



## Joint Supporters Group Statements - November 2022

### 24th November 2022

The supporters' groups of Southend United have provided the following update regarding the ongoing GoFundMe initiative.

Today we have transferred the funds donated so far to Southend United via a Conditional Donation.

The conditions are that the monies transferred must only be used for Staff Salaries and that an element of oversight on future spending (to the value of the donation) is to be provided when bridging finance is provided (as promised by Ron Martin).

The group would collectively like to thank everyone who donated, your generosity is very much appreciated and will make a big difference to staff still waiting for their October Salary

Sadly, we did not quite meet our target and in fact the (October) Salary situation was marginally worse than originally stated.

As it stands therefore some hard-working staff will not be paid in full for October, this is simply not acceptable and we applaud these individuals for continuing to provide support to the football club at this time.

The staff deserve respect, they have Bills, Mortgages, Rent etc to pay and to be consistently let down by those expected to provide finance is just not fair on them or their families.

We are therefore keeping the GoFundMe campaign going for a little longer with the hope that we could raise a little bit more to reach that target.

Please see the GoFundMe page here.

As stated before, until such time as the bridging finance is in place, we believe Southend United FC will remain in a precarious financial position. This problem is not going to go away, and we are exploring methods for continuing to raise essential funds over the next few months.

Support the team, not the regime.

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### 18th November 2022

The supporters' groups of Southend United have provided the following update regarding the ongoing GoFundMe initiative.

We continue to be impressed by the level of donations via our GoFundMe page, which is now nearing £20,000 inside four days of fundraising. Thank-you to everybody who has contributed, however large or small the donation.

There was a requirement for the initiative to be set up quickly to address the urgent situation at the football club, but we are now in a position to set out how the funds will be made available to those who need it.

The groups have appointed a distribution committee comprised of Clare Campbell (Save Our Southend), Simon Dodd (Shrimpers Trust) and John Crickson (ShrimperZone). The distribution committee will liaise with Tom Lawrence, CEO

of Southend United FC, over the areas of greatest need with regard to outstanding Staff Salaries and, when the group reaches agreement, will transfer those monies in the form of a conditional donation.

Until such time as the bridging finance is in place, we believe Southend United FC will remain in a precarious financial position. This problem is not going to go away, and we will be imminently exploring methods for continuing to raise essential funds over the next few months.

Support the team, not the regime.

### **15th November 2022**

The supporters' groups of Southend United Football Club would like to issue the following update.

We have been overwhelmed by the levels of support shown by our own magnificent fans and the whole football world following our announcement yesterday that we are seeking to raise much-needed funds for staff members working for Southend United FC.

Our initial target of £10,000 was passed less than 24 hours after we released our joint-statement, with contributions coming in from across the globe, and we have quickly moved to revise our target to £25,000. The kindness of fans from other clubs has been particularly humbling.

We heard from the Club's Chief Executive Officer, Tom Lawrence, just how significant the cashflow problems are at Roots Hall during the Shrimpers Trust's Annual General Meeting on Monday 14th November in a candid Question & Answer session.

When pressed about whether the Club would be able to meet payroll requirements at the end of the month, he disclosed: 'I can't guarantee they'll be paid. We're expecting to get it [a bridging loan]. I'm anticipating we'll be able to pay some salaries, but I can't hand-on-heart say it's an absolute certainty.' This is not an acceptable situation.

We also learnt at the Trust AGM that the Trust Board had sanctioned a loan to the Football Club of £40,000 earlier in November. The sadness of the situation is that the combined weight of the Trust loan and donations made so far through the GoFundMe initiative is not enough.

We sympathise with Tom's predicament, having to make choices as to who receives their wages, which suppliers get paid and managing the day-to-day business affairs of Southend United. It's an impossible task.

He stressed that the first team players had been insulated from the current situation. Our plea relates to those behind the scenes, staffing the ticket office, producing the matchday programme and updating the website and social media, selling food and drink on matchdays, maintaining the ground, carrying out administrative duties. We need to make sure they are not left behind.

We have been stunned by the progress that has been made so far and the generosity shown by everyone that has donated during difficult financial times. We will work hard to ensure that this money makes its way to those who need it.

We have always known how brilliant our fan-base is. Looking at what has been achieved in such a short space of time has proved it. The fact we have had to resort to this method shames Ron Martin. He underestimates the level of our support. We must continue to get behind those working for our Football Club.

Support the team, not the regime.

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### **14th November 2022**

We can't quite believe that we are having to do this, but here we are.

Due to Ron Martin's and his 'group companies' total ineptitude and failure to fund Southend United FC adequately, we are raising some money in an attempt to support our club's amazing staff, players and management through these tough times. They are the heart and soul of SUFC and they, along with Tom Lawrence, continue to work hard in the face of the adversity behind the scenes. The critical underfunding of the football club has resulted in numerous members of staff receiving their salaries late or, as of now, not at all. This is completely unacceptable conduct for any business at any time, let alone approaching Christmas and during a profound economic and cost of living crisis.

Unfortunately, we seem to have moved beyond simple incompetence when it comes to Ron Martin's performance as steward of SUFC and are now entering the territory of moral bankruptcy and absence of basic human empathy.

Even more unfortunately, the issue with wages is just scratching the surface when it comes to the issues behind the scenes at the club, which reportedly include but are not limited to:

- a multitude of well-publicised, reported unpaid supplier bills, e.g. to hotels, squad and stadium catering, and GPS data suppliers;
- late Academy wages leading to boycott action from the youth team, despite the club receiving money from the EFL to fund the Academy;
- a shockingly disrespectful statement from the club after the adjournment to the latest HMRC winding-up petition hearing, with absolutely no contrition, apology or information regarding length of adjournment nor indication of whether the funds will be in place by then;
- consistently late and still unfiled annual accounts from the club and 'group companies' and numerous first Gazette notices for compulsory strike-off issued them as a result.

'Cashflow issues' are not a credible excuse for any of this. Either you have the funds and cashflow to meet all of the football club's financial obligations in full and on time, or you do not. If you do not, then you are unfit to own and run a football club and should at least engage with parties interested in purchasing it in the near future to see what they can offer. Our beloved football club's name and reputation are being stamped into the gutter, and it will never fully recover and move on for as long as Ron Martin is attached to it.

All staff members should receive the money that they deserve for the work that they have already done but as things stand, there is a very real possibility that some of them will not be paid before Christmas. It would be wonderful to see the Shrimpers community rally around the people who have been so badly let down. The support that this club receives is astounding, with home attendances regularly topping 6,000 and sold out away ticket allocations at Maidstone, York and Barnet in the space of just a week. Kevin Maher has repeatedly stated how blown away he is by our unbelievable support of his team and how lucky they are to have us - let's show that we can provide the same level of support to the club off the pitch too. We are asking anybody who is reading this to make a donation, no matter how big or small, to support the staff members who are struggling to make ends meet. Please see the GoFundMe page here. We will work to ensure that all money raised goes to the people for whom it is intended somehow but at the very worst, it will be ringfenced in its entirety to help the club at any other stage.

This cannot continue.

Support the team, not the regime.

#MartinOut

This statement has been approved and signed by: Save Our Southend, The Shrimpers Trust , Shrimperzone.com, Blues on Tour, The Custard Splat Podcast, All At Sea Fanzine, Proud Shrimpers, The Blue Voice, SUFC Exiles