



THE INTRODUCTION – Paul FitzGerald

This is our first newsletter of the year - I hesitate to say Happy New Year (for obvious reasons) but, as I pen this into the day following Boris's latest set of "plans", there is at last, some hope that we might get to see some football, let alone our family and friends, in the not too distant future.

The last newsletter bemoaned the communication from our Football Club's chairman and frankly that has still not improved, although he has promised to address this – see below for more information. Ron Martin has been unwell with complications following contracting Covid, we do, of course, wish him well in his continuing recovery. He was, however, able and willing to talk to fans' groups (via Zoom) on the 15th Feb, where a variety of topics were discussed (notes below)

Fortunes off the pitch were improved markedly by the council's decision to progress with the Fossetts Farm development, which should enable Ron and his development partners, including his son, to have a bright future. It is hoped this bright future for Ron, might rub off on the football club, but details around this are still somewhat sketchy, a point not lost on many supporters, including the protest group (who no longer attend the supporter group meetings held with Ron.)



Fortunes and performances on the pitch are improved, but our league position is obviously precarious and the failure to find a goal scorer in the January window, despite significant efforts, was a blow leading to some dice throwing, the results of which, are at this stage, not quite known. We welcome the new additions and hope for a few more points over the coming weeks. When your leading goal scorer, and in fact most of the goal scorers are not the strikers, it's clear where the current problem is!

And on that point what a good job some of the Non-Strikers are scoring and it would be extremely churlish of me not to mention that goal from new signing Nathan Ferguson...one to remember certainly.

SUEPA – Southend United Ex-Players Association



Signings for SUEPA continue to flow and a significant milestone has been reached with the signing of Marc-Antoine Fortuné. Congratulations to all involved – we all hope to resume our activities in the not too distance future. SUEPA, formed by the Shrimpers Trust at the Crouch Vale Brewery Tap Room in January 2018, looks to re-connect former players with each other, the club and the fans.

Supporters Group Meeting with Ron Martin 15th February

The outcome of the previous meeting (reported in the last newsletter) was a distant memory especially as the key point, which all who attended took away, was that the embargo WOULD be lifted imminently...of course it was not....(although is now of course)

Representatives from all formal supporters' groups were invited by the Trust (20 or so attended). Interpreted minutes have been widely reported by others, so I won't repeat everything that happened, but I list a few points that I believe of interest/significance

Chris Phillips who was refused entry last time (by Ron) was invited and attended.

Questions from various sources were received and summarised upfront into 4 key subjects with anything else addressed at the end

- Short term Issues and Plans
- Stadium and development
- Communication
- Long Term
- Other

Short Term Issues and Plans - Ron dodged the first question initially, concentrating instead, on a history lesson to try to explain how we came to be at this low ebb. He accepted we may go down, but explained how everyone is doing their best to make sure we don't.

He talked about the culture and some of his disappointment, with regards to certain players and managers. Personally, I think this has been well documented, however, he went on to say that Mark Molesley does have an affordable, together dressing room.

It has cost a lot of money to rid us of some players and it has been difficult to attract people, based on our current position - John Akinde in particular had been offered a really good contract, but it was declined.

Ron accepted the weakness upfront completely, but his belief is, if we stay up, we have some positives to build on.

Ron stated that there had been no planning for next season and this will remain, until we know what league we will be in – this included season ticket prices.

In answer to a question about potential refunds, Ron stated that no one had been in contact and seemed surprised at the question. He agreed he would need to look at it as the group felt some

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people would definitely want this considered, although all attending agreed this would be a further financial blow to the club.

Stadium and Development – Ron was his usual bullish self and re-affirmed the new Stadium IS going to happen, enabled by the housing development. He refuted suggestions that having a green bit in the middle of a housing estate was probably not ideal.

He struggled to clarify how the Football Club will benefit precisely from the development, but referred to a hospitality area for 1000 people, which will be open on match days and be able to be used on non-match days.

He confirmed the Stadium would not be owned by Southend United and that it may be charged rent, but made the point that the club had never paid the rent to him during its tenure at Roots Hall. He specifically reserved the right to take payment should the club receive a windfall for whatever reason.

A discussion followed, but no further clarity was provided and in the interests of time – we moved on. However, it's probably worth re-iterating that this appears to be the single most significant worry to the thinking SUFC supporter at present and forms the basis of the arguments from the "Protest Group"

In answer to a specific question, Ron confirmed that there would be no developments at Roots Hall until the Club has moved.

Ron then explained the next phase/timings – the Council have a couple of complementary planning issues, Fossetts / Roots Hall and Queensway, expected to go to Committee in April, and re-iterated the Council support for the club surviving and growing.

Communication – All present felt strongly about this, and in fact it was this subject, that received the most comments from supporters prior to the meeting.

Ron apologised for the general lack of communication (COVID notwithstanding) and in particular with regards to releasing the club from embargo and the famous "it's just a phone call away"...which turned out not to be of course. All agreed that better communication with fans is needed.



