



**Exeter City AFC Supporters' Society Limited**

**Trustee Election Pack – 2020**

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## 1. Letter from the Chairman

Dear Trust Member,

Thank you for your continued membership of the Exeter City AFC Supporters Society Ltd (the Trust), which has ensured we remain at the forefront of supporter owned Football Clubs and continue to provide a sustainable model of ownership.

The 2020 Trust Board Election will be the first to utilise electronic voting, should the election be contested. Further details of the arrangements for electronic voting are contained within this election pack.

With COVID 19 restrictions it is difficult to predict whether we will be allowed or should hold any in person events in support of the election campaign. Therefore, the Trust Board is preparing for both in person and remote events using Zoom. Final arrangements will be made nearer to the election period in consultation with our returning officer and current government guidance.

This year's AGM, at which the results of any election will be announced, is on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November at 11.00am, prior to the home game v Oldham Athletic. Further details will follow.

The following Trustees are standing down at the 2020 AGM:

Peter Martin

Douglas Gillard

Nick Hawker

Mark Cordell

To assist in helping you decide if you wish to stand for election, I enclose an information pack that explains the role of a Trust Board member and the Election Campaigning Policy.

Any member aged of 16 or over can stand to become a Trustee providing they are able to pass the English Football League fit and proper test. I should advise however, that it is a time consuming and often challenging role, but equally, can be extremely rewarding.

It is the Trust's aim to have a diverse Board, with a broad range of skill sets. It would enhance the Board effectiveness, if you can offer experience in any of the following fields:

Law	Commercial & business management
Marketing; PR; Social Media	HR
IT	Financial management

We would also like to see Trustees who can represent or contribute views from:

the u-25 age group;  
disabled members;  
ethnic minorities; and  
female supporters

If you feel you possess the necessary skills and are able to devote some time to the role, I encourage you to put your name forward.

All the details and a nomination form follow in this pack. If you have any questions or would like further information, please email the Trust at [enquiries@weownexetercityfc.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@weownexetercityfc.co.uk) or call the Club reception on 01392 411243 who will pass on a message.

Many thanks again.

Nick Hawker

Chairman, Exeter City AFC Supporters Society Ltd

## **2. Election to the Trust Board of Trustees (Trust Board)**

If you would like stand for election as a Trustee of the Exeter City AFC Supporters Society Ltd you will find the nomination document form later in this pack – however, we would urge you to read the pack in full as it will explain what might be expected of you should you be elected, the rules of campaigning for election, and of course, what you need to do to be nominated.

If you have any queries or concerns around this pack, please do not hesitate to contact the Trust Secretary:

Phil Burden  
Trust Secretary  
Exeter City AFC Supporters Society Ltd  
St James Park  
Stadium Way  
EXETER  
EX4 6PT

e-mail: [enquiries@weownexetercityfc.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@weownexetercityfc.co.uk)

Queries or concerns relating the election process may be directed to the Secretary (as above) or to the returning officer:

ECFC Returning Officer  
10 Chariot Drive  
Kingsteignton  
TQ12 3GF

e-mail: [rx8man@btinternet.com](mailto:rx8man@btinternet.com)

We thank you for your interest and look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

**Phil Burden,**  
Trust Secretary

### **3. Potential Trustee - Briefing Paper**

The Trust Board (Trust board) is the formal management body of the Exeter City AFC Supporters Society Ltd (the Trust).

The Trust Board shall consist of not fewer than nine (9) and not more than 15 Trustees

Under the constitution, it currently may consist of up to 15 members and may include up to 5 co-opted members together with several appointed officers (Treasurer, Secretary, Public Relations and Communications Officer, etc.)

These numbers can be a mixture of elected and co-opted and that in this election the Trust board is seeking to achieve 12 elected members.

The primary responsibilities of the Trustees are:

- *To ensure that the Trust is continually working towards achieving its aims and objectives and fulfilling the Strategic Plan*
- *To monitor the management of the Football Club through pre-defined procedures*
- *To contribute towards the development of Trust policy*
- *To contribute towards the development of the Trust and the Football Club within the community*
- *To ensure that sufficient funds are raised to allow the Trust and the Football Club to continue to operate*

The Trust board is organised to formally meet monthly with 4 standing sub-groups tasked with achieving the practical outcomes required by the Strategic Plan.

