

Matt Phillips

How great is it to see fans back at grounds! As we come out of lockdown and return to normality, it's obvious just how important sports clubs are in bringing communities back together. But it's also clear from the past 18 months just how fragile the football system is: from Project Big Picture, to the European Super League, to the fiascos at Derby, Sheffield Wednesday, and, closer to home as an exile in Manchester, both Rochdale and Bury (even if they were our bogey team!). Against this backdrop, the strengths of our ownership model and academy system are clear and must surely be the envy almost all clubs below the Championship.

These strengths have allowed both Club and Trust to make several ambitious strategic decisions over the past year including; the repayment of the Trust loan, the new pitch, the plans for the new training facilities, the scoreboard and so on. It has been great to see the Club making strides forward, especially during such a challenging period. As the Club continues to bring in significant revenues though, it becomes even more important to ensure that the money is well spent. If successful, the projects which the Club invests into could give us the opportunity to become more self-sustaining, put more money into the playing budget, further enhance the supporter experience and leapfrog us ahead of our rivals. If not successful, they could become a "white elephant" that leaves us counting the cost into the future at the expense of the team on the pitch. I am standing for the Trust with a focus on these areas.

Professionally, I am a Senior Actuary with a Big 4 Professional Services firm and a member of the Association for Project Management. My role focuses on complex infrastructure programmes, focusing on the assessment and valuation of risk and uncertainty within business cases. I have significant experience working on NetZero and digital transformation programmes, and I have supported various companies in assessing the financial impact of new product launches. I also worked with a non-football sports team to improve their financial forecasts.

I am truly passionate about our Club and the Trust, and whilst my exile status may not allow me to be as visible as other Trustees, I will be committed to supporting the objectives of the Trust as best I can. UTC