

# League One Attendance

2016/17 Season

Report by **KVM Research** | January 2017

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# Attendance 2016/17

## Status at the end of Season

The information contained in this report has been researched and compiled by Knud Møller at KVM Research. If you want to know more please look at my website [www.kvmresearch.co.uk](http://www.kvmresearch.co.uk), give me a ring on 01782 499384 or send me an email on [knudvmoller@gmail.com](mailto:knudvmoller@gmail.com). © 2017

### Introduction

This note is based on information provided in tables 'Fixtures and results' provided in the website of each individual football club. In each website a figure is nearly always provided for total attendance.<sup>1)</sup> The first table and diagram compare the attendance during the seasons 2015/16 and 2016/17, but only for a selected number of clubs where information for both years is available and the club has appeared in League 1 in both years. In some cases the information is based on averages of a limited number of matches.

The following tables and diagrams seeks to depict the relationship between attendance, ticket prices and performance measured in terms of goal scoring.

### Attendance

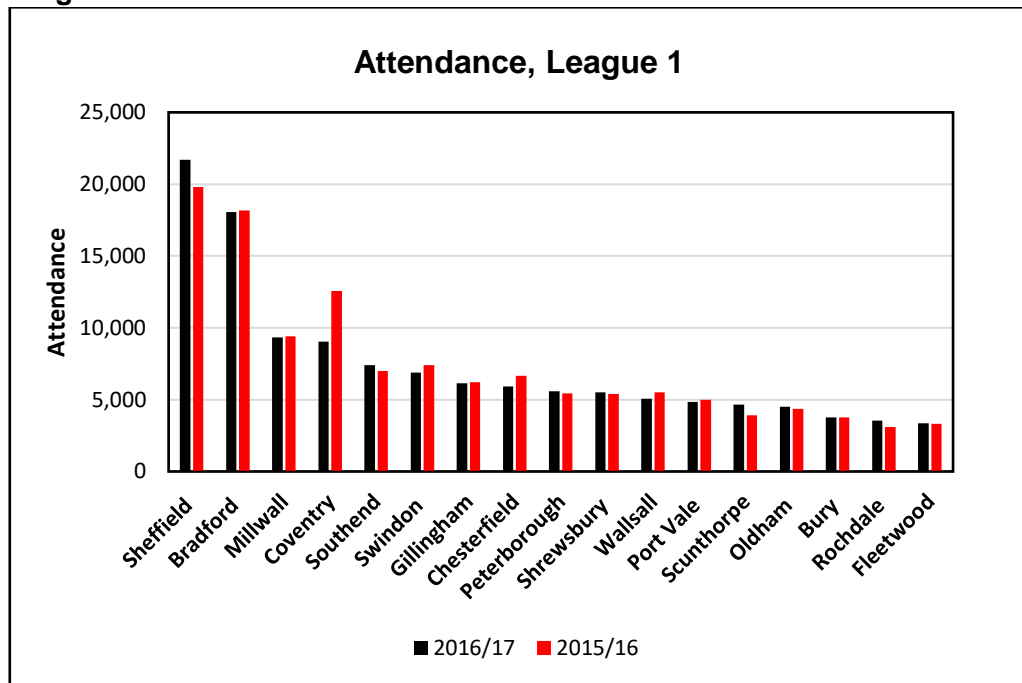
**Table 1**

	2016/17	2015/16	Difference	
			No	%
Scunthorpe Utd	4,650	3,907	743	19.03
Rochdale Association FC	3,556	3,098	458	14.78
Sheffield Utd	21,691	19,803	1,888	9.53
Southend Utd	7,419	7,001	418	5.96
Oldham Athletic	4,514	4,361	153	3.50
Peterborough Utd	5,594	5,447	147	2.71
Shrewsbury Town	5,507	5,412	95	1.76
Fleetwood Town	3,347	3,308	39	1.18
Bury FC	3,781	3,752	29	0.78
Bradford City	18,064	18,164	-100	-0.55
Millwall	9,340	9,392	-52	-0.56
Gillingham	6,129	6,228	-99	-1.58
Port Vale FC	4,833	4,993	-160	-3.21
Swindon Town	6,895	7,409	-514	-6.93
Walsall	5,072	5,513	-441	-7.99
Chesterfield	5,929	6,676	-747	-11.20
Coventry City	9,048	12,553	-3,505	-27.92
Average	7,375	7,472	-97	-1.30

Looking at table 1, page 1, above it appears that nine of the seventeen clubs have had an increase in attendance while eight have had a decline in attendance which makes an overall decline of -1.3%. However, if we exclude Coventry City<sup>2)</sup> the decline becomes an average increase of +1.62%.