The sub-groups are:

- **Finance & Governance (FGG)**
- **Ownership & Membership (OWG)**
- **Community**
- **Communications and Engagement Group (CEWG)**

All Individual Trustees are expected to be active in at least one of these sub-groups, and this will involve attending regular meetings, carrying out research; writing and presenting proposal documents; implementing and managing action plans and taking ownership to achieve positive outcomes.

It is expected that Trust board members will encourage supporter volunteers to help with the work of the Trust board and the sub-groups.

#### **The Trust and the Football Club**

Working relationships between members of the Trust and Club boards are promoted and encouraged for mutual benefit and there are procedures in place to ensure that all contacts and information flows are positive, effective, and efficient.

The Trust directly nominates four trustees to serve as Directors to the Club board

All this gives the Trust considerable influence over the working of the Football Club in line with its responsibility as Majority Shareholder, but it must be borne in mind that Exeter City AFC Ltd is a 'Trust Owned' football club, not 'Trust Run', and via the Club

Board we employ a professional staff to manage the business on behalf of all the shareholders.

### **Personal Commitment**

The Trust board & sub-groups typically hold meetings on a weekday evening. The Trust board currently meets every month and the sub-groups meet monthly or as required.

A Trustee is expected to attend all appropriate meetings; indeed, under the current rules, a trustee will be asked to step down if they do not attend three consecutive meetings without good cause.

In addition, the Trust board support the Club on match-days in the Board Room, typically entertaining visiting team directors and of course, the Trust 'Director for the Day' winner. This is done on a rota basis, as is attending to the Trust Stall in Red Square.

***You need to be aware that for a Trustee to be effective this work is likely to require a considerable and continuous time commitment.***

### **4. Guidelines for Trust Board Membership**

#### **Members of the Trust Board must not:**

- be less than 16 years of age at the date of their election. (The election date is deemed to be the date of the AGM)
- benefit financially, directly, or indirectly, from any working relationship that is established in the course of duties undertaken or contacts made on behalf Exeter City AFC Supporters Society Ltd;
- be subject to a bankruptcy order or has in place a composition with their creditors;
- be subject to a disqualification order made under the Company Directors Disqualification Act;
- have a conviction for an indictable offence (other than a spent conviction as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974);
- become incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury of performing the duties reasonably expected of a Society Trust Board Member;
- fail to abide by any rules for the conduct of elections made by the Society Trust Board

### **5. Trust Membership Eligibility**

Participation in the 2020 AGM and Trust Board Election is limited to current Exeter City Supporters Trust Members. The cut off date for membership for the 2020 AGM and Trust Board Election is **noon on 7th September 2020**. Participation includes the following activities:

- Nominating a Trust member for election for the 2020 Trust Board Election.
- Standing for election in the 2020 Trust Board Election.
- Voting in the 2020 Trust Board Election.

## **GUIDELINES FOR BEHAVIOUR**

### **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR TRUSTEES AND OTHER OFFICERS OF THE TRUST**

This Code of Conduct sets ethical standards for the Trustees of Exeter City AFC Supporters Society Ltd.

Trustees will pursue the highest standards of ethical conduct in the interests of Members of the Trust, Exeter City Football Club, employees, creditors and all other stakeholders.

The word Trustee in this Code shall also be taken to include Officers of the Trust

The following principles govern their conduct.

