



THE INTRODUCTION – Paul FitzGerald

I wrote a draft version of this introduction, some weeks ago – since then, with the current situation regarding the global health pandemic, normal life has all but disappeared. The events I was to refer to, have been cancelled/postponed and it felt wrong to focus on football matters with so many more important matters ongoing.

At this time of uncertainty - we need our members more than ever. Renewals have been somewhat light recently and maybe that is to be expected. If your membership is due now or soon please renew, the more members we have the more we can do to help our football club and I think we'd all agree it does need some help! Why not consider being a life member or join for multiple years as this helps us with administration and you with a significant discount. Please don't make me beg!

Before the lockdown, I was to report that the situation at our club had worsened and that was before all fixtures were postponed. It was difficult to see a way through the crisis, as no games means no income and with the Chairman's inability to extract funds from his property deals in a timely fashion – many people feared the worst.

And yet, many weeks on, the non-payment of Staff and Players was (we are told) resolved, the club continues to exist and those jolly nice chaps at the EFL have levied a minor slap on the wrist (a suspended points deduction) because of our previous good behaviour (shome mishtake, shurely? Ed)

Even today's news of our relegation is hardly a shock and of course, very much deserved, unfortunately.

Despite the lockdown, I've actually been quite busy on Trust matters and that includes trying to glean more info from Ron Martin than he puts in the press/website, never an easy task. However, Ron agreed to address the Trust members and I am delighted that he has seen fit to do so. I hope you enjoy reading his take on the current status. (**Note:** Ron's comments were received slightly before the EFL announcement). "Enabling Development" has been used in the past to describe at a high level, the method by which the Football Club prospers in the new Stadium. Establishing precisely what that means has never been easy and is especially relevant now, with the news that very little retail is now planned at Fossetts Farm. The Trust continues to nag Ron in this regard and although his address below, falls well short of any detail, he does re-iterate his mission. With the current situation, lack of income and general uncertainty, maybe we all have more pressing matters to worry about.

Prior to the lockdown, representatives of the Trust met with Ron Martin – firstly, in a one to one and secondly, as part of a wider supporter's group. These meetings were very welcome and the parties have agreed to schedule them on a regular basis.

The first meeting covered much of the same topics as the second, but also included the Chairman's support of certain Trust initiatives, which would not have been relevant to the more general group.

"Minutes" of the second meeting were made available on-line and through the usual channels by the football club. However, it would be fair to say that the minutes did not cover all subjects discussed, nor did it quite capture the extent and discussion on some of the points!

Subsequent to these meetings, it became clear that the Chairman's stated intention to clear the debt to HMRC has not been delivered and worse, that for the second time in recent months, the players and staff were not paid.

NEWSLETTER – Vol. 15 Iss. 03. – June 2020

The chairman made it clear in the meetings, that his long-term ambitions are to continue supporting the club financially, but, obviously, the continued delay caused yet more bad press and worry for all concerned.

Salaries and tax are entirely predictable. This was made very clear by the Trust during both meetings. If we look back through the years, there have been many times where the timing of money received has been a problem. In all cases, so far, the sums required have been received into the football club eventually. The timing of this is the issue - a point made many times over the years. We all understand that complex property transactions can take time to complete, all the more reason then, to start their undertaking earlier. The counter argument could be, that it is best to leave assets where they earn the most, until the last possible moment. Recently, that strategy has proven flawed and the staff and players deserve more.

If the situation continues, it's easy to see that a points deduction (rather than the current suspension) would be in the offing. We had all written off this year many months ago and imagine we'd all like to forget and move on.

Attempts to contact the EFL following the two recent charges have, although successful, not been met with anything more than a cursory acknowledgment of our existence. You'd have thought that the EFL should be helping/encouraging not fining/deducting points. Fining a club that can't pay wages is hardly likely to make life easier. Rick Parry and his gang should be ashamed.



I've always been impressed with just how much effort some people will put in to achieve something special - step forward Rylee Doe, a 17-year-old Trust member who for the 5th year in a row, was arranging the Essex Charity Cup at Roots Hall - sadly, postponed for obvious reasons. I hope that many of you will feel able to attend/support this great event for 2 local and relevant charities when it is re-arranged. Well done Rylee.

The Trust was approached recently by an exiled (in distance) Southend Supporter who hopes to be returning to the area shortly. Alfie Robinson has created "Proud Shrimpers" and aims for it to become the Official LGBT+ & Allies Supporters Group for Southend United Football Club, hopefully launching in time for the 2020/21 season.

