

SHRIMPERS TRUST



SHRIMPERS TRUST MONTHLY MEMBERS SURVEY
August 2023

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INTRODUCTION

The Shrimpers Trust is excited to release the results from the first edition of a new monthly survey for members on matters relating to Southend United FC and the Trust's operations.

The Trust believes engagement with supporters is crucial to being able to represent fans' views accurately, providing a mandate for the Board to make informed decisions, especially when liaising with other key stakeholders.

Whilst we regularly monitor social media and encourage fans to contact us by email or by visiting us in the Shrimpers Bar at Roots Hall before the game on any home matchday, the success of the season card survey released by supporters' groups during the summer of 2023 showed we can gain a quick and effective

understanding of the general consensus of fans via this method.

All adult members were contacted by email on Tuesday 8th August 2023 with the five multiple choice questions for the August survey with seven days to provide the answers. A follow-up email was sent to those members that had not provided answers by Friday 11th August 2023.

We are committed to publishing the results each month, and look forward to hearing what our members think.

Q1 WOULD YOU TAKE PART IN A BOYCOTT OF AN UPCOMING HOME GAME?

Background

At a recent meeting between representatives of the supporters' groups connected to Southend United, a proposal was put forward for the groups to consider a full boycott of the club's home matches.

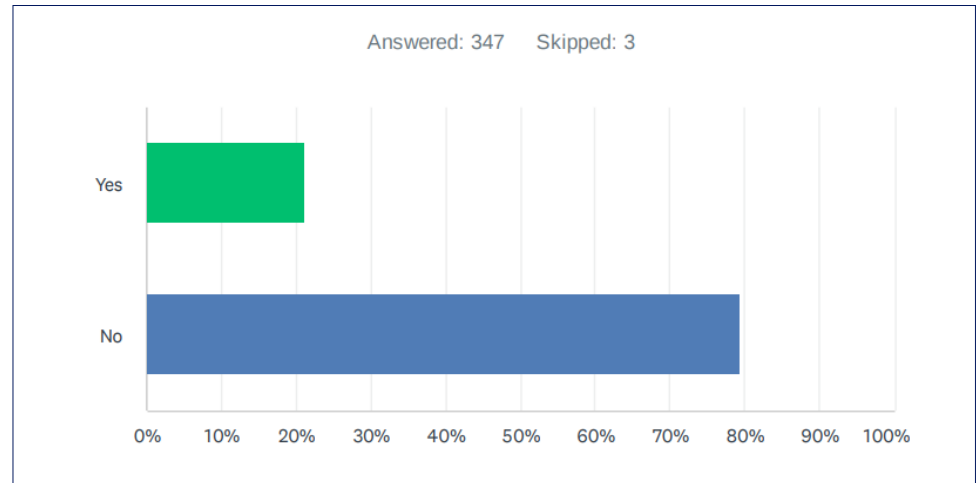
At the time, it was not believed that the prospects of such a boycott would be successful; the proposal was put forward before the opening National League match of the season when so many fans had played their part in getting Roots Hall ready for the game, and after the difficult summer where, on at least two occasions, the club had been just hours away from having their license to compete in the National League revoked.

However, it was agreed to consider the groups' collective position ahead of the next Roots Hall fixture, which takes place on Saturday, 19th August 2023 against Hartlepool United.

The most high-profile boycott by a football club's supporters was that organised by the Blackpool Supporters Trust, which lasted five years and ultimately ended with the culmination of the Oyston's ownership of the club.

In that situation, the BST determined not to give a penny more to the club during the Oyston's tenure, but the move was divisive and thousands of supporters continued to attend fixtures at Bloomfield Road.

Results



Total Respondents **347**

Yes **73** (21.04%)

No **275** (79.25%)

Q2 WOULD YOU TAKE PART IN LATE ENTRY TO AN UPCOMING HOME GAME?

