

Trust Statement – 23rd August 2023

The Shrimpers Trust acknowledges the outcome of today's court hearing regarding the ongoing winding-up petition served to Southend United, with the case being adjourned again until 4th October.

Just when everybody thinks it couldn't get any worse, it does. Bottom of the National League after a 10-point deduction and subject to an almost year-long (so far) registration embargo represents an embarrassing situation for our proud football club which will forever be a stain on the current owner's legacy.

We'd once again like to express our everlasting gratitude to the great staff of Southend United - for their enduring loyalty to the club, and for the incredible graft that goes in every day to keep the club ticking over. They deserve so much better.

Whilst we would of course rather not have to stomach a 10-point penalty and feel so sorry for the demoralising effect that it might have on Kevin Maher and his team; it is difficult to argue against it. The National League has been as lenient and helpful to Ron Martin and Southend United as it can be so far, but it has the integrity of a competition to uphold. The consequence of a failure to discharge all outstanding debt to HMRC by today's hearing was made absolutely crystal clear in the National League's statement on 26th July. We urge the owner to avoid wasting time on an appeal and to focus all time and energy on getting the sale of the club over the line as soon as possible.

We have been in contact with bidders and have been encouraged by some of the discussions held. However, we have made it abundantly clear to everybody we have spoken to that supporter involvement should be a key component of any new structure post-takeover. We believe this to be the only way to avoid our beloved football club being at the mercy of unscrupulous and/or deficient owners again, and to ensure that supporters are afforded a voice in the running and direction of the club. To this end, we hope that we will soon be able to share some of the initiatives that we have been working on to help effect this meaningful change and we continue to work with Anna Firth MP on positioning Southend United as a potential test case and/or case study for the upcoming football governance legislation.

We are also working closely with other supporters' groups to settle on plans for further direct action and hope to announce plans ahead of Friday evening's home match vs. Eastleigh.

We urge Ron Martin once again to do right by Southend United FC, its employees and its supporters and to do everything within his power to complete a sale ahead of the next court hearing, as he committed today to doing.

The Shrimpers Trust Board.