



# SOUTHEND UNITED SUPPORTERS SOCIETY LIMITED LIAISON MEETING



**Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023**  
**Roots Hall Stadium 16:00**

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## **1. Present and Apologies:**

Those in attendance were Tom Lawrence (TL) and April Smith (AS) on behalf of SUFC. Rhys Ellingham (RE) had been expected to join but was caught up on a zoom call. Paul FitzGerald (PF), Paul Yeomanson (PY) and Kay Fogg (KF) were present on behalf of the Shrimpers Trust.

Apologies were received from Rylee Doe (RD) and Shane Chapman (SC).

## **2. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2023**

Follow up on actions not otherwise covered in Agenda items:

- Shrimpers Bar Urn to be revisited in 4 months or so to order a replacement.  
**ACTION – TL to order in the Autumn**
- Rehabilitation donation from the Trust remains outstanding at this time.  
**ACTION – In due course, TL to arrange for the order to be place, the Trust to then pay for the item with the VAT to be discussed subsequently**
- Discussions with Macron about stock in the Club shop – some progress has been made however, the planned zoom call with Andy Dyer from Macron with Trust members remains outstanding.  
**ACTION – TL to liaise and facilitate**
- Discussions with the management team about explanations regarding the Junior Blues are still to take place.  
**ACTION – TL to speak to the management team ahead of next season**
- Shrimpers Bar – glass washing – KF had obtained some quotes for a replacement commercial glass washer. Once the situation regarding the Club is clearer, the Trust will discuss further and hopefully source something which can be used while we remain at Roots Hall and possibly be transferred to the new stadium.  
**ACTION – Trust to report back**

## **3. Club for Sale**

There was little that could be recorded under this item due to Non-Disclosure Agreements being in place between interested parties. TL advised that things were “ticking along” and that the Chairman is dealing with the sale.

## **4. Club Finances, including Bridging Loan, Embargo, Late payment of Wages and Trust Loan**

Some staff salaries unfortunately remain outstanding. The National League is generally supportive of the predicament and has adjusted their timeline to fall in with the HMRC timeline.

Documentation relating to the extending of the deadline for repayment of the Shrimpers Trust loan was duly completed although the personal guarantee by the Chairman is yet to be arranged.

**ACTION – TL to arrange**

PF raised the matter of a lady who had reached out to the Trust, and who had been a host for an academy player. She had contacted the Club several times about the fact she had received no funding for her hosting but had received no responses. TL advised that he was aware of

this lady and was under the impression someone had responded to her. He agreed that he would make contact.

**ACTION – TL to contact**

PF questioned why, in the recently published accounts, in the first set, there is a management fee shown which RM has always said wasn't taken. TL said he would investigate this further, and added that the next due set of accounts are nearly ready.

**ACTION – TL to report back on management fee shown in accounts for 2020/21**

#### **5. Memorandum of Understanding:**

A discussion was had on the principles of the MOU and the related Golden Share ideas. PF provided two documents for TL to consider. TL is broadly supportive although he felt that the Golden Share would need to be a Board level discussion, whether this is the current or expected new Board. He also sought clarification regarding the "financial information" that was being requested by the Trust. This was further discussed and a list of items noted. TL emphasised the need to re-build trust between the Shrimpers Trust, other supporters, and the Club and suggest that the Trust should look into pitch owners' agreements.

**ACTION – TL to consider further. PF to provide soft copies.**

#### **6. Junior Blues, including plans for forthcoming season and new membership sign-ups:**

PY has sourced and ordered the new gift for the Junior Blues sign up this year, these come in at a cost of £6.89 per item instead of the £9.60 per item it would have been through Macron. The scarves from the last two seasons have cost us money as they were not only an expensive item, but also expensive to post.

He advised that there had been a large cut of members as all those who were given free membership for the 2021/22 season as a result of the abortive 2020/21 season, have now had their entitlement to membership cease. They have all been invited to re-join.

Similarly, all junior Season Card Holders from last season have been cut, and we await the new list for this season. TL advised that RE is implementing a new ticketing system and that once this is fully operational, a list of junior Season Card Holders can be provided. PY asked if this could be provided in a workable format this time as the last one had included a large number of adult members.

**ACTION – RE to provide usable spreadsheet when possible**

KF asked if a new flyer could be produced ahead of the new season, with membership application on. PY added that it would be helpful if this could include payment details for credit/debit cards. AS and RD will co-ordinate the new flyer.

#### **7. Stadium issues including SAG inspection findings and arising from walkabout:**

Prior to the meeting, TL, PF and KF had met with Sherif Harding and Dean Crawley, interested supporters, to walk around the ground to consider the extensive spreadsheet of scheduled works which is already being worked on. The spreadsheet contains 247 items to be addressed, varying in importance, these include 52 items identified in the recent SAG inspection. TL agreed to send the spreadsheet to the Trust.

**ACTION – TL to forward spreadsheet**

There was some discussion about seeking help from among supporters. TL advised that the Club is looking into the possibility but didn't feel there would be much appetite for supporters to offer help at the present time.

**8. Meet the Blues Day:** The date for Meet the Blues Day was confirmed as being 30<sup>th</sup> July. AS and RD are co-ordinating the event this year and have a planning meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> July. Format is expected to be as in previous years.

## **9. Academy:**

Funding for our Academy ends on 30<sup>th</sup> June. There would be no compensation for any of the talent produced by our Academy after that date.

The Club has applied to run a National League u-19s side. This has been successful and we will compete in the National League system, which consists of 119 teams. We will continue to run an “elite” pathway, with three of our scholars from SUCET on this pathway. This system is the top tier under the Level 3 Academy model.

RM still has no wish to dismantle the Academy so it is under constant review. TL advised that there is “lots of red tape” but the Academy is still functioning as things stand.

## **10: Any Other Business:**

- **Government White Paper**

PF reported that he has a call scheduled next week with Alex Miller, Football Policy Lead who works directly with Stuart Andrew, Minister for Sport. This will also involve local MP, Anna Firth, who thinks some funding might be available. The aim was to get Southend United used as proof of the need for better regulations. The Agenda will cover regulation timelines, corporate governance and stakeholder engagement.

**ACTION – PF to report back**

- **Kevin Maher**

PF asked how Kev is coping at this time. TL said he’s in good spirits, all things good considered, and that he’d been to the National League conference. John Still helps everyone focus on what they can control.

- **James Walker Benefit Match**

This had been held at the end of May and had been a great success. As a result, the Trust wished to donate one of our outstanding executive boxes to the Farke Knights for their help and support in putting the match on. It is thought that a sum in excess of £20,000 has been raised.

- **Car Park Season Tickets**

PF said he hasn’t received his annual reminder to renew. It was known that some people have received theirs already. TL said it may be due to the new ticketing system and he would instigate some enquiries.

**ACTION – TL to discuss with RE**

- **Shrimpers Bar prior to Meet the Blues Day**

PY advised that this will need to be set up in preparation on 16<sup>th</sup> July and left ready

**Next Meeting TBA – scheduled mid-August**