



Union FS - Safe Standing Survey - Results July 2017

Scope and Method:

This survey was undertaken to gain an insight into Leicester City fans' opinion on the subject of 'safe standing' and its potential introduction into top flight English football. The survey was conducted online between 17.30 on Sunday the 25th of June 2017 and 17.30 on Sunday the 2nd of July 2017, and was completed by 1267 unique respondents.

The survey was deliberately designed to gain responses from a cross section of Leicester fans. This was achieved by circulating the survey outside of Union FS' traditional social media circles, including 2 of the largest online LCFC Facebook and Twitter pages, alongside a host of smaller fan run forums and blogs.

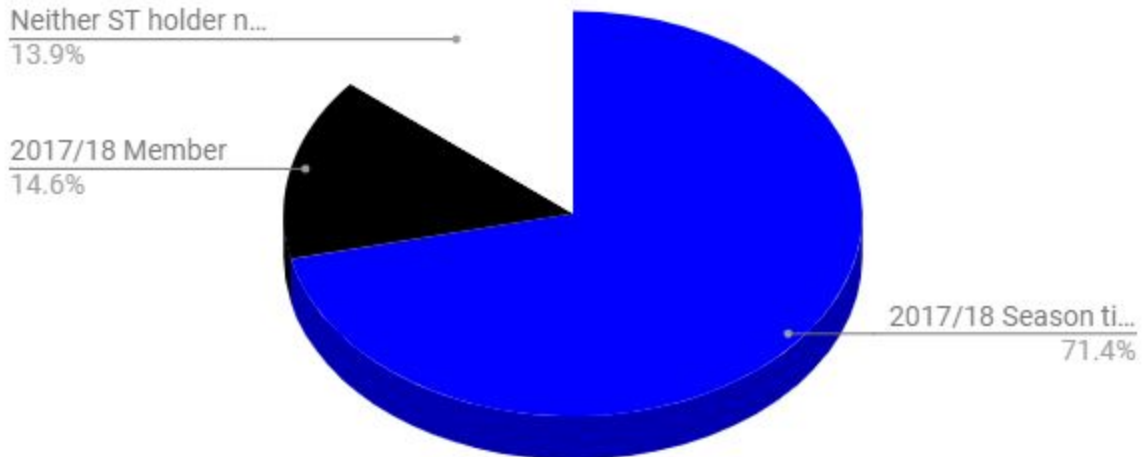
The questionnaire was broken down into three key sections. Firstly, two questions gave a brief indication of the respondents' status as a Season Ticket holder, a Member or neither for the coming season, and where they were most often situated in the ground on a match day. Secondly, three questions looked into people's habits of standing in designated seated areas at both home and away games, and a number of hypothetical situations were presented, where respondents ticked if any had applied to their matchday experiences in the past. Finally, a longer section asked specific questions regarding the introduction of 'safe standing' specifically at Leicester City, and its impact on fans' enjoyment and safety.

Results:

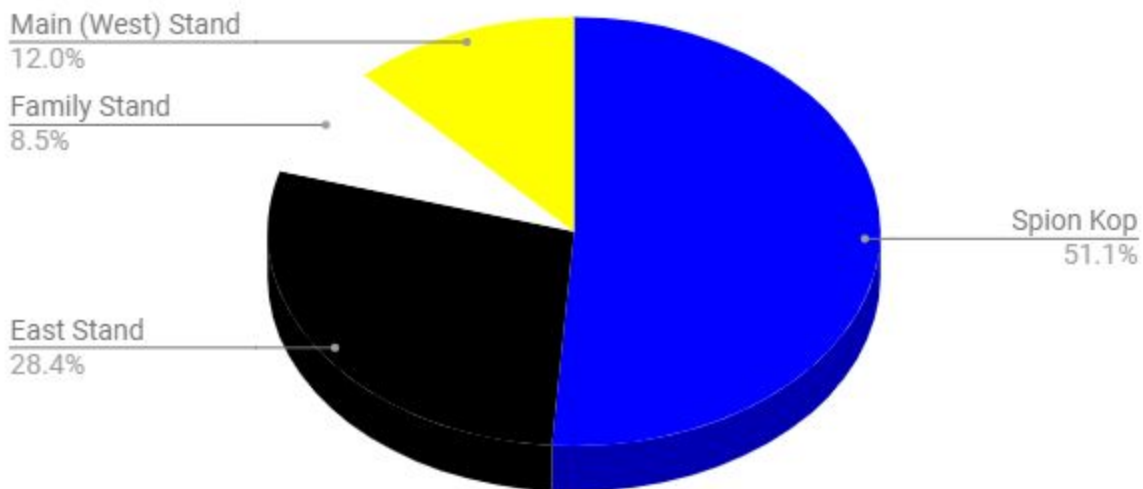
The results of each individual question are included below, followed by a table of results in full.



