



Supporters Group Statement – 25th June 2024

Southend United fans everywhere are tired. The city of Southend-on-Sea is tired. We are all tired of the Martin family; tired of their greed, tired of their emotional blackmail and tired of their false dawns.

As the situation around Southend United becomes more complex, it gets harder to find the clarity needed to digest, process and reiterate that this wonderful football club stretches beyond lease agreements, debt and turmoil. We have to remind ourselves of its history and the memories we cherish, because the present is traumatic. We know supporters all over the world feel this too.

As it stands, common sense is prevailing and the complex property transaction that underpins this deal is being decoupled from the takeover. Everyone involved in this takeover is aware that Ron Martin only has one option to deliver his housing: Southend-on-Sea City Council. He has run out of road and he knows it; weeks of last-minute tweaks are over.

This really is it. Ron Martin must finally admit that to himself. Take this deal or lose everything. In the latter scenario, the unthinkable happens; everyone's dreams will die at the behest of one man, and he – and his family – will forever be remembered for gambling and losing, holding a city to ransom whilst destroying one of its prized possessions.

Southend United means so much to so many people. Roots Hall is a place where families gather, where friendships are forged and relationships are started. The football club is a thread which binds the local community together, which bolsters the economy and which acts as living and breathing heritage.

This is people's livelihoods. Close to a hundred people are employed by Southend United, whether that be players, coaches or back-office staff, positively affecting the lives of thousands. It is linked to a thriving Community Foundation, bringing joy to people of all ages, and Roots Hall hosts social inclusion projects, the Junior Blues and events held by the Southend United Ex-Players Association.

We thank Southend-on-Sea City Council and COSU for their continued endeavours, and for presenting a resolution that could save Southend United FC. Unfortunately, this is only one of many roads reaching a potentially catastrophic end.

Yesterday, the National League released a statement revealing that the club would be required to pay a £1 million bond unless an agreement for a change of ownership was put in place, or the club could show that it would have the finances in place to survive the 2024/25 season.

The league's General Manager, Mark Ives, was quoted at the first sitting of the Football Governance Bill committee as saying that the National League's financial regulations are "not just about sanctions, but about helping the club make sure that they do not fall off the edge...We have been able to assist [those] clubs to make sure that they survive."

Now is the time for the National League to practice what they have preached and show greater compassion regarding the payment terms of this bond, at the very least, to ensure the club survives. We understand you are as sick of Ron Martin as we are, but please do not punish us for his sins. Now is not the time for others to play games. Don't be the ones to kill the club.

To our creditors, we urge patience. We understand you have leverage, but your leverage is our pain and the supporter-base is exhausted at talking people down and preparing for outcomes. You need to think beyond business; your money only returns if there is a club existing in the first place.

Our final plea is directed towards the football authorities and our politicians. Football and property speculation must be untangled. Too many times football has said 'this must be the last time'. And yet now, once again, our club is on the precipice.

Punishments and regulations must affect owners, not fans, players, coaches and staff. Mechanisms need to be put in place to stop this, and we implore all parliamentary candidates for the upcoming General Election to commit to an independent football regulator that puts fans first, and business second.

We thank the wider football community for their support. Many have felt our pain in the past, and their generosity with knowledge and guidance has been humbling.

The next 24 hours are crucial for our football club. We hope this will be the last time the future is held in the hands of one man but, for now, Ron Martin simply must take the only option available to him and cede to the wishes of the local Council, of COSU and of the club's long-suffering supporters.

We would like to conclude by reiterating that anyone who is struggling with anxiety about this ongoing situation is 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
Livewell Southend: www.livewellsouthend.com
Mind: www.mind.org.uk