

## **Trust Statement – Update To Members – 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2024**

**As we prepare for another important week in the history of Southend United Football Club, the Shrimpers Trust would like to provide the following update to members and supporters.**

The extensive statements provided by the leader of Southend-on-Sea City Council, Daniel Cowan, over the past fortnight, have set out explicitly where negotiations stand between the Council and the Martin family.

The events of Friday afternoon and evening were a cause of great anxiety for all supporters. Despite an agreement eventually having been reached, the Council and the Martin family are still to negotiate a new Heads of Terms, and we are still to find out how the consortium seeking to acquire the club (COSU), feel about developments.

We are grateful to Cllr Cowan for the time he has granted to this important and complex deal for the whole city, as well as the future of our football club. Representatives of the Shrimpers Trust Board have been in constant contact with him, including numerous online calls, helping to inform and influence where appropriate.

We have also maintained an ongoing dialogue with Justin Rees, the head of the consortium. We believe there is a desire within COSU to be collaborative with supporters and to seek advice and knowledge, even if there may be a natural divergence of opinion at times. We appreciate the commitment they have shown to date, but their continued involvement should not be taken for granted.

We have reached out to the general manager of the National League, Mark Ives, to attempt to understand his view of the ongoing situation, although we are yet to receive a formal response and we are therefore reaching out to the league via alternative avenues. We are doing all we can to steer all invested parties towards a positive outcome for Southend United.

We are aware there was some disappointment expressed that the Shrimpers Trust did not support protests arranged against the Martin family. We took on board advice from both the Council and COSU that protests would negatively affect the Martin family's desire to negotiate and would provide a distraction. There has been, and will be, times when protest is the right course of action. We don't feel this was one of those times.

We had a very useful call with the Football Supporters' Association on Thursday evening, using the benefit of their knowledge and experience to talk through a range of scenarios. Their ongoing support is much-appreciated as we continue to plan for all eventualities, and they have put us in contact with a number of supporters' organisations who have suffered in similar circumstances in the past.

As difficult as it is, we have to be ready for all possibilities over the next few days. Whilst we hope for the best, it could be the case that COSU walk away, collapsing the deal between the Council and the Martin; the deal could collapse of its own accord if the Martins move the goalposts again; the club could be placed in administration or it could be liquidated following the Winding-Up Petition served by Stewarts Law, which is set to be heard on Wednesday.

We have put a lot of effort into being prepared for whatever happens. Our priority, as it has always been, is to save the current club and its heritage status within the community. If the club is placed into administration, we will work with the appointed administrator and attempt to plot a path out with interested parties as a matter of urgency.

We have also established contact with the relevant authorities should Southend United FC be wound-up on Wednesday and are cognisant of the relevant regulations if we need to establish a phoenix club. This would be a last resort and would involve an intense period of work to ensure participation in the 2024/25 season, but the groundwork has been put in place.

Finally, we have worked on a submission to list Roots Hall Stadium as an Asset of Community Value. We believe the application is ready to submit although, to avoid any complications it could cause to ongoing negotiations, we have held off to this point. We will confirm the submission and provide further details in due course.

We hope this update has provided some context as to the scope of the work undertaken by representatives of the Shrimpers Trust Board during the past few weeks. The situation is rapidly changing and, even in the course of composing this message, representatives have continued to take calls to further understand what is happening.

**We will make further comment as the situation continues to evolve over the coming days and weeks. In the mean-time, we value the feedback of our members and you can contact us on [info@shrimperstrust.co.uk](mailto:info@shrimperstrust.co.uk)**

Finally, we are acutely aware of the worry and stress the current situation is causing. We hope anyone who is struggling with anxiety knows they are not alone. There are people who can help, and further details about some of those organisations are available via the websites listed below:

SECE Mind: [www.secemind.org.uk](http://www.secemind.org.uk)  
Livewell Southend: [www.livewellsouthend.com](http://www.livewellsouthend.com)  
Mind: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)