Which of the following options most accurately describes your current situation?

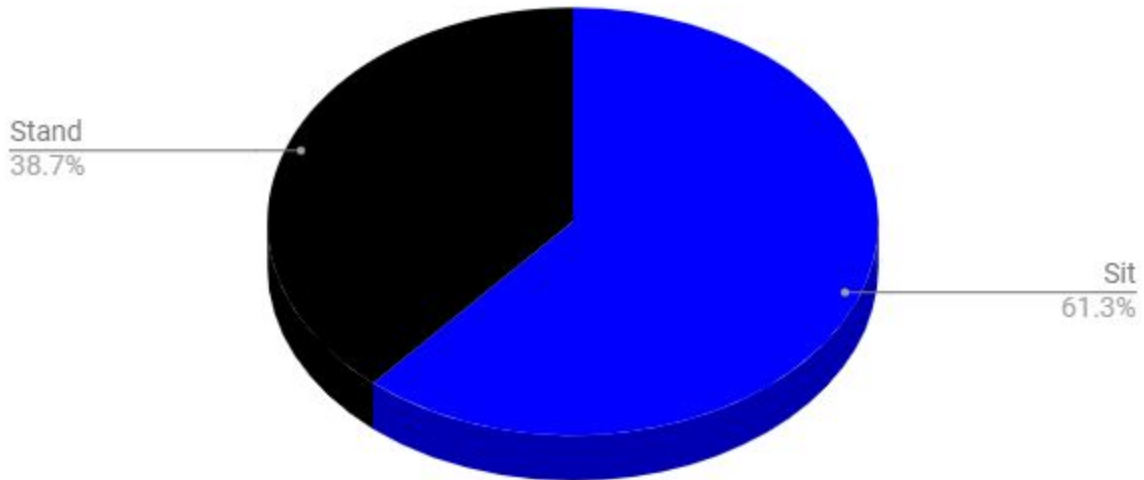


Where in the ground do you most often sit/stand?

