



# Sheffield Wednesday Supporters' Trust 2026 Board Elections

## Candidate Pack

All paying Trust members will receive a voting link direct to the e-mail account they registered with when they joined the Trust.

All e-mails should be received by 5<sup>th</sup> May. Any members who believe they should have received a voting link should contact us by e-mailing: [hello@swfctrust.co.uk](mailto:hello@swfctrust.co.uk). Voting will close on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May.

## **Candidate statements**

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# Michael Brown

## 1) Why do you want to join the Trust Board?

Lifelong Sheffield Wednesday fan. I want to join the Trust Board to contribute practical experience, independent thinking, and a clear focus on long-term stability after years of stagnation within the club.

In what could be an exciting new era, the Trust matters because it represents supporters' interests properly, not just in words but in outcomes.

## 2) What can you offer the Trust Board?

I have spent years building and improving organisations, often in challenging environments, and understand the importance of governance, accountability, sound decision-making and great teamwork.

## 3) If you have a preferred Board position, please state why:

Happy to support in any capacity but probably community based

## 4) Is there any other relevant information you wish to provide?

I have previously been a member of the Trust Board (2020/21) and have also supported in an informal capacity. I have recently launched an education foundation 'The Institute of Brilliant Ideas' which works with the SWFC Community Programme to support, mentor and help find work placed opportunities for 16-24 year olds.



# Kieran Burton

## **1) Why do you want to join the Trust Board?**

I want to join the Supporters Trust board because I care deeply about the future of Sheffield Wednesday and believe it's supporters should play an active, constructive role in shaping that future.

As the club looks to rebuild and move forward, I want to be part of a positive, proactive group that represents the fans with integrity, transparency and accountability. I'm particularly motivated by the opportunity to help strengthen the relationship between supporters and the club, ensuring that fans' voices are heard and genuinely considered in key decisions.

## **2) What can you offer the Trust Board?**

I believe I can offer communication skills to help improve the clarity, consistency and transparency of how the trust engages with both it's members, and the wider fan base. I would aim to enhance how information is shared, ensuring updates are clear, regular, and easy to understand so supporters feel informed, included and valued. I'm also keen to strengthen the two way communication, ensuring fans not only receive information but feel their views are actively listened to and properly represented.

In addition, I bring experience in marketing and a strong understanding of social media. Having previously led a social media team for a large company, I understand how to communicate effectively with large audiences, manage messaging responsibly, and drive engagement. I believe these skills could help modernise and strengthen the Trust's online presence.

Along side this, I am currently a prison officer and have been for eight years. This role requires me to operate within strict professional values, handle sensitive information with discretion, and communicate effectively in high-pressure situations. It has strengthened my ability to act responsibly especially at times of need, and build trust. Skills I believe are highly transferable in a position on the Trust board.

I also bring a team orientated mindset, reliability, and a genuine passion for seeing the club progress in a positive and sustainable way. I am committed to representing the supporters effectively and contributing to a stronger future for the club.

## **3) If you have a preferred Board position, please state why:**

Communication/Engagement

## **4) Is there any other relevant information you wish to provide?**

N/A

# Rich Davies

## 1) Why do you want to join the Trust Board?

Having been involved with another SWFC trust between 2009 and 2014 as Communications Director, and along the way Vice Chairman too, I initially got involved as I had a real desire to give back to the Football Club I love.

My initial 'why' was to get involved with the community that surrounded our Club and to create some meaningful engagement for those who couldn't, for a variety of reasons, and all whilst creating value for the fans.

Early on in my tenure that 'why' changed from helping the SWFC community to helping our club survive due to high court action. This meant that my journey took a different course to the one I imagined it would – one not too dissimilar to our current journey. Taking that into account I feel I have unfinished business as far as being able to work on club community initiatives that deliver value and compliment the ones that the trust has recently begun to offer, such as the match day mascots.

I now feel our Football Club is transitioning to a point where we can all work akin for 'A Better Wednesday' that brings all our stakeholders together, the Club / Trust / Community Programme / Supporters Groups etc as we all truly become one.

With the experience I've gained from all of my voluntary work in the past my 'why' remains the same and I now feel the time is right and I have the passion to get involved and help with the delivery of the trusts work and the initiatives it's working on, all at what could be a potentially exciting time of change for us.

## 2) What can you offer the Trust Board?

Having built connections in the past at the club, and wider, I now believe I am well equipped to be able to work with those who remain at the club/foundation etc, along with the prospect of lots of new ones to be able to really make a difference within our communities.

