

## Chairman's introduction – June 2016

Another frustrating end to a Pompey season, our Wembley dreams cruelly killed off with a 92nd minute goal bundled into the net. It was a devastating blow for those of us at Home Park, all those watching at home, or in pubs, listening on the radio plus those who were unable to follow the game or perhaps dared not to know what to expect.

The reality of course is that our season failed at various points earlier in the campaign. We had ample opportunity to secure automatic promotion, failing most notably at home against teams lower placed in the league. On a positive note I believe the season showed great improvement and we must now build on that to give cause for celebration in May 2017. The incredible start to season tickets sales, with as I write this already over 700 new season ticket holders signed up shows that many fans believe they'll be some good football to see at Fratton next season and I'm sure their thinking is spot on.

One disappointing piece of news regarding the 2016-17 season is the decision to allow Premier League B teams into what has in recent years been called the Johnstone's Paint Trophy. For me this is a step in the wrong direction for the Football League and shows both the League and clubs pandering to the Premier League big boys and their offer to hand out further scraps of their multi-billion pound TV deal proceeds. The strength of English football as always been its depth and incredible pyramid system of leagues. I hope that this does not signal worse things to come with the inclusion of these teams within that pyramid. Furthermore, what interest do the fans really have in watching B teams play? I can't see Chelsea's fans being too bothered to turn out and watch their B team play Pompey, and equally what interest does this hold for our own fans? It will be interesting to see how attendances compare.

One game that might generate a little more interest is if we end up playing "that lot down the road", although that is a game that I would personally dread and have little or no interest in. I'm proud to say that Pompey was one of the clubs to vote against this move and our CEO spoke strongly in opposition at the Football Leagues annual conference.

It's been a positive start to the year for the PST with us seeing our biggest monthly increase in members since the troubled days when we fought to keep our club alive. Remember if there is one simple thing you can do to support the PST it's to encourage fellow fans to join up. Each of your board continue to work hard in their respective areas, and I hope you are seeing a PST that communicates better with its members, nevertheless we are always looking to engage, improve and learn, so please continue to send us your comments and ideas.

June is traditionally the quietest month for club football, but hopefully England will give us something to cheer about right up until at least our pre-season tour to Ireland starts. Towards the end of July we will be holding our annual pre-season event to meet the coaching staff and squad, as usual this is a shareholder only event and tickets will be limited.

Finally, we have been working hard both at PFC and PST board level to look at ways to allow our supporters to invest further in the club, so expect some news from the PST on this at some point over the next few months.

Ashley Brown – PST Chairman