

Statements of candidates for election to Blues Trust Board at 2019 AGM

Karim Adab, nominated by Peter Bull and seconded by Richard Stanley

Having served as Board member over the last two years, I would be grateful for the opportunity to extend my tenure and continue the work I have enjoyed so far.

Since formal election to the Board, my main role has been assisting the Trust with its PR and communications, writing press releases to local and national press and helping with the wider recruitment and engagement aims of the Trust. In doing so I have managed to establish a good working relationship with members of the local press and radio, and in doing so begun to broaden the scope of the Trust's message. I have made contact with notable ex-players and influential supporters and will hope to develop those relationships over the coming year.

However, there is still much to do, particularly in terms of engaging with influential figures within the Blues fan base, and helping to design a long term strategy to deliver on the Trust's ultimate aim, which is to improve the working link between the Blues ownership and fans for the benefit of the club.

I confirm that there is nothing barring me from serving on the Society Board. I have no conflicts of interest but I do hold another Board level position at Primary Care Manchester Limited.

Neil Cottrell, nominated by Richard Stanley and seconded by Peter Bull

I have been a Blues supporter since 1967 and a season ticket holder for over 25 years. I joined the Blues Trust at its inception in 2012 and have been a member and supporter of the Trust ever since.

I am retiring from my job as Head of Planning at a major transport company at the end of 2019 and this gives me more time to dedicate to other activities and I'm keen to get more heavily involved in the Trust. I have been a director of two small not-for-profit member organisations during the last decade which I think would provide useful experience for being a member of the Trust Board. I have also got a breadth of experience in governance, regulation, financial analysis, strategy formulation, negotiations, research and project management which I think would be applicable in the Trust's dealings with the football club. I also have friends and colleagues who have experience of being involved in fan owned football clubs at AFC Wimbledon and Portsmouth which I can draw on.

Wealthy owners (often not supporters of a particular club) and big corporations are increasingly powerful in the game but their influence is often not in the best interests of supporters. Despite record amounts of money coming into the game 51 out of the 72 EFL clubs made a net loss in 2018 with total losses being in excess of £350m. Blues are one of those clubs who continue to make losses and appear to be being run unsustainably – we can see with the recent examples of Bury and Bolton where that can lead. However, the demise of Bury may also give some opportunities to re-think how clubs are governed in the EFL.

I believe it is important that supporters continue to try and influence clubs and the game in general to ensure greater sustainability and greater consideration of the fans' interests. This will often be a long-term process and I consider that Football Club Trusts are well placed to try and bring such change about. In my professional life I have often been involved in bringing about change over the longer term through planning and influencing and believe my skills can be useful in this regard here.

If elected I will work to further the influence of Blues supporters on the club and more generally in the game through the Football Supporters' Association. I would also use my knowledge, expertise and energy to ensure the Trust continues to thrive and grow and is well prepared for all future possibilities. I am happy to help out on the Board and in Board activities in whatever way I can.

Unfortunately, due to a pre-arranged holiday, I am unable to attend the AGM in person but my interest and enthusiasm for the post remains undimmed.

Richard Docker, nominated by Peter Bull and seconded by Richard Stanley

I have been a season ticket holder at St Andrew's for more years than I care to remember and despite having lived in Derby for the past 34 years.

I am recently retired with an employment background in local government (housing), management and administration.

I became a member of the Blues Trust and, more recently, a co-opted member of the Board because I shared its concerns about the ownership of our football club and I wanted to add my support to the drive to increase the engagement of fans with those that own and run it. I was, and remain, anxious that genuine supporters across the game as a whole are being marginalised as international finance and corporate interests increasingly attach themselves to football in the UK. And I have become ever more concerned at the way professional football has developed in recent years. I am not at all convinced that the current model is sustainable despite the staggering sums of money presently involved at the top of the tree.

These remain my reasons for wishing to stay involved with the Blues Trust and continuing my membership of the Board.

David J Roots, nominated by Graham Powell and seconded by Richard Stanley

I have only recently joined the Blues Trust, initially as a follower and then as a full member following my return to live in the UK after many years living overseas.

I am a lifelong Blues fan. My family connections with the club go back to pre-war trials and playing contracts which unfortunately never came to full effect because of the war. That did not stop me being taken to St. Andrews at 5 years old in the 1962-63 season by my father and uncle to stand on a wooden stool on the Kop to cheer on the boys in blue with a bobble hat and wooden rattle in hand!

For me Birmingham City is more than just something to go to on a Saturday afternoon (or Sunday or week time game), it is part of your DNA and culture. This is where our club is, I believe, very different to other clubs in the area. We don't support Blues for the glory or the trophies, we support Blues because it is our team, representing our city and our communities.

We have to accept however that since those first days when I went to St. Andrews, much has changed in football, not all for the good. It is now a big business with wealthy, and often foreign owners, hoping to cash in on the golden goose of Premier League status or Champions League at the very height.

Do these owners always know and understand what that football club means to the supporters, the town, the city and the community it resides in? I don't believe they do and they certainly do not always implement strategies in the best interests of the supporters and the club itself.

This is where a strong and vocal supporters group has an important part to play. In my view its role is to act as a promoter and protector of the supporters and club's best interests. To have a voice that matters within the football club and to act as a safeguard protecting the future of the club. The supporters trust should be involved in all aspects of the club, including the match day experience and helping to attract more new supporters to the club, especially the young. I would like to see the Trust encouraging more 5-year olds like me back then to start supporting the club and enjoy that lifetime experience.

If elected I would have these goals in mind for the Trust and work to promote and protect the best interests of Birmingham City FC.

Richard Stanley, nominated by Peter Bull and seconded by Karim Adab

I have been a member of the Blues Trust since the early days of its formation and have been actively involved since October 2014. I was elected to the Board in October 2015, re-elected in November 2017 and am now seeking re-election for a further 2 years.

It seems to me that football can mean different things to different people. For some it is TV entertainment. For others it is a place to go on Saturday afternoon (or these days Friday evening, Sunday lunchtime etc.) to cheer on your team and then head home until the next match. Some take a more active role, commenting on blogs, radio phone-ins, producing fanzines, providing information through Twitter and Facebook feeds.

At whatever level people take an interest in football, there is no doubt that big business and wealthy owners and television dictate a lot of what happens both at individual clubs and in football in general. This is not always in the best interests of supporters.

I believe that supporters should have the right to influence not only how their club is run but also the game in general.

Football Club Trusts are a critical part of that process, through membership of Supporters Direct and its successor organisation, the Football Supporters' Association.

If I am re-elected I will work to further the influence of Blues supporters in the decisions that affect their club. I will also continue to support the influence of fans in general through the Trust's membership of the Football Supporters' Association.