



Pompey Supporters' Trust

Strategic Plan for 2016-17





1 INTRODUCTION

We are coming up to 3 years since Pompey fans won the battle to save our Club. In that time, we have paid off the legacy debt; posted a surplus and invested in both a training ground and the stadium. Hence, stability, off the pitch at least, has made a welcome return after a long absence. Therefore, it is now time to look at the longer-term aims of the Trust and for the Club.

To that end, the Trust Board has been developing a strategy to support the Club over the next 5 years. However, while this is in progress, we believe it is important that PST members understand what actions we intend to prioritise over the next year and a half up to the end of the 2016-17 financial year. These actions will support and lay the foundations for the longer-term strategy, which we aim to have ready for approval the AGM later this year.

Hence, this plan focuses on the actions and goals over that period to support the longer-term objectives of the PST and for Portsmouth Community Football Club. A key consideration in all of these plans is the partnership role we share with the other Shareholders/Presidents and the Executive Team at the Club. We seek to work together with these parties wherever possible, as we believe this gives us all the best chance of realising our ambitions for PST and Pompey.

2 OVERARCHING AIMS OF THE PST AND GOALS FOR THE CLUB

The aims of the PST, set out in the constitution (rules); is to promote fair play for all by changing the way in which the Club operates with reference to seven core values:

- The club will aspire to play at the highest level of competition possible;
- The club will represent the City and the wider Pompey community with pride;
- Our supporters are the club. They will feel valued;
- The club will operate in an open and transparent way;
- The club will operate on sound financial principles;
- The club will be an active and integral member of the community;
- The Club believes in fair play on and off the pitch.

Translating these core values into defined goals is important, so that the Board can focus its activities on delivering these aims. Therefore, we see the medium term goals for the Club to be:

- Playing in the Football League Championship;
- Financially sustainable, funding its operations from income and not debt or continuous equity injections
- Well supported, with a healthy number of younger fans to provide the long term fan base
- Training and developing high quality youth players
- Viewed as a valuable and important part of the City and Community of Portsmouth

However, we recognise that the goals set out in this Strategic Plan (2016-2017) cannot be achieved by the Trust on its own; and will require a partnership approach with the Presidents, the Club Executive and other stakeholders.

3 AREAS OF FOCUS FOR 2016-17

The Board has identified six key areas of focus that will enable the Trust to support the Club in achieving those goals. Over the next 16 months, we will lay the foundations for these longer-term activities; and subsequent sections will give an overview of our aims and actions to support them.

1. Identify a future investment model for the Club that will facilitate its success;
2. Identify the stadium development options and then after consultation decide on the best option;
3. Supporting the development of a sustainable Academy;
4. Increase youth involvement and youth support of the Club;
5. Enhancing and developing Pompey's links to the Community;
6. Increasing the membership of the Trust.

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3.1 FUTURE INVESTMENT MODEL

The future investment model for the Club is vitally important. There are a number of significant challenges ahead if the Club is to be a competitive member of the Championship, and operate in a fiscally responsible manner.

3.1.1 The Issues

At this stage, we have commenced some work in this area and need to understand:

- What are the financial requirements of competitive operation at Championship level?
- How can we improve existing revenue streams and generate new ones?
- How do we best utilise our key asset, Fratton Park; and to devise a business model for either renovating Fratton Park or developing a new Stadium?
- What is the best funding model for the Club, the best mix of equity/debt?
- When, if ever, and under what terms is debt acceptable?
- How much funding is the PST capable of providing, and what form should it take?
- How do we protect the club's future as investment is made?
- What constitutes acceptable investment?

3.1.2 The Actions

Our action plan for the next 16 months is to carry out the following:

