Rodell Board Elections 2020

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Candidate statements are presented in reverse ballot paper order, which is randomly selected.

Each statement is accompanied by the candidate’s name, and their gender if declared.

The Rodell Board of Directors is responsible for exercising overall stewardship of Rodell Properties Ltd. on behalf of Unlock Democracy.

Remember to return your ballot paper before 5pm on 19 June 2020.
Unlock Democracy is in Crisis!

The current Council is considering reducing our paid staff responsible for campaigning whilst a speculative building redevelopment in Central London is underway. The Directors post is still vacant. Priorities seem to be very confused. Read the last Council Minutes on the website.

I have previously undertaken the role of Acting Director for six months (unpaid) and stabilised a financial crisis. As Chair of my national unions Finance and Legal Committee I played a decisive role in overcoming a massive deficit.

I see the role of Rodell, on which I have previously served for many years, as providing the maximum amount of funds to finance our campaigning activities. I am risk averse to jeopardising our asset base in any speculative building especially when the property market everywhere is so uncertain due to the Corona-Virus Pandemic.

My background has been mainly union being a branch secretary, National Vice-President, TUC national and regional committees.

More recently, I was Director of Action4Equality, campaigning for Equal Pay in Local Govt. and the NHS. I have a lifetime’s experience of campaigning on LGBT, democracy, pay and conditions, safety, housing and much more. I have previously served on both the Council of Charter 88 and Unlock Democracy. I believe strongly in cross party working mainly with Labour, Green and Liberal Democrat Parties.

I am active in my local community as Chair of the Springfield Community Centre. It is run entirely by volunteers. I have previously been a local councillor. More information needed just contact me:

Stuart Hill, 14 Park Drive, Forest Hall, Newcastle, NE12 9JP

stuart.hill4@gmail.com 07970011375 or 01912662988
Dear colleagues and friends.

It seems in these trying and uncertain times, that many of the old `system` has been shown to be, worn out at best, worse, busted. What we are witnessing is in effect, a reshaping of the that system, from our politics to business, even how we shop. Covid 19 has shown and exposed a great fault line here in the UK and many other countries. That fault line now has to undergo some of the most fundamental change, our whole political structure is in effect, not fit for purpose. Leading the charge, ULD and many progressives at home and abroad are, and should be leading the charge for such change-working together, if our goals are the same.

Rodell’s, which I have had the honour to have been elected to serve, need to be in a fit-for-purpose position to give that, financial, moral, and physical support where possible in this most noble aim. If I have the honour of receiving your continued support by being on the Rodell board in these pending elections, I shall bring my experiences, in and out of ULD/rodell to bare to the best of my abilities.

I offer my deepest and sincere, "thank you" in advance for your vote and support, whatever outcome of these `Corona` elections, I am certain the future may reflect with some optimism.

Our mantra, TOGETHER, FORWARD, NO GOING BACK TO PRE-COV19 TIMES,

Warmest regards

Andrew S. Manning

Having enjoyed success as both a campaigner and a business owner (now retired) I’m asking you to let me indulge my passion for constitutional reform in the UK.

When I was at a suburban comprehensive in the 70s we were taught that the UK’s constitution was the “best in the world”. When pressed on what that actually meant the best that our teachers could offer was “the Crown is sovereign in Parliament”. Traveling the globe, doing business face-to-face in a great many countries, has shown me personally how wrong those teachers’ trite, rote-learnt exceptionalist assumptions were!

If you give me the honour of representing you at Unlock Democracy my first focus will be on campaigning. Back in the early 90s I became a LibDem councillor in an “unwinnable seat” in the Conservative super-safe borough of Bromley, only standing down four years later as my wife and I started a family and I needed to grow our business. I would love a chance to bring that direct campaigning experience to bear in pushing for a legitimate, reformed UK constitution.

As a business person I took a small, closely held company and made it internationally successful, raising turnover thirty-fold before selling-out to protect the firm’s 60 jobs from Brexit. That growth was down to a fantastic team that I directed, focusing tightly on customer satisfaction. I’d like to bring that experience to bear too but – perhaps controversially – would not view you, members, as the key customer cohort. Instead I would prefer to focus on those outside our enlightened circle; those who’ve yet to understand the potentially dire implications of our loose, informal constitution.

In both of my previous roles I found cooperation to be key, whether across industries or parties. My third focus therefore would be on sharing what works with other like-minded organisations. Whether as a school governor, a local Councillor, a Trustee of a public pension or a senior board member, I’ve found my good-humoured seriousness aids cooperation.

- Life long enthusiast for constitutional regularisation and reform.
- History of success.
- Offering focus on campaigning, on enlightenment and on cooperation.

Current commitments:

- Covid Taskforce member for LDBEN.
- Frequent attendee at briefings from UCL Constitution Unit, LSE and Chatham House.
- Policy Forum contributor for LibDems.

