



## Supporters Group Statement – 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023

**Representatives from Southend United supporters' groups acknowledge the decision in the High Court today to grant the Football Club a 42-day adjournment to meet outstanding obligations to HMRC and other petitioners.**

This should be no cause for celebration. We are less than a month away from the start of the 2023/24 season and there remains huge uncertainty over the future of our football club. To date, no pre-season friendlies have been played and the first-team players have barely been able to train together.

Whilst the judge may have provided the football club a period of six weeks to meet their obligations, we are concerned that the National League will not be so lenient, given their requirement for clubs to adhere to their regulations and in order to maintain the competition's integrity. As well as the creditors on the Winding-Up Petition, all football creditors must also be paid to lift the transfer and registration embargo that is hindering the work of the Football Department.

Instead of looking forward to upcoming fixtures, Southend United supporters are gravely worried about the existence of the club. 117 years of history in our city is at risk. Memories of promotions and cup runs, friendships forged on the terraces; all compromised by the club's current owner, Ron Martin.

Now is not the time for anyone to be playing games. Ron Martin must release information immediately as to how Southend United will continue to exist under his watch. It is not acceptable to hide behind a Non Disclosure Agreement.

Last week, the Shrimpers Trust released details of a hardship fund to help support club staff, some of whom have now not received payment for three or four months. Supporters have again stepped up to the plate and contributions totalling around £4,000 have already been received. Thank-you to everyone who has donated; the fund remains open and we encourage long-suffering staff to get in touch in strict confidence.

It is also important that supporters don't suffer in silence. We appreciate that a stay of execution for our club, whilst something of a relief, is also hugely frustrating and means that anxiety will continue to be present in the coming days and months. Please reach out to charities Mind ( <https://mind.org.uk> ) or Andy's Mans Club ( <https://andysmanclub.co.uk/> ) if you need to speak to someone.

The Shrimpers Trust will continue to work closely with other supporters' groups in response to developments, and will be holding an Emergency Board Meeting later this week. A further update will be provided thereafter.