Action	Detail
1. Investigate protective mechanisms for the Club.	<p>The investment sums required to create an infrastructure that can operate sustainably in the Championship pose a serious challenge to the PST's ability to maintain its % ownership.</p> <p>We will work with the Club Board and other Shareholders to create mechanisms that will protect the Club's heritage and prevent a repeat of the past failures.</p>
2. Identify the financial model for sustainable Championship operation.	<p>In order to understand the investment requirements, we need to understand what infrastructure is required and the likely income and expenditures.</p> <p>Therefore, we will work together with the Club Executive and the Presidents to develop a fiscal model for Championship operations that will enable us to understand the infrastructure and investment requirements.</p>
3. Identify the best form for future PST funding.	<p>The current Community Share model was the best model at the time of the rescue of the Club. However, we now need to examine the best option for the future that will maximise the amount invested by members, while preserving their democratic input to the club and protecting our collective ownership.</p> <p>We will identify future investment models for the PST, how we protect our members' interests, maintain equality of ownership and whether our current legal structure is the best for the future.</p>
4. What urgent funding requirements are likely to arise from the Stadium or Academy?	<p>The work on the Stadium and Academy may identify areas of immediate investment. We should act on these to enable the PST to maintain its ownership proportion even if we have not finalised a future investment model.</p> <p>We will ensure that the different teams working on the areas of focus are communicating to allow any immediate actions to take place.</p>
5. Report back to the members.	<p>We will aim to have an agreed investment model agreed between the PST, the Presidents and the Club Board in time to present at the 2017 AGM.</p> <p>We will also provide an update on progress at the 2016 AGM</p>

3.1.3 PST Board

The Board members allocated to this area of focus are Ashley Brown (Lead), Simon Colebrook (Financial), Mark Trapani (Club Board Liaison) and Eric Coleborn (President Liaison).

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3.2 IMPROVING THE STADIUM AND OTHER FACILITIES

We all understand that there are issues with Fratton Park. As much as we all love and venerate our home, we also can see the impact of decades of underinvestment. The new PFC has already invested significantly in improving Fratton Park and creating a new training facility; but there are bigger strategic questions that need answering. Therefore, it is now the right time to look at the future of the stadium.

Although this may be considered as an internal matter for the Club, the input of fans in this process is important and the PST offers an easy, structured mechanism for this feedback to occur.

3.2.1 The Issues

At this stage, we need to understand;

- What further urgent works are required and does this require external investment to facilitate?
- What improvements can be made that are cost-effective and do not prejudice our decisions on the long-term future of the stadium?
- What are the realistic options for the stadium in the long-term in terms of location, funding and feasibility?
- How do we decide on the long-term solution?

3.2.2 The Actions

Our action plan for the next 16 months is to carry out the following:

	Action	Detail
1.	Identify urgent areas of work required.	<p>A number of vital improvements have already been made to the stadium; but there is always more that needs to be done. Hence, we need to identify the urgent improvements to stadium or other facilities and the resources required in the intermediate term. For example, improved facilities for disabled supporters.</p> <p>We will continue to work together with the Club Board and Safety Groups to identify areas of urgent improvement; and how these will be funded.</p>
2.	Identify cost-effective improvements.	<p>The final decision and completion of a long-term solution for the Stadium is years away. We should always be looking to maximise our match day income and improve the fan's match day experience. For example, the family section. We intend, therefore, to look at ways of improving the stadium that will be cost-effective in the short to medium-term.</p> <p>Similarly, we will continue to work together with the Club Board and liaise with fans and fans groups to identify stadium improvements that can increase club income and improve the match day experience. Where necessary, we will feed these into the funding working party for consideration in the investment model.</p>
3.	Identify the Stadium options.	<p>Resolving the conundrum over the long-term future of the stadium is ultimately the aim. In order to do this, we will need to understand the realistic options in terms of location, our ability to fund it and the feasibility of the plan.</p> <p>We will form part of a PCFC Stadium Working Group in conjunction with the Club Board and Presidents to examine the options for both renovation and relocation of the Stadium. We may/will consider the scope for external consultancy.</p>
4.	How will we decide the stadium issue?	<p>Ultimately, the decision on the stadium will be by the PST, the Presidents and the Club Board. Ultimately, we will need to make an informed joint decision, but after we have consulted extensively with our members.</p> <p>We will form a Stadium Sub-Group with our membership to consider options for redevelopment or relocation, and consult with fans to inform the decision making process of the PCFC Stadium Working Group.</p>

3.2.3 PST Board

The Board member allocated to this area of focus is Mike Saunders (Lead); and other Board Members will contribute to specific sub tasks.

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3.3 DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE ACADEMY

The Academy is another area that is an obvious avenue for development regardless of the outcome of other plans. A productive, successful Academy will underpin the success of the Club whatever division we play in and could become a vital source of both success on the pitch and finances off it.

As with the stadium, this too might be considered as an internal Club matter. Indeed, in the long term it would be desirable to see the Academy operate as a self-sustaining entity as high quality players are developed, but we need to get to that stage first. Building the Academy will require planning and investment, and PST will play a part in that process.