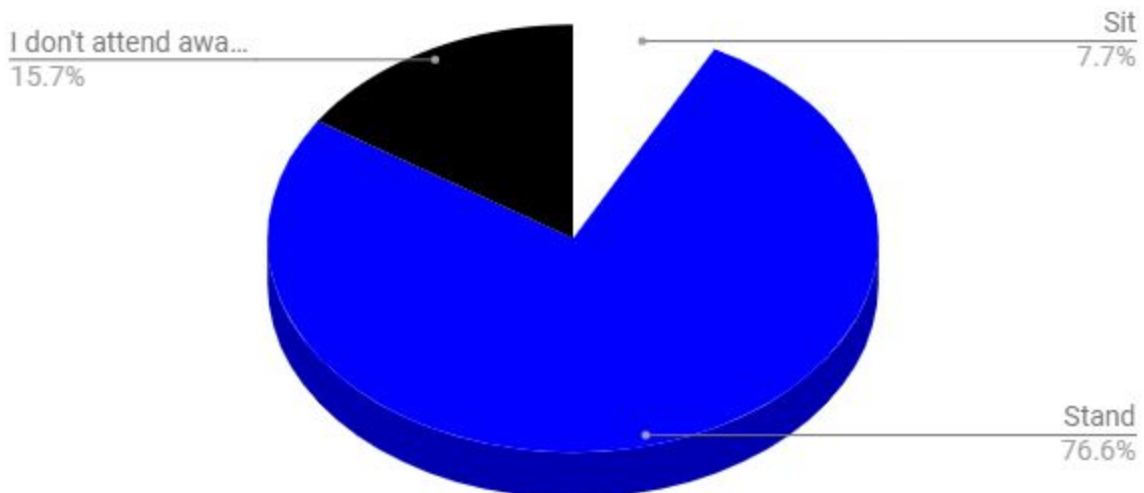




Do you currently sit or stand at HOME games?

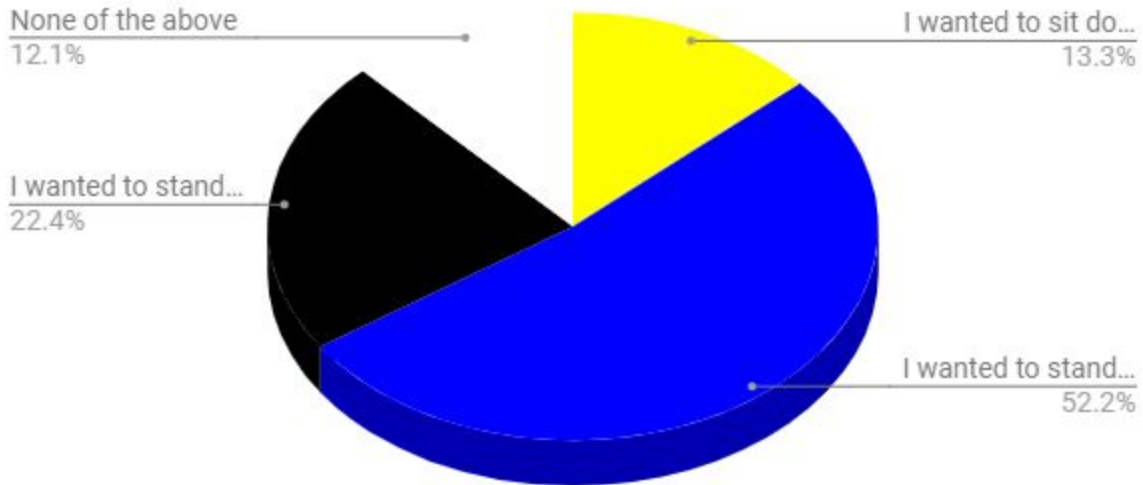


Do you currently sit or stand at AWAY games?