Background

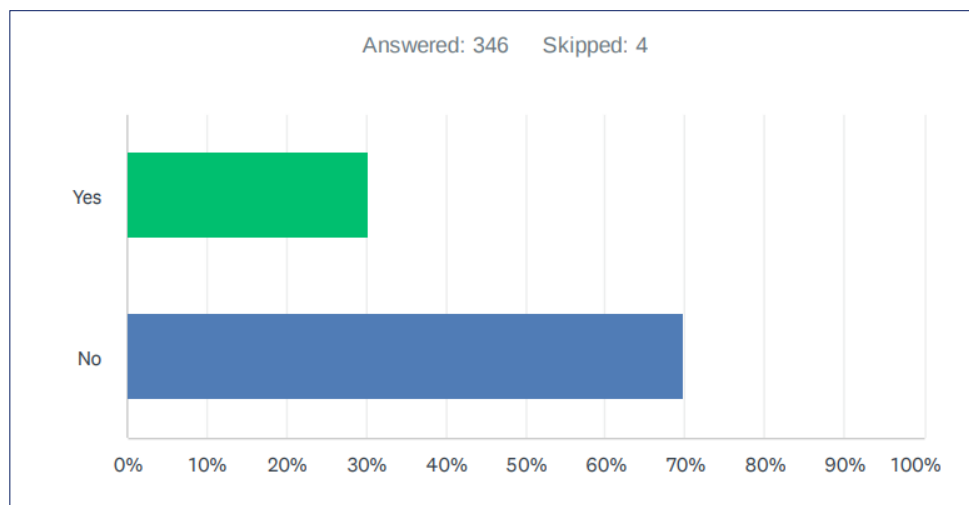
With a full boycott considered to be a nuclear option with the ability to divide supporters, an alternative tiered approach was put forward.

This would see those supporters - many of whom have already initiated their own personal refusal to attend home fixtures - that wished to carry out a full boycott do so, but enable others, including season ticket holders who have already purchased tickets for 2023/24 to participate in a late entry to a fixture.

Both groups could participate in a protest in the lead-up to the fixture, previous incarnations of which have already been successful in raising the profile of fans' frustrations with Ron Martin's ownership, and there would be a visual representation of this in the form of empty seats at Roots Hall for the beginning of the fixture.

A walk-out of a game was considered to be a potential negative influence on the team and coaching staff who have worked so hard to begin the season in a positive fashion, although some supporters may believe that this is also the case with late entry.

Results



Total Respondents **346**

Yes **105** (30.35%)

No **241** (69.65%)

Q3 IF THERE WAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PURCHASE A SHARE OF ROOTS HALL FREEHOLD, HOW MUCH WOULD YOU BE PREPARED TO INVEST?

Background

The Shrimpers Trust has been consistent in saying that a sustainable future for Southend United FC is dependant on greater fan involvement in the operation of the football club.

One such mechanism for improving supporter influence at the club could be the opportunity to purchase a share of the freehold of the stadium.

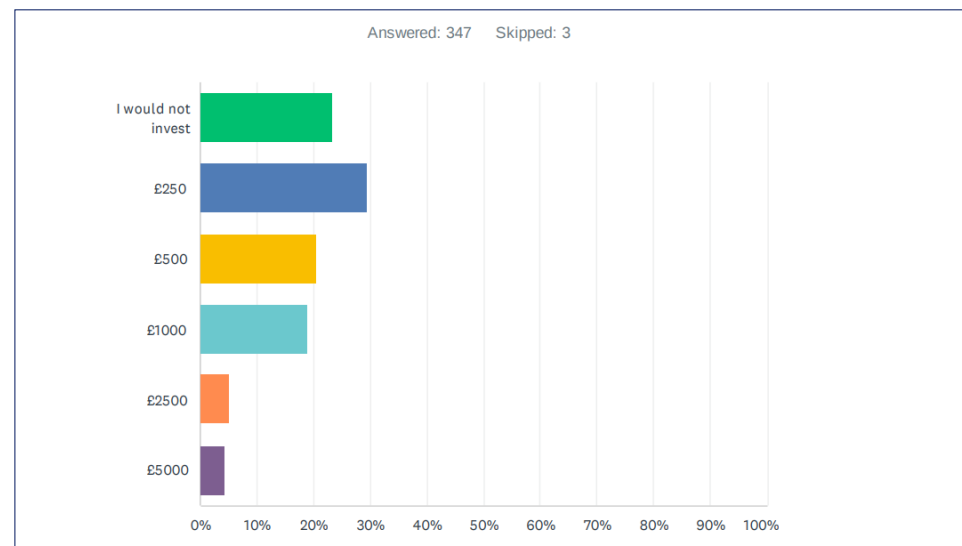
Roots Hall was built entirely by an internal labour force, with Sid Broomfield leading a small band of supporters and local residents in constructing the stadium in its