3.3.1 The Issues

At this stage, we need to understand;

- What are the current gaps or pinch points in the Academy operations?
- What investment from the PST is required to support the Academy?
- Is investment needed as a one-off for infrastructure or ongoing for operations?
- What is the level of support we can obtain from our members for this activity?
- What category of Academy do we aspire to have?
- How can the PST assist in the areas identified?

3.3.2 The Actions

Our action plan for the next 16 months is to carry out the following:

No	Action	Detail
1.	Identify the areas of support required by the Academy.	<p>It is important that we understand the reasons for and areas of support that the Academy requires. This will enable us to assess whether our support is an appropriate use of our resources; and to explain to our members the reasons why they should contribute.</p> <p>We will work with the Club Board to identify the aims for the Academy and the costs of progressing toward those aims. We will also work with the Club Board and Academy staff to identify areas of additional support for current operations.</p>
2.	What investment is required and in what form?	<p>If we are going to go to the members for support for this proposal, we need to understand the level of resource required and whether it is one off sum or an ongoing commitment.</p> <p>We will take the output from the above action and, in conjunction with the Club Board and Presidents, develop a funding plan for the required support. We will consult with our members on the level of support for funding.</p>
3.	PST to put in place a fundraising programme for this activity.	<p>If the investment is justified and supported by our members, then we will need to put in place a fundraising mechanism and identify how this money will flow to the club – income or equity? This will tie into the fundraising elements of programme of work on the funding model.</p> <p>We will take the funding plan from above, and develop a fundraising programme for the Trust to assist in the investment required.</p>

3.3.3 PST Board

The Board members allocated to this area of focus are Mark Trapani (Lead), Johnny Ertl (Academy Liaison) and Simon Colebrook (Financial).

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3.4 INCREASING YOUTH SUPPORT

The long-term future of the Club is dependent on the sustainability of the future fan base. Put simply, we need more young fans, particularly if we aim to have a larger stadium. The PST, as a fans organisation, can and should take a leadership role in this work.

In addition to underpinning the future, by working with the younger people in Portsmouth, we also need to strengthen the Club's links to the community and enhance the reputation of the Club in the City.

3.4.1 The Issues

At this stage, we need to understand;

- What barriers are preventing younger people from becoming active fans?
- How can we encourage more young people to attend games?
- How the PST and Club can become better informed about the issues affecting younger fans?

3.4.2 The Actions

Our action plan for the next 16 months is to carry out the following:

	Action	Detail
1.	PST to set up a youth committee and co-opt a youth Board Member.	<p>We have to recognise that the PST Board lacks young members and therefore is potentially out of touch with the issues facing younger fans. We therefore need to create a forum for these issues in order to examine and provide solutions to issues that affect young fans. We also need to ensure that our plans and partnership working with the Club take into consideration the views of younger fans.</p> <p>We have recently formed a youth committee and following interviews have co-opted a member onto the PST board.</p>
2.	Identify the barriers preventing younger people from becoming active fans and possible ways to overcome them.	<p>We already have some understanding about why young people are less likely to become active Pompey fans and attend games – cost, other demands for time, etc. Hence, we need to engage with young local people to understand why this is happening and what we can do to overcome it.</p> <p>PST will research the reasons why younger people are not attracted to Pompey and what mechanisms or actions might mitigate.</p>
3.	Give the youth contingent a voice with the Club Board.	<p>It is well-documented fact that that the views and needs of younger fans remain unmet by football clubs. It is easy for them to be over-looked by louder older voices, or just ignored. The risk is that this will lead to a circle of decline where the younger fans feel ignored or alienated and then subsequently move on.</p> <p>As a community club, we have an almost unique opportunity to put the interest of younger fans on a level playing field with all other fans; and therefore enabling their opinions to be voiced at the Club Board level.</p> <p>We will provide a mechanism for the views and findings of the youth committee and to be heard by the Club Board on a regular basis.</p>
4.	Make home games more attractive to our youngest fans and their parents.	<p>Our long-term future is dependent on the renewal of our fan base. Especially young fans. In order to attract children to games we also need to make it attractive for their parents as a family event. Historically, the Young Blues provided this way into the club for the youngest fans and their parents.</p> <p>We will work with the Club and PITC to improve the match day for children and make it more of a family event (linked to the Community work focus)</p>

3.4.3 PST Board

The Board members allocated to this area of focus are Scott McLachlan (Lead), Bradley Saunders (NG Co-opted Member) and Clare Martin (PITC)

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3.5 ENHANCING LINKS TO THE COMMUNITY

It is our firm belief, and embodied in the PST constitution (rules), that the Club should have very strong links to our local community. It is in the name of the club – Portsmouth Community Football Club. We should seek to have a club that is welcoming to children and families, promotes diversity and inclusion, and embraces everyone that wears the Pompey badge.