I recently met and chatted with Trust Community Officer Paul Taylor about getting involved with the community subgroup and I pitched a project which I branded 'Owls Community Tickets'. I also met, and chatted with, Matt Pierre from the Community Programme to discuss how we could deliver this and I created a document on how, what, where and when it could benefit our community, the club and the community programme (Paul has a copy of this).

Essentially the scheme would run a couple of games per season with involvement from all stakeholders (club/community/trust) with the plan to raise money to purchase match tickets and donate them to those who can't normally afford to come to Hillsborough. This is just one project I believe I could hit the ground running with and deliver with a large visual impact on the chosen matchdays.

More holistically, and with the restriction of 1,000 words, my core skills involve a proactive approach to how we can become better, what we can deliver with subgroups and how we challenge in a friendly and constructive way to benefit all.



**3) If you have a preferred Board position, please state why:**

I have learnt to have multiple strings to my bow and be able to help and get involved wherever needed. Journey's, and roles, evolve and find a way in my experience to adapt, so in answering that I believe I could bring many skills to the trust that it may not already have or compliment the work of others.

Having spent over 5 years on the committee at Hallam FC putting the nets up, switching on floodlights, serving behind the bar etc they all added to my main duty of looking after the marketing activities which made me a bit of an all-rounder.

I guess I'm a Lee Bullen, a utility player who will have a go at positions that may also put me outside my comfort zone. To pigeonhole me with one particular role might not be the best use of my skillset, however, community was what I was first and most interested in 17 years ago, and without stepping on Paul Taylor's toes, that is where I believe my passion lies and I feel I can complement Paul's work and increase fan engagement which is aligned to my desire to give back.

**4) Is there any other relevant information you wish to provide?**

I have been involved in other voluntary roles in Football (SWFC Trust, Hallam FC and Sheffield FC) but from a business perspective I wear a few hats.

I'm employed as a Director of an IT and Telecoms business where I'm responsible for the sales and marketing strategy along with managing the team and overseeing day-to-day operations of the business.

I'm also involved with Sheffield Chamber where I hold 3 roles; I'm a member of the Chamber Council consisting of around 30 Sheffield business leaders who play an active role in being an advocate of the Chamber's purpose and its work.

The second Chamber role is Vice Chair of the Nominations Committee which exists to help identify individuals who represent businesses, organisations and industry verticals and to make recommendations of those people to become new members of the board, council and candidates for the Presidential cycle.

Thirdly, I am working with the Chamber as the lead on delivering their Alumni programme for members of the board/council etc who have served their term and still have a desire to remain involved and to keep their skillsets within the Chamber network.

I am also an ambassador for the Institute of Directors and finally I'm an ambassador for local Sheffield charity, The Archer Project.

These various roles expose me to stakeholders in many differing businesses and industries and my continually expanding network of connections around Sheffield and South Yorkshire

As part of these roles, I've have chatted with James Todd at the club on how I can help expose the Club to these business networks and repair the reputational damage that was created over the last decade.

In conclusion I now have the time, desire and want to be involved with the Trust so that others can benefit from its work.

# Maureen Edwards

## 1) Why do you want to join the Trust Board?

I would like to help the club in the next few years to maintain the momentum generated by our supporters. The Trust ran a successful campaign to end an era of badly managed ownership. I realise this meant many hours work by a few dedicated people. I should like to offer my help sharing the load as we work our way into a new dawn. We will need to maintain the superb positive input all supporters have given this season. It is essential the Supporters Trust succeed as an organisation. The board have done a fantastic job so far and if I can do anything to help ease the load, I'm willing to do it.

## 2) What can you offer the Trust Board?

I'm a very experienced volunteer and have held several different roles within charitable and professional organisations. At present most of my more formal work is with Citizens Advice where I'm currently training as an immigration adviser. The work involves reading documents and advising clients accordingly. I have a good understanding of number and am an experienced organiser.

I volunteer for Food Works which is a charity using surplus food to make meals which it sells at a low cost. I work in the kitchen usually doing the washing up but can make barista coffees and operate the till/card machine etc.

I volunteer at an organic farm near Norton which runs a bag scheme, and I help in a garden at Graves Park. I have an interest in green spaces and wildlife.

I am passionate about public transport and have already been in touch with South Yorkshire Mayoral Authority (SYMA) regarding provision for matches. This has been particularly for those scheduled on days with a Sunday service or no service at all eg Boxing Day. If transport to matches were improved, I believe less people would travel to the match by car and so the Hillsborough residents would find match days more tolerable. Often parking and the sheer volume of traffic makes life difficult for locals.

