



ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

Shrimpers Trust & Iron Trust Joint Statement – 2nd October 2023

The Shrimpers Trust and the Iron Trust today come together to declare “enough is enough” and implore the Government and relevant authorities to ensure our clubs aren’t lost as a result of poor ownership before new legislation comes into place.

It is less than five years since Southend United and Scunthorpe United met in League One, the third tier of English football. Since then, we have faced each other in League Two and the National League as our respective declining fortunes have closely mirrored each other.

The experience of every club in the country is nuanced and there are often subtle differences in each case, but many are exploited for their bricks and mortar assets; their stadiums. Roots Hall was separated from Southend United almost 25 years ago, kicking off the construction of a complicated web of asset-holding companies and debt charges for any prospective new owner to untangle in order to purchase the club. Scunthorpe United may have played their last fixture at Glanford Park as a consequence of similar actions.

The Shrimpers Trust - and other supporters’ groups at Southend - have been engaged over the past twelve months in lobbying local and national politicians for change, in raising the profile of the club’s plight in the media, and in contributing almost £100,000 through loans, donations and a hardship fund for staff.

The Iron Trust now find themselves speaking to the relevant authorities to try to understand their position as the club and stadium remain separated, and with the current owner having declared that he will no longer fund the club whilst expressing his desire to leave Scunthorpe United.

Following the non-payment of staff wages for September, supporters across the country have raised over £60,000 to help assist those individuals. The generosity of football fans across the country proves how important each and every club is to the footballing ecosystem.

The National League hit Southend with a ten-point deduction when obligations to HMRC were not met by the owner; whilst this protects the integrity of the competition, and there can be no doubt that the National League gave Ron Martin fair warning of their potential actions, it was the hardworking players, coaches and staff as well as supporters that were inconvenienced by this act, rather than the owner responsible.

The ruling Conservative Party will be discussing the UK Government White Paper regarding the proposed independent regulator for football at their Conference in Manchester this week; the Paper has broad cross-party support and legislation relating to its recommendations may be included in the King’s Speech in November.

Football fans across the country would welcome an independent regulator and we would like to express our thanks to the Government, Parliamentary working groups, ResPublica, The Football Supporters Association and all who have fed into the Football White Paper and subsequent consultations.

It would, however, be a disaster if any legislation is implemented too late for Southend United or Scunthorpe United. Our clubs cannot be allowed to die with such legislation on the brink of implementation.

Enough is enough.