

# SHRIMPERS TRUST



**SHRIMPERS TRUST MONTHLY MEMBERS SURVEY**  
September 2023

# CONTENTS

Page 2 Introduction  
Page 3 Q1 How do you feel about the principle of protesting about the ownership of Southend United FC?  
Page 4 Q2 Would you participate in specified forms of protest?  
Page 5 Q3 If there was an opportunity for supporters to obtain a stake in the future operation of Southend United FC, how much would you be willing to contribute on a monthly basis?  
Page 6: Q4 Should the Shrimpers Trust commit any funds to Southend United FC during the current situation?  
Page 7: Q5 If away games were screened at Roots Hall, in the Shrimpers Bar, how likely is it that you would attend?  
Page 8: Conclusions

## INTRODUCTION

The Shrimpers Trust has released the results from the September edition of its 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.

This is the second edition of a monthly consultation and includes questions about protests against the club's owner, financial contributions towards the football club and whether supporters would be interested in watching coverage of away games at Roots Hall.

All adult members were contacted by email on Wednesday 6th September 2023 with the five multiple choice questions for the survey, and were provided with seven days to respond with their answers. A follow-up email was sent to those members that had not provided answers by Sunday 10th September 2023.

All new adult members joining during this period were also invited to complete the survey. Thank-you to everyone that participated in this consultation.

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

# Q1 HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE PRINCIPLE OF PROTESTING ABOUT THE OWNERSHIP OF SOUTHEND UNITED FC?

## Background

During recent years, as Southend United FC has suffered multiple relegations against a backdrop of players, staff and creditors being paid late on a consistent basis, and with repeated appearances in the High Court due to winding-up petitions served on behalf of HMRC, supporters have becoming increasingly frustrated.

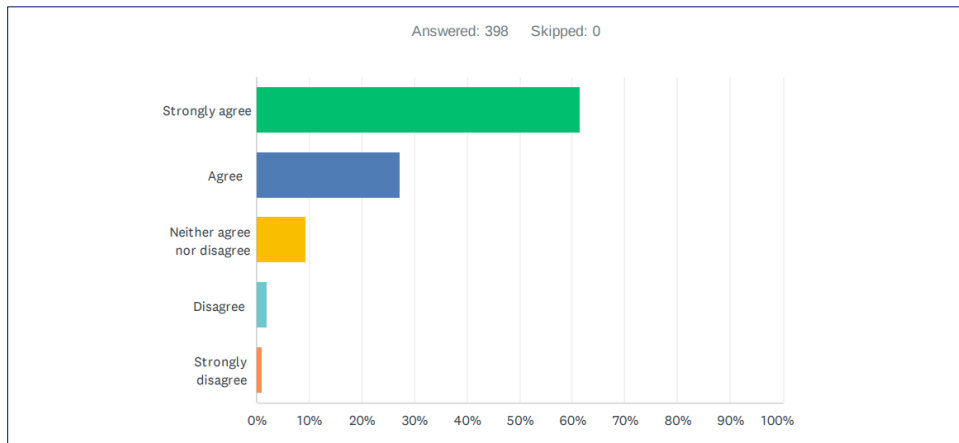
There have been marches to Roots Hall, protests outside the stadium and the property of the club's owner, Ron Martin, disruptive actions such as pitch invasions

and, more recently, the depositing of tennis balls onto the Roots Hall pitch to temporarily suspend the National League fixture against Eastleigh.

This question sought to establish the strength of feeling against Ron Martin, and whether Shrimpers Trust members are, in principle, in favour of protesting against him.

The question does not seek to identify which methods of protest are supported or opposed by Trust members.

## Results



Total Respondents **398**  
Strongly agree **244** (61.31%)  
Agree **109** (27.39%)  
Neither agree nor disagree **37** (9.30%)  
Disagree **8** (2.01%)  
Strongly disagree **4** (1.01%)

## Q2 WOULD YOU PARTICIPATE IN SPECIFIED FORMS OF PROTEST?

### Background

In the previous Shrimpers Trust Members Survey, we sought to establish the level of support for a boycott of, or late entry to, a first-team fixture.