I have already joined the Sheffield Wednesday Supporters Trust Community Sub-Group and am currently planning to arrange litter picking in the Hillsborough area. I am an environmentalist and think that there are many low-cost wins if we work with the Hillsborough community and fans to improve the environment. Any activity is worthwhile because it enables people to meet up, have a chat and feel part of something.

## 3) If you have a preferred Board position, please state why:

I don't think any of the Board positions are perfect for my skills. However, I'm willing to help or take up any position that is within my capabilities and availability. I have experience of every position on a board but the membership was far smaller than that of SWST.

## 4) Is there any other relevant information you wish to provide?



I found the 18-page Election Pack very daunting and thought such a formal organisation was beyond my capabilities. However, I didn't allow my self-doubt to prevent me making the effort to apply. There is after all nothing to lose by filling in a form. I really don't fancy my chances if there's an election but I'm only volunteering to help the Trust.

I'm a SWFC supporter by descent and so are all my family. Being a SWFC fan has helped me through some difficult times by focusing on less onerous issues. When I'm at a match I am totally focused on watching the action. I forget all my other problems and rejoice even small wins. I believe there is a great deal of joy to be experienced by supporting a football club. We have survived the most difficult season in our history, and we have managed to find joy in that. Strongest together at a most difficult time. We have often been very well supported by other clubs' fan groups, and we need to maintain those links. Together fans can effect change to level the playing field. I'm proud of what SWFC fans have achieved this season and will try my best to maintain this positive ethos. WAWAW Wednesday 'til I die.

# Paul Furniss

## 1) Why do you want to join the Trust Board?

Having seen and been apart of the tremendous work the Trust has done and continues to do I would like to be involved in some capacity to help the Trust to achieve its goals.

As a season ticket holder in the Grandstand and previously standing on the kop even when it didn't have a roof, I have seen the club celebrate some fantastic times and now the terrible position we find ourselves in drives me to want to work tirelessly with the board and members to bring the good times back again.



## 2) What can you offer the Trust Board?

As a lifelong Wednesdayite following the team both home and away I believe I have the club at heart and share the values and principles needed to contribute in a positive way.

I'm a retired sales engineer with years of experience in sales and marketing managing teams to plan and achieve agreed targets.

A team player happy to work with other members to talk the Trust forward and reach our objectives both internally and with the wider community.

As I mentioned being retired means I have plenty of time to offer.

## 3) If you have a preferred Board position, please state why:

I don't have a preferred position I'm happy to help in any capacity but given my past experience something in that area would be helpful to the Trust.

## 4) Is there any other relevant information you wish to provide?

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# Olivia McGuinness

As a lifelong Sheffield Wednesday supporter, season ticket holder, and away day attendee, I care deeply about the future of our club and making sure supporters' voices are heard. I am therefore applying to join the Board of the Sheffield Wednesday Supporters' Trust.

Professionally, I have almost 15 years' experience in HR, with a strong grounding in employment law and organisational governance, supported by a Law degree. My career has given me a solid understanding of process, legislation, and compliance, along with the ability to lead teams, communicate clearly, and deliver work to a high standard. I regularly work with contracts, policies, and complex legal frameworks, and I'm confident I can contribute to the Trust's governance, accountability, and strategic direction.



A large part of my role involves making difficult, often high-stakes decisions, and communicating these clearly, fairly, and with integrity. I'm used to balancing different viewpoints, handling sensitive situations, and maintaining trust and transparency, even when conversations are challenging. I believe these are essential skills when representing supporters and ensuring their voices are handled with honesty and respect.

On a personal level, I'd bring a slightly different perspective, one that reflects a broad and important part of the fanbase. As a woman, and a parent, who attends matches home and away alone with a child, I have first-hand experience of what supporters need to feel safe, included, and welcome. I'm passionate about making football accessible and enjoyable for families and underrepresented groups and making sure their voices are heard in how the club engages with fans.

I was also actively involved in volunteering during the campaign to remove the previous ownership, including taking part in protests and scarf sales. That experience reinforced my belief in the power of collective fan action and the importance of strong, representative supporter groups.

I've supported Wednesday since I was a child, and I'd really value the opportunity to give something back. I'd bring professionalism, integrity, and genuine passion to the role, and would work to ensure the Supporters' Trust continues to represent fans effectively and constructively during what we all hope will be a positive and exciting future for the club.

# David Parkes

## 1) Why do you want to join the Trust Board?

Over this last couple of years in particular, I've observed with interest, admiration and pride, how the Trust has helped represent us; the Sheffield Wednesday supporters. It has also restored some faith, that the diverse group of people that us Wednesdayites are, can be brought together, to drive a common cause.