Seven clubs have experienced a decline of between 0.55 and 11.2% with Port Vale 'suffering' a decline of 3.21% to be added to the decline of 4.51% in the previous season.

**Diagram 1**



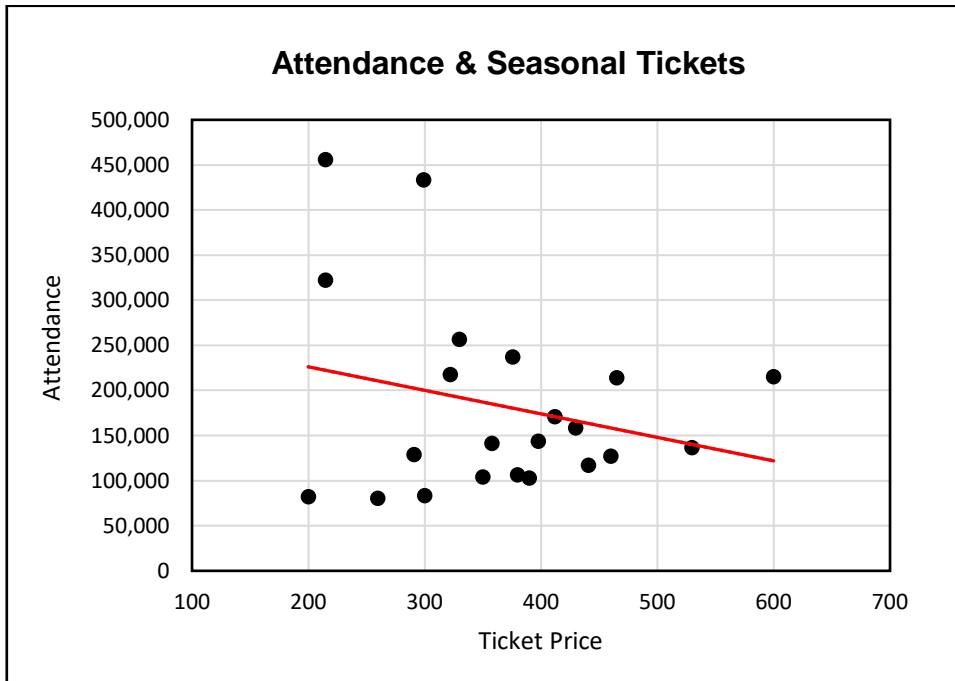
**Price of Season tickets<sup>3)</sup>**

It is sometimes argued that there is some competition between clubs so that supporters will tend to drift towards the clubs who offer the lowest ticket price.

Diagram 2, below page 3, and the following section, seek to explore this notion. In no way do they purport to be conclusive or to be strictly statistical proofs, but maybe the reader will find they can inspire further discussion as to whether ticket price is a decisive influence on attendance at individual clubs and on differences between clubs.

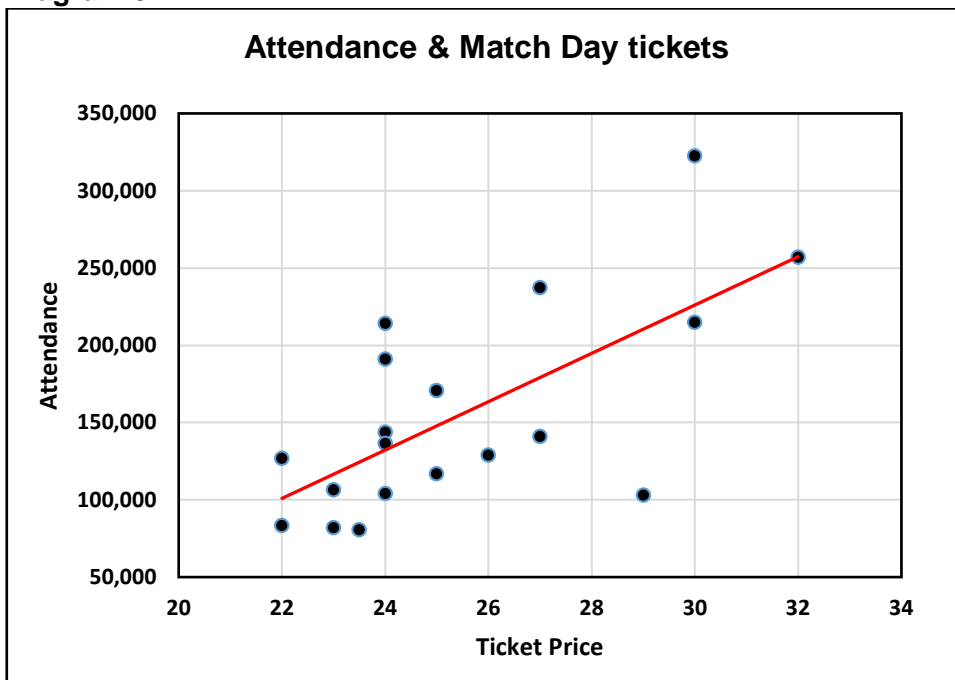
This diagram seems to confirm the notion that a high price for seasonal tickets will lead to lower attendance. We find that with a price tag of £215 Sheffield Utd and Bolton Wanderers get attendances of around 400,000. At the other end of the scale Bristol Rovers and Millwall with prices of £465 and £600 respectively get crowds of around 214,000.

