



# SOUTHEND UNITED SUPPORTERS SOCIETY LIMITED LIAISON MEETING



Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022  
Roots Hall Stadium 16:30

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## 1. Present and Apologies:

Those in attendance were Tom Lawrence (TL) and April Smith (AS) from SUFC, Paul FitzGerald (PF), Paul Yeomanson (PY), Clare Chapman (CC) and Kay Fogg (KF) from the Shrimpers Trust.

Apologies for absence received from Rhys Ellingham (RE) and Shane Chapman (SC).

The Meeting was chaired by PF.

## 2. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2022.

Follow up on actions not otherwise covered in Agenda items:

- Invoice from the Club to the Shrimpers Trust for the purchase of Junior Blues scarves is still outstanding.  
**ACTION – TL/RE to ensure this is passed over as a matter of urgency**
- Snagging list in the Shrimpers Bar had been largely completed. KF asked if a mirror could be replaced, where one had been taken down, in the ladies' toilet. CC advised they had one at home which could be used.  
**ACTION – SC/CC to provide and arrange for mirror to be put up**
- Retro shirt day was observed as having been a little disappointing in the support from the Club in the lead up. AS pointed out that the window between fixture release and retro day way short – about four weeks for this event and others to be planned in time for August fixtures. However, it was agreed that this could be done better in the future and that planning would need to be done earlier.
- Stellisons – KF advised she had spoken with her contact there but was not aware if they had contacted the Club with regards to industrial air fryers.  
**ACTION – KF to follow up**
- The cheque for payment on the mini-bus has been replaced and cashed, finally.
- Memorandum of Understanding still with TL.

## 3. Embargo and delay in new signings yet again

There was discussion concerning the latest embargo. TL advised that our management team have assembled a good team, which is competitive and that it was unlikely we would be making any new signings in any event.

It was noted that the Chairman intends to have bridging finance in place in the very near future to be able to satisfy outstanding payments and therefore take us out of the embargo.

## 4. Late payment of wages

KF pointed out that this is one of the things which annoys supporters the most, no-one should expect to have to be without their wages at their due time.

TL confirmed that some senior members of staff had agreed to a wage deferral. PF said that the Chairman had openly said that things would be “rocky” for a few months but that we are now coming to the end of that time-period.

## 5. Junior Blues

PF had recently met with Gary Lockett, Dale Spiby and Shane Chapman informally to discuss utilising the Shrimpers Trust social inclusion and Junior Blues numbers to add to data held by SUCET to further promote the Club.

This meeting had been followed up by a Zoom Call arranged by Dale, including PF, AS and KF.

As an outcome of this, concerns had been raised by KF that it didn't seem to be just about capturing and utilising data, but the inference seemed to be that the Junior Blues should come under the SUCET umbrella. AS thought that the theory was that SUCET could follow up the free tickets which they give out to schools during the season, and to try and steer people in the direction of the Junior Blues.

PF and PY have agreed to look at the Co-ordinate Sport system which is used by SUCET, to see how our Junior Blues database fits with that and what benefit there would be. PF explained that the Shrimpers Trust have spent a considerable amount of time in resolving the many issues with the database for the second time and that there was reluctance on the Trust's part to give it over to SUCET. TL said that he would like to be involved in the final decision.

**ACTION – PF and PY to look into Co-ordinate Sport, liaise with TL and KF**

KF advised that the Junior Blues "Meet the Players Day" would be taking place at Roots Hall on Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> October. This will follow the same format as in previous years. KF said that they would like access to the relevant areas at 9.30 to ensure everything is set up and ready. AS agreed to set up an online booking link for bookings for this event. A photo taken with the Junior Blues player ambassadors would be taken at this event.

**ACTION – AS to set up booking link and send to KF**

**AS to arrange with Graham Whitby-Boot to attend event**

KF asked for the Club to re-tweet and share more of the Junior Blues social media during the week, not just on matchdays. Jamie Cameron is doing great work with organising birthday messages.

