The Trust's rules for elections to the Board

Wimbledon supporters set up the Trust to be a democratic organisation based on participation from its members. We want to run elections so that we have the widest possible active involvement by members, as candidates and as voters. We must ensure that the way we organise and control elections encourages members to take part. These rules therefore aim to promote active and vibrant elections, keeping bureaucracy to a minimum while ensuring fairness as far as possible.

The election steering group (ESG)

1. From time to time the board will appoint a chair of the ESG. On his or her recommendation, the board will appoint other members to the ESG. The chair's main responsibility will be to ensure a vibrant, fair election.

2. The ESG will work in liaison with the secretary of the Trust. Members of the ESG are not allowed to stand as candidates, nor to nominate a candidate, in any Trust election.

3. During the election period (which runs from the opening of nominations until the declaration of the results) the ESG will run the election in accordance with these rules on behalf of the Trust. Outside an election period, the ESG will support and advise the board in matters relating to the conduct of elections; they will also advise the board on widening and deepening members' participation in Trust elections.

Announcing the election

4. The secretary of the Trust will formally start the election by announcing its timetable, the number of elected positions to be filled and the nomination procedure.

Eligibility and nomination

5. A candidate must be a member of the Trust and meet the criteria set out in rule 58 of the constitution.

6. A candidate must comply with the nomination procedure announced by the Secretary.

7. In their manifestos, candidates may not make threats or insults, nor make derogatory, abusive, racist, sexist, or homophobic statements or references. The ESG shall remove any such statements it considers in breach of this Rule from manifestos before publication. Any text so removed will be replaced by a statement explaining the removal.

8. The ESG will verify all nominations upon receipt and may require evidence of identity. Should there be any reason to reject a nomination, the candidate shall be informed as soon as possible. He or she shall be entitled to resubmit a revised nomination, addressing, to the ESG's satisfaction, the ESG's concerns either before the close of nominations, or 48 hours after being advised of the rejection, whichever is the later.

Announcement of candidates

9. The ESG will inform the secretary of the number of properly nominated candidates.

10. If the number of properly nominated candidates is more than the advertised number of vacancies, the ESG will publish a list of their names and their manifestos, as well as the names of those members nominating each candidate.

11. If the number of properly nominated candidates is equal to the advertised number of vacancies, the ESG will publish a list of their names and their manifestos and will report to the Secretary that they are considered to be elected.

12. If the number of properly nominated candidates is fewer than the advertised number of vacancies, those members of the board not standing for election shall decide how to proceed, after seeking advice from the secretary and the ESG. The board will issue to members a statement setting out the reasons for its decision and will invite the ESG to add its comments.

Campaigning

13. Candidates are encouraged to campaign actively. The ESG will make every effort to ensure that candidates are provided with every opportunity to campaign, and will be supported in this by the board of the Trust. Hustings, surgeries, programme articles, PA announcements, providing poster sites at the ground and publishing articles on the official website at www.afcwimbledon.co.uk will all be considered by the ESG.

14. In order to ensure a level playing field for all candidates, the use of any club facilities not open to all candidates is not allowed.

15. Candidate will be responsible for the content of all publicity material they publish, which must comply with the rules for manifestos. Candidates planning to distribute leaflets should remember that many will end up on the floor, and should join in and encourage other supporters to help with any required clean-up operation.

16. Should any candidate come up with a new way of campaigning, he or she is encouraged to discuss it with the ESG before going ahead.

Voting and counting

17. Voting will be by a multiple variant of the “first-past-the-post” system. The ESG shall be responsible for distributing voting instructions and making candidates’ manifestos to all members entitled to vote at the election. In the event of a tie requiring resolution, the result in question will be decided by the toss of a coin.

18. The count will be overseen by an independent person.

19. The results as determined by the ESG shall be final and shall be published as soon as possible after the count. The announcement of election results will include the number of votes cast for each candidate.

Conducting a fair election

20. During the election period:
    - club employees and volunteers should not be involved in campaigning for any candidate or candidates while undertaking their duties;
    - any opinions given by anyone connected with the Trust or any of its subsidiaries should be expressed in a personal capacity, and not on behalf of the Trust or its subsidiaries.

21. Any communication regarding implementation of these rules should be addressed to the ESG:
    - by email to elections@thedonstrust.org;
    - by letter addressed to the ESG delivered to the Trust table in the back bar; or
    - by writing to the ESG c/o the Trust.

    The ESG will acknowledge receipt of such communication within two working days.

22. Should any candidates break these rules the ESG shall judge what, if any, steps to take, in the interests of a vibrant and fair election. The ESG shall proceed sensitively, recognising that Trust members may not be seasoned political campaigners and that advice can at times be as effective as the imposition of sanctions.

23. During the election period members, whether candidates or not, who have any complaints about the conduct of the election should follow the procedure in 21 above. Anonymous complaints may not be investigated, but the board, the secretary and the ESG will try to respect any request for confidentiality.

24. Appeals against any decision of the ESG may be made to the secretary, and will be judged by the board of the Trust.

25. If a successful candidate declines to take up his or her place after the results of the election have been announced, then the resulting vacancy shall be considered as a resignation of a board member in accordance with the constitution of the Trust.

No policy statement can anticipate all the questions that might arise. If in doubt on matters not clearly covered by this statement, the ESG should always be guided by the spirit of these rules.