

NEWSLETTER – Vol. 19 Iss. 01. – September 2023

INTRODUCTION – Paul FitzGerald

I hardly know where to start with this Newsletter, a tumultuous time off the pitch and a remarkable experience on. The contrast could not be greater, the ongoing performance of our owner pitted against staff, management and players.

As I write this introduction, having just returned from Westminster following our meeting with the Sports Minister (Stuart Andrew), I can only reflect on how football generally needs to get its act sorted before more clubs go the way of our beloved.

The visit alongside Anna Firth MP had a dual purpose;

Firstly, and most importantly, to establish whether Central Government can provide any help to our club. There was of course sympathy, but obviously no easy mechanism, for obvious reasons. Bury, however, set a precedent some time ago, when they were able to obtain a grant from the Community Ownership Fund. That fund is still open (until October 11th) and the minister promised to host a follow up meeting with those responsible for distribution. Any grant from this fund will come with significant strings attached and will most likely need matched funding, which bearing in mind the timescales, is unlikely to be able to come from supporters. However, further meetings are planned with Local Government, where the Trust and Anna intend to try to provide a mechanism to provide that matched funding.

Of course, if the proposed sale of the club goes ahead, this might not be necessary, but, as I write this, there is no formal bid and we appear to be drifting towards administration (more likely than to be wound up in court IMO).

I really hope all the work we are doing is.....wasted...

The Trust have established a good relationship with Justin Rees (or "Australian chap" as Ron Martin referred to him in court) and are keeping him informed of all actions, to ensure no unexpected conflicts occur. Justin appears hugely supportive of formal fan involvement and has suggested several possible routes to achieve that, if his takeover is successful.



Secondly – as we have been under the Martin Model for so long, the Trust feels that it could help shape the Government's regulation and maybe even provide back check for what might have happened had regulation been in place all those years ago.



We made the point that Ron Martin still does not fail the current Fit and Proper Owners test. How is that possible??

Secondly, Ron wasn't always bad (some would say) so at what point in his 25-year tenure would the proposed regulation have kicked in.

You'd have to hope it would have been at the point he attempted to transfer all the club's assets to himself. Time will tell on that, but one thing is certain, when we come through this mess, in whatever form we are left with, the fans will have a stake going forward.

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On Friday (1st September) I met with local Labour Party councillors after their public support initiative and proposed motion regarding our club. It was an hour well spent, with the key takeaway being that they committed to work with all parties to help save our club. So often in local government one side simply objects to the other side out of principle. I am assured by Councillor Dent and his colleagues that this will not be the case with our football club. Of course, I don't always believe politicians, but I do this time.

On Thursday 7th September, a full council meeting discussed Southend United, following the Labour Motion as above. I think the unanimous vote is a milestone step for our football club and paves the way for further supporter involvement.

The Trust's 40K loan was not repaid, as expected, by the revised repayment date and the promised personal guarantee was also not forthcoming. Justin Rees made reference to this in a communication earlier in the week and this will obviously be discussed over the next few weeks as the situation develops.

Despite winning four of our first seven games, we find ourselves at the foot of the League. Our 10-point deduction was, of course, due to the National League taking a dim view of our inability to pay our debts. They had made it very clear what they would need to do if our owner did not clear the debts by the time of the Winding Up Petition on 23rd August. Despite assurances at the previous hearing, debts were not cleared. Ron Martin's expectation that a deal to sell the club might be concluded by the 23rd, were clearly unrealistic and of course, the National league acted. For those attending the High Court on the day, an anxious expectation was made worse, by the judge delaying early proceedings to consider several factors. The extent, and size of our debts, brought it home to those present, just how precarious our position is. The judge summed it up nicely before delivering his welcome stay of execution, by saying that, if the company involved were anything other than a football club, then he would have had no hesitation than to put it out of its misery. Our owner now has 42 days (from that point) to resolve. The 90 mins or so in court awaiting our fate put some pressure on those in attendance and was not good for anyone with a heart condition.

Considering the current trying times, I would like to pay tribute to everyone who makes Southend United great, starting with the fans. Without the fans we would be nothing, the following, home and away, has been great this season. We're the voice of SUFC, so keep on singing loud and clear!

