

Candidate Statement ~ Andy Baker

I'm a Cardiff boy born and bred; St David's and Canton as it happens. I'm a passionate and committed supporter of Cardiff Rugby, attending most Cardiff Blues and Cardiff RFC home matches, and pretty much all European away matches.

I first experienced Cardiff Arms Park as a youth in the 1970's when my father played a match there, though sadly not for Cardiff RFC. I moved away from Cardiff in the early 1980s and lost touch at that point, but my enthusiasm was re-awakened in the mid 1990s following the run to the first European cup final and I've been a CAC member and season ticket holder since.

I've been involved with the trust from day one, having attended the inaugural meeting, and have been responsible for creating and maintaining the website along with other IT/communication requirements, handing out newsletters and fanzines, speaking at meetings and managing the membership side of things.

I became involved with the trust as I believe there is a disconnection between the support base and the management of the club leaving many supporters feeling disillusioned and disenfranchised. The supporters clubs, while performing an admirable role, are not in a position to hold the management to account and address these fundamental issues.

My vision for the trust is to see it grow into a powerful and democratic voice for all supporters, building bridges, bringing unity to the current discord and being a critical friend to the management, while ensuring that the history and heritage of the club is cherished and built upon.

There are challenging times ahead, not least with the proposed redevelopment, and it's absolutely essential that there is a vehicle for the grass roots support to have their voices heard. I believe the trust can be that vehicle. I believe strongly in the trust's mission statement of "Protecting The Past, Embracing The Future".

On the wider rugby scene I have to confess that I'm not a fan of the regional concept. While accepting that something needed to be done I'm not convinced that the structure as it is at present is working. I believe it's done more harm than good in terms of attracting support to the game we all love. While this is not something the trust may be able to influence I feel it is important that I put this on record while canvassing your vote.

Politically I would describe myself as a social democrat, albeit not aligned to any political party. I believe in the basic concepts of social justice, democracy, equality, non-discrimination, community and the co-operative movement. In practical terms I assist various charities (including Animal Aid and Viva!) on a pro-bono basis and volunteer a couple of hours a week at my local Scope charity shop.

Professionally I'm a freelance software engineer and developer working mainly these days in the web development world. These are skills that I feel can be useful to the trust.

In my personal life I have emigrated to the Forest of Dean where I live with my wife, eight house rabbits and two horses and aside from rugby my other main passions in life are XC mountain biking and music.

Thank you for taking the time to read my statement. If you would be kind enough to consider voting for me I can assure you that I will serve vigilantly with the best interests of Cardiff rugby at heart and will seek to engage with members at every opportunity to ensure that their voice is heard.