He explained an idea of his to extend the idea of this forum to include a "Thursday Surgery" perhaps on a weekly basis. He felt we could use Zoom and Teams, tools most people hadn't heard of before lockdown! It would allow easier attendance from SUFC staff and other members of the board. It wouldn't be limited to the Chairman; "we could involve everyone". Ron was open to ideas on how to make things better and promised to circulate details shortly.

Ron talked about a CEO, but doesn't want one in our current position as the candidate now might be very different from what he'd like going forward.

Other

In response to a specific question, Ron stated that a new physio is in place and will be announced online this week. This prompted further discussion on the poor communication, i.e. why could we not celebrate this positive news?

The shortish meeting (75 mins) was felt by all to be worthwhile and is likely to be repeated on a regular basis.

Liaison Meeting

The situation with COVID has also meant that the Trust Liaison meeting with the club had not been held for a significant period. However, I am pleased to say this has now resumed and we plan to meet every 6 weeks or so. Unlike the forum with Ron, this meeting is designed to cover the day-to-day activities affecting the club and fans

Minutes are available on our website but a point of note I'd like to mention is that the money raised during last year by several groups, has been offered to the club to purchase gym equipment

Mark Molesely had indicated that he would be interested in some gym equipment, in particular, a Teqball table, which would cost in the region of £1,000. The Trust would be happy to pay for this out of the fund-raising money and then would wait for other thoughts.

Retro Shirts

A big thank you to all who voted in our recent poll to determine our next Retro Shirts offering. It was great to see so many people voting.

We are pleased to confirm that the 1976-78 and 1985-86 shirts, by some distance, received the most votes and so they have been selected. SUEPA models have been lined-up to launch them when ready!

It will take about a month to finalise everything - we will let you know as soon as they are on sale. As before, there will be a full adult size range, junior shirts, a babygro, options to have either long or short sleeves, and, if required (at no extra cost) a name and number on the back.



This follows on from the start of our hugely successful partnership with Chablais Sport at the end of last year with the iconic Custard splat and 1980/81 shirt.

You can still order one of these through our website, in a fabulous number of sizes, and even have it personalised, if required.

Once through to the Chablais site, just type 'Southend' into the search box, and it will take you straight to the SUFC Retro Shirts page.

All sizes are available, from Babygro to Adult 7XL.

An adult shirt is priced at just £35 (including carriage & packing) and delivery, is normally within 3 weeks from placement of your order.

Also being considered is Southend's United's very first shirt from 1906, this is currently in the design stage with a sample being created. History books tell us that Southend played in "Royal Blue", but the pictures do not really bear that out. We have obtained a colour card from the time and designed the colours based on that....watch this space!

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 . Additionally, if you'd like a question posed to Ron Martin or anyone else at the football club, please don't hesitate to send it to me and I will include it in the relevant forum.

THE 'BIG' CHRISTMAS QUIZ

Over 100 of the 2020 Christmas Quizzes were sold.

42 entries were received by the closing date of which only 3 from Darren Eldrige, Mark Walden and Paul Yeomanson were 100% correct.

We obviously made it a little harder this year!

The draw for the top 3 prizes was undertaken independently by a moderator from ShrimperZone with the results as follows:

1st prize of £150 cash won by Mark Walden

2nd prize of 4 seats in the Centre Circle Lounge was won by Paul Yeomanson

3rd prize of a bottle of champagne was won by Darren Eldridge

There was a further 11 entries with 99 correct answers and again the draw for the final two prizes was undertaken independently by a moderator from ShrimperZone with the results as follows:

4th prize of a signed SUFC Shirt was won by Hazel Armstong

5th prize of a box of sweets was won by Dave Longbottom

We'll be in touch with all the winners in due course to arrange for their prizes to be collected/delivered, and would like to thank everyone for supporting and entering the Quiz.

The answers to this year's quiz and a full list of entries received and the marks scored can be downloaded from the Trist Website www.shrimperstrust.co.uk

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 their donation of prizes.



ALEX STEEL – BARCELONA'S FIRST 'FALSE' 9

The Trust was approached recently about a former player from 1913.

Apparently in research it appears that Alex Steel (top row, third player from left) signed for Southend having previously been playing in Spain for Barcelona.

Alex was a vital player for Barcelona - their very first 'false 9' - and helped to grow the club through his footballing abilities and organisation of that embryonic team (1912-13). Whereas Southend (and Man City, Tottenham and Kilmarnock) played Alex in his natural position as a half-back, Barca realised that for the first time they had a player who was technically gifted and utilised him in a role behind the front men.

He scored 53 goals in 40 games.

At that time, Spanish football was of a lot poorer quality than in the British leagues and it would have almost been an embarrassment for professional players to have admitted that they had played in Spain.

However, Alex had suffered a bad knee injury at Man City and throughout his career he suffered from this. Leaving Kilmarnock on loan to Barca and playing in a hotter climate would have helped him.

A fuller write up of this story will be available on the Trust website as the research concludes.