current form. The entire £73,997 cost of the stadium, save for a small grant from the FA, was met by the Supporters' Club after an extensive fund-raising campaign.

The ground was donated to the club in the 1950s, and was subsequently transferred to the ownership of Ron Martin, via his Roots Hall Limited vehicle, in 1998.

The purpose of this question was to establish whether, if such an opportunity arose, there would be sufficient support amongst the fanbase for a viable proposition to be made to potential partners.

Results



Total Respondents **347**

I would not invest **81** (23.34%)

£250 **102** (29.39%)

£500 **71** (20.46%)

£1000 **66** (19.02%)

£2500 **18** (5.19%)

£5000 **15** (4.32%)

Q4 DO YOU BELIEVE ROOTS HALL IS AN ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE?

Background

The community right to bid gives the local community the right to nominate important local land or buildings for listing as Assets of Community Value.

This means that if they are then put up for sale, local community groups can delay the sale so they can prepare a bid to buy the asset and take it over.

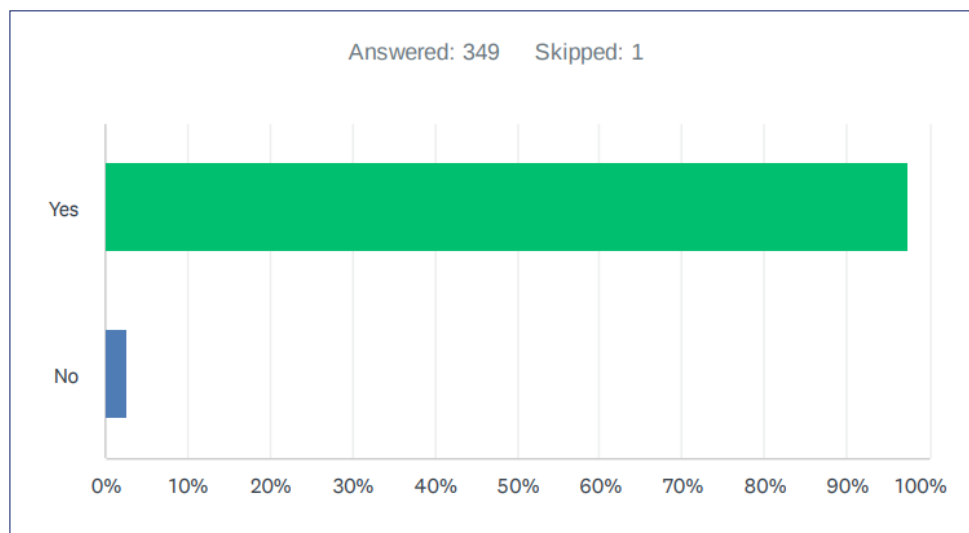
If listed, the asset will remain on the list for a maximum of five years, at which point it can be re-nominated and re-listed, subject to local interest and continued compliance

with the definition of an Asset of Community Value.

The Shrimpers Trust would be able to make a submission to Southend City Council, following examples from Leeds United (Elland Road), Stockport County (Edgeley Park), Walsall (Bescott Stadium), Hereford United (Edgar Street) and, more locally, Billericay Town (New Lodge).

This question sought to gain an understanding of the level of support for such an action amongst Shrimpers Trust members.