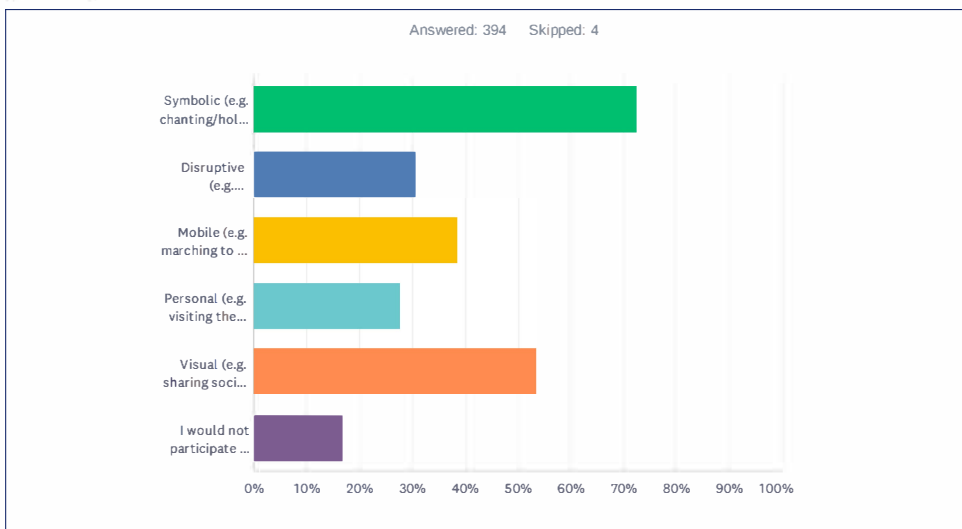
However, there were a number of other potential forms of protest that were not considered in that survey, and we felt it was important to explore support for those.

In order to do so, we grouped the various actions into symbolic (such as chanting or holding up signs and banners), disruptive

(interrupting a fixture), mobile (such as marching to a match), personal (targeting the owner's property or business partners for protest) or visual (such as sharing images on social media and leafletting). There was also the option to select that the respondent would not be willing to protest.

This question sought to establish an indication of which methods might be most successful moving forwards, whether Trust members would be willing to participate and was designed to complement a similar question posed on the ShrimperZone forum.

### Results



Total Respondents **394**

Symbolic (e.g. chanting/holding signs/holding banners) **286** (72.59%)

Disruptive (e.g. interrupting a match by throwing objects) **121** (30.71%)

Mobile (e.g. marching to a match) **152** (38.58%)

Personal (e.g. visiting the owner's house/targeting business contacts) **109** (27.66%)

Visual (e.g. sharing social media posts/leafletting) **211** (53.55%)

I would not participate in any form of protest **66** (16.75%)

## Q3 IF THERE WAS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SUPPORTERS TO OBTAIN A STAKE IN THE FUTURE OPERATION OF SOUTHEND UNITED FC, HOW MUCH WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO CONTRIBUTE ON A MONTHLY BASIS?