By doing these things we enhance the reputation of Pompey, not just within the local area, but also nationally within the wider football community.

3.5.1 The Issues

At this stage, we need to understand:

- How do we encourage more children and families to come to games and to support Pompey?
- How do we create a more welcoming Pompey that is inclusive and embraces diversity?
- How do we support and promote the other members of the Pompey family whilst recognising their independent and unique identities?

3.5.2 The Actions

Our action plan for the next 16 months is to carry out the following:

	Action	Detail
1.	Relaunch the Young Blues.	Overlapping with the Youth area of focus, this has the potential to re-establish the Club relationship with the kids of Portsmouth. Many older fans have fond memories of their previous membership of the Young Blues, and it paved the way for a life of support. We will work with the Club and PITC to relaunch the Young Blues scheme.
2.	Enhance the Family Section.	The Family Section of the stadium is an important area of the ground. If we are to continue to gain new young fans, then offering their families a good match day experience is vitally important. We will work with the Club to review the current facilities and the general experience of families in this section of the ground. We will explore cost effective improvements and propose these to the Club.
3.	Promote diversity and inclusion at Fratton Park.	Creating a welcoming atmosphere on match days is important. It will encourage new fans to attend and enhance the image of the Club. Not to mention that offensive chanting and behaviour exposes the Club to the risk of fines and other sanctions. We will work together with the Club to promote diversity and inclusion and to support and continue the initiatives that are already in progress.
4.	Embrace all other Pompey related teams under the PFC umbrella.	There are many teams playing football in the colours and name of Portsmouth. We believe that we are all members of the same family and by working together we can create a wider community of Pompey fans supporting Pompey in all its guises. We will reach out to all of the teams playing for Portsmouth and find ways of working together to promote and support their successful development.

3.5.3 PST Board

The Board members allocated to this area of focus are Clare Martin (Co-Lead and PITC Liaison), Scott McLachlan (Co-lead) and John Kimbell (Club Liaison)

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3.6 INCREASING OUR MEMBERSHIP

It is important to recognise that increasing our membership is not an end in its own right; rather the desire to increase our membership is driven by the need to achieve the other aims. Hence, a larger membership will help us to achieve those goals.

If we have more members, then we can:

- Ensure the views of more fans are reflected in Club decisions, particularly the stadium;
- Raise a greater investment from a larger pool of fan investors;
- Develop stronger links to the Community and City of Portsmouth;
- Demonstrate to Local Authorities, Financial Institutions and others the size and passion of the Pompey fan base and the consequent opportunities that may arise if they support it.

3.6.1 The Issues

At this stage, we need to understand

- What are the easy, low cost marketing activities that we can do to increase membership?
- Are there any enhancements to membership that would encourage people to join?
- Can we gain some membership increase simply by doing 'more'?
- Can we develop a corporate membership model to attract local businesses?

3.6.2 The Actions

Our action plan for the next 16 months is to carry out the following:

	Action	Detail
1.	Develop a marketing plan for increasing membership.	There are a number of activities with relatively low cost than could increase membership. Eg, advertising, match day activities, etc. We will put together a costed marketing plan for these activities, and then carry it out.
2.	Improve and increase our communications.	If we successfully deliver our objectives and become a more visible part of the plans for the future of Pompey, we will likely attract more members who want to have their say or be part of the future. We will improve and increase our communications to members and the wider Pompey fan base.
3.	Continue engagement at Home games.	Our presence at home games is an important aspect as it ensures that members have an opportunity to ask questions and seek new members from passers-by. We will continue our match day presence at games.
4.	Investigate the addition of membership benefits.	We may find that some fans would be more attracted to membership of the Trust if there were additional benefits to membership. We will investigate the possibility of affiliate benefit schemes or other tangible valuable benefits that could be offered without significant cost to the Trust.

3.6.3 PST Board

The Board members allocated to this area of focus are Johnny Ertl (Lead), John Kimbell (Comms and Marketing), Scott McLachlan (Comms) and Pam Wilkins (Match Day)