Further membership details will be released over the coming months and will be announced via their social media accounts.

If you would like to be involved in the running of Proud Shrimpers or want to understand more about the group, you can contact them using the following.

proudshrimpers@gmail.com

<https://twitter.com/ProudShrimpers>

<https://www.facebook.com/ProudShrimpers>

I am slightly disappointed to report that following Aviva's decision to change the application rules, we are no longer able to obtain a grant for our community inclusion scheme.

The scheme saw various worthy causes treated to a day out, in partnership with the football club, namely: -

Kingsdown - the Special needs School;

Off the Streets - the Westcliff Homeless refuge;



NEWSLETTER – Vol. 15 Iss. 03. – June 2020

Community Group from South Woodham – they try to combat loneliness largely, but not solely, amongst special needs adults;

RE House Resource & Enterprise centre – they support adults with learning disabilities.

We have been running this initiative as a pilot for the last 12 months and we weren't really sure what to expect. It is obvious to all, that this has been a huge success and although our budgeted funding is now exhausted, we are looking at ways to move ahead. In fact, as a committee, so impressed were we, with the results, we have committed to continue and Ron Martin has agreed to help in any way he can. We see this as a win / win situation for all parties and an opportunity (rare some might say) for some really positive press.

A brief update on the Southend United Ex-players Association (SUEPA) which has been a great success. Membership is now up to 231 with goalkeeping legend Simon Royce joining (at last!) recently. Six ex-players from 60s, Mike Beesley, Derek Tharme (who has not been back to Roots Hall since 1963!), Peter Goy, Ken Jones, Peter Hunt and Eddie Clayton era were hosted for the Bristol Rovers game. They even saw us win, a very rare treat this season!

A recent conversation with Ron elicited the following comment on SUEPA - *"In writing I also wish to recognise the good work being carried out by SUEPA. Staying in touch with past players, and knowing they wish to stay in touch with the club too, is to be applauded ... I very much hope this will continue when we do get back to playing in front of crowds. Well done to everyone"*

If you'd like to get involved in our activities, have an idea or have any comments on anything the Shrimpers Trust does, or does not do – please feel free to contact me at pfitz666@aol.com

A MESSAGE FROM RON MARTIN

"It needs no emphasis from me in recognising we are all living through the strangest of times. Nobody has escaped the necessary changes to life as we knew it January.

But what does the future hold, for our lives generally and football in particular. People often make their hopes their prediction.

Right now no one can accurately predict the future ... but we can hope, and anticipate, football recommencing next season. My belief is this season, in Leagues 1 & 2 will to all intents and purposes, be curtailed save for Play Offs. I do not anticipate League 1 clubs voting to finish the season on the pitch ... Testing for Covid-19 is estimated at a cost of circa £150,000 for the remaining games. With no income and an uncertain future when normality shall return you can understand why the majority are like to vote for curtailment.



These are the two principal options under the planned vote:

- Finish the season behind closed doors
- Curtail the season with decisions based on an average Points Per Game

There are other suggestions made by clubs (in self-interest) but they are simply tweaks on a theme. Voiding the season has not been considered by the EFL Board. I guess their thinking is that the season is 80% played out and in most respects the die is cast.

As for next season this could Kick Off in the Autumn. Initially I imagine behind closed doors but with the possibility of watching all games on Live-stream until crowds can return. I do, in this instance, need to emphasise that is only my best guess and much depends on whether there is a

NEWSLETTER – Vol. 15 Iss. 03. – June 2020

second wave of infection that might extend the “lockdown” and put our best laid plans back in the melting pot.

My hope this is how it will pan out and with some prediction of a vaccine/therapeutic medicine(s) before the year end.

I appreciate this may be gloomy reading but we all have to try and look past this and in between I shall be planning and working to return good times to Roots Hall ... whilst we remain there.

On that note, and a very positive one, the legal agreements with the Council are progressing at pace. All parties are committed to delivering the clubs new stadium and if anything good has come out of “lockdown” is that it has improved my ability to focus on the transaction whilst football is “resting”.

We now have a first draft construction programme. This is dependant upon the clubs planning applications being approved we are working closely with Southend Council for both applications (Roots Hall & Fossetts) to be brought to the same Development Control Committee in the autumn. There is a third planning application that sits with Rochford District Council relating to the clubs New First Team Training Centre which is likely to be considered by Rochford Council within days of Southend Borough Council’s decision(s).

