

PRESS RELEASE

Dulwich Hamlet Supporters' Trust (DHST) backs the redevelopment of Champion Hill

The Dulwich Hamlet Supporters' Trust (DHST) will be backing plans for the redevelopment of Champion Hill. This follows a poll of members on whether to support the redevelopment proposals, as submitted by Hadley Property Group (HPG). An unequivocal 94 % of Trust members who responded to the poll are in support.



Duncan Hart, Chairman of DHST, said "our Club is a major part of life in Southwark. The work that many volunteers have done to tackle discrimination and support community projects has received local and international acclaim. We want to build on this, alongside having a successful football team. I firmly believe that putting the Club into supporter ownership would mean that we could do just that.

"We have an agreement in principle with the owners of Champion Hill for the Club to be put into fan ownership. This would put an end to the constant speculation around the Club's existence. It puts the club in the hands of those who love it and cherish their local community. If the new ground is approved, the transition to fan ownership presents far fewer risks. It would provide the Club, and the local community, a fantastic facility to grow from."

Dulwich Hamlet Football Club has been a key part of the local community since the Club was founded in 1893. The Club have a long and famous history within East Dulwich, and the huge rise in attendances in recent years has evidenced the strength of feeling from the local community towards the Club.

The many volunteers that help to run Dulwich Hamlet have led the way in challenging discrimination within the sport and bringing the community together with a series of impressive initiatives. The Club's volunteers were deservedly recognised at this year's Southwark Civic Awards, as they received the Liberty of the Old Borough of Camberwell for their outstanding community work.

Sadly, Dulwich Hamlet have had challenging times in recent years as its future has been in doubt due to financial issues. DHST members have made clear that they see the plans as an opportunity for the long term sustainability of the Club in East Dulwich.

Darren McCreery, the Trust's vice-Chair, said "the plans submitted to the Council have been developed in partnership with DHST to provide the best possible solution on this challenging site. The proposal firmly supports the broader strategic objectives of the Council, whilst successfully balancing the Club's needs with our desire to remain a leading light in bringing the community together. Therefore, we urge everyone to write to Southwark in support of the application."

The new facility and the Club being owned by its supporters is a fantastic chance to secure the Club's future for years to come. DHST will therefore be campaigning in the coming months to ensure that Dulwich Hamlet Football Club, a vital community asset, has the bright future it deserves.

Notes to editors

1. The Dulwich Hamlet Supporters' Trust (DHST) is one of the largest community organisations in the area with over 230 members. The Trust Board have worked with Hadley Property Group (HPG) since they became the owners of the Champion Hill site in late 2013. The Trust published [an interim statement](#) in December 2014 making clear that HPG should provide clarity on the plans for the ground, the lease on Greendale Fields (proposed location for much of the new ground) and on fan ownership. This information would then be presented to Trust members to decide whether DHST should back the plans for the redevelopment via a democratic poll.
2. In the run up to this poll, DHST [published a memorandum of understanding](#) that had been agreed with HPG, outlining the proposals in more detail and including plans for the Club to transition towards a model of supporter ownership. With the input of Supporters' Direct, the Board have also drafted [a vision and governance plan](#) to outline how the club could operate as a CBS (Community Benefits Society), the model commonly used for supporter owned clubs.
3. DHST polled members between 30 April and 14 May on whether the Trust should support plans to redevelop Champion Hill. Members were provided with [the plans as submitted and validated by Southwark Council](#), as well as other relevant material (e.g. on plans for fan ownership, how the new facility would run and an update on the lease). After closure of the poll, 94 % of respondents are in support of the plans. Following the result, DHST will now be campaigning for the plans to be approved by Southwark Council.
4. Throughout this period the Trust Board has maintained a neutral position in relation to the plans, in order to allow our members to reach an informed and independent decision. Now that our members have voted strongly in favour of the plans, we will be campaigning for these to become a reality.
5. For further information, then please contact Jack Bagnall (spokesperson) on 07791 731428, or Duncan Hart (Chair) on 07812 366730.