Albeit, the cause this time, has been monumentally challenging, on so many levels; it has demonstrated how important it is to have a strong, organised, talented and driven supporter's organisation to rally behind.

Because, if we've learnt anything through recent times; it's that no one else is looking out for us. I'm sure most of us would acknowledge, that there will always be numerous groups, with differing views, priorities and voices; as to how best to represent Wednesdayites.

But it genuinely feels as though the Trust, has taken great strides towards becoming a focal point that many Wednesdayites seem to appreciate, value, and trust.

Like many of us, I am part of a multi-generational family of Wednesdayites, from my Great Grandparents, to my own daughters. On my late Mum's side, with her seven siblings all blue and white, and hailing from Grimesthorpe; it was only ever going to be Wednesday. Albeit, on my late Dad's side, there were some attempts from his wider family to lure me to the dark side as a youngster; but that was never going to happen.

I recall conversations at the old Wembley in '91, with older supporters, they were insistent that we relish and take in the occasion, as we didn't know when we'd be back; it'd been 25 years for them...the rest as they say, is history.

Did I ever think back then, we'd need an organisation such as the Trust, to corral, represent, and fight for us? Not a chance; but how the goalposts have moved since those halcyon days. I am of the firm belief, that now more than ever, we need a strong, representative and trusted focal point for supporters; building on the success of the Trust's efforts to date is not only an opportunity, in my opinion, it is essential. And that is something I would like to be part of.

## 2) What can you offer the Trust Board?

My offer to the Trust board, is a mixture of time, commitment, experience, effort and integrity. In my work life, I've been fortunate to work with some excellent people; and I have always been keen to learn new skills, and put myself in positions where I need to adapt and learn quickly to be successful. Along the way, I have also enjoyed forming new teams, whilst helping people to learn, develop and progress themselves.

A big part of my career required working in partnership with other organisations, including private, public and community sectors. So, understanding others objectives, perspectives and desired outcomes has been a skillset that I have developed well over the years.



I have worked in both the public and private sector, though the majority in the latter. This has ranged from Sheffield City Council, in my earlier years; to the large French corporate, Engie, in more recent years.

Generally, the roles I have undertaken, have required a lot of collaboration to be successful. And this meant the need for both a broad and detailed understanding of how successful organisations operate, or what they need to change to be successful. In my last full-time role as a Regional Managing Director, my responsibilities included financial budgeting and control, operational activities, human resources and corporate governance.

In my personal life, I bring the experience of four decades as a full time Wednesdayite. As most of us know, this brings shared experiences, with friends, family and often complete strangers; of some of the most emotionally charged times in our lives. It also brings to the fore, the fact that we can all have different opinions; ranging from who should play at centre half, to what sort of stripes are right, to how much it should cost for a ticket.

I have followed a much-trod path as a Wednesdayite. Those early days when you're first taken to Hillsborough, for me it was on the north and the kop with friends and family. Then moving on to some independence as a young know-it-all, avidly following home and away.

As the years click on and I start my own family, time and money gets tight – and so matches and trips do too. Then that day, the day I get to take my own children, the day when I'm more excited than them!

And then I begin to enter the next stage, the middle aged, busy at work, parent; sometimes able to manage a season ticket, sometimes picking games. And now for me the current stage, living further away than previously, so picking games home and away; but still consumed by it, and occasionally enjoying it!

To sum up what I can offer to the Trust Board:

- four decades of Wednesday
- time, commitment and effort
- corporate governance experience and expertise
- experience of managing and leading successful businesses
- several years' experience working on and leading successful boards

**3) If you have a preferred Board position, please state why:**

I'm happy to discuss positions at a later date, to determine where best to support the Board.

**4) Is there any other relevant information you wish to provide?**

I've been a season ticket holder on and off throughout my time as a Wednesdayite, and had periods of constant home and away games, together with a few armchair years...

My observation would be; it doesn't matter what stage you're at in the lifecycle of a supporter. You are always a supporter, and you'll always follow; and sometimes there will be other things in your life, that are more important than the match.

But you'll always be a Wednesdayite, as long as there's a Wednesday; and given what we're still going through as supporters of this wonderful club – it's clear – that we are the ones, that ultimately have to stand up, to make sure Wednesday is always there.

# Kathryn Williams



## 1) Why do you want to join the Trust Board?

My main reason for wanting to join the Trust Board is because I'm a Wednesdayite and like many other Wednesday fans, particularly over the last 12 months, have seriously worried about the future of our club. Having been a season ticket holder since 1981, travelling the length and breadth of the country, not forgetting exciting little forays, like a trip to Karlsruhe in the Intertoto Cup 15.07.1995, Wednesday is a big and important part of my life.