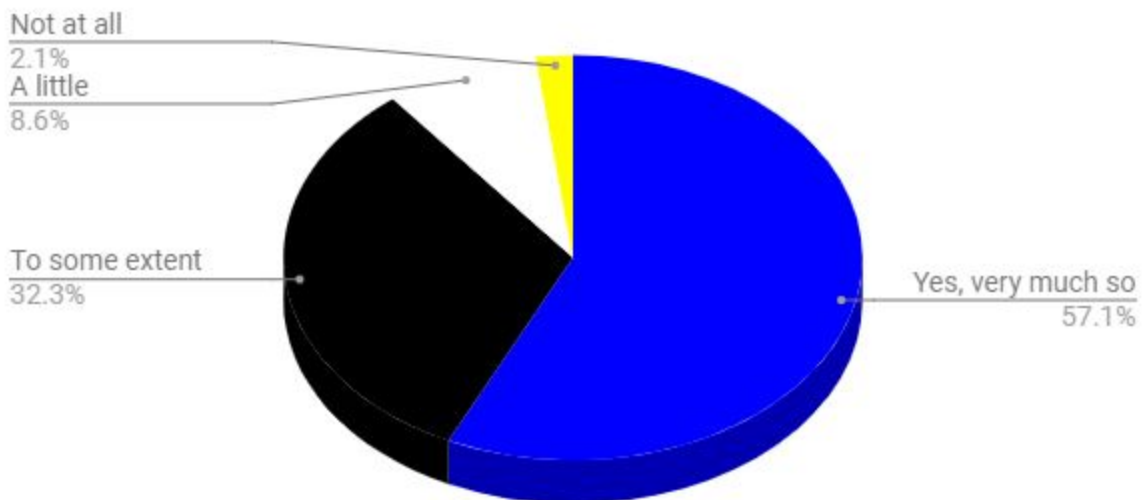




Have any of the following situations applied to you at home OR away games?

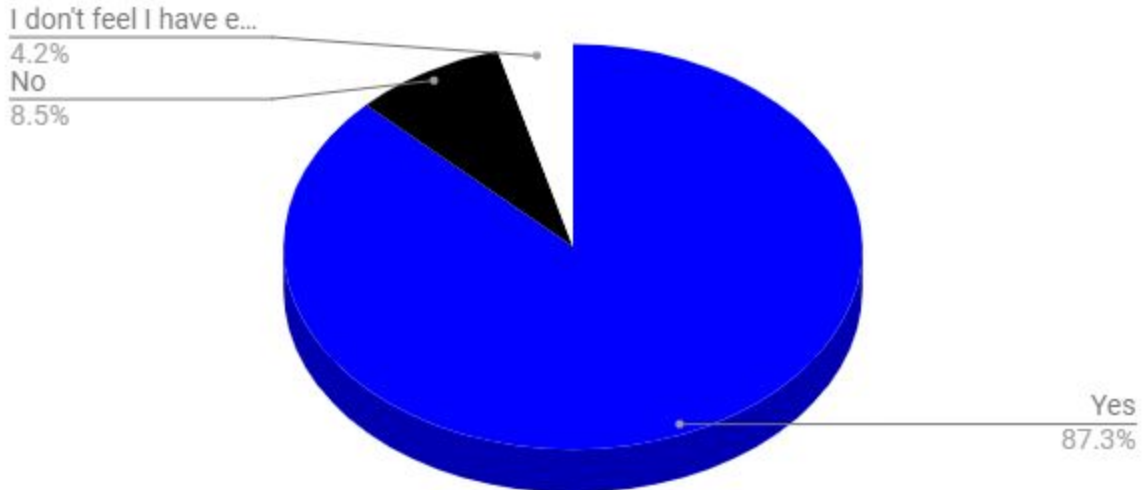


Are you aware of the current campaigns to bring safe standing to the English game, and the options that are available?

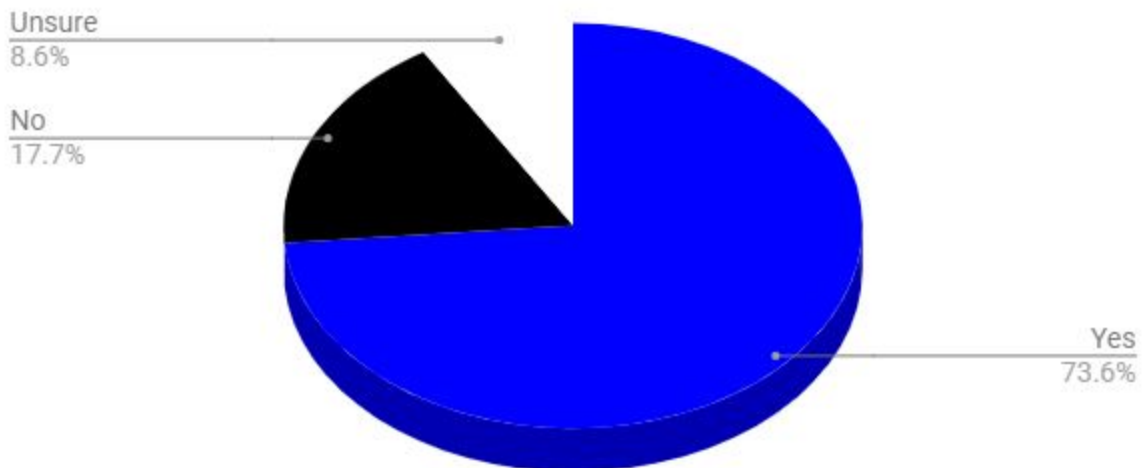




From what you know, do you feel that a safe standing area at Filbert Way would be a good idea?

