

CANDIDATE STATEMENT – TOBIAS ASHTON

Proposer : Christopher Ballard

Secunder : Jamie Tune-Holmes

I am an exile fan in Ireland, I have a strong connection through the brilliant fan-created content on social media. With a young family I catch as many games as I can and attend whenever I am back visiting family in Devon. I have also taken a number of Premier League-supporting Irish friends to glamorous away fixtures such as Bath, Dorking and Notts County. My first game was the pulsating 1-1 FA Cup draw with Farnborough in 1991 but I would have to wait to see my first goal as we left before the equaliser to “beat the traffic” (I am not bitter at all about this!).

This is the start of an exciting time for the club, and for the Trust, following the most tumultuous period in the club’s history. A time where many of us feared we may not have a club to support. We have a dedicated fanbase and the recent fundraising has made people from all over the world feel more connected than ever before with the Gulls.

I want to pay particular attention to engagement with supporters who are not able to regularly attend games (exiles, those with disabilities and those with family or work commitments) as we have seen the benefits of the additional revenue, passion and media coverage that such fans can bring.

We know the dangers of a poorly run, non-transparent club financially and from having points docked last season. I can bring my expertise by independently reviewing club documentation, structure and finances, making sure that decisions are made correctly with the input of all required stakeholders and in the best interests of the club. TUST must play an active role in making sure Torquay United is run correctly, with accountability to the fans.

I am a professional company secretary with twenty years’ experience working with public and private company boards with a focus on corporate governance, risk and compliance. I am eager to contribute to the Trust and club’s proper management and accountability. This is a critical time for the Trust in its evolution to being the custodian of this historic community asset. I want to be a board member to ensure the club is well-run and transparent, serving as an example of good governance and fan engagement for the benefit of fans and the wider Torbay community.