My constitutional pet-hates:

- Dark money.
- FPTP.
- No consequences for dishonesty.
Stephen Carter

The crisis of our democracy is only getting worse. The COVID pandemic threatens to supercharge the tendencies which have already apparent in the government’s alarming ‘Page 48’ agenda. Unlock Democracy’s work is more important than ever, and once again I would like to continue supporting that work on Council.

I have served four terms now on both the Unlock Democracy and Rodell boards. For the last two terms, I have also served almost continuously on the UD Management Board, meaning that I am active on all of our governance bodies.

I’ve previously served as the Vice-Chair for Policy, and have always been an active contributor in the strategy discussions in council. I have also played my part in more day to day efforts to strengthen UD, notably by making better use of the two London properties that are UD’s main assets. I still have a 100% attendance record (by skype if not in person), despite being temporarily based outside of the UK.

I’ve taken an active part in the helping both organisations get through some challenging times. I thought we were through the worst: but now we face greater challenges than we have for years. My main concern if I am re-elected is to help UD adapt to these very different circumstances. These present us with some difficult hurdles to overcome, but huge opportunities as well.

The UK is more than ever in a state of constitutional crisis: the dysfunctional settlement between regions, nations and centre threatens the integrity of the whole country, the injustice of the electoral system is increasingly impossible to disguise, and local government is suffering an illusion of reform and a reality of budget cuts and central control. COVID is going to make all these issues even more acute.

I’ve long pushed for us to have a bolder approach. I want us to rethink our campaign strategy both to deal with our likely reduced circumstances, and to build on the work we have done in recent years, like the We the People campaign.

I am currently working as a consultant advisor to the Mayor of Sheffield City Region. Previously I worked as a campaigner and researcher on human rights, conflict and corruption, heading the Afghanistan campaign for Global Witness, an international civil society organisation working against corruption and conflict.

I would be happy to answer any questions UD members might have – I can be reached at postcarter@gmail.com
No election address supplied.
Mike Madgwick
Male

Mike Madgwick - I am standing for election for both the Rodell Property directors election and the Unlock Democracy Council. I started by writing something else, then looked at what is happening in front of my eyes today and it shouted back at me that, the very issues we stand for are being played out right now and there is next to no debate or examination as to where this all started to go so horribly wrong. The public have been relegated to spectator status. This occurred with minimal democratic input from the talent and capability this nation has in abundance – the situation was imposed on us by executive decree that swept away all else before it. I am more than a little disappointed that all campaign groups for democratic reform have not been actively communicating the glaring issues the current situation has exposed, it makes many look like democracy part-timers; I believe this can be used to make our message and end-point more potent.

The core messages of Unlock Democracy today are more relevant than ever before; a written constitution authored by the very people it serves, that constitution having equality and justice as building blocks for everything else, every vote making a difference, local voices really having meaning and an ability to drive local services and choices, local people know far better what is needed than remote centralised decision making that serves all too often party political paymasters, a defined relationship with devolved governments of the other nations, rebalance our partnership for the good of all, and, whilst fracking is one example - the real underlying issue is where the balance of authority exists of central government to impose solutions on local communities against their will. All these concepts resonate today so loudly when one steps back and asks, if we had them in place would our pandemic response be vastly improved along with our ability to get this country back on its feet, or, sleepwalk into economic output levels last seen in the 18thC, with potentially horrific long-term consequences.

Our membership embraces the core principles each in our own way, we actively challenge that which seeks to insidiously erode each hard won right. This movement is founded on the very principle of all the population having an equal right and responsibility to grow our democracy.

Covid will in my view be a game changer. It will not be too long before the many misrepresented facts and decision making with limited oversight are exposed in full, the serial denial and cover-up up of failure to discharge the duty of care of government and how many voices that were not ‘on message’ were actively suppressed to serve political ambition above and beyond service of the national need.

Rodell Properties is linked far more deeply today than ever before with the ability to get the message out, it is a major financial support mechanism of the movement. It is commercial property based and that form of income-stream will come under enormous pressure in the coming years. The office and retail shop based economy will start to fragment and disintegrate in places – the rent levels of yesterday will be slashed.
Tough strategic decisions will have to be made now to save the income that pays for the jobs and talent that supports the movement’s aims. A more diverse and protected portfolio is likely required going forward.

Grass roots is key to be energised and something many others are alighting on, we must unlock the talent of this nation which is our collective prosperity, locally people know what works best, they engage to make things happen, they also maintain and sustain all that which adds to community value. Government must trust the people and increasingly act as an enabler, not our controller. Different parts of our nation have different and changing needs – imposed ‘one size fits all’ in many ways reflects the lack of ambition and capability of those who resort to it.