The players and management have been nothing short of incredible - we have a group of top professionals who wear the shirt with pride. This squad never gives in, and it's a testament to their character. They embody the #NeverGiveUp motto that sits above the tunnel.

Last but certainly not least, a huge thank you to the staff behind the scenes who may not always get recognised in the same manner. From the media team, to the commercial department, hospitality and catering, to the ground staff, each and every one of you deserves praise for your efforts.

Our **Hardship Fund** plea certainly touched the heart strings and has so far raised over 30K – thanks to all who have donated. The fund is still open if you'd like to make a donation. <https://www.shrimperstrust.co.uk/product-category/hardship-fund-donations/>

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We would also like to thank Trust member Sam Duckworth for organising a fantastic gig at Chinnerys on the 23rd August, raising a sum of £2238 for the Hardship Fund! The show received top reviews on ShrimperZone and Twitter alike, a worthwhile escape at the end of a rough day for everyone associated with Southend United. Dave Shields from Stadium Photography took this fantastic picture, capturing the emotion of the evening.

You can find more of Dave's photos @davethephoto on Twitter, or on his website <https://footballstadiumphotography.co.uk/>

A particular thanks also should go to the Joker Comedy club in Chalkwell, who arranged a fundraiser (featuring Terry Alderton) on Thursday 3rd August, a very enjoyable night too by all accounts.



We also will not forget the solidarity of the wider football family, in particular, the York City Trust and their club Chairman Matt Ugla, whose generosity helped the success of this initiative go way beyond our expectations. We look forward to seeing our new friends at the home and away fixtures this year, so we can thank them in person.

Finally (and most importantly), thank you to our incredible staff. It's truly astounding that you are still here, fighting for the football club. We will always do what we can to support you.

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Were you at our **Match for James** back on 28 May? What an occasion that was, the culmination of a huge effort by our ex-players association to help our former Shrimper James Walker, who now lives in a residential home in Southend, requiring 24-hour care.

It was a beautifully sunny day, and circa 500 fans went along to Bowers & Pitsea's Len Salmon Stadium to see a Southend Legends team take on serial charity fundraisers The Farke Knights. Tilly & Brush were reunited as a management duo for the day and their squad, including the likes of Simon Royce, Adam Barrett, Anthony Grant, and Kevin Betsey, ran out 8-2 winners, with Lee Barnard bagging a hat trick. Paul Byrne came over from Ireland, Francis Laurent travelled from France, and many others came long distances to support their former teammate.

The best thing of the day was to see James's smile as he was led on to the pitch by his mum and carer to receive the applause and kick the game off. In another emotional moment, the match was stopped during the second half as Damian Scannell and his keep-fit team of 'Superdads' came on to the pitch after completing a 50-mile run to get there.



Over £20,000 was raised and that money is already being put to good use to help secure James much-needed additional therapy sessions to aid his rehabilitation after his cardiac arrest back in 2019, which left him with severe physical and mental disabilities. We are staying in regular contact with James and his family. Indeed, Dawn has told us that James is making good progress, which in part is due to YOUR contributions to the campaign to help him. So, a heartfelt THANK YOU to all who helped and participated.

SUEPA's squad has now passed the 460-member mark, one by-product of the recent sad exodus from our playing squad, being that a number of those departing have joined up to belong to our ever-growing former players family. Sean Hobson, Rhys Murphy, Steve Arnold and Jon Benton are now in the SUEPA ranks and each told us that they left with a heavy heart but fond memories of their time at Roots Hall.

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Retro Shirts An apology:

At our retro shirt event last season v Dagenham there was a lot of interest in the retro shirts on display and many were bought on the day.

Unfortunately, due to supply and transport problems Chablais Sports struggled to deliver the merchandise on time so supporters were having to wait quite a while before receiving their shirts. Paul Jago owner of Chablais Sports wanted to issue the following statement.

"We at Chablais Sport are proud of our link with the Shrimpers Trust through our World Retro brand. We are a family business with the enthusiasm of genuine long term football fans.

We know that what is important is accuracy and prompt delivery. We have fought through the delays and errors caused by the collapse of one supplying factory, and the guidance of a new one towards the quality we demand.

