



### **New unified national supporters' organisation: EFL League 1 & League 2 network**

The Football Supporters' Federation and Supporters Direct will be merging into one organisation later this month and below is a list of candidates who have put themselves forward for consideration in the League 1 & 2 network elections.

Each affiliate member can vote for up to three candidates to represent them on the new national council – over the next seven pages you can find the supporting statements for each of the seven candidates in the League 1 & 2 network.

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#### **Roger Ellis – The Sky Blue Trust:**

I am a lifelong supporter of Coventry City FC. I have been Secretary of the Sky Blue Trust for the last five years, in which time we have battled with the owners - SISU - over various challenges to the very existence of our Club.

I have become active in the supporters' movement nationally. I have attended all the "Structured Dialogue" meetings between FSF/SD and the EFL since 2016, representing L1 and L2 Clubs, challenging Shaun Harvey on numerous issues such as "crisis clubs", safe standing, the scheduling of matches, etc. I was elected to the SD England and Wales Football Council in 2017. I spoke at the Supporters' Summit in 2017. I am a member of a working group of FSF and SD representatives developing proposals to reform the regulation of football. We hope this may deliver progress towards a new approach to tackling the owners and directors of "crisis clubs."

I spent 36 years as a solicitor and manager in Local Government before retiring in 2012. I had professional dealings with a number of football clubs and their owners - notably with Robert Maxwell, during his notorious spell owning Oxford United in the 1980s.

Formation of the new supporters' organisation is a key step. Football clubs are the greatest expression of community identity in our nation. For too long, too many owners of clubs have treated them as mere chattels and supporters as no more than sources of income. The game's future depends upon greater recognition of the crucial contribution which supporters make, especially when they are actively engaged in the running of clubs.

If elected I will hope to address many issues facing the game - such as its gross financial imbalance; the need for much better backing for the grassroots; the quest for more inclusive, welcoming and non-discriminatory clubs which encourage people from all backgrounds to enjoy their football with pride and in safety; and the improvement of the way clubs engage with their supporters.

I will also do what I can to try to bring about a change in the regulation of the game so that owners have to exercise proper stewardship, not just of their club's balance sheet, but also of the immense value of supporters' loyalty and the heritage and tradition which clubs bring to their host communities.

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**Kristine Green – Mariners Trust:**

Although I have only served around 15 months on the previous national council of FSF I feel that this invaluable experience will stand me in good stead to help any completely new council to progress during what will be a bedding in period. This will be helped with my 100% record in attending council and fan rep meetings as well as being active with email and telephone communications.

Outside of the FSF national council I have worked with Supporters Direct as a board member of the Mariners Trust in various aspects including a new MOU between the trust and Grimsby Town FC. It has been a long process involving meetings at various levels but one that I have not shied away from when hard work was needed.

I have also worked closely with Level Playing Field as an Executive Trustee giving me both insight and knowledge into this area which again I feel would benefit a new council make up of a new organisation.

In the last three years I have built up a reputation with fans of Grimsby Town as somebody that they can talk to, somebody that they can trust and ultimately somebody that will work hard to get across their fears, worries and frustrations – whatever they may be. This work has included time as the clubs Supporter Liaison Officer which opened up engagement with other clubs about various issues but also with Amanda Jacks of the FSF and various police forces. The work I did around our troubles at Stevenage last season was praised and gave me a skill set to be able to communicate with people from various organisations that didn't always agree with the viewpoint that I put across but still dealt with this amicably. It also showed that I can be discrete and trusted with confidential information.

As a final point; I am currently in my 2<sup>nd</sup> year of my honour's degree in Public Relations. While on the face of it this may not seem applicable I feel that the knowledge and skills picked up during this time can only be of benefit should they be required both internally and externally through the setting up period of the new organisation or in the future.

## **Neil Le Milliere – Exeter City Supporters’ Trust:**

### **PERSONAL BACKGROUND**

I’m 65, married to Julie, who I married on the pitch at Exeter at her suggestion!

I’ve always been an Exeter City “fan” although I left Exeter in 1966 for Kent.

From 1980, I, with my brother, became “supporters” going to more and more games, home and away, hooked for life by our 1981 FA cup run.

