



Candidate Statement



Kate Osterholm

I have been an ardent supporter of the PST throughout the journey that saw the fantastic achievement that resulted in fan ownership of our magnificent club. I've had some amazing highs and terrible lows following Pompey (which all began on the rain-sodden terraces of the north stand and a defeat to Aldershot in 1983) but the achievement I'm most proud of is the day we, the fans, came together and did what at one time many thought would be impossible. I believe that more than ever now the PST needs to be a strong cohesive unit, engaged with fans and reflecting the views of the wider fanbase. I've heard people ask 'are the Trust still going? We don't need them now do we?' The answer is of course we still need them. In fact we need them now more than ever, not least because they are our representatives on the Heritage and Advisory Board.

I believe strongly in fan representation and participation in the running of football clubs. It makes perfect sense – owners come and go but it is the fans that are the mainstays, that are the breath in the lungs that keeps our club alive and I feel strongly that although we may have passed over the keys, we should still feel that the club is as much ours now as it was the day the Fratton End created that iconic scene.

The shareholders that became automatic PST members will cease to be members on 30th June. I think this could be a crucial time for the Trust and it's essential that we work hard to

keep the Trust vibrant and retain and build a large membership. Our voice is stronger when it's formed of many voices.

I'm also a strong advocate of safe-standing and it is campaigns like this where supporters groups have an important say. Again, it is important to have a large membership so we can canvass and promote supporters opinions on this and other issues. There are those who are unsure what safe standing actually is. Many are concerned that it may be a return to the days of the old concrete terraces of the darker days of football which it isn't. Rail seating systems are used across the continent most notably in Germany as well as campaigning for its full introduction I feel it is important to help all fans to better understand the argument.

I handed out leaflets around Fratton Park when the share issue scheme was in it's infancy, and spoke with many by telephone who pledged the initial £100 when the dream became reality and so many of us found a way to raise the money to save our club. Social media is a valuable tool when engaging with other fans but not everyone uses it and people are often more likely to voice their true feelings in person. This is why I feel it is important that the Trust retain a tangible presence on matchdays. Having said that I was a big supporter of the Tifosy scheme to raise money for the Academy pitches at Roko and managed to raise enough money for a plaque and then some through a Pompey Facebook page!

Football as a game has changed immeasurably since the first time I stood on those rain-soaked terraces – not in all ways for the better – but Pompey remains a close-knit, fiercely loyal city where its people unite in the love of their football club.

If elected I pledge to do my utmost to ensure that our fans have a voice, that we have a strong visible PST and that Pompey remains the community club so many worked so hard to create.