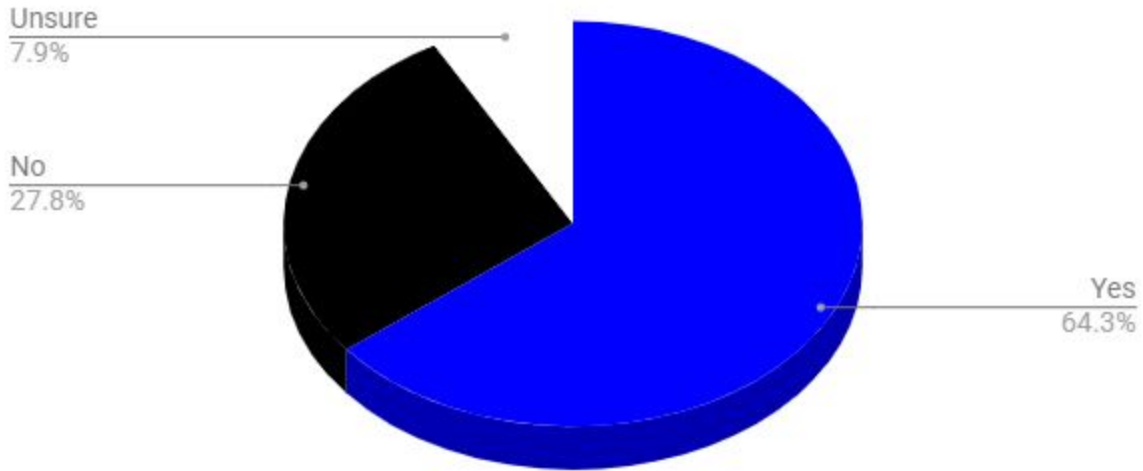


If there was a safe standing area on Filbert Way, would you be interested in purchasing a season ticket or match by match ticket in that area?

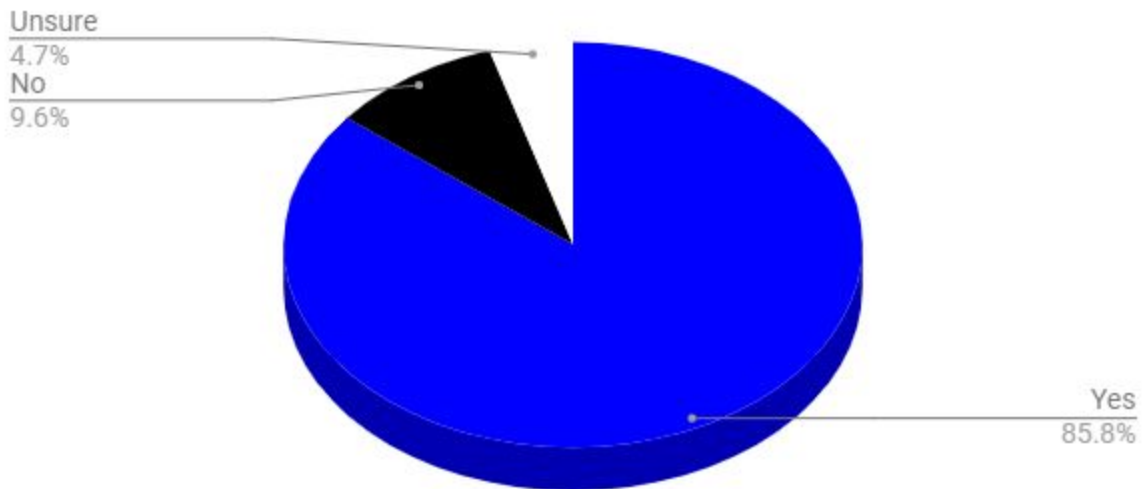




Would you be more likely to attend home and/or away games if you had the choice to sit or stand?