This time last year, it was apparent the situation was far from rosy, mainly due to the inexplicable behaviour of our chairman. I felt I could no longer hide in the obscurity of the crowd, hoping the sad reality would fade away and Wednesday would return to our former glory days. I attended the march from the Crucible to Hillsborough and realised other fans there were like minded and wanted to see change for the better.

As the year progressed, I became a member of the Sheffield Wednesday Supports' Trust and partook in any actions, meant to demonstrate our dis-satisfaction with the desperate state of affairs, at our beloved club.

The price of tickets and merchandise was staggering, the divide of opinions amongst the fanbase was at times frightening, resulting in a difficult experience at matches. Refreshment choices of both food and drink at the ground are limited, the quality/variety poor and all vastly over-priced. The dilapidation of the stadium is obvious. The inability or unwillingness to pay any SWFC staff or to pay late was totally unacceptable. Letting a first-class manager, coaching staff and players, with ability, leave was astounding and suicidal, reflecting a lack of knowledge of how to run a football club, a seeming lack of concern for all stakeholders in SWFC and a definite lack of interest and ambition. Although the club tries valiantly to be active in the community and does a sterling job with this in some directions, the whole feeling generated by the last chairman was one of not being welcome, yet alone, appreciated. You would hesitate to bring your children (the Wednesdayites of the future) to the ground, as overall it hasn't been a good stadium experience, in recent years.

The Trust gives the fans the opportunity to be heard and have a say in how our club is run. Acknowledging (almost thankfully!) we are currently in administration, I realise we are in somewhat of a holding position but feel now is the right time to gain an understanding of what the fanbase is wanting and help promote these aspirations, to the new owners of SWFC. The preferred bidder, David Storch, appears to encourage fan involvement. I think now is the moment to act and I could be a useful representative; demonstrating the Trust's aims, values, beliefs and principles for the 2026 and future version of Wednesday.

## 2) What can you offer the Trust Board?

I've worked for decades in customer service roles; both face to face and on the administrative side. Most of the companies I have worked for have been in the private sector, many of them in manufacturing. This has resulted in my having a good grasp of different departments needing to liaise and collaborate, to achieve success. I have a realistic and practical approach to financial matters, appreciating the fact if the figures don't add up, the business is seriously threatened. I'm used to dealing with all colleagues within an organisation and communicating at all levels,

welcoming the interaction with the shopfloor/factory, office-workers, management and the board. I also have an appreciation of the input from all stakeholders, whether internal or external, including customers, suppliers, general public and the community as a whole, as I realise what we do affects a much wider network.

I work in a clear and methodical way, recording all actions taken and paying meticulous attention to detail.

I communicate well both in verbal or written forms. More importantly, I listen, am not judgemental and value all opinions, even if they differ vastly from my own. I believe no one should operate in splendid isolation and truly appreciate the synergy gained from teamwork. I embrace the democratic, transparent, community-focused principles promoted by the Trust and believe I would be able to fairly respect and represent the Trust's legal responsibilities and decisions jointly arrived at, by our members.

I welcome any initiatives to strengthen the Trust's relationship with the club and the community. Having been a Guide Leader for 12 years in the Crosspool area, I'm used to engaging with young people, their families and friends and being involved in local community activities. I'm equally at ease with young and not so young people. I mix with others both by day at work and socially, in my free time.

As I attend nearly all of Wednesday's matches, I could take part in any initiatives of engaging with a greater number and variety of fans, to collect and collate different views, reporting back in an honest manner. I will be able to attend Trust meetings, as required.

I understand the confidentiality of information the Trust may hold on members, SWFC and any stakeholders. I currently work for a Charity, Breast Cancer Now, where I liaise with and keep records updated on Service Users, Volunteers and Healthcare Professionals, which have to be handled with extreme sensitivity and total integrity.

**3) If you have a preferred Board position, please state why:**

I do not have a preferred Board position but would want to be involved mainly in communication/customer service, record keeping and administration.

Although setting out my interest in being a member of the Trust Board in detail above, I've always been slightly concerned about the communications/admin activities and believe I could help improve this area of the Trust's activities.

**4) Is there any other relevant information you wish to provide?**

As a fan-based organisation, I would like to think the Trust welcomes Wednesdayites of all ages, genders, races, religions and ethnicity. In the interest of diversity, inclusion and equity, I hope my application will be positively viewed. Thank you.