### 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.

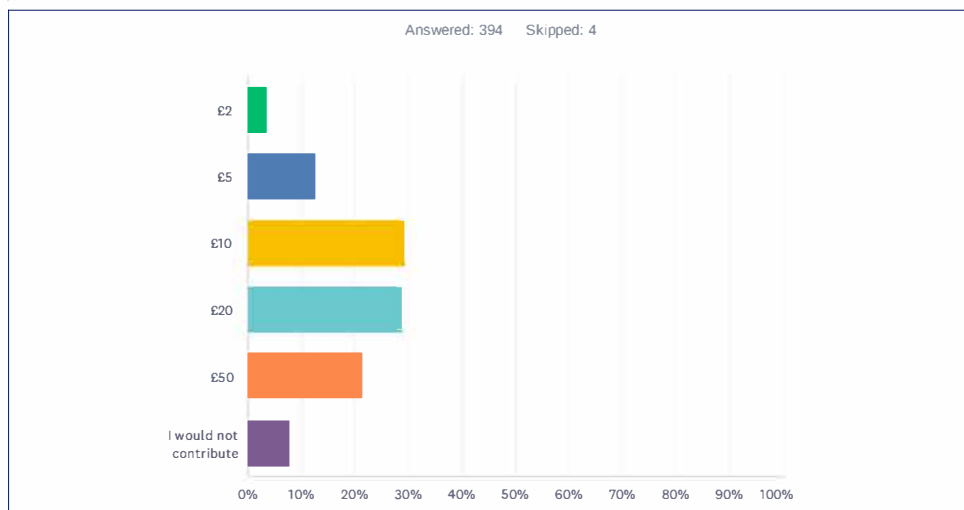
However, it would be likely that supporter influence at the club would be dependent on a financial contribution.

Whilst there are mechanisms outwith financial contributions, such as a 'golden share' for supporters or amendments to

the articles of association, and these should be explored, it would be negligent not to attempt to establish what sort of contribution could be made on a monthly or annual basis from Trust members, dependent on there being tangible benefits in return.

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 **394**

I would not contribute **31** (7.87%)

£2 **14** (3.55%)

£5 **50** (12.69%)

£10 **116** (29.44%)

£20 **114** (28.93%)

£50 **85** (21.57%)

## Q4 SHOULD THE SHRIMPERS TRUST COMMIT ANY FUNDS TO SOUTHEND UNITED FC DURING THE CURRENT SITUATION?

### Background

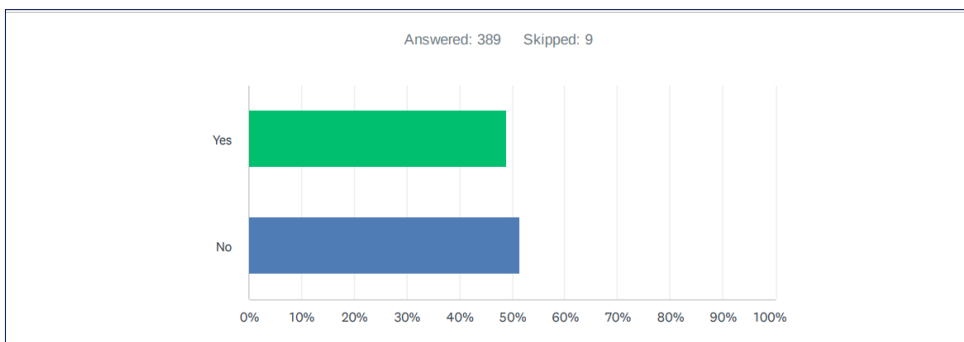
Over the past 17 years, the Shrimpers Trust have contributed almost £200,000 to Southend United Football Club.

The vast proportion of this amount (over £150,000) has been directed towards Academy operations, alongside physiotherapy equipment (almost £20,000) and almost £8,000 towards the Community & Educational Trust.

However, we recognise the strength of feeling against the current owner, and the sense amongst some supporters that any such contributions at the moment - although directed towards specific projects - help to prop up his regime.

This question sought to gain an understanding of the level of support for contributions towards the football club amongst Shrimpers Trust members at the current time.