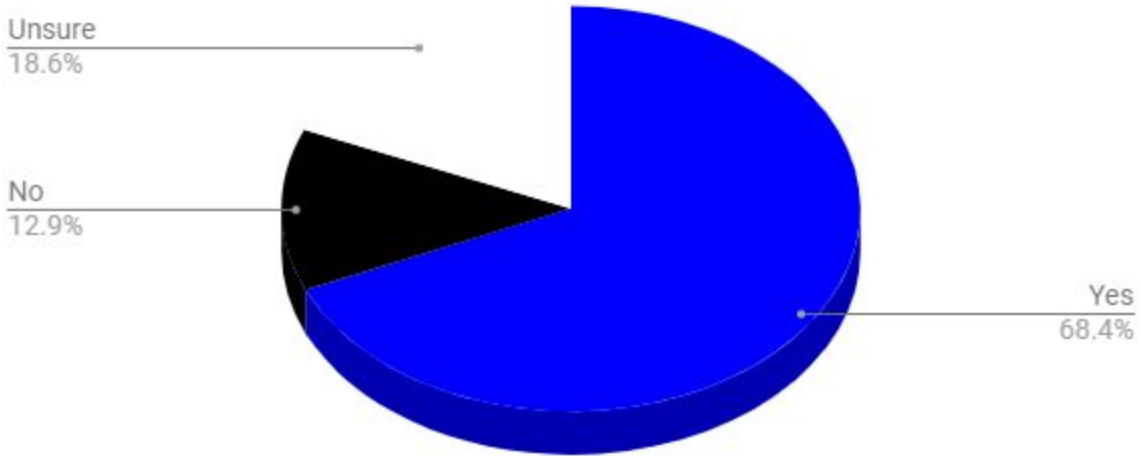


Do you feel that the introduction of designated standing areas would improve the matchday atmosphere at Filbert Way?





Do you feel that the introduction of safe standing would improve the safety of match-going fans?



Results in full:

Which of the following options most accurately describes your current situation?	
2017/18 Season ticket holder	902
2017/18 Member	185
Neither ST holder nor Member for 2017/18	176
Where in the ground do you most often sit/stand?	
Spion Kop	647
East Stand	359
Family Stand	107
Main (West) Stand	152
Do you currently sit or stand at HOME games?	



Sit	773
Stand	487
Do you currently sit or stand at AWAY games?	
Sit	97
Stand	968
I don't attend away games	199
Have any of the following situations applied to you at home OR away games? (More than one option could be selected)	
I wanted to sit down but others around me were standing so I wasn't able to	210
I wanted to stand up but others around me were sitting down so I wasn't able to	821
I wanted to stand up but others around me were sitting down, so I moved to another area of the stand	353
None of the above	190
Are you aware of the current campaigns to bring safe standing to the English game, and the options that are available?	
Yes, very much so	722
To some extent	408
A little	109
Not at all	26
From what you know, do you feel that a safe standing area at Filbert Way would be a good idea?	
Yes	1103
No	107
I don't feel I have enough information to decide accurately	53
If there was a safe standing area on Filbert Way, would you be interested in purchasing a season ticket or match by match ticket in that area?	



Yes	930
No	224
Unsure	109
Would you be more likely to attend home and/or away games if you had the choice to sit or stand?	
Yes	811
No	350
Unsure	100
Do you feel that the introduction of designated standing areas would improve the matchday atmosphere at Filbert Way?	
Yes	1084
No	121
Unsure	59
Do you feel that the introduction of safe standing would improve the safety of match-going fans?	
Yes	863
No	163
Unsure	235



Analysis of results:

Question 1: Which of the following options most accurately describes your current situation?