All being well there shall be no need to adjust our construction programme for the work going on in the background in relation to our move is enormous. This is being progressed in parallel to save time.

A debt free stadium and sustainable football club has always been my mission. Nothing has changed in that regard and I remain confident we will achieve that objective under these revised plans.

Amongst all this uncertainty ... what has happened to the players.

Like you and I they too of course have been in lockdown. All players were issued with fitness programmes and as professional footballers it is natural for them to adhere to regimes set by the clubs. That said there can be no substitution for everyday training as a squad and another reason why curtailing or voiding (if it was an option) has some merit. From when players resume it will take them some time to be match fit and even longer to be match sharp. With some players out of contract this month time, due to Covid-19, has run out.

It has been a dreadful, and expensive couple of years but the future is certainly not all doom and gloom. The club will make changes. Some will happen naturally with player contracts ending. Others will help us to adapt to the “new normal” until Life is safe for us all to return to Roots Hall. In between we hope to complete the contract negotiations with all those young players offered new deals. For me watching our potential stars of the future take to the field over those last few games was a highlight. They will mature and grow in experience and coupled with inevitable new signings we will have much to look forward to.

Until then it just leaves me to wish all our supporters, their families and friends good health and to stay safe”.

RM

SOL CAMPBELL Q&A REPORT

Monday 25th November 2019

Sol was introduced to an audience of 40 Trust members, by Trust Chairman, Paul FitzGerald, and the first question to him was along the lines of how he had managed to rescue Macclesfield Town.

Apparently they had been promoted the season before and the group of players had a winning mentality and togetherness/ team spirit.

This mentality is being promoted by Sol on the training ground and helped by overnight stays at away games where practical.

He said he will beg, borrow and steal loan signings but he can only have a maximum of five and we already have two. He was asked what sort of players are likely to want to play for a team in our position, to which he replied there are players out there with the right mentality to shine in this situation and he will work hard to bring them in.

He said belief has evaporated with some of the current squad and he is working hard to reinstate this belief and make their own luck.

Sol was asked about bringing youth players in and replied that we will have seen he is happy to do that.



One of the audience commented that the likes of Manchester City can bring the ball forward from the back but we do not have players of that calibre. Sol said the option is to lump the ball upfield but we do not have any players that can win such long balls and hold it up, so working the ball forward is a strategy worth working at.

He was asked about dietary changes for the players. He commented that he cannot control what they eat while at their own homes but can do so in the time they are with him.

The audience asked about the future of certain players in particular Lennon and Demetriou. Sol would not be drawn on their futures.

He explained that pre-season had been a disaster for Southend, with injuries and players returning who were unfit, which is where our problems started this season.

NEWSLETTER – Vol. 15 Iss. 03. – June 2020

He has not told any players they are surplus to requirements.

He felt there were not enough shots on goal, and likes playing with wingers. He believed that Bwomono and Ralph are both showing promise.

He would like to bring in players with more pace and Humphry's injury is a real blow. He is probably 10 days away from a return and Barrett may be two weeks away.

When asked what he made of Ron Martin's talk about a new stadium, he replied that Ron has a vision of the future. He saw that as a positive as there are many chairman who have no vision and will allow their clubs to stagnate. He does not believe Ron is one of them.

The meeting closed with members thanking him for attending and wishing him good luck in the job.

XMAS DRAW 2019 - RESULTS

The Shrimpers Trust 2019 Xmas Draw took place at half-time during the game vs MK Dons on Thursday 26th December.

The winners are as follows:

1st	£500.00	11510	Kay & Kevin Fogg
2nd	£250.00	266	Paul Nelson
3rd	£100.00	8011	Andy Thorne
4th	Meal for 2 in the Blues Lounge	5028	Kelly & Sarah Jones
5th	Bottle of Champagne	5170	Kevin Kirby

The Trust would like to thank all those that bought and sold tickets helping us to raise over £2,000.

THE BIG CHRISTMAS QUIZ - WINNERS

Over 300 entries were sold for the 2019 Christmas Quiz.

58 entries were received by the closing date of which 22 were correct. The draw for prizes was made by John White after the SUFC training session on Tuesday 21st January with results being as follows:

- 1st prize of £125 cash won by Shane Chapman**
- 2nd prize of 4 seats in the Centre Circle Lounge plus signed pennant was won by Deborah Davidson**
- 3rd prize of a bottle of champagne was won by Paul Bunyan**
- 4th prize of a signed SUFC football was won by the 'Footie Family' c/o Clare Chapman**
- 5th prize of a box of sweets was won by Lynn Beard**

The Trust would like to thank everyone for supporting and entering the Quiz.

