

Annual General Meeting

5 September 2019

ELECTION MANIFESTOS

Six candidates standing for election to the STAR Board

1. Melanie Bishop
2. Vicci Elliot
3. Paul Ellix
4. Kevin Lenton
5. Paula Martin
6. Michael Yeomans

Melanie Bishop

My name is Melanie Bishop and I am seeking re-election to the STAR Board. I have been married to Colin Bishop for forty two years and I have supported Reading since 1976. I have three children who are all fervent supporters of RFC (they wouldn't dare be anything else). I am a retired and former Learning Support Assistant of twenty five years at the Willink School in Burghfield Common. In addition I was also a serving Governor of the school for twelve years during which time I held the post of Safeguarding Governor. This is a role that I am currently serving within STAR as Safeguarding Officer as it is important to me to recognise the responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of young people and vulnerable people taking part in STAR activities.

I held the post of STAR Membership Secretary for ten years and I served on the Committee of STAR's predecessor - Reading Football Supporters Club and I have participated in many of RFSC's and STAR's activities over the years. I have always supported Colin in his role with RFSC and as a Board Member of STAR - not forgetting the STAR Shop and organisation of away coach travel. I can always be found in the STAR base in the afternoons or evenings of home matches.

Supporting Reading has had its highs and lows but it has certainly never been boring. I have witnessed enormous changes in terms of the club's development, growth and location. I have watched heart stopping games and ones that have exasperated me, but I am a great believer in supporting your home town team and, although I was not born in Reading, for the last forty two years it has been my home town. One of the most important things to me is to make sure that as many young fans as possible can get safely to away games and at a price that is affordable. This is a particular role that I take very seriously.

I have made many good and long lasting friendships through football. It became very clear to me early on that I not only married a man but a football club and all it entails, and I am content but purposeful in that I want to do all that I can to encourage the next generation of young Reading people to support their home town club. They are the future of Reading Football Club.

Proposed by: R. Crowe

Seconded by: Gerard McGreevy

Vicci Elliot

I am Vicci Elliot and I'm seeking election to the STAR board for a third time - I have served on the board as Treasurer since 2015.

As a qualified Chartered Accountant I feel that I have the necessary skills to combine with my huge love and passion for Reading FC. I have been following the Royals for 27 years and only missed 4 games home and away in the last 21 years

Being an "exiled" member down on the South Coast means that I see first hand the issues with travel on a match day. Public transport is not an option for me so I take a keen interest in the discussions regarding parking and other travel options - and able to represent fans in this area. I do also make use of the coaches run by the STAR travel team - so well placed to give my opinion and help develop the service.

Being a "younger" member (yes Mum - I still have a year in my thirties so that makes me young) I am able to represent the age group and steer STAR's activities to include this group. With the developments happening with other fan groups such as Club 1871- It is an exciting time to be involved with STAR and I would like to be able to be part of developing links with these.

I would be grateful if you could consider me for re-election.

Proposed by: Miriam Elliot

Seconded by: Wendie Wakefield

Paul Ellix

To start with let's get the reasons why you might not want to elect me out in the open.

1. I have not supported Reading FC all of my life. I'm a late comer who was born in West London and my first football love was Brentford (they're still the third result I look for). I moved to Reading in the mid-1980s; fell in love with the town and its football club and spent many a happy hour in the corner between the South Bank and the Norfolk Road of Elm Park with my son and daughter, before the move to RG2. I now come to football with my grandchildren.
2. I no longer live in Reading- in fact I have a SN post code, but let me emphasise that I don't actually live in Swindon (although I do work there as a senior human resources manager with a large public organisation).
3. I've done this before. I served on STAR's Board for around 10 years and I was honoured to be Chair between 2012 and 2017 - they do say never go back.

What you'll get if you elect me:

Someone who is passionate about STAR, who thinks that supporters' organisation and collectivism is the best way to ensure that we are not shafted by the powers that be who run our game for their own benefit and not for ours. You'll also get someone who is determined to pursue whatever work that he is allocated to do to its natural conclusion.

What do I think about:

STAR's relationship with club:

STAR should be a critical friend - not afraid to say when the club is wrong, but also praising and supporting the club when it is right. It should never, ever break the club's bad news for it. STAR needs to be the supporters' voice to the club. It needs to ensure that it remains relevant, timely and authoritative. STAR should not just be supporting the men's first team in the EFL, it should be actively supporting the Academy teams, the under 23s, the WSL team and, crucially, the work of the Community Trust; they're all intrinsically important aspects of our football club.

STAR in the community:

STAR is a Community Benefit Society- every activity that it undertakes and every decision that it makes should have a beneficial community impact to it. This goes from its sponsoring activities through to travel and publicity: when STAR acts there should be an overriding beneficial community aspect to what it is doing. It needs to think; if we do this, how does it benefit the community? If it doesn't can it?

STAR and technology:

STAR needs to continue to recognise the shift in the way that supporters want to engage with the club and with itself and move itself forward; with a strategy for embracing technology, social media and the internet. Supporters should be able to open a phone app or the website and see what STAR is doing or what STAR thinks and why. Card payments and on-line membership and travel booking are a must and should be the norm, not an exception. Ask yourself why anyone would want to

queue for 20 minutes in the rain to get into STAR Base to book and pay for a coach ticket in cash when they should be able to do it from their phone or computer.

