



## SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY SUPPORTERS' TRUST

### ELECTION 2021

18th June 2021

Herewith our report on the 2021 Board Elections to the AGM.

I was pleased to be asked to act as the Independent Chair and Scrutineer of your election process and welcomed the help of one of your ordinary members, Mick Derrick.

By the closing time and date of the nomination period nine nominations had been received for the twelve Board positions that were subject to election in this formative year. All the nominees and their proposers were verified as being current members entitled to take part in the process.

As there were only nine nominees for the twelve positions a contested election will not be necessary but rather the nine nominees will be appointed to the Trust Board subject to an affirmative vote by the attendees at the forthcoming Trust AGM.

The nominees will fill positions with initial three-year terms of office but a third of those successfully elected, drawn by lots, will be asked to retire under the Board rotation process at the next election. At the third AGM the rotation rules as stipulated in the articles will then be followed.

Therefore, the result of the Sheffield Wednesday Supporters' Trust is as follows (nominees in a randomly drawn order):

**We declare: Steve Walmsley; Chris Macdonald; Jenni Smith; Gary Slinn; Nick Hopewell; James Silverwood; Matthew Millard; David Lee; and Tom Scott; as the successful candidates subject to an affirmative vote at your AGM. Their manifesto statements and proposers are appended at the end of this letter for information and publication.**

I am also asked to comment on the election process.

I would like to congratulate and thank the nominees for standing for election, a Trust is only as good as its' memberships' engagement.



We can confirm that your election policy and your rules were followed in conducting this election and were fit for purpose.

I'd also like to thank your Secretary, Paul Smith for his help as well as Mick's.

Good luck to you all in the coming year.

**Best wishes, Neil Le Milliere**

### **Independent EWG Chair, Nominations & Returning Officer 2021**

The following lists the nominees, their nominators, and their statements presented in the random order drawn by lot.

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#### **Steve Walmsley proposed by Matthew Millward and Tom Scott**

I want to join the Trust Board to make a difference to the running of SWFC, to how the club engages with supporters, and to how the club engages with the local community. The objective being to build a truly community club where everyone believes "we have our Wednesday back". I believe that football clubs are usually safest when in the hands of their fans, and if they are not controlled by fans, when the management of clubs is substantially influenced by the fans. This applies to SWFC in my view. I think that Supporters Trusts are the best vehicle to try to make that a reality as they are one member, one vote democratic structures that have a legal basis and can undertake activities in partnership with the club, the community and community institutions. They are also free and independent organisations that can speak to the club to represent the interests of members, sometimes in a challenging but constructive way when needed. Those were the reason why I worked with others right from the very start to try to establish a Trust at SWFC.

All those months ago I also feared that the way our club was being run could put it into a critical position and that the fans would need a legal vehicle through which to channel energies to try to save the club if needed. Recent times at SWFC have demonstrated to me the need for greater fan involvement in the running of SWFC and the need for fans to be able to set out the changes needed and to campaign for



them. Let us hope that we not need to save our club from a Bolton or Wigan type situation, but if we do need to do that, I want to play my part in doing that.

Along with other members of the board I have played a key part in building the Trust up from scratch to a body that is well organised and professional and can have a major impact. The Trust will never please all of the people, all of the time but so long as it remains in connection with and listens to the Trust members it can move forward strongly. Like all organisations we have made mistakes, but we have always tried to learn from them and shape a different approach. Once a board has been fully elected by the members the board has the mandate to move forward and try to grow membership and influence. I want to be a part of trying to do that.

Having been involved in the establishment of the Trust from the very start, having served on the interim board from the start, I believe I have developed the knowledge, the confidence and experience to continue to make a positive contribution to the Trust Board and to the Trust. In my working career I have worked in and with large complex organisations that had to work within their own rules and structures but had to deliver on objectives. I have held roles on the front line and in senior management positions. Through this experience I have developed a skills and knowledge base that can be usefully applied to the work of the Trust.

I bring passion and commitment to the Trust. That passion covers both SWFC and the Trust movement. I have been a Wednesdayite for far too many years than I care to remember and during that time I have experienced the highs and the many lows of supporting this club. It is an important part of my life, and I am passionate about it. I am equally passionate about the Trust, and I desperately want to see it succeed. I also bring the capacity to apply energy and hard work to the work that the Trust needs to do to be a successful organisation – that works eats in to time away from my work role, but I am happy to do it.



In the end I am happy to take up any role on the Trust Board but for the past 12 months I have been acting as the Trust connection with the FSA and I am happy to continue to do that. Through membership of the Football Supporters Association the Trust can also play a part in national activities and engagement with other Trusts, the wider football industry and recently the Fan Led Review of football governance. Over the last 12 months I have led on this area for the Trust, and I would like to continue that work.