Thank you for your patience. These thanks are not just words, but a practical thank you, we are reducing all Southend prices by £5 until December 31st, covering the Christmas present period. That will come out of our pockets, as we will continue to give a donation from each shirt sold to the Shrimpers Trust.

Most importantly, we fervently hope to see football in Southend return to health, and its normal place in the football world".

Just a reminder that the latest shirt on our website is the 2008/2009 home shirt as used in the recent James Walker Charity match and also from that game, the tracksuit tops are available through our website.



The Shrimpers Trust Board try our best to represent the views and interests of all fans, but we accept we will not please everyone. We are an elected group of volunteers who act on our belief on what is best for the Football Club, whilst being accountable to our membership. We are always looking to diversify our board and membership, and should you wish to get more involved or would like more information please contact me at chairman@shrimperstrust.co.uk

We would love to hear from you.

Paul FitzGerald

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP FUND – EOI SUBMITTED

As part of its efforts to help secure the future of Southend United, the Shrimpers Trust has been exploring potential pathways to fan involvement forming part of the club's future ownership structure. One such pathway could be community ownership.



Community Ownership

The Shrimpers Trust, which represents over 1000 supporters of Southend United Football Club, with the support of Anna Firth MP and Southend-on-Sea City Council, has submitted an Expression of Interest to the Community Ownership Fund (COF), administered by the UK Government's Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), to seek to bring ownership of the freehold of Roots Hall Stadium and its facilities into the hands of those who value it most – our local community of Southend-on-Sea.

This is not just about securing Southend United's future. The Expression of Interest will let DLUHC and the Government know that our community is serious about keeping and enhancing Roots Hall, about fulfilling its potential as a pivotal community asset, and about realising all of the opportunities and positive influence that it can bring to the health and wellbeing of the local community and economy. It lays out how this could happen and what those opportunities look like and, if successful, the partners will be invited to make a full application for financial support. This forms part of an extensive project to explore all avenues available to increase the role that supporters play in the security and long-term sustainability of Southend United FC.

The result of forthcoming Government legislation related to football governance should be that clubs like ours no longer become a burden on their communities with their facilities suffering from a lack of investment. The legislation also calls for mechanisms that allow greater fan involvement, and we are grateful for the support from policy officials within the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Football Supporters' Association (FSA) in working with us to investigate and highlight the issues blighting Southend United FC as well as exploring pathways to help our club and others in similar situations to turn things around.

What is the Community Ownership Fund?

The COF has 4 strategic objectives:

- to provide targeted investment for communities to save and sustain local assets for community use when they would otherwise be lost
- to strengthen capacity and capability in communities, supporting them to shape their places and develop sustainable community businesses
- to empower communities in left behind places to level up
- to strengthen direct links between places across the UK and the UK Government

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Programme outcomes

For the purposes of this Fund, community ownership refers to the ownership and management of local community assets by a community organisation, in order to deliver benefits for the community and place.

This could be that the community outsources operations to the football club/a 3rd party as part of a secure, long-term lease agreement. This will also allow the community to explore other grants and investment opportunities that might aid further refurbishments/essential developments.

The fund provides up to £2m of capital match funding for the purchase of assets, refurbishment of assets and for feasibility studies for future investment opportunities.

What this might look like at Roots Hall

There are multiple success stories involving greater fan ownership and community stadium models, with the most well-known and recent being Brentford FC's Brentford Community Stadium. The Expression of Interest allows us to work with DLUHC, bid writers, specialist consultants and to call upon the fan base to bring their skills and resources to the table. It will allow us to actively explore how fan investment models could help form a new ownership structure for Southend United, and how community involvement in the stadium might benefit not only the club, but the wider City of Southend-on-Sea.

Does this mean that the community will own Southend United Football Club itself?

No, the expression of interest is the way to kick off the process of potentially utilising Government funding for Levelling Up and enhancing communities like ours to bring Roots Hall and its facilities into community ownership. This will, of course, have a positive impact on the club itself.

As things stand, The Shrimpers Trust does not intend to attempt to buy the football club, and we have no desire to block the pathway for anyone that would deliver a fit and proper ownership model.

