

Johnny Hunt – Election Statement for STAR



I would like to re-apply for a position on the board of Supporters Trust At Reading. I am a lifelong Reading fan living in Ireland for past 10 years and want to continue to offer views and opinions of a supporter living outside the United Kingdom. I am currently involved with the running of STAR Exiles and STAR Ireland. Whilst we are unable to attend games we have set up a What's App group for exiled fans to share views and to keep that link to the club together. I believe I can develop these groups a lot further when we are able to go to the Madjeski again. This includes organising trips over for our fans based here and social events here to get fans together.

Since my initial application to be on the board three years ago I now have even more involvement with Reading Fc. I enjoy my role in raising awareness of mental health and suicide prevention having now completed 3 walks between Reading and Fulham with fellow fans alongside a short walk to ground for a Aston Villa game. I have also been involved in other initiatives including a Christmas RUOK reach out to fellow fans and a blog for the official club site reaching out to others during covid.

The 70km walks were hard going but by third walk we had so many more people taking part. It was amazing to see so many 17-20 year olds who have now gone to be involved in more walks with other clubs. Most importantly, it has helped people get the support they needed with their own mental health issues. Others voiced their appreciation, for raising awareness of what is still a taboo subject but also gave a lot of positive press for the club, local media, supporter bases and of course STAR. We are planning more walks for the 2021 season which I think will be a real boost for everyone linked with the club. I also feel that I am respected by other fans both in our club and outside, for being such a strong advocate of talking about mental health and have some strong links within the footballing community to call upon.

I believe this shows the positive impact I have had on STAR since joining the board, I have helped raise the profile but also got more of our younger generations of fans involved. I am still passionate about developing this further, obviously the last 15 months of covid has impacted massively on the role STAR has played. However I feel my positive can do attitude has helped us face this challenge.

We have had a very successful online Hall Of Fame and look forward to developing even more initiatives both online and in person with my fellow board members. I feel I work very well with everyone on the Board and we have a lot of mutual respect for each other. Having the opportunity to attend the board meetings via Zoom has made me feel a real part of the process and look forward to continuing this in the future. From a work side, I have been a registered nurse for people with intellectual disabilities for 25 years. This past 16 months working through Covid and at times with covid positive clients has been the biggest challenge I have faced but also makes me totally understand the challenges that everyone else have faced in these difficult times.

I care for people and want to make a difference in life. I want to help create better opportunities. This is something that I can continue to bring to the board. The Reading FC community is a special one and with next season being our 150th Anniversary and with the return of fans a chance to bring us all closer together.

Who knows what will happen on the pitch but isn't it great to be able to look forward to going to a game again catching up with friends. I also intend to use these opportunities to find out what the fans want from STAR to increase the enjoyment and involvement with our club.

This is my hometown, our club, our community lets make a difference together as one voice.

Thanks

Johnny Hunt

Proposer: Paula Martin

Secunder: Vicci Elliot