would like to see AFT and all Argyle fans at the heart of the club and the club to be at the heart of the local community as it uniquely represents the city of Plymouth and the wider local region nationally and internationally. You can read my thoughts about various things, but mostly Argyle-related, in my blog at babararacucudada.blogspot.com.

I have long since been sceptical that the authorities controlling football are particularly concerned with us, the fans, who ultimately pay for everything whether it be through buying tickets for games, subscriptions for TV channels, club merchandise or by purchasing the products advertised by the game's sponsors. As individuals football supporters are easy to ignore but collectively as a Trust we have a voice which must be listened to very carefully because without fans the game is nothing.

I believe that AFT should be active nationally and engage with the Trusts of other clubs. Collectively we really can influence national policy on issues like policing matches, match scheduling, standing areas at matches, admission prices and far more besides.

I have been a member of the AFT board for a year during which I have helped to coordinate the introduction of our new website, been largely responsible for posting messages through social media, been at the heart of compiling the last 3 years' accounts (which in turn have enabled our successful AR30 registrations with the Financial Conduct Authority) and recently have been acting as Membership Secretary.

If elected I will continue to help AFT in any way I can.

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