

Trust Statement – 3rd October 2023

The Shrimpers Trust cautiously welcomes the news that an agreement is in place, in principle, for Ron Martin to be replaced as the owner of Southend United Football Club.

It is a relief that this deal has been confirmed, at the eleventh hour, to safeguard the future of our football club, and that this evening's National League fixture against Oxford City is unlikely to be the last for Southend United.

Whilst we have had the opportunity to meet with the head of the new consortium, Justin Rees, and have maintained a dialogue with him over a period of time, we are keen for the identities of the other members of the consortium and full details of their proposed ownership structure to be disclosed.

The 'Martin Model' of football club ownership has had its day, and we hope this announcement signals a new dawn at Roots Hall, with all staff being able to look forward to receiving their wages on time, creditors being paid promptly and supporters being fully engaged with club operations.

Over the course of the past 12 months Southend United supporters have found a voice, whether that is through raising money for our hardworking and dedicated staff, the lobbying of local and national politicians and councillors, marching through the streets of the city, or participating in consultations. Everyone deserves to enjoy a period where our club is not under existential threat.

We are grateful for the efforts of all concerned to broker this deal, but it is frustrating that talks between Ron Martin, Justin Rees, Southend-on-Sea City Council and the city's Members of Parliament have taken place without the inclusion of any form of formal supporter representation.

There are also question marks about Ron Martin's ongoing involvement in any project or development that either directly or indirectly affects Southend United FC and its finances.

We hope, and anticipate, that those concerns will be addressed over the coming weeks and months as we welcome the new ownership group and look forward to building a productive relationship with them.

There is an opportunity now for everybody involved in Southend United Football Club to harness the commitment, passion and determination shown during the recent past to create a brighter future for our football club. As fans, we stand ready to play our part.

The Shrimpers Trust Board.