

Oxford United Supporters' Panel

ELECTION POLICY



1. Introduction

The purpose of the Election Policy is to ensure that the elections for the Supporters' Panel are conducted in a democratic and unbiased manner and the process and result(s) are accepted as free and fair by all participants.

This document has been created by the Oxford United Supporters' Panel working group and has taken into consideration FSA best practice.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. "Co-opted Representative" means a person who has been asked to be part of the Supporters' Panel by supporters' panel representatives for a specific purpose, but not elected by the fanbase.
- 2.2. "Election Period" means the period from the date each year on which the EMG issues nomination forms to supporters until 3 days after the announcement of the result(s) of the election to which the nomination forms relate.
- 2.3. "Election Policy" means the details laid out in this document.
- 2.4. "EMG" means the Election Management Group.
- 2.5. "Expectations for Representatives" policy means a detailed set of policies and procedures of the Supporters' Panel set out in a separate policy statement.
- 2.6. "FSA" means the Football Supporters' Association.
- 2.7. "Hustings" means a meeting at which candidates in the election can address potential voters.
- 2.8. "Policies" means the policies and procedures of the Supporters' Panel laid out in separate documents.
- 2.9. "Regular Season" means from the first league fixture of the season for the league Oxford United is participating in and ends on the last league fixture. For the purpose of this policy playoffs and cup matches are not considered as regular season.
- 2.10. "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Supporters' Panel.
- 2.11. "Supporter" means from the fanbase of Oxford United.
- 2.12. "Supporters' Panel" means the elected group of individual and group representatives chosen by the fanbase, including any co-opted supporters' panel representatives.
- 2.13. "Supporters' Panel Representative" means a person elected by the fanbase to the Supporters' Panel.

3. Election control

- 3.1. In advance of the commencement of the election, the Supporters' Panel will ask the FSA to recommend an independent Chairperson who will work with the Secretary to form the EMG.
- 3.2. No supporters' panel representatives whose positions are due to be offered for election shall play any part in determining the composition of the EMG or any aspect regarding the conduct of the elections.
- 3.3. Members of the EMG shall not be eligible to nominate candidates nor be a candidate themselves and shall ensure that they are not associated closely with any candidates and have proper regard to maintaining the integrity of the election process.
- 3.4. During the Election Period the EMG will ensure that the election is run in accordance with this policy.
- 3.5. The EMG shall make the final decision as to the eligibility of candidates, nominations and valid votes. They shall conduct the count, and the result as determined by them is final. Any decisions taken will be by majority vote and recorded. The Chair of the EMG shall have a casting vote in the event of a tie.

4. Timetable

- 4.1. The election will take place during the close season with elected representatives in place prior to the start of the new season. The exact dates shall be decided by the Supporters' Panel prior to the completion of the regular current season.
- 4.2. Prior to the end of the regular current season the Supporters' Panel shall agree which places an election shall be run for.
- 4.3. The Supporters' Panel shall ensure that the membership of the EMG has been agreed by the Supporters' Panel before the nomination forms are circulated.
- 4.4. The EMG will circulate a nomination form no more than seven days after end of the regular current season.
- 4.5. During the Election Period, the EMG shall manage the process, with the assistance of the Secretary as required.

5. Nominations and eligibility

- 5.1. Any person wishing to be a candidate for election to the Supporters' Panel shall be a supporter of Oxford United and be nominated by at least two Oxford United supporters.
- 5.2. The EMG will verify that nominations are from Oxford United supporters. This will be based on a valid fan number. The EMG will consider alternative evidence of OUFC support, though their decision of acceptability will be final.
- 5.3. Supporters can nominate as many candidates as they wish.
- 5.4. A signed letter of nomination from a supporter, or email from the address a supporter has given to Oxford United for receiving communications, are acceptable substitutes for a signature on the candidate's nomination form.
- 5.5. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that their nomination is valid and submitted by the closing date specified by the EMG. This will include ensuring nominees are Oxford United

supporters. This will be based on a valid fan number. The EMG will consider alternative evidence of OUFC support though their decision on acceptability will be final.

