



## Community Right to Bid: The Implications for Supporters' Trusts

With actual and potential separation of a club from their stadium being an issue we have worked with you, our members, on countless occasions since our inception, any opportunity to protect this key asset for clubs must be maximised.

Our research suggests that since 1992, there have been at least 54 occasions in the top five divisions where the ownership of stadia has been separated from that of the club. In the Non League the situation is even worse, with less visibility and fewer supporters to intervene.

The new Community Rights derived from the Localism Act (2011) give communities more control over what happens in their neighbourhood and to valuable local amenities.

For supporters' trusts and any member club with third party ownership of their stadium the Community Right to Bid offers the most value and relevance of all the rights. The right offers a level of protection for designated Assets of Community Value, which in turn activates a period to be triggered for a community group to bid if and when the Asset comes up for sale.

Supporters Direct have been involved in the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) consultation group during the Act's journey through the legislative process.

Whilst the Act did not offer the opportunities we had recommended in our [Developing Public Policy to Encourage Supporter Community Ownership in Football briefing paper](#), it does provide at the very least scope to prevent secret sales (often to the owner). If the stadium has been successfully designated as an Asset of Community Value, its status as being up for sale must be publicised. It should also hopefully offer many opportunities for supporters' trusts to actually purchase their club's stadium and ensure it is protected for both current and future generations to enjoy.

To help our members understand the implications better we have produced tailored guidance, in association with [Locality](#).

We have not yet produced guidance on when a request should be made to a local authority to designate a stadium as an Asset of Community Value; we are discussing the merits of this approach. As relationships between supporters' trusts and clubs are often delicate we are not currently suggesting all stadia should be designated. However, if a third party (other than a local authority) owns your club's stadium there is a strong argument in favour of making the request. There are other circumstances when a request may be wise.

It should be made clear that there are weaknesses in the Act, which allow for potential circumnavigation. However, when this does happen we will ensure the relevant bodies, including Government, are made aware.

If you are considering utilising this new Community Right please contact [Tom Hall](#) to discuss. We are keeping a record of all request, to report back to the DCLG and Minister for Localism, Don Foster.