#### **Honesty, Integrity and Commitment**

- Trustees shall act honestly and with integrity in all of their dealings on behalf of Exeter City AFC Supporters Society Ltd.
- Trustees will make their best endeavours to attend meetings of the Trust Board of Society of Exeter City AFC Supporters Society Ltd, and not be absent without good reason.
- Trustees will devote sufficient time and attention to the Society in order to fulfil their duties as a Trustee.
- Trustees will not discriminate on the grounds of people's race, religion, gender, marital status or disability.
- Trustees will not make promises or commitments that the Trust board does not intend, or would be unable, to honour.
- Trustees have collective responsibility. They are bound by the decisions of the Trust board and when representing the Trust will support those decisions outside the Trust board environment.
- Trustees' conduct, at all times, will be such that their honesty is beyond question.
- Trustees' conduct, at all times, will be such that it upholds the reputation and good name of the Trust.
- Trustees shall adhere to the truth, and not mislead directly or indirectly nor make false statements, nor mislead by omission.
- Trustees shall treat everyone with whom they have dealings as a Trustee with personal respect and politeness.

#### **Personal Transactions**

- Trustees' personal or other business dealings will be kept separate from their dealings as a Trustee of Exeter City AFC Supporters Society Ltd.
- Trustees shall not use the name of Exeter City AFC Supporters Society Ltd or Exeter City A.F.C. Limited to further any personal or other business transaction not related to Exeter City F.C. Supporters Trust or Exeter City A.F.C. Limited or its business interests.

- Trustees shall use goods, services and facilities provided to them by Exeter City AFC Supporters Society Ltd, Exeter City A.F.C. Limited or associated business, strictly in accordance with the terms on which they are provided.

**Confidentiality of Information**

- Trustees will ensure that confidential information (or any information that could be considered to be of a sensitive nature) relating to the Trust board or the Football Club's operations, its customers, employees, creditors or associated businesses is not given either inadvertently or deliberately to third parties unless that information is required by law or a regulatory body.
- Trustees will not use information obtained by them as a Trustee of the Exeter City AFC Supporters Society Ltd for personal financial gain, nor will that information be used to obtain financial benefit for any other person or business.
- Trustees shall respect the privacy of others.

**Disclosure of Interests**

- Trustees shall fully disclose promptly any private or other business interests or any other matters, which may lead to potential or actual conflicts of interest.

**Abiding by the Law**

- Trustees shall abide by the law at all times.

**Payments, Gifts, Entertainment and Travel**

- Trustees shall not use their status as a Trustee of Exeter City AFC Supporters Society Ltd to seek personal gain from those doing business or seeking to do business with the Club. Trustees shall not accept any personal gain of any material significance if offered.

**FAILURE TO ABIDE BY THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

- Trustees whose behaviour or actions are contrary to the spirit of this Code may be subject to such disciplinary sanctions as imposed by the Trust board after due process and, if appropriate, appeal or arbitration.
- Any allegation of Trustee's failure to honour the Code must be made in writing to the Chairman of the Trust board, or if relating to the Chairman of the Trust board, to the Secretary. The accused Trustee will be given written notice of the allegation and asked to respond within 14 days. However, should the complaint relate to personal behaviour during a formal meeting of the Trust or any properly constituted committee, then the meeting can consider a verbal motion to exclude the offender from the rest of the meeting without notice.
- The Trust board, or any properly appointed sub-committee, will make such enquiries as deemed necessary, including the right to call a hearing of all interested parties and will rule on the outcome of those enquiries and report the findings to the Trust board for ratification and/or further action. In the case of calling a hearing, all parties will receive 14 days-notice of the date, place and time of such a hearing.
- Sanctions available to the Trust board will include formal reprimand, orders of specific performance, suspension and ultimately, recommend expulsion from the Trust board.

## **6. Getting Nominated**

The final pages of this pack contain the nomination form and manifesto statement. The nomination form is also available on the trust website. These should be detached, completed, and returned in accordance with the deadlines set in the election timetable.

Nominations should be sent to the Returning Officer at:

ECFC Returning Officer  
10 Chariot Drive  
Kingsteignton  
TQ12 3 GF

e-mail: [rx8man@btinternet.com](mailto:rx8man@btinternet.com)

Nominations should be despatched to arrive no later than noon on 17th October 2020.

The candidate must return the original form, signed and dated by themselves and the three members making the nomination.

Alternatively, the candidate may return the nomination form completed but unsigned by the Proposers, providing the e-mail address of the Proposer as recorded against that member's details on the Trust database.