I’ve played football and/or been involved in football administration for 51 years and feel qualified to represent supporters’ views on a national supporters’ organisation.

### **SUPPORTER INVOLVEMENT BACKGROUND**

My background includes:

Being actively involved with the Exiled EC Supporters Group in London since 1984;

Being a member of the EC Supporters Club for a similar period;

Running an Internet Mail Group for Exeter fans since 1999 and sending out news and trips emails to a couple of thousand fellow supporters.

Being involved with APFSCIL and acting as Secretary and Travel Secretary since 2006;

Attending almost all home and away games and being recognised by being made EFL Supporter of the Year in 2013.;

Being a founding member of the EC Supports Trust and have served on the initial committee then the Board continuously since 2000 save for a mandatory year’s absence;

Being on the Supporters Direct Board continuously since 2005; later also Chair of their England and Wales Council and Chair of the Governance Sub-Committee;

Being on the Trustees Advisory Board of Kick it Out before this body was abolished;

Holding a position on an FA Compliance Monitoring Group representing supporters;

and

Volunteering at the Club running a real ale/cider bar at every home match for the last fifteen years or so.

### **WHAT I CAN OFFER**

With this wealth of involvement, I feel qualified to represent supporters’ view and opinions and to help specifically with advising supporters on the setting up of a supporters’ trust and ownership of a club.

I invite you to vote for me and promise to continue to work towards getting supporters views and opinions moved to the top of every agenda. I’ll also strive to help those supporters who want to, to get involved with the running and owning of their clubs where possible; combining this with ensuring that clubs are community focussed, fully involving those communities in the life of the football club and vice versa.

**Martin O'Hara – Viking Supporters Cooperative:**

I am the current Deputy Chairman of the FSF and I've just completed my third two year term. Prior to that I was a National Council member for a period of some years and was actively involved in several of the workgroups gaining experience of current issues. I have also been a board director of the FSF.

I am also secretary of the Viking Supporters Cooperative at DRFC and a supporters' board member. In recent years we have been subjected to hostile takeover bids by offshore hedge fund companies which I am proud to say that I helped resist in the strongest possible terms. Despite threats of legal action and other less salubrious acts we stood firm and now have ownership that have the best interests of the club at heart.

During my time with the FSF I have participated in all the various campaigns, workgroups and activities. This gives me extensive experience and a knowledge base that encompasses everything that is current to supporter issues at all levels, this would include International football as well as the league structure in England and Wales. The issues which I have extensive knowledge of would be governance, safe standing, away fan experience, Policing and stewarding, plus a whole host of the day to day troubles that afflict football and its supporters.

My aims and interests would be to carry on helping out and being involved in all aspects of the work that the FSF are currently involved in. In recent years, following on from our reorganisation, we have made tremendous progress in all our campaign areas and that is a tremendous result for all the volunteers and staff that have been involved. I intend to carry on with the work of the FSF and guide and encourage the organisation to keep doing the right things for the benefit of all supporters.

In particular our price campaigns have met with tremendous success, what we need to do now is to capitalise on that and put that experience to work in other areas. We still have some good work to do in the 'safe standing' area, the increased role and use of SLOs', Policing and Stewarding along with the 'Away Fans Experience'.

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**Ally Simcock – Port Vale Supporters Club:**

I have been part of the FSF's National Council for three terms and am eager to continue working in a new unified national supporters' organisation. Currently, I am the only fan representative on the national Fixtures Working Party where I represent the supporters' perspective in multi-agency meetings between public authorities and leagues when looking at how fixtures are to be allocated. Additionally, I am the co-opted Supporters Direct board member on behalf of the FSF, where I help to communicate between the two organisations. This is a position I feel very strongly about and will continue to support.

I have keenly participated in structured dialogue meetings with the EFL where I try to represent the views of not just Port Vale fans, but all fans potentially impacted by EFL-wide issues. Beyond that I am part of the England Fans' Embassy team and have enjoyed supporting England fans abroad, most recently during the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

Previously, I chaired the PVFC Supporters' Club for five years. Currently, I volunteer as an SLO for the club, supporting all fans. I also write an article in the local paper weekly, write in every match day programme and am regularly interviewed by local and national media, both in written and verbal formats.

