

What Are Supporters Trusts?

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Influence – the formation and running of representative bodies of supporters

Representation – securing the democratic election of supporters’ representatives to the boards of directors of individual football clubs

There are however, many differences between some supporters clubs and not all share all of the aforementioned objectives, preferring to concentrate on some at the expense of others. Some supporters trusts do not seek to gain actual representation at boardroom level via share purchases but instead concentrate in being in as open and democratic as is possible, asking only an administrative fee for membership. In effect, such an association is run as a pressure group with the fans bonding together to provide a strong, official voice that the club finds far harder to ignore.

As opposed to this, other trusts have been so successful in obtaining shares as to actually get a representative on their club’s board, through collective share ownership and some trusts, have even been able to secure majority ownership of the club itself. Indeed in the case of the reformed Clydebank FC, the Supporters Trust secured majority ownership of the club from the outset of the club’s formation.

All trusts though wish to improve the lot for their team and supporters and while not all supporters may believe that trusts form a necessary part of the football world, preferring to see their club run without any fan involvement, there can be no doubt that all fans want their team to be successful, however it is achieved.

With the current trend towards multi-millionaire and even multi-billionaire owners bankrolling football teams and their success either as personal playthings or with an eye to an investment, the interests of the common or garden fan can be easily brushed aside or forgotten about compared to the interests of other forces such as television companies and league

sponsors. Worse yet, fans can find their club taken over by an unscrupulous asset-stripper who promises the fans the earth, only to deliver shattered dreams and a trail of neglect and devastation that shakes the club to its very core, undoing in some cases more than a hundred years of hard work and tradition for the sake of avarice & greed.

It must be remembered at all times that without the fans, there would be no game for these people to want to be part of in the first place – it is the deeply held love that fans have for their team no matter how big or small it may be that makes it such an appealing proposition for businesses and media companies to get involved in.