The nomination will be considered valid upon receipt of an e-mail by the Returning Officer from that address confirming the nomination. The e-mail should include that member's name, postal address, and membership priority number.

By submitting a nomination, candidates will be deemed to have accepted the election policy and rules as described in this pack and have agreed to be bound by them.

A check will be made against the candidate and Proposers to ensure that they are current members of the Trust as at the closing date for ballots.

Proposers should not normally be serving Trustees, officers, or members of the Club Board.

## **7. Policy on Election Campaigning**

### **Introduction**

The Supporters Trust have a policy that clearly defines the parameters to which an election campaign is carried out. This policy is enforceable and any restrictions capable of speedy and accurate evaluation. Elections should be vibrant, and members should have a sense of their importance and they should not send out a message of bureaucratic duty or irrelevance to the issues.

The Supporters Trust will provide additional opportunities for members to communicate directly with candidates, where members can ask questions of candidates.

This could be through a set-piece debate event or, and as well as, an on-line Q&A. Members will be made aware of such activities via on-line promotion and in official AGM/Election documentation sent to the members.

Candidates may engage with the membership for the purposes of election campaigning using any social media or online platform, provided that they inform the trust secretary

and returning officer of their intention to do so and name all platforms or forums they intend to use.

Typically, the Supporters Trust may seek to arrange an 'in-person' debate to which members could attend or submit written questions for consideration. Arrangements can also be made for an on-line 'forum' style Q&A to run throughout the election period.

### **Funding**

Candidates may produce, at their own cost – up to a limit of £100, literature in support of their candidacy. There is a limit of 1,000 words on content for printed literature (flyers etc.) for campaigning purposes.

A copy of any such literature is supplied in hard copy or electronically, to the Trust Secretary and Returning Officer prior to its distribution to members.

No free of charge benefits, are to be incurred by any candidate in relation to campaign literature or advertising.

### **Negative Campaigning**

Candidates should respectfully refrain from implicitly or explicitly referring to other candidates to prevent the political practice of negative campaigning. This is to protect everyone's interests, to prevent defamatory statements and so that successfully elected candidates can work together without the prejudices being created at a campaigning stage.

### **Election Manifesto**

All candidates will be required to submit an election manifesto not exceeding 400 words with their application. This manifesto must conform to the conditions included within this policy and will be published by the Trust on its Website.

Candidates should further submit a short 100-word summary of their manifesto, together with an electronic passport style photograph in PNG or jpeg format, for inclusion in the Ballot Pack and the Trust Website.

Both the 100 and 400 word manifestos along with the photograph must be submitted to the returning officer along with the Candidate nomination form.

### **Electronic Voting**

At the July 2020 Trust Board meeting the TB voted to adopt electronic voting for any 2020 Trust Board election and subsequent elections utilising the Election Runner software package. Prior to this vote the software was extensively tested in association with our returning officer to prove to the board members it was suitable. The voting system utilises the trust members registered email address for the vote. The system provides for reminders to voters throughout the voting period.

Despite numerous appeals and a mail out with provided stamped addressed envelopes the Trust still has a small number of members (around 5%) for which we do not have email addresses. Therefore, for any 2020 election a paper ballot will be provided for those members. Included below is screen grab which provides an example of how the candidate information will be presented to voters.

**THE TRUST**

We Own Our Football Club

## Trust Example

## Example Ballot

Please select your favourite player from the 1989/90 season

## INSTRUCTIONS

Select between **1** and **3** options from the list below. \* Required

0 of 3 Selected



Danny Bailey



Kevin Miller



Shaun Taylor



Scott Hiley



Darran Rowbotham

Submit Ballot

All candidates will be listed in alphabetical order with a picture and a link to the candidate manifesto.

### Hustings

The hustings will take place on **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2020**.

Following on from comments received following the 2019 election the Hustings will be the initial event of the election campaign. The voting period will not commence until after the hustings. At this stage it is not possible to say whether the hustings will be held in person or via Zoom. It is planned to record the hustings and to be made available for those not able to attend in person.

The hustings event will allow for all candidates to answer questions that will be given in advance to the candidates.

