

Steve Watts

My name is Steve Watts and my connection with Lewes FC goes back over 30 years. I've watched over 500 home games - standing, for most of them, in the same place - pictured! I've also attended dozens of away games, including the historic game against Stoke City in the FA Cup. My primary reason for standing for the board is that I believe there is work to do to re-invigorate and strengthen the club's links with the immediate Lewes community and I am in a strong position to help build those relationships.

I was chair of the club's supporters' trust that set in motion the process of the club becoming community-owned. I helped to re-form the Southover Bonfire Society in 2005 and was their first chairman. My connection with Lewes FC is the reason that Southover's colours are red and black, part of a desire to build stronger community links. I've been voted 'personality of the year' by Lewes Rotary Club and also won a Sussex Police bravery award for my part in foiling an armed robbery at Clarks jewellers on Cliffe Bridge.

I was advertising manager at Viva Lewes magazine, worked as a custodian for Sussex Past at Anne of Cleves' house, and have a deep knowledge of local businesses and other community leaders. I would use these skills and experience to leverage further investment and sponsorships from local businesses. I work part-time for John Lewis Partnership (another great example of an alternative governance structure) and so now have the time to commit myself to helping build a sustainable and community-focused future for our club - all of our club, whether it be the men's team, the women's team, the vets, or the juniors.

Yes, community is at the heart of everything we do at the club. However, in recent years, we have seen the interpretation of that concept move away from grassroots local communities towards a more global vision. I heartily approve in principle of a global sense of community but there is a feeling among supporters that the club is in danger of neglecting the community on its doorstep.

2025 will be the club's 140th birthday and, if we are to guarantee the club's next 100 years, we must ensure that we build deep-rooted sustainable relationships, on and off the pitch,

with local community groups. That is, community groups, representing children and young people, teenagers, young families, men, women, LGBTQ+ people, people with physical and sensory disabilities, autistic people and people with learning disabilities, older men and women, newly arrived residents, Lewes care home residents, and every other community that calls our town home. I want to see those people at the Dripping Pan, enjoying the football, but also feeling the togetherness and sense of community that comes with shouting, chanting, listening, laughing and cheering on our teams.

Vote Steve Watts to put the 'community' back into Lewes community football club and fans, new and old, back at the heart of our fan-owned club.