



4th May 2023

SUPPORTERS GROUP STATEMENT

Supporters' groups are aware of a new winding-up petition served upon Southend United Football Club concerning monies owed to HM Revenue & Customs.

This notice furthers the trend of financial mismanagement and negligence at our club under owner Ron Martin and is, ashamedly, the 18th winding-up petition served during his 25-year tenure. It unfortunately brings into sharp focus once again the question of our club's very existence, with the High Court hearing scheduled for 17th May - just thirteen days away.

New ownership or investment into the club is being sought but it is clear that, until this is in place, there will continue to be grave concerns about the future and a dark cloud hovering above Roots Hall.

We feel desperately sorry for the club's excellent staff who are still missing several months' wages. This unacceptable situation continues to be a stain on Southend United's reputation and a source of shame for all connected with the club. Today's news will not give anybody confidence that this will be rectified soon. Their loyalty continues to be taken for granted and we stand with them.

Any notion within the club's hierarchy that supporters' group statements or reduced season card sales are at all to blame for any of the current woes is delusional. A supporter's decision to not renew their season card is an individual one which won't have been taken lightly. Nobody can be blamed for feeling disillusioned or that their continued support and loyalty has been presumed.

Now is the time for Ron Martin to consider what he wants his legacy to be, and whether he'd like to depart with some goodwill in the bank. We believe that his position is untenable and his redemption in the eyes of the fanbase impossible, but he can still prove that he truly cares about the club and show that he is doing right by it and its supporters.

We therefore implore the owner to be realistic about the terms and timeline of a sale, and to be an open book. A good start would be to audit and submit all missing

accounts. This summer must not develop into a game of chicken. Time is of the essence. We feel it is important that everybody involved does everything within their power to facilitate the process, in order to provide certainty and to ensure - before it's too late - that the football department is given the tools necessary to make next season one of success on the pitch.

Supporters' groups have worked incredibly hard off the pitch to push the club and its plight into the spotlight of the media, local council and Government. That work is more important than ever and will continue in earnest.

In addition to the immediate situation, huge questions remain around the timescale of the new stadium development, the prospective move to the new training facility, the future of the Academy and how Southend United FC will be financed in the short-term. This uncertainty is crippling the club, and the lack of communication with the fanbase only serves to fuel a negative atmosphere of ill-feeling and worry. We call upon the club owner to communicate with supporters urgently regarding the situation, with clarity and candour.

Time and again Ron Martin is insulated from the consequences of his own behaviour. Players, staff, local government officials and of course fans have borne the brunt of his pernicious incompetence. We implore prospective new owners to declare their intentions publicly with the hope of giving everyone involved at Southend United some much needed hope.