

Trust Statement – 23rd December 2023

The Shrimpers Trust is pleased that a deal to end Ron Martin’s tenure as Chair of Southend United Football Club has been agreed, and that contracts have been exchanged to enable the consortium led by Justin Rees to take control.

We would like to begin by once again paying tribute to the club’s loyal staff, club officials, football department and players, who have held Southend United together during this extremely testing period and under the most trying of circumstances, often whilst suffering personal hardship. Their commitment at this time will never be forgotten; when the fans needed it most, they gave us a club worth supporting.

The sale of the club paves the way for the lifting of a transfer and registration embargo that has been in place since September 2022. It is an extraordinary achievement by Kevin Maher, Darren Currie, Mark Bentley and our hardworking squad that performances have not suffered in such supreme adversity, and a strong bond has been forged between players and supporters as a result. We look forward to seeing what John Still and the recruitment team can do with their hands untied to augment the existing squad.

We would also like to salute the efforts of all supporters who have continued to back the team on the pitch at home and away during this period, whilst combining this with performing important roles off it, whether that has been raising the club’s plight in the national media, lobbying local politicians and councillors, protesting against the ownership at his property and at Roots Hall or liaising with other supporters’ organisations around the country.

We thank those who have shown patience and diligence in brokering this deal during a lengthy process. We recognise the complexity of the situation and are grateful in particular to Anna Firth, MP for Southend West, and Southend-on-Sea City Council, led by Tony Cox, for their crucial involvement.

To Justin Rees and the other members of the consortium: welcome to Roots Hall and to your term as custodians of Southend United Football Club. Thank-you for taking on the challenge of restoring this club to the English Football League whilst providing us with a sustainable future, free from the permanent existential fears of our recent history.

You will know all about our passion and support for our football club. Fans of this club want to play a vital and active role in Southend United’s future and, during the past 15 months in particular, have shown our readiness to do so. We wish you all the best in your endeavours, and look forward to working with you to help you achieve our combined objectives.

Merry Christmas and Up The Shrimpers!

The Shrimpers Trust Board.