We do, however, believe that meaningful fan involvement should form a crucial part of that future ownership model. We encourage you to have your say in helping to shape this approach as and if it progresses. You can do this by joining the Shrimpers Trust if you have not done so already, and by participating in upcoming surveys so that we can build upon the research already undertaken in previous monthly member surveys to further explore how this approach might look.

MEMBERS SURVEY – SEPTEMBER 2023

The Shrimpers Trust can now reveal the results from the September edition of our new monthly survey for members on matters relating to Southend United FC and the Trust's operations.

On Wednesday 6th September we sent five questions to our adult members, which were as follows:

- Q1: How do you feel about the principle of protesting about the ownership of Southend United FC?*
- Q2: Would you participate in specified forms of protest?*
- Q3: If there was an opportunity for supporters to obtain a stake in the future operation of Southend United FC, how much would you be willing to contribute on a monthly basis?*
- Q4: Should the Shrimpers Trust commit any funds to Southend United FC during the current situation?*
- Q5: If away games were screened at Roots Hall, in the Shrimpers Bar, how likely is it that you would attend?*

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398 members (40.61% of the total adult membership) took the time to respond, and we again thank everyone for providing their feedback and participating in the survey before the deadline of 5:00pm on Wednesday 13th August. This represented an increase of almost 50 respondents from the August survey, although with an increased adult membership, the percentage responding dropped marginally.

The results have again provided the Shrimpers Trust Board with important information to take forwards. There was a clear indication that the majority of Shrimpers Trust members (almost 90% of respondents) agreed with the principle of protesting against the current owner of the football club, Ron Martin. Only 12 of the 398 respondents to this question did not agree with the principle of protesting.

In relation to the forms of protest, there was clear support from respondents for symbolic protests, with 286 respondents (72.59%) saying they would participate in actions such as chanting or holding up signs and banners against the club's owner.

A further 211 respondents (53.55%) stated they would participate in visual protests such as posting on social media or leafletting. There was much less support for disruptive, mobile or personal action and 66 respondents stated they would not participate in any form of protest.

Moving on to potential monthly contributions in return for supporters to purchase a stake in the future operation of Southend United Football Club, 92.13% of respondents indicated they would be willing to contribute if the opportunity arose.

Although we were not asking for pledges, the indication was that almost £8000 pounds per month, translating to almost £100,000 annually (£95,616) could be raised from those that completed the survey. The most popular potential monthly contributions were £10 (29.44%) and £20 (28.93%).

Respondents to this survey were split regarding the question of the Shrimpers Trust committing funds to the football club during the current situation, with 190 (48.84%) agreeing and 200 (51.41 %) disagreeing. This result was inconclusive.

Finally, almost 50% of respondents stated it was unlikely they would attend screenings of away games at Roots Hall. 120 of 397 respondents said it was highly unlikely they would watch and 76 more suggested they were somewhat unlikely to do so, with a further 73 undecided.

Full results and analysis from this survey and the first survey carried out in August can be found on the Trust Website here <https://www.shrimperstrust.co.uk/latest-news/shrimpers-trust-surveys/>



MEMBERSHIP

Life Membership (Total 306)

Welcome to New Life Members Tracey Ransome, Ken Adamson, Martyn Hollands, Howard Tiffin, Eric Marshall, David Slade, Peter Round, Brad Simpson, Alex Manning, Ian Nichols, Robert Pigram, Matt Monk, Robin Macdonald and Jamie Finlinson.



Life Membership of the Trust currently costs £100.00 or £70 if aged 70 or over. An email account is required for Life Membership.

If you are interested in joining this group please contact our Membership Secretary, Paul Yeomanson via email at membership@shrimperstrust.co.uk.

You can also join up as a Life Member in the Membership Section of the Trust Website www.shrimperstrust.co.uk, and postal applications will also be accepted at Shrimpers Trust, PO Box 5830, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 9FD.