My enthusiasm and driver is to make our messages so compelling that they become the new norm for all and are owned by all – democracy for me is a personal item which the population at large can be trusted to own and nurture. Unlock Democracy has the ability to truly come of age; we must grasp the moment.
Re-Elect Danny Zinkus Sutton

Email: danny.zinkus@gmail.com

Mobile: 07730 559628

I am Danny Zinkus Sutton. I am seeking re-election to the Rodell Board. I live in Edinburgh. For the last four years I have served as Unlock Democracy’s Co-Chair. I’ve been on Council for 8 years, serving on Management Board and the board of Rodell.

I am a qualified accountant with two decades of experience managing the financial affairs of private, public and third sector organisations.

This term I am only standing for election to the board of Rodell. It’s important for Unlock Democracy to have a secure financial base to work from. Having our own income, under the control of our Membership, gives us the security to take on long term campaigns and ensures that we are never beholden to any particular funding body. I want to focus for the next two years on finishing the redevelopment of our Greys Inn Road property and the important question of what we do with the proceeds of the redevelopment. Then it will be time to work out what next we can do to improve Rodell’s income and through that Unlock Democracy’s campaigning work.

I think it is important that we maintaining Rodell as a property management company, we have useful skills and knowledge in this field and these enable us to earn a good return on our investments.

I believe we should maintain the commitment to increase Rodell’s capital base. Whilst it is always tempting to spend all the resources we have right now on the campaigns we are running now, we have seen that campaigning for constitutional reform is a long game and we should always seek to leave the Unlock Democracy of the future in a stronger position than Unlock Democracy has been in the past.

Equally important is that the Board of Rodell ensures that Rodell’s assets are not used to fund day to day operations without consulting the membership. Rodell’s income is there to campaign today. Rodell’s assets are there so we can continue to campaign for constitutional reform and a better democracy in the future. UD is uniquely placed because we have the long-term security of a strong and growing asset base.

I believe that any significant changes to Rodell’s business, or its asset base or any consumption of Rodell’s assets for campaigning should be expressly approved by Unlock Democracy’s membership.
Unlock Democracy Council Election Ian Driver’s Election Address

Why am I standing? I am a member of the Unlock council and the Rodell board. I am seeking re-election for a third term to contribute to the important work of Unlock. This work will become even more important during a post-Covid, post-EU, world in which, I am sure, many fundamental democratic questions will be raised.

I would also like to play a role in extending and strengthening democracy in the UK and developing a democracy which will encourage and promote much greater public participation.

I believe in a fairer voting system, voting from 16, the abolition of the House of Lords and its replacement with a democratically elected second chamber, and a written constitution. I also believe that local, regional and national government should be much more transparent and accountable with more public consultation, citizens juries, and greater involvement in decision making. Freedom of Information rights must also be extended and strengthened.

We have witnessed during the Covid crisis an exciting glimpse of the democratic possibilities of new communication technologies, as Parliament, regional, and local government embrace virtual, online meetings. As a society we should be investing in these tools to develop a non-London-centric virtual and real-world democracy with increased transparency and accountability and greater opportunities for citizen participation in decision making.

Political Background. I am a member of the Green Party and was the Party’s Parliamentary candidate in the South Thanet constituency in 2015. I was a Thanet councillor until 2015. Before that I was a Labour Party member, a councillor in Southwark in the 1990s and a trade union activist and member of my union’s NUPE (now UNISON) National Executive.

Campaigning. I am an experienced community campaigner who has been involved in a social justice, animal welfare, environmental and anti-fracking campaigns. I have actively promoted democratic accountability including –

- Campaigning for public’s right to film council meetings.
- Campaigning to defend and strengthen the Freedom of Information Act
- Campaigning against undemocratic “Cabinet” system of governance in local councils
- Campaigning for abolition of County councils and devolution of powers to more localised unitary authorities

Other. I am an active blogger focusing on local and sometimes national politics. Here’s the link http://iandriverthanet.blogspot.com/ Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/ian.driver.7 Twitter @IanDDriver

E-mail ianddriver@yahoo.co.uk.
I'm Jim I'm 67 married to Joy for 48 years we have 3 children and 4 Granddaughters

For many years through various companies I worked for I fought hard for democracy within the work place for fairness for all and for those that thought they were being overlooked for more senior positions

I have many different board experiences many with disability organizations I'm no longer on these because of change of members at agms and constitution changes again democracy rules

At present I'm on the board of a housing association
I'm Secretary to the board chair of the area committee vice chair of audit and director of our subsidy company with all members being elected at our yearly agm this will be my third time this year ,if elected I have knowledge of governance and health and safety we are all appraised once a year to see if we are still doing the right things and need anymore specialist training on any issues

I'm now retired so time will not be a problem if elected

I hope you can vote for me I will continue to fight for democracy in all walks of life

Thank you

Jim