MEMBERSHIP

Life Membership (Total 260)

Welcome to New Life Members Joseph Clifford-Doyle, Gary Luckman, Gaye Overall and Keith Overall.



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

Justin Barber, Joseph Clifford-Doyle, Steven Jones, Chris Phillips, Stuart Rushton and Deryck Shead.

****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 ****

CALLING ALL KENT SHRIMPERS

We have received a request from Gareth Rowe who recently joined the Trust.

Gareth lives in Kent and would like to link up with other Trust Members / SUFC Supporters living in the area.

If you live in Kent and would like to contact Gareth you can do so by emailing him at g_rowe_2000@yahoo.co.uk



FUNDRAISING

100 Club

The latest winners in the scheme, pulled out of the hat during weekly draws since the last newsletter were **Peter Brock, Paul Brice, Albert Chittock, Tim Wilson, Darren Posnack, Robert Russell, Jon-Paul FitzGerald, Peter Hall, Paul Strutt, Andrew Perry, Trevor Hardy, Clare Chapman and Martin Simper.**

Congratulations also to Simon Dodd who won £325 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.

Quid-a-Goal

Our Quid a Goal scheme is now up and running for the 2020/21 Season.

The current total after 39 games is £852.75



The aim of the scheme - like most of the Shrimpers Trust's activities is to raise money for Southend United Football Club and make sure that there is a club for us to be supporting in the foreseeable future.

For the season 2020/21, some of the money raised from this 'Quid a Goal' scheme will be donated to Ricky Duncan's Youth department to help ensure that players of the quality of Daniel Bentley, Ted Smith, Jack Payne, Dru Yearwood, Elvis Bwomono and Charlie Kelman continue to be nurtured and made available to the first team.

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This is how it works:

Those who support the scheme with a pledge have their name displayed in the United match program.

We ask you to pledge £0.25, £0.50, £1.00 or more under various headings such as clean sheets, various players scoring goals, or team goals. This does not have to cost you a fortune as you can easily judge in advance how much your pledge will cost you come the end of the season.

For example, the Blues rarely manage more than 70 goals in a season from 1st team matches. A £0.25 per goal pledge would therefore most likely not cost you more than £20.00 come the end of the season. If you chose to do £0.50 per point and we finished up with 80 points, at the end of the season we will write to you thanking you for your support of this initiative asking you to send us a cheque for the amount of £40.00.

Entry forms can be downloaded here

www.shrimperstrust.co.uk/n_images/client/pdf/quidagoalflyer20-21.pdf and as mentioned in the newsletter intro all those that make a pledge will be entered into a prize draw for some goodies.

SHRIMPERS TRUST MERCHANDISE

2020/21 SHIRT KEY RING



This two sided football shirt key ring is in the SUFC home & away colours for the 2020/21 season with the Shrimpers Trust youth team shirt logo.

Priced at £1.50 the Key Ring can be purchased from our online shop here www.shrimperstrust.co.uk/shop.asp?catid=6

SEASON CARD HOLDER

This Oyster Card style Season Card Holder comes in Navy with the Trust Logo and Web Address printed in full colour on the front.

Priced at £2.00 the Season Card Holder can be purchased from our online shop here www.shrimperstrust.co.uk/shop.asp?catid=6



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FRIDGE MAGNET



The Plasticised 'Sammy The Shrimp' Fridge Magnet features the Trust Shrimp in a Navy SUFC Kit with the Shrimpers Trust website address at the bottom.

Priced at £2.00 the Fridge Magnet can be purchased from our online shop here www.shrimperstrust.co.uk/shop.asp?catid=6

BALLPOINT PEN

With a Blue, Yellow & White body the Plastic Push Button Ballpen has the Trust Logo printed on the main body and has a unique Magnet Clasp printed with a football design.

This unique pen is exclusive to the Trust and will cost just £3.00 can be purchased from our online shop here www.shrimperstrust.co.uk/shop.asp?catid=6



OR WHY NOT SPLASH OUT ON ONE OF OUR SALE ITEMS IN OUR EXCLUSIVE SAMMY THE SHRIMP JEWELLERY



Manufactured in Sterling Silver with Blue Spinel the items are available as a Pin or Cufflink Set which come in their own presentation box.

Each of the items are priced as follows:

Blue Spinel Pin: £25 (Was £45)

Blue Spinel Cufflinks: £45 (was £75)

Plain Pin: £15 (was £35)

The Pin measures 24.5mm high x 21mm wide and is also available in a plain Silver version and the Cufflinks measure 20mm high by 17mm wide.

This items of Jewellery are exclusive to the Trust and can be purchased from our online shop here www.shrimperstrust.co.uk/shop.asp?catid=14

These and other items in our merchandise range can be purchased online in the Trust Shop at www.shrimperstrust.co.uk

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ORGANISER FOR SOUTHEND UNITED F.C.

07892 905338 | travel@shrimperstrust.co.uk | www.shrimperstrust.co.uk

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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.

10th March 2021