Diagram 2



Price of Match day tickets

Diagram 3



It is striking that the same type of analysis of the possible correlation between the price of match day tickets and attendance gives the totally opposite picture. The higher the price the better the attendance.

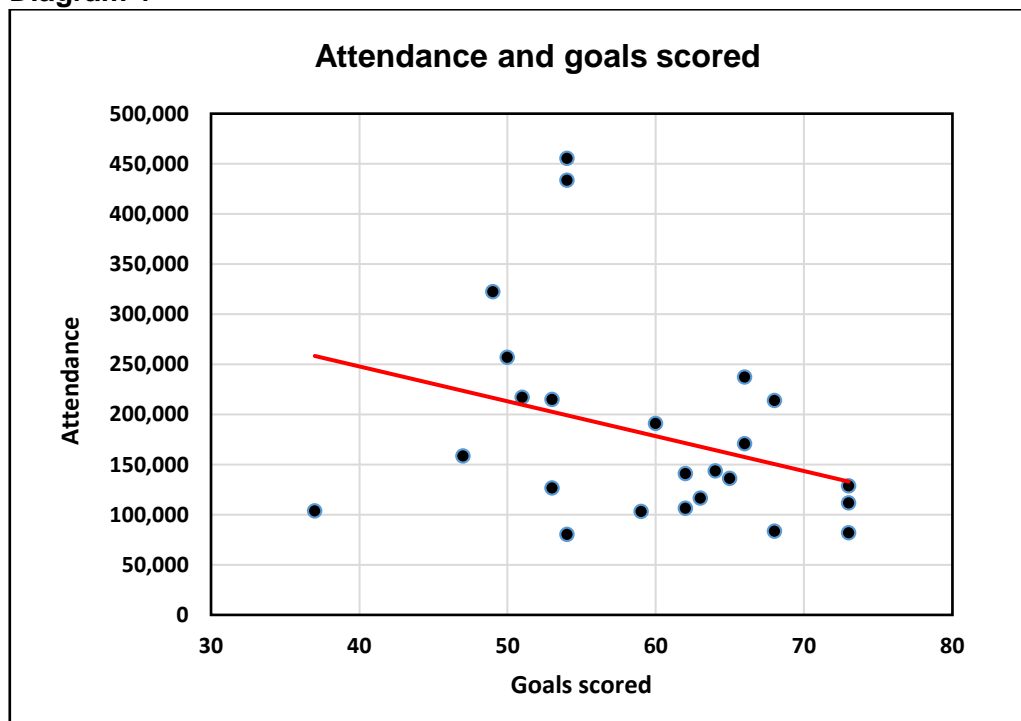
In seeking an explanation it is worth noting that seasonal tickets primarily are for local home supporters while a large proportion of the match day tickets are sold to travelling supporters - 'visitors' to the club hosting the match – two groups of supporters with different attitudes to the game, with different ties to the club and the local area and probably with different socio-economic characteristics. It is therefore also likely that prices are set with these differences in mind.

It may also be that there are some subtle differences between smaller clubs and the big clubs in the way they set their prices.

### Goals scored

Diagram 4 depicts the relation between attendance and the total number of goals scored. It appears that the more goals that are scored in any match the smaller the attendance.