The majority of respondents (71.4%), were season ticket holders for the 2017/18 campaign. This was very much expected, it is a natural assumption that ST holders will be more engaged with online media and fan pages, so were much more likely to be exposed to the survey than non ST holders. Members made up 14.6% of the final total, which given 2016/17 membership numbers in relation to season ticket sales, meant the engagement ratio with Members was lower than ST holders. A large number of non members also completed the survey, giving a valuable insight into a demographic that could be engaged more actively by changes that are attractive to them.

Question 2: Where in the ground do you most often sit/stand?

The most responses were provided by people sitting and standing in the Spion Kop (51.1%). Behind the Kop, was a strong representation from the East stand (28.4%), followed by the Main Stand (12%) and finally the Family Stand (8.5%). Ideally these percentages would have been as close to an equal split as possible, but doing so would require selecting respondents manually from a pool of potential participants which may have influenced the results.

Question 3/4: Do you currently sit or stand at home and/or away games?

The following two questions gave an insight into the respondent's habits in relation to standing at home and away games in designated seating areas. Although against ground regulations, it is widely accepted that there are 'unofficial' standing areas in grounds across the country, in areas that are not designed to accommodate standing fans safely. 61% of those who completed the survey said that they sat down at home games, with the remaining 39% stating that they regularly stand in front of their seat at Filbert Way. The responses for away games, as expected, had a higher proportion of standing fans than at home. A significant number of those that completed this question stated that they didn't attend away games. These responses slightly disrupt the percentages of responses, for people who do attend away games. These responses were removed as below, to give more accurate figures from those who follow LCFC on the road:

Question 4 total responses	1264
Number of responses removed due to not attending away games	199
Remaining responses	1065



Out of the remaining 1065 responses to Question 4, 968 people said that they stood in front of their seat, with just 97 saying that they regularly sit away from home. This gave a 'standing' rate of 90.9% at away games, showing an overwhelming majority of Leicester fans stand persistently away from home which is very much common knowledge and perhaps a factor in away games' rise in popularity over the last 10 years.

Question 5: Have any of the following situations applied to you at home OR away games?

This question was asked to gain an insight into potential conflict between fans wanting to stand and sit at both home and away games. This question was vital to the survey and the results in full have been included below:

Have any of the following situations applied to you at home OR away games?	
I wanted to sit down but others around me were standing so I wasn't able to	210
I wanted to stand up but others around me were sitting down so I wasn't able to	821
I wanted to stand up but others around me were sitting down, so I moved to another area of the stand	353
None of the above	190

All three of the first options, which represented potential conflicts in all seated areas, gained significant responses. 210 people said that they had wanted to sit at a home or away game but weren't able to. This meant these individuals were on their feet when they either felt uncomfortable doing so, or potentially had young children with them whose views may have been blocked by standing fans in front of them. A massive number of respondents stated that they had previously wanted to stand however those around them had been sat down. Finally, again a large number of people had vacated their allocated seat as that area of the crowd was sat down, and moved to another area of the stand. This is common at away games where people wanting to stand are allocated seats at the front of an away allocation, where there are sometimes pockets of seated fans. This leads to overcrowding in other areas of the stand, in particular aisles and rows towards the back of the stand. Under 10% of people who completed the survey had not encountered these issues at home or on the road.

These issues can be easily rectified by designated seating and standing areas in both home and away sections of UK stadiums. Rail seating would benefit not only those wanting to stand but those wanting to sit also.



Question 6: Are you aware of the current campaigns to bring safe standing to the English game, and the options that are available?

The ongoing FSF Safe Standing campaign has engaged hundreds of thousands of football fans in the UK on the matter since its inception. Individuals such as Jon Darch who runs the Safe Standing roadshow, have been working to engage with match going fans to showcase the benefits of rail seating and to dispel common misconceptions. Their work has been very effective, shown clearly by the large majority of responses that stated they were “very much aware” of the campaign and what it is looking to achieve.