These questions will be drawn from the Trust membership and selected by the Trust Secretary or a nominated Trustee (who is not standing in the election). Time permitting, questions from the audience may be allowed.

Nominee attendance at the hustings is voluntary and non-attendance does not preclude a candidate from the election process.

**Breaching the Rules**

Any breach of the above rules will be considered within 14 days by the Trust board. Sanctions available to the Trust board may include a written warning or should the breach be considered serious enough the candidate may be removed from the election process. A two thirds majority vote of the Trust board will be required for a candidate to be removed.

In any event the Trust membership will be informed of this breach through the Trust Website.

**8. Proposed Trustee Election Timetable**

<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>5<sup>th</sup> September 2020</b>	<b>Announcement of Election / PR campaign</b>
17 <sup>th</sup> October 2020 (Noon)	Deadline for Candidate Nominations and Manifestos
W/c 26 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	Invitation to submit member questions to candidates
1 <sup>st</sup> November 2020	Deadline for Candidate communication and members questions via social and other media
<b>6<sup>th</sup> November 2020</b>	<b>Dispatch ballot papers &amp; related documentation</b>
<b>7<sup>th</sup> November 2020</b>	<b>Hustings</b>
<b>7<sup>th</sup> November 2020</b>	<b>Open Electronic Ballot Window</b>
<b>17<sup>th</sup> November 2020</b>	<b>Close of Electronic Ballot Window Deadline for return of ballot papers</b>
<b>Saturday 21st November 2020 (ECFC v Oldham Athletic)</b>	<b>AGM Successful candidates to be presented at AGM</b>

## **Candidate Manifesto 2020**

All candidates are required to submit an election manifesto not exceeding 400 words. This manifesto must conform to the conditions included within this policy and will be published by the Trust.

Once the Returning Officer deems a nomination valid, to support electronic voting, the candidate shall provide an electronic version of their manifesto in pdf format and passport style photo in PNG or jpeg format to the Trust Secretary at [enquiries@weownexetercityfc.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@weownexetercityfc.co.uk) to be loaded into the electronic voting software.

Candidates should further submit a 100-word summary of their manifesto, together with an electronic passport-style photograph, for inclusion in the Ballot Pack.

The views contained within these statements will be the individual views of the candidates and not those of the Exeter City AFC Supporters Society Ltd.

Candidates should provide information which addresses the following information:

- i) Experience or past involvement in football, which you consider may be relevant to your nomination, or which could be useful to the Trust if elected.
- ii) Outline how you might be able to use any skills, knowledge or experience you have which may benefit the work of the Trust Board.
- iii) What would be your aims & interests if elected?
- iv) What are your views on any current issues which affect the welfare and interests of the football supporter?

**Exeter City AFC Supporters Society Ltd Elections  
Nomination Form for election as Trustee.****CANDIDATE** (Full Name) - Please PRINT:

\_\_\_\_\_

Candidate Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate Membership Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact telephone no \_\_\_\_\_

Contact email \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby agree to my nomination for an elected place on the Trust board and I agree to be bound by the provisions of the Trust Rules and the Trust Board Membership & Conduct Policy.

**I confirm that I have read and understood the Trustees duties and responsibilities letter.**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Proposers**

- All sections must be completed to be valid
- Copies of the Trust rules can be accessed via the Trust's website [www.weownexetercityfc.co.uk](http://www.weownexetercityfc.co.uk) or by e-mailing the Secretary at:

[enquiries@weownexetercityfc.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@weownexetercityfc.co.uk)

	<b>Name of Proposer</b> Please PRINT	<b>Member Priority No.</b>	<b>Proposer signature</b> <i>If the nominee is unable to obtain the original signatures of their Proposer, then please refer to the e-mail procedures in this pack.</i>	<b>Date</b>
<b>1</b>				
<b>2</b>				
<b>3</b>				

This page, together with both the short and long form Candidate Manifesto Statements and electronic photograph, must be returned to:

**ECFC Returning Officer, 10 Chariot Drive, Kingsteignton, TQ12 3GF**

by post as an original with original candidate signature by: 12.00 midday on Saturday  
17<sup>th</sup> October 2020