In the last 12 months I have also acted as Trust Secretary until we were able to appoint to that role. I have also served as Vice-Chair of the Trust board. Where needed I have done media activities for the Trust too, both with local newspapers, local radio and regional TV.

The only thing to add is that I do try to have a life outside football! I am married (to another Wednesday fan) and have a 9 year-old daughter who is a season ticket holder along with her parents. I have a big interest in music, in books and in current affairs. I also spend a lot of time tending to the exercise and other needs of a cockapoo dog!

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**Chris Macdonald** proposed by **James Silverwood and Nick Hopewell**

As a lifelong Sheffield Wednesday fan, recent events on and off the field have hurt. In a what will be remembered as one of the most difficult years in modern history for both the UK, and the world, we turn to our passions to provide us with escapism. Unfortunately, Sheffield Wednesday Football Club has provided me with disappointment, heartbreak and a numbing feeling of apathy. The club is at what I believe is an historic crossroads – continue on this path of alienating the fan base, eroding a history of achievement as we plummet the English football league, or reigniting the club as a force in English football, becoming a beacon of hope and pride for the local community and Sheffield as a whole. I've always believed in being practical – and that is why I wish to continue serving the members of the Sheffield Wednesday Supporters Trust. The Trust is an exceptionally professional, dedicated and thorough group who are adamant on



positive change. We can vent our views on social media, and in the stadium again soon, but nothing compares to practical people power. Continuing to be a part of this group, for positive change at the club we all love, is my ambition. I look forward to implementing many of the ideas I have developed during my first year as a board member to reinstall the sense of community spirit and connection with Sheffield Wednesday Football Club.

In my first year as a board member, I have made a positive start to our community aims. In what has been a difficult year for organizing due to the pandemic, I am proud to say we have made strong links with our chosen charities and developed ideas for future fundraising and collaborative work with both these charities as well as the Sheffield Wednesday Community programme. In addition to this, exciting opportunities are on the horizon, including a campaign to create Sheffield Wednesday themed murals in the local area, working with Sheffield based artists.

In my professional life I am a dedicated Primary School teacher in the city, and wish to extend links with schools and young people in the city. My profession requires me to be practical, creative and have strong people skills – something I bring to the Trust. In addition to this, I represent staff as a school based union representative and sit on the Sheffield Committee for the National Education Union.

I'd be interested in the Community co-ordinator position to continue work from the past year.

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**Jenni Smith proposed by John Dyson and Gary Slinn**

I want to join the Trust board because I believe passionately that our club needs to reconnect with its fan base not just to thrive but ultimately to survive. I feel like now is the time to try to do something positive, and stepping back from the board I have been an interim member of since we set the Trust up in March 2020 doesn't feel like an option.

I was lucky enough to be a teenager in the 1990s and I've seen what this club can be, and what it can achieve. The state it's in now is so sad, and if I can do anything at all to safeguard its existence, and help to recreate that special connection with the fan base, I will be right there. Harnessing the power of a unified fan base is crucial



and it's difficult to believe that anyone at the club knows how to do this at present. I'm certain that this organisation can help and that I can play an active role in that.

My primary skillset comprises leadership, influencing, and the application of behavioural science/ audience insight to inform engaging communications. In my day job, I lead a team of 50+ people to plan and deliver effective, evidenced and measurably successful campaigns across broadcast (TV/Radio), digital and social channels. I have 22-years of experience in the communications industry behind me having worked in press, PR and marketing in agencies, the private and latterly public sector, and I continue to learn every day. I have a post graduate qualification in Public Communications Leadership. Much more importantly, I'm enthusiastic, hardworking and have the odd creative idea. I have loved helping to set up the Trust and am looking forward to supporting its aims in whatever capacity in the future.

I am the interim communications co-ordinator on the board currently and my skillset and experience best suits this role, but I am also willing to act as an ordinary board member as I have generic business and leadership skills.

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**Gary Slinn** proposed by **Chris Macdonald and Nick Hopewell**

I joined the interim board in September 2020 so that I could see if I could add anything to the board and I think that I have added my experience.

I have been a Wednesday fan for my entire life and have been a season ticket holder for nearly 40 years. When I joined the interim board in September I did so because I felt that the club was in a mess and I felt the need to do something positive and I feel that in the short time it has been in existence the Trust has done good work despite the clubs fortunes.

I want to be part of making the club what it used to be and reconnecting to the fans which is something that the current regime (and COVID) have managed to dismantle.

I strongly believe that the Trust will be essential in the club moving forward.