**ACTION – TL to speak with the Media department – might not be aware (tag doesn't work)**

**PY to speak with Trust social media experts as to why tagging doesn't work**

PY said that the Trust is still waiting for the list of Junior Season Card Holders to be sent so that they can be added to the database.

**ACTION – TL to ensure this is sent as soon as possible**

## 6. Supporter Unity

Stan Collymore had recently met and chatted with Trust Board members to discuss supporter unity amongst other things. Supporter unity is high on his agenda. PF had informed him that the Supporters Group is still running, but that some factions no longer want to engage. Stan wanted the Trust to try to bring everyone back under one roof for discussions, protests weren't helpful.

To get supporters more onside, KF suggested more news reports and stories about the progress at the training ground. There is a schedule of works which TL would get from the Chairman and it was agreed that if supporters had access to more good news stories, then it would help with unifying supporters.

**ACTION – TL to obtain schedule of work and talk to media team about getting more news out**

## **7. Ticket Office**

CC informed everyone about a supporter who had tried to get a season card for his grandson recently but that no-one in the ticket office appears to know how to do this. Apparently, since the Ticket Office Manager left at the end of September, there is no-one working in there who knows. PF said that he had a similar issue with the season cards promised to those who won them in the Shrimpers Trust Balloon Race, although they have been given paper tickets for now.

**ACTION – TL to speak with RE, who has overall responsibility for the Ticket Office and who knows how to resolve this issue**

On a separate matter, CC advised that, at the Yeovil game, staff in the Ticket Office at the West Stand entrance had been unwilling to take cash payments, instead directing people with cash to stewards who had taken cash at the turnstiles. Cash had been handed over by stewards but this is obviously not an acceptable situation.

**ACTION – TL to look into**

***EDIT: After the meeting, TL reported back that the internet had gone down in the West Stand and a message went out on social media for supporters to go to the main ticket office to purchase tickets. Several supporters didn't want to do so (or missed the message) so stewards took cash and allowed them access. The cash was collected and handled in the normal manner.***

## **8. New Stadium Working Group**

Jack Martin had agreed to meet with a small number of Trust Board members. A meeting would be agreed for early November.

**ACTION – PF to liaise**

## **9. Contingency Plans for Ron Martin's Departure**

The Chairman has always intended to develop a self-sustaining new stadium for the Football Club. TL said he had been working on some financial projections which show that the Club has a bright future once we have our new stadium.

Ron has never officially discussed any exit plan.

## **10. Any Other Business:**

1. PF advised that the Shrimpers Trust AGM would be taking place on 14<sup>th</sup> November, and that TL would be most welcome as our after business guest. It was suggested that he might want to bring Kevin Maher along as well.
2. PY said that the training tops that the Shrimpers Trust now sponsor for Southend Ladies had been well received and that the Trust had received some enquiries from people who wanted to purchase them.

**ACTION – Simon Dodd to compile list of names and speak to Dale Spiby by email (and copy AS in)**

3. AS advised there is a lot of old stock of training tops which the Trust can assess to see if some can be sold.

**ACTION – Trust members to meet with AS ahead of next home match**

4. CC raised concerns about the cost of a small soda water in the Club bars.
5. KF asked again about the possibility of having hot drinks on offer in the Shrimpers Bar as we head into colder months, particularly as the Shrimpers Trust had bought an urn a few years back which had been appropriated for making mulled wine in and never cleaned.

It was agreed that this would be a good idea and AS said she would do an inventory on the urns in the building and see if one could be used on matchdays in the Shrimpers Bar.

**ACTION – AS to report back on urn inventory**

6. In closing, TL said it was important for us to all keep positive and to try and spread positivity.

There is a lot of good stuff going on at the Club – Commercial are being hugely productive, securing more sponsorship than they have for many years but working with less staff. The Media and Marketing team are up for “Best Football Club – Non League” in the Football Content Awards 2022.

**Meeting closed 18:10**

**Next Meeting due 1<sup>st</sup> December**