

My name is David Johnstone and I am a Chelsea supporter. I have been going to watch football at Stamford Bridge for more than 40 years so far.

For the last 19 years, I have produced a journal dedicated to Chelsea Football Club. So I have come to know many fellow Chelsea supporters, a lot of whom live in the area and all of whom are in favour of the redevelopment of the stadium.

I am one of them; in fact I am one of 80 million supporters who have walked since 1905 through the gates of Stamford Bridge; for many of us, it is our blue heaven.

I am here to speak for those who tonight have no voice; the millions no longer with us and – hopefully – the millions still to come, not yet born, who will grow to know and love this special place.

This is not our second home or our spiritual home – this is our home, across the generations and our support has kept it alive all these long years.

We are so delighted that our dreams may now be realised through the incredible commitment of the club's third owner to this fantastic new building, taking its rightful place in our story, along with the past and present arenas of his predecessors, which these magnificent models here tonight illustrate.

My earliest memories are of coming to Fulham Broadway with its sights and sounds; Fulham Broadway is an area we love and cherish and are proud of. I am aware of the business generated in Fulham Broadway because Chelsea play there.

We all know the football keeps local businesses alive; we are happy to support and improve the local economy by using the shops, the bars and the restaurants.

These businesses would disappear and the area would become a ghost town without football; in the near future the area and the local economy will flourish with the new stadium, something that residents will presumably not complain too much.

Indeed, the livelihood of SW6 is dependent on the existence of the football club.

As many here tonight know, football is the lifeblood of tens of millions of people in this country, bringing families, friends and neighbours together.

Stamford Bridge, the home of Chelsea Football Club, is a place of pilgrimage for millions of people.

With our support, combined with the power of the Chelsea name, the most recognisable brand in the borough, this extremely valuable community asset can be used so positively for the benefit of those who live locally.

It is an asset that must be protected, as well as nurtured.

The Chelsea Foundation – the charitable arm of the football club – will, with the redevelopment of Stamford Bridge, further extend its social programme to help and give

even more opportunities to local people, especially those not fortunate enough to enjoy life's advantages yet, to improve their lives and prospects.

I'm proud to support Chelsea because of reasons like that. I hope you will see fit to help the club grow and help the borough develop too by granting planning permission.

Thank you.

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