### Results



Total Respondents **389**  
Yes **190** (48.84%)  
No **200** (51.41%)

## Q5 IF AWAY GAMES WERE SCREENED AT ROOTS HALL, IN THE SHRIMPERS BAR, HOW LIKELY IS IT THAT YOU WOULD ATTEND?

### Background

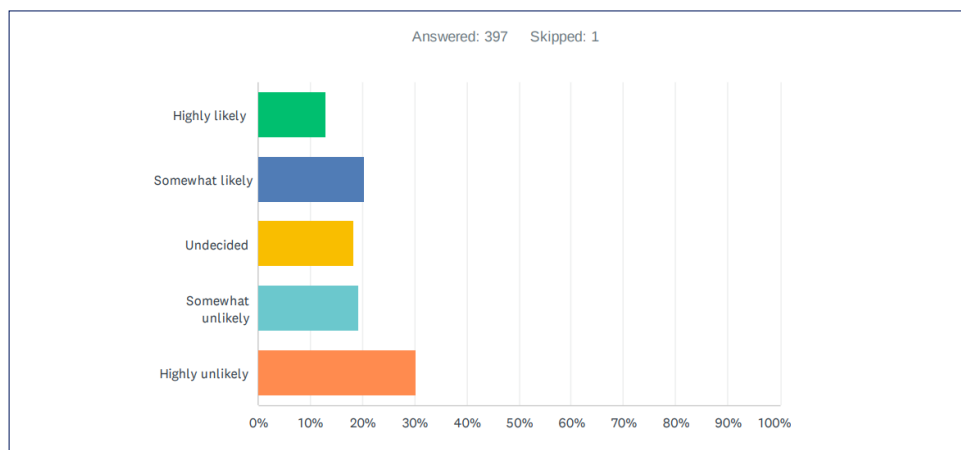
Whilst the Shrimpers Trust is the official away travel supplier for Southend United FC, and the club enjoys phenomenal away support, we know that many fans aren't able to make those journeys for a multitude of reasons.

Those supporters will still be following team, either watching via the National League's streaming service, listening on BBC Essex or monitoring social media platforms.

We wanted to investigate whether those supporters would like to come together to watch away matches in the Shrimpers Bar at Roots Hall.

As well as improving the sense of community amongst the fanbase, this question also provided an indication of how viable Roots Hall is, in its current state, to support non-matchday revenue streams.

### Results



Total Respondents **397**  
Highly likely **52** (13.10%)  
Somewhat likely **80** (20.15%)  
Undecided **73** (18.39%)  
Somewhat unlikely **76** (19.14%)  
Highly unlikely **120** (30.23%)

# CONCLUSIONS

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With **398 respondents** to the survey from our **adult membership of 980**, we have been able to gain a good understanding of the feeling of Trust members about the questions posed in the survey.

The percentage representation of adult Trust members responding to the survey remained at over 40%. For September, **the percentage of adult members providing answers to our questions was 40.61%**, compared to 41.52% in August.

There was a **clear indication that the majority of Shrimpers Trust members (almost 90% of respondents) agreed with the principle of protesting against the current owner of the football club, Ron Martin**. Only 12 of the 398 respondents to this question did not agree with the principle of protesting.

In relation to the forms of protest, there was **clear support from respondents for symbolic protests, with 286 respondents (72.59%) saying they would participate** in actions such as chanting or holding up signs and banners against the club's owner.

**211 respondents (53.55%) stated they would participate in visual protests** such as posting on social media or leafletting. There was much less support for disruptive, mobile or personal action and **66 respondents stated they would not participate in any form of protest**.

Moving on to potential monthly contributions in return for supporters to purchase a stake in the future operation of Southend United Football Club, **92.13% of respondents indicated they would be willing to contribute if the opportunity arose**.

Although we were not asking for pledges, the indication was that **almost £8000 pounds per month, translating to almost £100,000 annually (£95,616) could be raised** from those that completed the survey. The most popular potential monthly contributions were £10 (29.44%) and £20 (28.93%).

Respondents to this survey **were split regarding the question of the Shrimpers Trust committing funds to the football club during the current situation**, with 190 (48.84%) agreeing and 200 (51.41%) disagreeing. This result was inconclusive.

Finally, **almost 50% of respondents stated it was unlikely they would attend screenings of away games at Roots Hall**. 120 of 397 respondents said it was highly unlikely they would watch and 76 more suggested they were somewhat unlikely to do so, with a further 73 undecided.