Question 7: From what you know, do you feel a safe standing area at Filbert Way would be a good idea?

This question shows the clear desire for designated standing areas from Leicester City fans. A huge majority (87.3%) of people who completed the questionnaire felt that rail seating would be beneficial to their experience on a match day. Removing those who felt they weren't informed fully yet and therefore did choose a “yes” or “no” option, those who supported the idea totalled at just under 90% of the vote.

This is a clear and undeniable indication that there is a real demand for standing areas at Leicester City. This question was deliberately left broad and further questions as to why people felt standing was needed were not suggested for people to agree with like similar surveys have done. This was due to the range of benefits that we feel designated standing areas provide, and the various combinations of factors that lead to individuals to be supportive of the proposed changes.

Question 8: If there was a safe standing area on Filbert Way, would you be interested in purchasing a season ticket or match by match ticket in that area?

This question showed a strong interest in purchasing tickets in a designated standing area, with almost three quarters of the total number saying that they would be interested in purchasing tickets in this area. This question did not specify if supporters would be looking to purchase season tickets or match by match tickets, but it is clear that any standing areas would be in extremely high demand.

Question 9: Would you be more likely to attend home and/or away games if you had the choice to sit or stand?



This question linked back to the multiple choice question surrounding conflicts in all seated areas. Designated standing areas for home fans at Filbert way could allow a no tolerance policy of standing in seated areas, rather than the unofficial acceptance by fans and LCFC that areas such as L1, K1, J3, SK1 and the back rows of the Kop can be used by supporters wishing to stand. However, we feel that this question relates more relevantly to away games. Fans wishing to sit at away games may be put off by the c90% standing rate (as shown in the results of question 4), and therefore not attend. If they could be assured of a seated space with a clear view, this will make away games more accessible for this section of the support.

Question 10: Do you feel that the introduction of designated standing areas would improve the matchday atmosphere at Filbert Way?

“It will be a special atmosphere – it’s going to be electric. The fans can play a big part in what we are trying to do.” - Craig Shakespeare speaking before the second leg of the Champions League last 16 against Sevilla.

This question touched upon one of the most widely quoted and discussed topics surrounding standing areas in the English game. It is widely accepted that designated standing areas in continental Europe and beyond, allow like minded fans to gather together and back their team vocally to the fullest. It is the staunch belief of Union FS, and over 85% of the respondents to the survey, that the same would be true in the English game. Currently the most vocal fans at Leicester City are spread between three areas in the East Stand, the Kop and a small pocket in the Family stand next to the away fans. We feel strongly that an area for these fans to congregate as one, will exponentially increase the vocal support that the fans can give the players, and hopefully influence the action on the pitch.

Question 11: Do you feel that the introduction of safe standing would improve the safety of match-going fans?

The final question of the survey looked into the second key advantage of rail seating - the increase in fan safety that it can provide. A strong majority of those who answered this question agreed that rail seating would be safer for fans standing in those areas, than the current situation where supporters stand in front of a conventional seat. A significant portion (18.6%) of the total vote indicated that they were unsure how rail seating would provide a safe environment for both standing and seated fans, showing that educating fans as to the benefits and the options available is still key to the campaign.



Conclusions:

This was not a study of feasibility of standing at Leicester City, nor was it a project taken on to gauge national interest of safe standing, which has been completed multiple times prior to our survey. This was a project taken on to specifically sample Leicester City fans' opinion on the potential introduction of safe standing on Filbert Way.

We feel that the results are a clear indication that standing areas are wanted by a significant portion of the fan base, for a variety of reasons that become clear on review of the above data. Standing areas have been proven to be popular, safe and conducive to a positive matchday atmosphere in Europe and beyond, and we believe that further deflection of a key issue in English football will leave our national footballing culture trailing further behind other countries' across the globe.

We hope that this report and the opinions of 1267 Leicester City fans will lead to LCFC confirming their stance on the subject in the near future.

Up the City
Union FS.