Results



Total Respondents **349**
Yes **340** (97.42%)
No **9** (2.58%)

Q5 DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF AN ACTIVE SOCIAL MEDIA USER?

Background

The Shrimpers Trust seeks to communicate with its membership in a number of ways.

We have a presence in the Shrimpers Bar on every home matchday, giving fans a chance to call in and speak to the Board as well as purchase items from our shop.

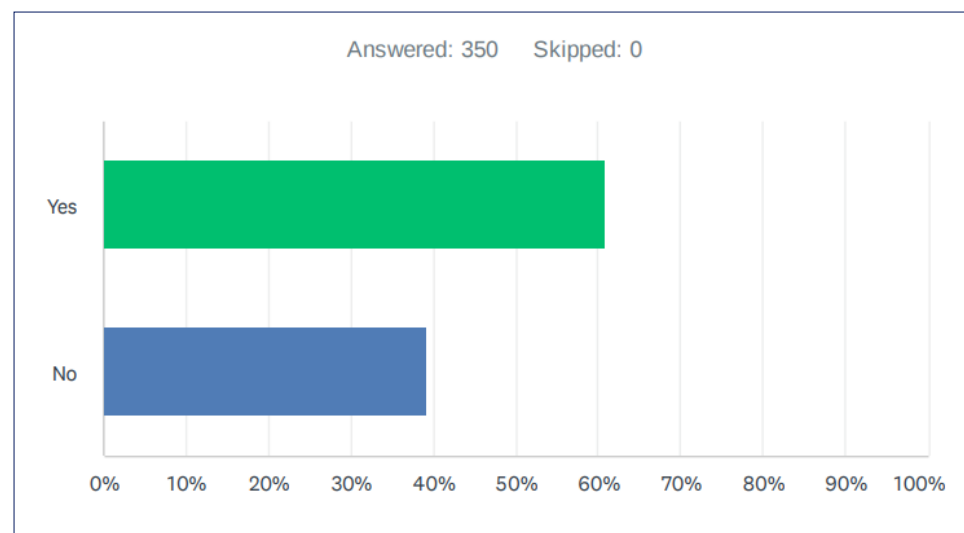
We release a regular email newsletter to members and we also have a column in every home match programme providing details of upcoming events and how to book our coaches for away games.

Our website, www.shrimperstrust.co.uk has recently been relaunched, and you can find archive minutes from committee and liaison meetings as well as a full archive of our statements, which are also released to the local press.

We also have a strong presence on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, as well as a designated section on the club's most popular supporters' forum, ShrimperZone.

This question sought to help us gain more information on the importance of social media amongst our membership.

Results



Total Respondents **350**
Yes **213** (60.86%)
No **137** (39.14%)

CONCLUSIONS

With **350 respondents** to the survey from our **adult membership of 843**, we have been able to gain a good understanding of the feeling of Trust members about the questions posed in the survey.

There was a **clear indication that the majority of Shrimpers Trust members (almost 80% of respondents) would not willing to participate in a full boycott of Southend United home fixtures.** Were this feeling to be reflected across the fanbase, this would make a successful boycott very difficult for supporters' groups to enact.

There was **slightly more support (almost 70% of respondents) for late entry to a home Southend United fixture.** However, the indication was clear again that the majority of Shrimpers Trust members would not be willing to participate in this action and that the visual effect of a co-ordinated late entry to the stadium would be diminished as a consequence.

Moving on to potential investment in an opportunity to purchase a share of the Roots Hall freehold, **over three-quarters of respondents (76.66%) indicated they would be willing to invest in the opportunity.** Although we were not asking for pledges, the indication was that **almost a quarter-of-a-million pounds (£247,000) could be raised** from those that completed the survey alone.

The most convincing response was to the question of **Roots Hall as an Asset of Community Value, with over 97% of respondents believing this to be the case.** Just 9 of 349 respondents to that question did not concur with this opinion.

Finally, over **60% of respondents considered themselves to be active social media users.** Despite this being a high figure, it is important for the Shrimpers Trust to continue to consider how to communicate with those that do not.