I am extremely passionate about equality and diversity. I would like to support the new organisation's aims in working towards a reduction in discrimination cases within football as a whole. I would also aim to explore ways of capturing wider audiences for clubs, especially encouraging more diverse groups to attend matches. I aim to be involved in initiatives which help improve fan experiences across the board. I am also very interested in the discussion around football governance and safe standing.

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### Dave Tomlinson – The Railwaymen:

I passionately believe the voice of supporters must be heard and their views taken into account when decisions are being taken.

When issues and problems occur we need to make sure that our organisation is always available for supporters to contact, we must make sure our standing within the footballing authorities is high so that we are respected to such a level that they contact us to discuss issues as well as the organisation contacting them.

I believe it is a supporters **right** from the moment they leave their home to go to the match, until they return home, to be treated respectably by all who they meet, they should be safe and whether its travel or admission they should feel they have had value for money. Are we there yet? I don't believe we are. It is now time to move forward and I want to work with you all to help this happen.

At Crewe Alexandra who I have supported for over 38 years, I hold the position of a Supporters Liaison Officer. I am the link between the supporters and the club. I attend and organise meetings with supporters, supporter groups and club officials making sure that supporters views are taken into account when decisions are being made. On match-days I attend security meetings and make myself available to talk to supporters to deal with any issues. I am also a member of the clubs Safety Advisory Group.

I have recently been a part of a small group of supporters who have formed the new Crewe Alexandra Supporters group the Railwaymen and hold the position of Group Liaison.

For many years I followed England home and away and became involved in the England members club and Englandfans, I have also represented both England supporters and the FA on numerous visits to host cities prior to France 98 and Euro 2000.

I am at present a member of the FSF services Ltd Board of Directors, the National Council, and also a member of the FSF Freelines Fans Embassy team which provide valuable help to England Supporters abroad.

I hope the experience and knowledge I have obtained put's me in a position to help our new organisation move forward to a position where their voices are not just heard but their views, policies and ideas will become even more influential and continue to make a real difference in football.

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### **Antony Wilkinson – Blackpool Supporters’ Trust:**

I am Antony Wilkinson, Deputy Chair of Blackpool Supporters’ Trust and also currently elected to the Supporters Direct England & Wales Football Council for a 3-year term. I have been a football supporter for over fifty years, my support being for Blackpool FC since the age of five.

The problems faced by Blackpool supporters over recent years have been well documented and BST have become very involved with the issue of football governance which has given me a lot of experience of how the issues affecting many football supporters are currently being debated, most recently at the Conservative Party Conference Fringe event titled ‘Who’s in charge? Regulating English football for the good of the game’.

The problems at Blackpool have been extreme but we are acutely aware that many clubs are suffering from the actions of rogue owners. As our own campaign for a change in ownership at Blackpool has progressed, it has become very obvious that there is a great deal wrong with the way football is governed and we are keen to use our experiences to help bring change to the game nationally.

In spite of there being a number of bad owners of football clubs, I have been interested and encouraged to see examples of owners who have been nominated for the SD ‘Best Club Supporter Group Relationship of the Year’ award in partnership with Football Business awards. As a panellist for the judging of the award it has given me an insight into how supporters and owners can work together for the good of their club.

Besides dealing with governance issues, my work with BST has also included a number of initiatives and events to raise funds for local charities and The Gary Parkinson Trust. We see this sort of community work as fundamental to our role as a supporters’ trust and in spite of the obvious difficulties we have encountered due to BFC’s owners refusing to recognise BST, we have continued to grow our membership. We have been instrumental in maintaining a connection between the many Blackpool supporters who boycott games and the spirit of Blackpool FC, which we all represent.

In the majority of my working life I have been self-employed, having set up and run a number of successful businesses and now consider myself to be semi-retired, running a small property portfolio. I am an accredited landlord with the National Landlords’ Association.

I feel that my role as part of the Blackpool Supporters’ Trust committee has given me the skills and experience required for the newly merged SD/FSF council. BST has faced a turbulent few years, unlike anything any other football club has yet had to face and it has certainly been a learning experience for myself and my committee colleagues. This, along with my business experience and my commitment to football as a lifelong fan is why I would like to be considered for this role.

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