I am a qualified solicitor, and so feel that I have a lot to bring. To the board, my organizational skills, my enthusiasm, commitment, skills and experience (from my professional career), but also my passion for the club. I am also disabled and so have a different perspective to bring to the board.

In my legal career I have worked in law enforcement, and now work as a data protection lawyer, which has already had benefits for the Trust.

In the interim board I have been the diversity and inclusion coordinator and I feel that I have made slow but steady progress, but if there is another candidate who can offer more then I am happy to take up any position on the board for the greater good.

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**Nick Hopewell** proposed by **James Silverwood and Steve Walmsley**

I have been a fan since first going to Hillsborough as a small boy (an FA Cup draw vs. Southampton). I had been to Bramall lane several times prior to that (mostly as I lived on that side of the city), but the moment I entered Hillsborough, I felt "home".

These are critical times for the Club, and I wish to do what I can to get the Club on the right track.

As such, I wish to continue in my role as the Trust moves forward.

I believe I can bring a slightly different perspective, given my residence on the west coast of Canada (though, COVID notwithstanding, I travel to the UK once or twice per year).

I can also offer contacts within the game (and sports in general) in this Province, which can be accessed to help the Club in several areas, including, but not limited to, diversity and inclusion (for fans and youth players), matchday experience, retail and marketing.

I'd be interest in being an Ordinary Member, as it would allow flexibility to perform tasks for which I'm best suited.



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**James Silverwood** proposed by **Matthew Millward** and **Steve Walmsley**

A Supporters' Trust has never been needed more at Hillsborough than in these troubling times. Almost every day seems to bring more dire news about the leadership and financial situation at our historic football club. Strong leadership from the Supporters' Trust is required that asks difficult questions, holds those in power at Sheffield Wednesday to account, and effectively communicates the views of its members both to the football club, but also the wider fan base.

I have been honoured to have been the Interim Chair of the Sheffield Wednesday Supporters' Trust since election to the position by my fellow board members in April 2020.

Before that, I had been intimately involved with bringing the Supporters' Trust into formation having been one of the initial group of supporters who met in the New Barrack Tavern in November 2019 to hold discussions about its creation. Previous to that I had written a [blog](#) for the Wednesday fanzine 'War of the Monsters Trucks' outlining some of the reasons why I believed a new supporters group was necessary.

Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to continue to contribute to the Sheffield Wednesday Supporters' Trust, to help grow the Trust such that it can continue to effectively represent members, and finish the job that I helped to start in creating a vibrant and energetic Supporters' Trust at Sheffield Wednesday.

Any organization that aspires to be successful must have strategy, leadership, and application. I can offer these two core capabilities to the Supporters' Trust and its members.

#### Strategy

As interim Chair of the Sheffield Wednesday Supporters Trust, I have been at the forefront of developing Trust strategy, which promises to build a democratic and transparent organisation, influence club strategy, operate for the betterment of the local community, and voice member judgements. This strategy identifies important areas where the Trust needs to operate if it's to continue to grow its membership and deliver a better football club than the one we have at present.

#### Leadership





My most pleasurable experience of been on the Trust board has been to work with such a wonderful group of people. I hope that my fellow board members believe I have been an effective leader, creating a sense of togetherness and common purpose, and trusting and empowering them to lead and develop strategy in their area of responsibility.

I've also shown my capabilities of leadership from the perspective of organisational growth. I have been delighted to see the Trust grow from strength to strength. At time of writing the Trust has just under 800 members, an incredible achievement given that we have only been recruiting members for eleven months.

The Trust has also gained a considerable reputation within the football world, notably, with the Football Supporters Association such that the Supporters' Trust was invited to give specific feedback on the situation at Sheffield Wednesday to panel members on the fan-led review of football governance.

#### Application

##### Democratic and Transparent Organisation

At the very beginning of the Trust, I led the project on getting the club to accept the principle that fan engagement should be transparent involving structured meetings that have an agenda and minutes. Although this has met with varied success, and was met with great reluctance by the club at the beginning, it has now been adopted by the club as the basis for interaction via its engagement panel. Although far from perfect, it has at least produced some kind of transparency and enabled members view to be heard.

I have also been at the forefront of member consultation events, and led on the creation of an Advisory Panel for the Trust.

##### Influence Club Strategy / Voice member judgements.

An important action I have personally led on is accelerating our evidence-based strategy for changes at Sheffield Wednesday both commissioning and editing research papers and blogs. Through my contacts with academia, I have been able to ensure these papers are peer-reviewed so that only high-quality work is associated with the Trust.



