

TRUST MATTERS

'Honoured' Brown is raring to go after re-election to chair

Ashley Brown outlined his Pompey Supporters' Trust plans after dismissing suggestions of a conflict of interest.

The 46-year-old returned as chairman after losing the role to Ken Malley in December 2014.

He was voted out of the post amid concerns his position as a member of Pompey's seven-man board conflicted with also being the supporters' group's chairman.

But following Malley's death, he was re-elected on Monday evening and is raring to go.

He said: 'It wasn't an easy decision for me to become chairman again and I certainly wouldn't have got in the way of an enthusiastic and ideal candidate.'

'But the board made it very clear they were keen for me to step back into the role.'

'It may be only a year, it may be longer, time will tell but I was honoured to accept.'

'Previously there were issues and concerns of some individuals about a conflict of interest – but not from all board members.'

'I raised it specifically myself at Monday's board meeting and asked if those issues still existed because if so, I am not the right person to be chairman.'

'I also told them I believe I can deliver a huge amount of benefit and a huge amount of good as a director of the football club.'

'Subsequently everybody made it clear those concerns don't exist.'

'They understand they have the power to remove their chairman at any one time should they believe a conflict exists but also I personally think it is far more simple than that.'

'If a conflict exists for a chairman then a conflict exists for any board director of the Trust to sit on the club's board.'

'Therefore you reach a dilemma which would be impossible to address because we should be extremely proud of the fact we have the ability to put three of our own members on to the board of the football club.'

'Personally, I believe it's a good thing the chairman of the Trust sits on the board of the football club because it is a key link across



Ashley Brown returned to the role of Trust chairman this week

PICTURE: JOE PEPLER

the organisation. It doesn't mean it should always be that way but to suggest there is a conflict just for the chairman I don't think is the case at all.'

Brown is now relishing a second bite at the cherry following a testing year.

He said: 'Although there is obviously some disappointment surrounding the reasons for having a vacant chair, I hope I can do Ken proud and take the Trust forward in the next year.'

'The last year has been difficult and it is all too easy to forget what a fantastic football club we have presently got.'

'It is financially stable, there has been investment in a stadium neglected for many years, investment in a training ground back in the city and a team second in the league.'

'The Trust is not the only reason all those things are happening but some credit has to go to us.'

'We have three directors on the football club board and helped to influence the way the club is run – that it is something all the Trust members should be extremely proud

of. We now have to look at ways to broaden our membership, that is something we have struggled with since taking over the club.'

'We also want to work closely with the presidents and other investors in the club, looking at some of the key issues the club has to tackle in the coming years.'

'And we have to work to ensure we protect our own investment, including what we do more strategically with Fratton Park.'

In addition to Brown's appointment, Pam Wilkins has been named as vice-chairwoman.

Brown added: 'Pam has been around since the Trust's formation, she is one of its unsung heroes.'

'It is a fantastic reward for all of her efforts to be recognised as vice-chairwoman but more than that Pam can play a significant part in that role.'

'She has experience as part of her duties with the southern region of the Football Supporters' Federation, while she is a fan of 50-plus years and understands the club, the city and the passion.'

'Ken (Malley) would be very proud to hear Pam was given this role.'

Pompey leaders prove their worth as Cook's troops give fans confidence... Lavery to provide crucial competition

TEENAGE KICKS

with Ben Sturt

Hi fellow Pompey fans, my name is Ben Sturt. I'm 16 years old and I've been a season-ticket holder in the Fratton end for as long as I can remember.

I am also the youngest member of the Portsmouth Supporters' Trust youth committee, which tackles all issues that may concern younger Pompey fans.

I hope you enjoy my weekly column in the Sports Mail, describing the goings on at our club through the eyes of a younger supporter.



Christian Burgess has emerged as a Pompey leader

A team of leaders are making a difference.

Last season, one of the main criticisms of the team was a shortage of leadership.

The side lacked the character required to see games through.

When Pompey went 1-0 down, you could quickly predict the result.

Paul Robinson seemed to be the only natural leader and that is why he proved so important to the side.

That problem has been eradicated now, though.

And the side have shown plenty of grit and team spirit to come from behind, grab late winners and hold on to leads.

It's not just the older heads, such as Michael Doyle and Gary Roberts, providing that leadership.

Younger players like Christian Burgess, in particular, have stepped up.

A fan can watch Pompey in confidence, knowing their team will probably score and regularly win games.

Some of you may quickly point out the Exeter City and Yeovil Town fixtures, however, for large parts of those games Pompey dominated and looked like scoring goals.

Hopefully, those two results were a blip.

Cast your minds back to last season's visit to Accrington, who were reduced to 10 men.

It was typical of us at the time that we failed to capitalise and created very few chances.

This is in stark contrast to last Saturday's victory at Cambridge United.

At half-time, U's captain

Mark Roberts was sent off and Pompey took advantage.

They exerted the pressure we now associate with a Paul Cook side and pushed for victory.

A friend of mine, who is a Cambridge fan and attended the game, said that quite early on in the second half it became apparent a Pompey goal was on the cards.

What we didn't expect, though, was the game to be turned on its head so quickly.

Matt Tubbs once again proved his class in front of goal and if he does nothing but score 20 this season, he has done his job.

Caolan Lavery's loan move to Fratton Park this week adds extra competition for Tubbs.

According to reports, the Sheffield Wednesday striker is a very pacy forward.

Lavery's arrival may prove another piece in the jigsaw towards solving our home woes in front of goal.

His speed may help the team get in behind and create more clear chances.

Meanwhile, Ashley Brown has been re-elected chairman of the Pompey Supporters' Trust.

One thing high up on his agenda is to get more young people involved.

As a member of the Trust's youth committee, I welcome this and hope Ken Malley's vision of increased involvement is achieved.

Topics on the agenda at our latest meeting included ticket prices, a singing section and getting more university students attending Fratton Park.