Welcome to New Members since the last Newsletter

Donna Alderman, Mark Amis, Martin Armstrong-Fox, Stephen Arrowsmith, George Ashley, Dominic Bailey, Stuart Bailey, Roger Baines, Kevan Baker, Peter Baker, Mark Baldwin, Simon Barker, Andy Barton, Billy Bates, Stuart Bates, James Beattie, Ed Beavan, Ron Black, Gordon Bocking, Lee Boyce, Martin Bridge, Tom Brooks, Kay Burton, Norman Burton, Luke Bye, Paul Cambridge, Alan Carey, Sam Carey, Joanne Chapman, Stewart Chapman, Linda Clark, Peter Clark, Daniel Clark-Frew, Andy Collins, James Collins, Clifford Collis, Mark Coleman, Gary Daley, Jenny Davies, Justin Dawson Andrew Dennison, Steve Desborough, Daniel Dobisz, Sam Duckworth, Archie Dunnill, Matthew Ebbs, Martin Ellis, Steven Ellis, Tony Emery, Trevor Emery, Liam Fane, Graham Fidgeon, Alan Fincher, Jamie Finlinson, Scott Fleming, Mark Foan, Selwyn Foreman, Paul Forsyth, Brett Foster, Ben Galpin, Robert Ganley, Mark Gannon, Darren Gibbinson, Colin Green, Paul Green, Mark Groom, Paul Hague, Alan Hale, Andy Hales, Barry Hall, Colin Hall, Luke Hall, Christopher Hardy, Julie Hardy, Jon Hardy, Baz Harmer, Martin Harris, Sean Harris, Sharon Harrison, Nicholas Haynes, Joshua Helmer, Sam Herrington, Piers Hewitt, Alec Hitchman, Martyn Hollands, James Hood, Daryl Hopkins, Derrick Howard, Neal Hughes, Doug Ithell, Graham Jamieson, Kenneth Jarvis, Stanley Jeeves, Raymond Jervis, Mark Jiggins, Peter Jones, Lucy Kempen, Peter Kempen, Shane Ketchley, Sara King, Dan Kirkland, Gavin Kirkman, Tim Laken, Michael Lancaster, Kevin Lansdale, Paul Lee, Bethany Liddle, Charlotte Liddle, Jamie Liddle, Hils Loveless, Robin Macdonald, Alex Manning, Eric Marshall, Paul Marubbi-Hamer, Lee Mason, Roy Matthews, Colin Mays, James McLean, Malcolm McLeod, Paul Mellor, Matt Monk, Lee Morgan, Anne Moss, Danny Moss, Charlie Mullard, Alex Muscat, Simon Nead, Ian Nichols, Frank Norris, Kevin Ovens, David Pagram, Anthony Pankhurst, Matt Patanden, Colin Patch, Gary Peet, Liz Perrin, Carolyn Peters, Leon Pezzuolo, Robert Pigram, Ian Pile, Tara Poore, Curtis Prout, Vicky Prout, Jason Pullen, Glen Rayner, Martin Reed, Max Reed, Ian Richardson, Alex Robertson, Jason Rodwell, Kerry Roff, Peter Round, David Roust, Adam Rowe, Tyrinne Rutherford, Terry Salmon, Michael Sargent, Ian Scoble, David Scott, Thomas Sharman, Denis Sibley, Leigh Simpkins, Brad Simpson, David Slade, Ollie Smith, Richard Smith, Matthew Spenceley, Miller Spendiff, Johanne Springett, Carl Stillaway, Pauline Stonehouse, John Stuart, Mark Stuart, Joe Styles, Christopher Taylor, Russell Taylor, Howard Tiffin, David Thompson, Andrew Turner, Callum Turner, Mark Turner-Case, Phil Turnpenny, Jane Tyler, Patricia Tyler, Anthony Tyndall, Symon Vegro, Dylan Walsh, Matthew Warner, Adam Warren-Ward, Paul Watkin, Chris Watkins, Dennis Watling, Adam Webb, Norman Webb, Richard Webb, Hannah Welch, Richard Welham, Liam Williams, Barry Willis, Dan Wilson, Jeff Wilson, Lewis Wilson, Lesley Winterflood, Rona Wood and Steven Wright.