**Diagram 4**



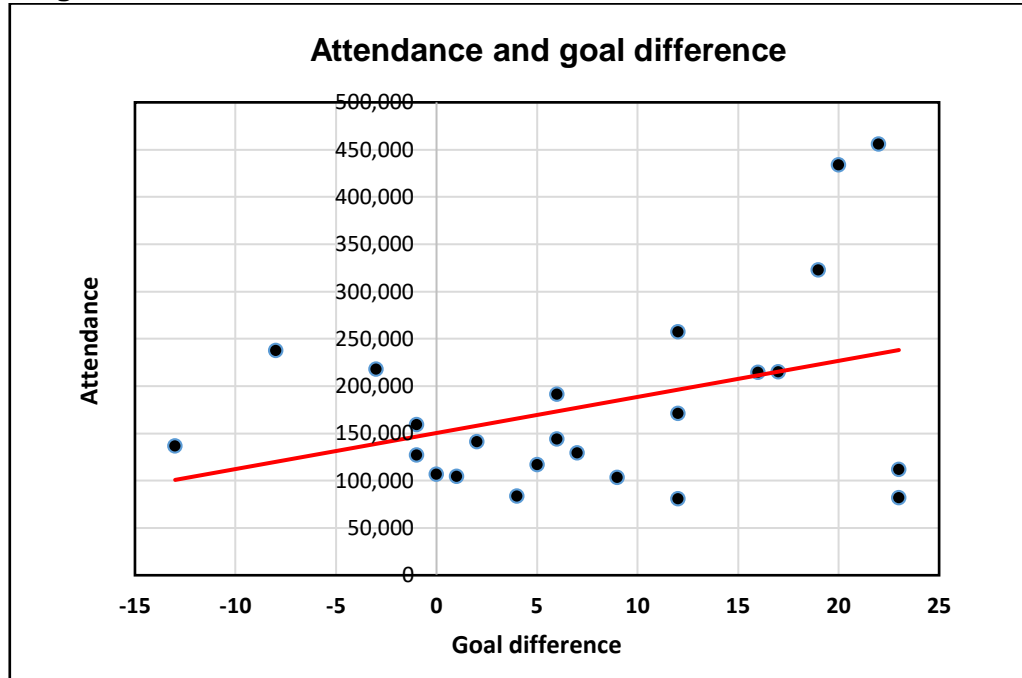
### Goal difference

Diagram 5 below depicts the relationship between attendance and the difference in goals scored by the winning and the losing side. A positive difference means that the home side

side is winning whereas a negative difference means that the away side is winning.

This analysis seems to show that a large positive difference (the home side is winning) assures a large attendance whereas a negative difference (the home side is loosing) will mean a smaller attendance.

**Diagram5**



In table 2, below, page 6 we have ranked the clubs according to the goal difference and we note that Scunthorpe Utd and Rochdale AFC have been successful in achieving the biggest positive difference while Chesterfield has lost a number of games and therefore 'suffered' a big negative difference.

This may go some way to explain the success of Scunthorpe and Rochdale in also achieving relatively big increases in attendance as shown in table 1. By contrast it may also be at least part of the explanation why Chesterfield have had a decline in attendance.

**Table 2**

	<b>Goal Diff</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
Scunthorpe Utd	23	111,608
Rochdale	23	81,783
Sheffield Utd	22	455,511
Bradford City	20	433,531
Bolton Wanderers	19	322,262
Millwall	17	214,814
Bristol Rovers	16	213,956
Charlton Athletic	12	256,723
Southend Utd	12	170,626
Fleetwood Town	12	80,325
AFC Wimbledon	9	102,964
Peterborough Utd	7	128,670
Oxford Utd	6	190,839
Northampton	6	143,626
Walsall	5	116,665
Bury FC	4	83,184
Gillingham	2	140,977
Oldham	1	103,814
Port Vale	0	106,319
Swindon Town	-1	158,594
Shrewsbury Town	-1	126,668
Coventry	-3	217,159
Milton Keynes	-8	237,052
Chesterfield	-13	136,358

## **Conclusion**

When I first started to develop an interest in attendances at football matches and the factors on which it depends, a potential client said that his main interest was in finding out “how to bet more ‘bums’ on the seats”. In view of the above analysis what is the more important, performance or ticket pricing? How can ticket prices be structured to maximum benefit?

## **Notes**

- 1) It appears that websites have been streamlined in such a way that clubs no longer record the attendance of visitors which in turn makes it impossible to do analysis of visitor support and home support. This seems regrettable since a solid home support is seen as the main reason for the existence of clubs.
- 2) Coventry City appears to have had a disproportionate decline in attendance which cannot be explained purely in terms of the clubs performance. It is noted that the club have had to change venue between Northampton Town and the so-called Ricoh Arena within the City.
- 3) Every club has their own individual pricing structure for tickets with deductions for families, different ages such as young people, OAPs and different prices for different areas of the spectator areas. This makes it virtually impossible to choose a price for club A which is comparable with a figure for club B. Considering the various offerings for season tickets we chose the highest figure given within the scheme of each club. Similar for Match day tickets.