



**25<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

## **SUPPORTERS GROUP STATEMENT**

**On Saturday, the supporters' groups were unified in calling for clarification from Southend United Football Club concerning the current situation at Roots Hall.**

This evening, we have learned through reports in the Southend Echo, that Club staff payments have finally been brought up-to-date. Our initial thoughts are with those staff. They are the heartbeat of our football club, and we will be forever grateful for their loyalty and dedication through what has been an immeasurably tough time. We are so happy for them.

Despite this welcome news, we continue to encourage anyone affected to make use of the Shrimpers Trust's hardship fund, which has now generated donations totalling over £25,000. Thank-you to everyone who has contributed; your generosity has enabled the Trust to help applicants at this difficult time, and the fund will remain open in the immediate term.

However, there remains no confirmation from the Club that all payments to creditors have been met and, as a result, the job of the football department remains almost impossible. Last season, against a backdrop of late payment of wages, and with the Club under an embargo stretching back to the end of September, everyone at Roots Hall pulled together to launch an unlikely bid for promotion.

The fans felt proud and had a team they could relate to and support, which we did in massive numbers. An average home gate of around 6,000 in non-league football following three miserable years (including two relegation campaigns), whilst taking more fans to the corresponding away fixture than each of our opponents did to Roots Hall, stands testament to that.

Our football club represents a family, a community. It has a rich history, forging friendships and sparking relationships that last a lifetime. Southend United spent over a century competing in the English Football League and continues to create memories that will never fade. Our Club deserves a future.

Whilst Ron Martin is in charge, Southend United will remain under an existential threat, with the Owner doing the bare minimum to support its functionality. Supporters can be assured that we are doing all we can to preserve the future of our Club. The continued game of chess between the Owner and any prospective bidders cannot continue.

There is massive potential within our fanbase. Supporters are ready to play their part. We firmly believe greater fan representation is crucial to a thriving and sustainable football club, and we would like to speak to any parties who share our vision.

We can also confirm that there will be a further responsible and lawful protest against the actions of the current Owner between 10:00am and 3:00pm on Saturday, 29th July on the corner of Essex Way, Vicarage Hill and Benfleet Road. We encourage supporters to bring placards, signs, posters and leaflets and make your feelings clear, but a zero-tolerance policy on alcohol will again be in effect.

Furthermore, should the situation not be resolved, co-ordinated action will take place at the first National League fixture of the season at Roots Hall against Oldham Athletic on Saturday 5th August. We have already received public support from the Oldham Athletic Supporters Foundation and will seek to release details of our plans early next week.