

Blues Trust Annual General Meeting, 21st November 2015

Three candidates have been nominated for election or re-election to the board: they are Margaret Decker, Richard Stanley and Mark Sutton. Here are their statements.

Statements in support of nominations:

Margaret Decker nominated by Daniel Ivery and John Moxon

I was involved in the steering group that set up Blues Trust in 2012 and was elected onto the board at the AGM in 2013, for a two-year term. I am putting up for re-election because I believe that supporters should have more of a say in the way their clubs are run and that supporters' trusts are the best way to achieve this aim.

I would like everyone who owns or helps run Birmingham City Football Club to be a fit and proper person for the role that he or she has. If the Football Association and Football League cannot ensure this then I believe that the Government needs to regulate football as it does other businesses.

I also want Blues Trust to be a fit and proper supporters group and believe that its legal structure helps it to be democratic, financially accountable and transparent. It is accountable to its members who have the power to overrule decisions made by the board and to Supporters Direct, to which it belongs. It is required to submit an annual report and accounts to the Financial Conduct Authority.

Over the last two years, the trust has made some progress in becoming more transparent. We have improved our database system so that we can keep better track of members and our website now displays how many members we have. We have appointed an independent chair for our Election Management Group, who is not a member of Blues Trust. He checks our procedures for nominating and electing board members.

We need to do better at communicating with our own members and getting more people involved in helping the trust. We lost several board members this year, due to health reasons and work commitments. This made it necessary for me to take on the work of the secretary and the chair, which is an arrangement that cannot continue. If I am elected to the board, one of my aims will be to work myself out of at least one of these jobs and to encourage more members to consider putting up for election to the board.

We need to find a way to get members more involved in making decisions on what the trust's priorities should be. In particular, I would like to get some younger people involved and get some of them to stand for election to the board. I hope

that by 2017, there will be sufficient capable and energetic candidates putting up for election and I will be able to step down. As long as I am able, I will support the work of the trust but am sure that there are people better qualified than me to lead it.

Margaret Decker

Richard Stanley nominated by Mark Sutton and Margaret Decker

My name is Richard Stanley and I've been a Blues fan for as long as I can remember. My father took me to my first game in 1961 and I got my first season ticket in 1972. My great grandfather used to go to matches when they were still called Small Heath Alliance, so Blues are truly in my blood.

By profession I am an accountant, and have worked in a number of different organisations including one of the big 4 accounting firms, private practice, nationalised industry and European and American multinationals. I am now retired.

Despite being a Blues fan for such a long time, like many fans my involvement with the club largely consisted of attending matches and the occasional club-run event. However, the record home defeat against Bournemouth on 25th October 2014 allied to the uncertainty about the future of the club was a watershed moment. I wanted to give more active support to those trying to improve the situation.

Already a member of Blues Trust, I attended the open meeting at The George in October 2014 and, having met some of the Trust Board at that time, I subsequently started to more actively support them.

I strongly believe that a football club belongs as much to its supporters as it does to its owners. Players, managers and financial owners are transient - fans are forever. Even though football has now become dominated by money and business interests, all supporters should still have the right to have a voice in the running of their club. Through the Trust, I will work to try and bring this about. I will also seek to build the relationships with both the Club and other fan groups, and work with them to seek solutions to issues which are important to supporters.

Richard Stanley

Mark Sutton nominated by Margaret Decker and Gabriel Sutton

I have supported the Blues since the mid-60s, have a season ticket in the Kop and go to as many away games as I can. I am standing for election because I think the Trust can make a difference to the way our club is run - perhaps not immediately but over a longer period of time. The way the Trust is set up as a democratic not-

for-profit organisation puts it in a unique position to take a leading role on some big issues affecting all Blues fans - protecting St Andrew's by getting it registered as an Asset of Community Value is a great example of what can be achieved.

I became a Blues Trust member in 2013 and, having seen the steady progress made by the Trust during the short period of its existence, I became more involved in autumn 2014, attending most Trust board meetings and contributing to some of the Trust initiatives. These have included writing letters concerning ownership issues to the Football League, the Securities and Futures Commission in Hong Kong, and Ernst and Young, and posting articles on the Trust web-site explaining the issues. I also worked with the Trust board to update the Trust mission statement which sets out the key things the Trust is trying to do.

The Trust's overall aim is to help safeguard the club's future by securing supporter representation and influence in the way the club is run. To do this the Trust must engage with both the club and the fans, and forge links with the wider Trust movement across the country. It is probably fair to say that progress towards this aim has slowed over the last year or so, as several Trust board members have left and others are no longer able to devote the same amount of time as previously. This is not to undermine the sterling work that remaining board members have done to keep the Trust running during this difficult period; the work required to ensure the Trust continues to be democratic, financially accountable and transparent should not be underestimated. But now the Trust needs to look outward, to the supporters and the club, if it is to be successful in its aim.

So I see the priority for the coming year as recruitment of people who want to play an active role in shaping how the Trust moves forward, especially how it should connect with the club and the fans, and will then go out and make it happen. I am happy to play my part in this, working as part of wider and active team.

Mark Sutton