

## **Trust Statement – 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

**The Shrimpers Trust was pleased to work with Anna Firth MP on composing some questions for yesterday's final oral evidence session of the Football Governance Bill Committee.**

Whilst we hope that the takeover by COSU completes soon, it should not be forgotten that Southend United FC has been, and remains, a glaring example of bad football club ownership, and of exactly what the Independent Football Regulator will be protecting against.

The Shrimpers Trust has worked hard to position our football club as a poster child of the necessity for improved regulation in football, and it has been heartening to hear Southend United FC and its recent plight being held up as an example in the Government response, used as examples in Bill evidence sessions, and mentioned in Parliament. Southend United supporters have all played a part in this landmark moment.

We are pleased that politicians of all parties appear to be prioritising community, culture and heritage over the private ownership rights of a few individuals to treat our football clubs as their personal playthings. Whilst it's unfortunate that something as dear to so many people as football is under a spotlight for unsustainable governance and operations, there is hope in legislation from Government to protect, reform and regulate one of the most important things that the UK has given to rest of the world.

Whilst the Bill continues its journey through the legislative process, we would like to reiterate our continuing eagerness to feed in our experiences and thoughts. The Bill must be robust, and the Regulator must have the teeth necessary to do what is intended and be free from cynical influence and vested interests.

Finally, we'd like to acknowledge and thank Anna Firth for her tireless work on this subject. As the local MP for a football club in existential crisis due to bad governance and ownership, her voice on the Football Governance Bill Committee is an important and timely one.

The Shrimpers Trust Board.