

# Sheffield residents voice strong support for Supertram workers' strike

By our reporters  
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On Saturday, campaigners from the Socialist Equality Party distributed a statement in support of the Sheffield Stagecoach Supertram workers, revealing strong support among workers, young people and pensioners for the strike.

Joel Higgins, 22, was born and raised in Sheffield. He works as a furniture remover and spoke in support of the Supertram strikers: "I personally think that it's atrocious what they earn. I don't understand how someone can live on that wage."

His friend Jordan, 23, also from Sheffield, works in steel recycling and agreed: "With the cost of living everything's being raised—it's £2 for a can of Coke, nappies' prices going up, baby wipes, rent and mortgages and all this sort of stuff to be paid, it's not enough money at all. They're working long hours as well—it's not short hours—plus, some customers are not exactly the best of people to deal with. They should be on £15 an hour, easy."

When told that Stagecoach Group co-founders Brian Souter and Ann Gloag had a combined wealth of £825 million, Joel and Jordan were disgusted, but not surprised. "That's business, the rich getting richer and the poor get poorer," said Joel.

Responding to the media witch-hunt against the strike, Jordan and Joel said the drivers and conductors were justified in taking action during the Tramlines festival, saying many local youth were priced out of the event. "It used to be free five years ago, it's ridiculous... People can't just come up with 80 quid for a ticket," said Joel.

Jordan agreed, saying: "They're trying to make Sheffield better, but then they're charging like that? If you want to make it better, make it a fair price. Some people work 12-hour shifts, six or seven days a week and they still haven't got £80 at the end of the week to

pay for that."

Ann Farquarson, 71, a life-long resident of Sheffield, also stopped to speak in support of the strike: "They need to carry on with it [the strike] and get what they want. A first-class stamp is 67p, so 26p doesn't even cover the cost of a stamp. It's ridiculous.

"The drivers and conductors should also be entitled to subsidised meals. I don't know if it's still the case, but at one point they were going after their pensions too. Not only that, they have to put up with violence and other situations on the trams, especially when there's football matches. So, they need every help they can get, including signatures and things like that."

Looking over at the Castle Gate tram stop, where trams were running every half hour to Meadowhall, Ann asked: "Is that managers doing that? That's terrible."

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