I have also played a role in the effective communication of member's views to the wider fan base. I have drafted (or had significant input) into all written statements released by the Trust, a notable success been the open letter in December 2020, which was signed by just under 6000 signatories in around thirty-six hours. Beyond written statements, I have also been active on radio and television and feel comfortable communicating across both mediums.

Operate for the betterment of the local community

Here, my actions have mostly centred around the application to have Hillsborough designated as an Asset of Community Value, which will be ready for submission in the opening weeks of July. The application to have Hillsborough designated as an ACV is a complicated project requiring completion of a nomination form that requires significant evidence to be successful. It also requires widespread community engagement and to that end (with the help of my Trust colleagues) I have been piecing together a coalition of support for the ACV application that spans local politicians across the political divide, local resident's groups, charities, and businesses.

If members were to elect me, I would be very happy to continue in my role as Chairman. However, the Supporters' Trust should never be about one individual. We have taken important steps since our creation in placing members at the heart of our organization. The Supporters' Trust is designed to serve the needs of the members, not the ego of any one person. To that end, I stand for election for the Trust Board ready to serve in whatever capacity I can to help achieve the objectives of our members.

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**Matthew Millard** proposed by **Tom Scott and Jenni Smith**

I am currently the Interim Treasurer on the Trust Interim Board. Having served on the Interim Board for around a year, I wish to continue in this role. I feel the Trust is progressing and I want to continue to support the Trust Board. I feel I can contribute to the running of the Board with my skills.

With the current situation the club is in, the need for a strong Supporters Trust for Sheffield Wednesday has never been more important. The club and the fans have never been further apart. I would like to continue to represent the members and the wider fanbase and to attempt heal the rift between the club and the fans.



As a qualified accountant, having 25+ years working in a number of industries, I feel I have the necessary skills to fulfill the Treasurer role in providing the necessary financial control and financial reporting for the role. I also bring commercial and business insight to the Trust Board. This includes explaining financial topics to the Board. One of my strengths is explaining financial topics to non-financial people. This could be to the Board or to the members. Evidence of this includes the blogs that I have written and have been published by the Trust.

I am applying for the Treasurer role. I am the current interim Treasurer and am also a qualified accountant so this role suits my skillset.

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**David Lee** proposed by **Anthony Ludlow and John Dyson**

My late father and grandfather took me to see my first game in 1960.

Since then SWFC have been in my blood.

I trained two nights a week in the gym behind the North Stand under Alan Brown in 1967/68.

I am a ST holder and 1867 member.

Although everyone my age, just turned 70, has seen worse, in a lower division than this season, I do not believe I have felt so much pain and disengagement associated with our club in past.

I believe I can be a valuable member of the Trust Board with my history of loyalty to the club over the years. I have a 200 mile trip for every home game.

I now want to try and help this club from within, and the SWST is a really good start and I believe so far has a good track record.

I hope I will be with like-minded supporters who all have one goal in mind which is the continual existence of our club and its future success.



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Almost a half a century of running a very successful business and even longer meeting and interacting with a wide cross section of society with differing socio-economic backgrounds, races, religion and views, has made me broad minded and empathetic.

I have enjoyed treating, employing, working and socializing with many people over the years from this diverse spectrum.

The experience I now I have I believe will allow me to contribute, particularly having reduced my clinical commitment to just two days per week, will give me the time to devote to Board duties.

I have boundless energy and enthusiasm for the task in hand, which I know will onerous.

It takes me just 2 hours to get over to Sheffield.

I get on with people, but not afraid to speak my mind in something I believe in.

I have ideas and much to share and discuss.

Recently I completed an on-line course in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Ordinary Board Membership, for reasons stated previously, would be gratefully accepted, but I really believe I can contribute in all things specifically related to Diversity and Inclusion.

I am aware of many groups in society who do not appear to be represented in proportionate numbers  
with regards to supporting Sheffield Wednesday.

Lack of Inclusivity can represent many aspects of society, not just the obvious ones we are aware of these days, but the people who are priced out of coming along at the very least to home games and shopping in the Megastore.

We probably can't completely change society and its values to any great extent, but we can make a new start, and where our club is concerned any new start has to be for the good, surely things can't get much worse.



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**Tom Scott** proposed by **Jenni Smith and John Dyson**

As a passionate Sheffield Wednesday fan I want to help the club move forward and deliver a much much better fan to club relationship. I'm also passionate about building activities in the community as well as charity work and believe the trust is the right vehicle to do this.

I've got extensive experience in Digital Marketing / Comms / Website work and am the owner of a digital marketing agency. I am happy to maintain and grow the website and membership options as well as advising on strategic comms decisions.

Interested in the website position as I have the relevant skills in this area and have built the current site.

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