- 5.6. Decisions over the validity of nominations shall be a matter for the EMG. Any decision by the EMG not to accept a nomination as valid shall be notified to the candidate with the reason it was not acceptable as soon as possible.
- 5.7. Candidates shall submit a statement in support of their nomination and shall also provide a photograph for publication with their statement. All submissions will be published on the supporters' panel webpage.
- 5.8. The names of those nominating candidates shall be appended to each candidate's statement.
- 5.9. By submitting a nomination, candidates will be deemed to have accepted this Election Policy, the supporters' panel policies, and any other policies and procedures adopted by the Supporters' Panel; and agreed to be bound by them.
- 5.10. Specifically, candidates are self-certifying that they comply with the supporters' panel policies and with the *Expectations for Representatives* policy relating to eligibility to serve on the Supporters' Panel. In particular, no person can be a representative on the Supporters' Panel who:
 - 5.10.1. has been a representative on the Supporters' Panel for 12 consecutive years.
 - 5.10.2. fails to abide by any policies for the conduct of elections made by the Supporters' Panel.
 - 5.10.3. is currently subject to a banning order from football ground(s).
- 5.11. All candidates shall leave full contact details with the EMG including an email address.

6. Statements and Campaigning

- 6.1. The only campaigning supported by the Supporters' Panel will be the publication of the statements submitted by the candidates and the organisation of any hustings if they are required.
- 6.2. All candidates' statements are to be sent to ouspelections@gmail.com, access to which is limited to the EMG. These will be validated and published on the supporters' panel webpage, in a random order, once the application period is closed. If an alternative method of delivery is required supporters should contact ouspelections@gmail.com. The application shall include the photograph of the candidate and a list of the supporters who have nominated them.
- 6.3. Candidate statements should be at least 100 words long and no longer than 1000 words. If a candidate's statement has more 1000 words, it will be truncated and text will be inserted below stating "The candidate's statement has exceeded the permitted amount and has therefore been truncated". The number of words counted shall be decided using Microsoft Word.
- 6.4. Candidates shall comply with all appropriate policies which will be on the supporters' panel webpage and stated for candidates to comply with (<https://www.oufc.co.uk/news/2019/october/supporters-panel-documents/>). The EMG will reserve the right to reject the statement if it breaches these policies.
- 6.5. If there are more candidates than places available on the Supporters' Panel the EMG shall determine whether the statements provided are sufficient for voting or if a hustings should be held.
- 6.6. If a hustings is appropriate the EMG will arrange for candidates to address the fanbase and field questions from the floor. This may be held in person or via video conference.

- 6.7. During the election the EMG shall not provide advice to voting representatives as to the suitability of any candidate nor issue any voting advice to supporters.
- 6.8. Supporters' panel representatives who indicate a preference in public must make it clear that they do not speak on behalf of the Supporters' Panel and express a purely personal opinion.

7. Appeals

- 7.1. Candidates or complainants shall raise matters with the EMG, whose decision is final.
- 7.2. Complaints after voting has closed shall be made to the EMG not later than three working days after the close of poll. Any complaint received after this date shall be ruled out of order.
- 7.3. If any candidate should contravene the Election Policy, the EMG shall judge whether a disqualification shall be applicable and their decision is final.

8. Ballot

- 8.1. The EMG will arrange the ballot. The voting form will be available to download, with arrangements made for those unable to access online.
- 8.2. Votes shall be emailed to the EMG email address or posted to the EMG mailing address.
- 8.3. The election result(s) shall be announced no more than 10 weeks after the nomination period opens.
- 8.4. The highest placed candidate(s) in terms of total votes as equal to number of places available for election declared by the Supporters' Panel shall be deemed elected.
- 8.5. The result(s) shall be communicated to the fanbase via the supporters' panel webpage, after all candidates have been informed by appropriate methods.
- 8.6. The EMG will issue the supporters' panel *Expectations for Representatives* policy to the successful candidates upon the result(s) of the election. This is to be signed and returned within 14 days of receipt.
- 8.7. The supporters' panel *Expectations for Representatives* policy will be emailed and have read receipt enabled. The successful candidate shall sign and return via email with read receipt enabled. If there is not an acceptable reason for lateness in returning the document, the election of that candidate will be declared null and void and a vacant position will be created.
- 8.8. Successful candidates shall become representatives of the Supporters' Panel upon receipt of their signed acceptance of the supporters' panel *Expectations for Representatives* policy.

9. Appendix 1 – Example of Election Timeline

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| Week 1 | Day 1 | Nomination forms issued |
| Week 4 | Day 22 | Nominations closed |
| Week 4/5 | Day 24 | Nomination statements posted on webpage and hustings held* |
| Week 5 | Day 31 | Election opens* |
| Week 8 | Day 52 | Election closes* |
| Week 9 | Day 55 | Election appeal period ends* |
| Week 9 | Day 57 | Results announced |

* These stages will only be required if there are more candidates than vacancies.