STAR and the rest of world:

STAR should be more outward facing. Board members should not be anonymous; their pictures should be on notice boards and the website, together with their seat locations. Activities should be public. Decisions and opinions should be transparent. STAR should be the supporters' representatives in the stands.

STAR should have an authoritative opinion and be commenting on everything significant that the club does and what's going on in the wider football world. If the club releases a story STAR should have view on it and that view should be public. When the media want a comment from supporters they should naturally come to STAR.

STAR and the club's supporters:

No supporter of Reading FC should feel that they are excluded from STAR; that STAR is irrelevant to them. If they haven't heard of STAR or they don't know what it is doing and why and how it benefits them, then STAR is clearly not doing its primary job. STAR's Board is democratically accountable to its members as well as having an overall responsibility to all of the club's supporters. It needs to ensure that it engages with and takes account of its membership and listens to and engages with all aspects of the club's supporters.

I'll finish with what I think of Club 1871. In a word - Brilliant! It is needed at a time when the overall level of vocal support was noticeably waning. It is new and vibrant. Those who set it up and organise it need praise and encouragement to keep going. Yes, Club 1871 has polarised opinion, but overall, it's a force for good and the players clearly like it. Should it be the overriding focus for the club in encouraging supporter participation. No, it shouldn't. The club needs to think about it strategically, whilst appreciating that it comprises a minority of the club's supporters and, if it's not careful, over focussing on Club 1871 the club risks alienating other supporters (but I'm sure that they don't need me to tell them that).

Many thanks for taking the time to read this election statement, which I hope will be one of at least seven that are put forward by people wanting to direct STAR. Why at least seven: so that there is a competitive election this year. If new people, with new ideas and different perspectives are putting themselves forward, they should be encouraged (and elected). Enthusiasm, new ideas and belief in what you stand for are vital. Without new ideas STAR will quickly become moribund, unrepresentative and irrelevant to the club and its supporters.

Proposed by: Wendie Wakefield
Seconded by: Gerard McGreevy

Kevin Lenton

I am married, living in Wokingham with a son and his family living in London and a daughter who lives in Sydney with her fiancé. My wife's daughter lives in Wisconsin, USA with her husband.

I have supported Reading for over 52 years and have been a Season Ticket Holder going back to Elm Park days. I go to every home game and some away matches.

I have been on the STAR Board for nearly two years and currently have responsibility for the following: -

- Maintaining the STAR calendar
- Liaison with the Reading & District Sunday League, who STAR sponsor.
- Maintaining the catalogue of Reading home programmes held by STAR, that fans can purchase
- Editing and submitting the STAR page that is published in every Reading home programme, for which I also have had a number of articles written
- Assisting in the Hall of Fame activities, providing nominations, voting and maintaining a project checklist

This year I have also attended a Reading Senior Management Meeting, presented medals at the Reading & District League senior cup final, and presented the Steve Death Trophy to the Reading Academy nominated goalkeeper of the year. I have also contributed articles for the STAR publication, Reading Matters.

Proposed by: Melanie Bishop
Seconded by: Roger Titford

Paula Martin

My roles on STAR Board include membership secretary and representing supporters on the Safety Advisory Group for the past few years and as Deputy Chair in 2018/19. I have also been part of the team trialling online travel which will now be available to all members so that we can make travel more accessible for those who cannot easily get to STAR Base.

Following representing STAR on the Fan Engagement Panel I have also been involved in Club1871, and so have been working with supporters who are not natural STAR members. I would like to build on this and find ways to involve Reading supporters who do not consider being part of STAR.

I have always believed very strongly that the best way to improve the football experience for fans is to represent our views as early as possible in the decision process to prevent mistakes rather than just complain after the event and so listening to more of the supporter base can only improve this representation. I want to continue to build relationships with those in power in the club so that we may change decisions to the benefit of all fans.

I also want to encourage STAR members to be involved in all aspects of the activities of STAR (not just handing over an annual subscription) to make the trust stronger and more proactive.

Proposed by: Hilary Goldson
Seconded by: Pam Downing

Michael Yeomans

A few notes about me- **Michael Yeomans**

I have always been involved with football in some capacity - Manager - coach - secretary - chairman (Boys and men's football).

I have served on a number of committees including vice chairman on the Aldershot and District Football League.

I have also had my own football retail business, with a very large turnover.

I am now retired, and I feel I would like to help or contribute to the future of the Supporters Trust at Reading in any way I can. I feel the way forward is not just about a cheap means of getting to an away game. I would like to see supporters join for other reasons.

I would like to see social events, which could maybe be held at 'The Jazz Cafe' or at the club inclusive of competitions and quizzes' etc. Any profits going to charity, or bringing the cost of running the Trust down. However, saying all this, I do not want to run before I can walk. Nevertheless, I would put forward any ideas I had, to see the 'Trust' grow in the interest of its' members.

If I am not successful in my application, I would like to wish the 'Trust' all the best for next season.

Proposed by: B. Aris

Seconded by: D. Peart