Look out for the next Big Xmas Quiz later this year.

The Trust would once again like to thank MSPFX Foreign Currency Services for their sponsorship of the quiz and Southend United FC and Alan Perry for donation of prizes.



MEMBERSHIP

Life Membership (Total 244)

Welcome to New Life Members Ian Hill and Dave Williams.



Life Membership of the Trust currently costs £100.00 if you have an email account or £150.00 if you prefer to receive Trust Mailings by post.

If you are interested in joining this group please contact our Membership Secretary, Paul Yeomanson via email at membership@shrimperstrust.co.uk.

You can also join up as a Life Member in the Membership Section of the Trust Website www.shrimperstrust.co.uk, and postal applications will also be accepted at **Shrimpers Trust, PO Box 5830, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 9FD.**

Welcome to New Members since the last Newsletter

Callum Clements, Michael Day, Amanda-Jane Freemantle, Steve Gutteridge, Kelly Hicklin, Ben Humphrey, Jonathan Hunnibal, Ashley Lansley, Stephen Morris, Theo Paphitis, Alfie Robinson, Jeremy Robinson, James Rush, Lorraine Rush, Mark Rush, Kieran Staggs, Ben Ward and Dave Williams.

****Please note that the Shrimpers Trust would like to know if any of its members' addresses change, or if they have a new email address so that newsletters and other correspondence can be sent to the correct address. Please send any change of address details to **The Shrimpers Trust, PO Box 5830, Southend on Sea, SS1 9FD**, by email to membership@shrimperstrust.co.uk or alternatively fill in our on-line contact details form which can be found in the Membership Section of the Trust Website, www.shrimperstrust.co.uk ****

FUNDRAISING

100 Club

The latest winners in the scheme, pulled out of the hat during weekly draws since the last newsletter were **George Short, Tim Wilson, Andy Thorne, Robert Russell, Mike Paterson, Andrew Leeder, Lesley Hicks (twice), Chris Karkoski, Rob Warman, John Onslow, Teresa Perry, Andrew Haddow, John Freemantle, Mike Roles, Tony Gardener, Steve Stone, Clare Chapman, Lorraine Posnack, Albert Chittock, Mrs C.A. Harvey, Simon Dodd, Tim Roberts, Peter Hall, Andrew Perry, Carol Champion, Paul Strutt, Richard Cunningham, Paul Yeomanson and Paul Manning.**

Congratulations also to Peter Brock who won £300 in the Xmas Draw.

The nature of the 100 Club means the more people that sign up, then the bigger the weekly prize.

100 Club Application Form and Standing Order Form are available from the Fundraising Page on the Trust Website or from the Trust Information Stand in the Shrimpers Bar so why not join up and put yourself in with a chance of winning the weekly prize.

For further information, you can contact Alan Perry at alanperry4@hotmail.com or by calling 01702 476458.

Remember, the more people that sign up to the scheme, then the higher that prize will be. By setting up a standing order for just £5 a month (or just £60 a year), you put yourself in with a chance of winning around £31 per week at the present time.

NEWSLETTER – Vol. 15 Iss. 03. – June 2020

Quid-a-Goal

Our Quid a Goal scheme has now been curtailed due to the cancellation of the 2019/20 Season.



The final total after the Bristol Rovers match is £1,126.25

Alan Perry will shortly be contact all those that joined the scheme advising you of any monies due to the Trust.

Thank you all for your support.

SHRIMPERS TRUST ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Follow us on twitter @shrimperstrust and like and follow us on Facebook "ShrimpersTrust" to keep up to date with all our latest news and events.

A promotional banner for Shrimpers Trust. The background shows a red bus with "SHRIMPERS TRUST" and "Corporate Travel" written on it. The text on the banner includes "Be Part Of It!" with a website URL, "SHRIMPERS TRUST" in large yellow letters, and "OFFICIAL AWAY SUPPORTERS TRAVEL ORGANISER FOR SOUTHEND UNITED F.C." in blue. At the bottom, there are contact details: a phone number (07892 905338), an email address (travel@shrimperstrust.co.uk), a website (www.shrimperstrust.co.uk), a Facebook link (facebook.com/sufcofficialawaytravel), a Twitter link (twitter.com/shrimperstrust), and a QR code.

We now also have a dedicated Away Travel Facebook Page "sufcofficialawaytravel" where you can find all the latest details on the Official Away Travel for Southend United.

9th June 2020