



Joint Supporters Group Statement – 28th February 2023

The combined supporters' groups of Southend United welcome the statement issued by the football club confirming the finance, promised in October, has finally been secured some five months later, enabling the money owed to HMRC under the Winding-Up Petition to be paid.

However, we are concerned that the short statement does not address the issue of responsibility for the fundamental and ongoing problem facing the football club, which is the continual mismanagement of Southend United by its owner, Ron Martin.

The statement instead merely deals with the current crisis, and we request the club provides urgent clarification on whether the 'working capital' mentioned is sufficient to meet and maintain obligations to playing and coaching staff, Academy personnel, backroom staff, local suppliers and other creditors at least until the end of the current season, as well as carrying out urgent remedial work at Roots Hall to provide a basic level of comfort to spectators.

The supporters' groups will endeavour to establish more detail on how the club intends to be funded in the short- and medium-term, and we reiterate our desire to meet with Mr Martin to raise important questions on behalf of our loyal fanbase, who continue to back the club in impressive numbers.

We would like to applaud those who have worked through this period and served Southend United with such distinction, whether that be the coaching staff and players, who have kept us in contention for a National League play-off place despite recent impediments, or those staff away from the pitch who have maintained a functioning club under the most trying of circumstances.

We would also like to thank those supporters who have assisted us over the past few months by offering their services in areas of their own personal expertise. We are grateful to you all, as well as those from other organisations, and particularly the Football Supporters' Association, who have been generous with their time and knowledge.

Although the anticipated dismissal of this Winding-Up Petition draws to a close this particular saga, our experience over more than 20 years of Ron Martin's tenure at the helm of the club suggests we should not be complacent, and the next crisis could be just around the corner.

We have been encouraged by our recent conversations with Anna Firth MP and, following the recent publication of the UK Government White Paper into football governance, hope the proposed reforms can be implemented swiftly to help ensure this situation does not blight our club again.

The experiences of everyone connected to Southend United Football Club over the past five months have brought the owner's inadequacies into sharp focus, and we believe we will only be able to truly enjoy a new beginning when a new structure and ownership is in place at the club.