***Please note that the Shrimpers Trust would like to know if any of its members' addresses change, or if they have a new email address so that newsletters and other correspondence can be sent to the correct address. Please send any change of address details to **The Shrimpers Trust, PO Box 5830, Southend on Sea, SS1 9FD**, by email to membership@shrimperstrust.co.uk or alternatively fill in our on-line contact details form which can be found in the Membership Section of the Trust Website, www.shrimperstrust.co.uk ***

FUNDRAISING

100 Club

The latest winners in the scheme, pulled out of the hat during weekly draws since the last newsletter were **Anthony Pearce, John Onslow, Andrew Haddow, Andrew Perry, Mike Roles, Philip Endell, Mike Smith, Paul Brice, Rob Warman, Martin Simper, Andy Leeder, Lorraine Posnack, Paul Brice, Darren Posnack, Peter Hall** and **Albert Chittock**.

The nature of the 100 Club means the more people that sign up, then the bigger the weekly prize.

100 Club Application Form and Standing Order Form have been included with this newsletter so why not join up and put yourself in with a chance of winning the weekly prize.

For further information, you can contact Alan Perry at alanperry4@hotmail.com or by calling 07901 845012.

Remember, the more people that sign up to the scheme, then the higher that prize will be. By setting up a standing order for just £5 a month (or just £60 a year), you put yourself in with a chance of winning around £31 per week at the present time.

Quid A Goal

Our Quid a Goal scheme is now up and running for the 2023/24 Season.



The total after the game vs York City played on 16th September is £643.25.

This is how it works. Those who support the scheme with a pledge have their name displayed in the United match programme on a regular basis.

We ask you to pledge £0.25, £0.50, £1.00 or more, under various headings such as clean sheets, various players scoring goals, or team goals (you can choose anything reasonable!). This does not have to cost you a fortune, as you can easily judge in advance, how much your pledge will cost you come the end of the season.

For example, the Blues rarely manage more than 70 goals in a season from 1st team matches (21/22 League goals - 45).

A £0.25 per goal pledge would therefore most likely, not cost you more than £15.00, come the end of the season. If funds are tight, how about £1 for every goal scored by our full backs? If you chose to do £0.50 per point and we finished up with 80 points. At the end of the season, we will write to you thanking you for your support of this initiative asking you to send us a cheque for the amount of £40.00.

If you would like to join our Quid a Goal scheme please complete and return the enclosed form and we will do the rest.

SHRIMPERS TRUST MERCHANDISE

TROLLEY KEYRING

Recycled Eco Trolley Coin Keyring – Printed with a New Trust Logo on a White Background.

Priced at **£2.00** the Key Ring can be purchased from our new online shop at www.shrimperstrust.co.uk or from the Trust Information Stand in the Shrimpers Bar prior to any home game.



NEW SHRIMPERS TRUST PIN BADGE



2023 Shrimpers Trust Hard Enamel Pin Badge

Based on the new Shrimpers Trust Logo featuring a Shrimp and the three Essex Seaxes, the badge measures 9.1 mm x 30 mm and has a white background with blue lettering and raised nickel metal edging.

Priced at **£3.00** the Badge can be purchased from our new online shop at www.shrimperstrust.co.uk or from the Trust Information Stand in the Shrimpers Bar prior to any home game.

These and other items in our merchandise range can be purchased online in the New Trust Shop at www.shrimperstrust.co.uk or from the Trust Information Stand in the Shrimpers Bar prior to any home game.

Please note that as well as the usual cash and cheque payments we can now accept Credit/Debit Cards for all purchases including Merchandise & Memberships.



SHRIMPERS TRUST ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Follow us on twitter @shrimperstrust and like and follow us on Facebook “ShrimpersTrust” to keep up to date with all our latest news and events.

You can also follow shrimperstrust on Instagram and you can connect with us on LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/company/75033660

THE SHRIMPERS TRUST
OFFICIAL AWAY SUPPORTERS TRAVEL
ORGANISER FOR SOUTHEND UNITED F.C.

07892 905338 | travel@shrimperstrust.co.uk | www.shrimperstrust.co.uk

[facebook.com/sufcofficialawaytravel](https://www.facebook.com/sufcofficialawaytravel) | twitter.com/shrimperstrust

We also have a dedicated Away Travel Facebook Page “sufcofficialawaytravel” where you can find all the latest details on the Official Away Travel for Southend United.

19th September 2023