

SUFC HISTORY PROJECT GROUP ('THE GROUP') - MINUTES OF MEETING

DATE: 19 January 2026 (by video conference) commencing at 7.00 pm

GROUP MEMBERS PRESENT: Andrew Leeder (Chair), Richard Coxell, Paul FitzGerald, Michelle Gargate, Chris Hunt, James Schooley

ALSO PRESENT: Mike Paterson

MINUTES DISTRIBUTION: the Group, Trust Board members, Justin Rees, Tom Lawrence, Rylee Doe, club website, Trust website

APOLOGIES: Dave Brabbing, Rob Craven, Sam Duckworth, Dave Goody, Paul Hill, Peter Miles, Paul Napper

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING 4 SEPTEMBER 2025

Previously agreed and were available on the club and Trust websites.

MP had been invited to attend the meeting.

An invitation had also been extended to Justin Rees but he was unable to attend.

2. MATTERS ARISING AND OTHER POST-MEETING ACTIONS

2.1 Box corridor project - all prints had been delivered to club (but two had been mislaid and Dave Shields was in the process of getting new ones sorted). A volunteer to put the prints up in the Box Corridor had been sourced by AL and the work had been carried out on the day of this meeting. It was anticipated that a promotional video would be produced by the club.

ACTION - AL

2.2 Sid Broomfield - a 'low key' meeting between Sid's relatives and the club had yet to be arranged

ACTION - SD

2.3 Legacy numbers - two meetings between Rylee Doe and the club had been held (the first meeting also involving PM) to consider ideas and an implementation plan, the last occurring on 08.01.26. A number of significant projects were underway and these were outlined by AL at the meeting. Announcements by the club will be made in the coming months.

What to provide players/former players/relatives of deceased players in recognition of their legacy number and place in the club's history was discussed. Taking into account cost it was agreed at this stage that a framed certificate would be appropriate, though this should typically only be presented in person and usually to those who attend a match at Roots Hall. AL was currently seeking assistance from Stuart Byford regarding certificate design and process, and a quote for frames was being sourced via Dave Shields.

ACTION - AL

2.4 Memorabilia cataloguing - an excellent catalogue had been completed by PM/DG, the memorabilia is now stored in the classroom at Roots Hall, and a meeting was held with the local museum representatives on 23.09.25. A way forward regarding using this, restoration, and display cabinets, was considered under (6) below.

2.5 Website - actions relating to the Cultural Diversity project were covered under (2.12) below.

It was noted that AL set up a 'club history' tab (which has on it an introduction, minutes and a number of player stories) on the Trust site as an interim measure prior to any more detailed history-focused website being considered at a future date. Player stories were being added to this on a piecemeal basis.

2.6 Match programmes - Paul Yeomanson had emailed to RC/AL on 24.10.25 a list of Trust-held programmes to be used as a start for creating a database which perhaps first lists on a spreadsheet season by season the matches and then whether that programme is held by the Trust. The Trust would then set aside programmes to be kept for collection purposes with the remaining ones being used for sales at programme fairs, MTBD, etc. AL said that he has a programme collection which can be added to the mix, and that there are also some programmes saved from the old SUFC storage cupboard. From there, gaps could be considered, seeking missing ones from fan donations, with possibly a longer-term aim being to put covers etc online as part of an overall future history website project. It was noted that on an ad hoc but relatively frequent basis, fan offers for donating programmes are received, many for programmes from 1980's onwards for which the Trust holds many. Storage is an issue and current policy was to decline programme collection offers unless they are pre-1970. After discussion, CH/PF agreed to assist RC in putting together the database.

ACTION - CH/PF/RC

2.7 History presentation to groups - The WI presentation on 17.09.25 had been undertaken by PM and DG (with MG in attendance) - it had been well received but afterwards it was generally considered that the presentation could benefit from being more concise. The ability to roll out a presentation to other social groups had since been highlighted on social media but so far there had not been any take-up. After discussion, it was agreed that a summary note of what the presentation covered would be useful and then this could be sent to appropriate social groups direct. MG undertook to liaise with PM and DG to take matters forward.

ACTION - MG/PM/DG

2.8 Shrimpers Tales - sales at 30.12.25 stood at just over 500, so most of an additional 250 stock ordered remained available (profit to date just over £2,800 with stock in hand too). MTBD 2026 was recognised as perhaps being the biggest next selling opportunity.

2.9 Interviewing Past Players - the stories had now been added to the Shrimpers Trust club history tab and these will be added over time. It was noted that setting up fan interviews might be a future project to explore.

2.10 Shrimpers Bar Update - a limited refurb, funded by the club with volunteer labour (project managed by Josh), had been undertaken during December. Club comedy nights to be held here are now in the diary and a SUEPA 'Evening With' event (Ian Benjamin) has been arranged for 28.02.26. The club continue to have separate plans for the adjoining classroom area which is currently being used as a temporary storage area for the display cabinets and memorabilia. The SUEPA event on 25.10.25 at the Essex County Bowls Club was a sell-out, and the lower-key Dave Worthington book evening at the Shrimpers Bar went ahead on 07.11.25 and was well received.

2.11 Museum - the cabinets from AFC Wimbledon had been delivered to Roots Hall on 04.10.25 (thank you to SUFC fan Graham Lee for his help here). See (6) below regarding next steps.

2.12 Cultural Diversity Project - significant progress has been made here with the project having been launched in October and actions regarding publicising the players involved, issue of the playing cards (orders taken), roll out of the project to schools, and a website were all in hand.

ACTION - SD/PH

2.13 Group Way Forward – it had been proposed that a new Southend United Historical Society, incorporating SUEPA, would be set up to carry forward the actions of this Group, perhaps at some point this year, as part of a Shrimpers Trust re-structuring programme. The separate entity would afford the ability for seeking charitable status, grants etc. A way forward was currently being considered by AL/SD/JS/CH, with it being vital to get the details right from the outset to ensure there was the correct set up in place to successfully apply for grants (especially for new club history projects in a future redeveloped Roots Hall). The current target was to launch the Society for the start of the 2026/27 season. On a related matter, it was agreed at the meeting to bring overseeing of SUEPA projects under the Group (there was currently a small SUEPA WhatsApp Group but that had mostly only been used to consider leads for new signings).

ACTION - AL/SD/JS/CH

2.14 Previous Grounds/Blue Plaque - this project remained under consideration.

ACTION - PM/DG/SD

2.15 Executive box naming - biography sheets for the players had been prepared by the club (with the assistance of Finn Howard and AL). AL was currently awaiting note of a cost for printing from the club to see if this is something that the Group might help with.

ACTION - AL

2.16 Division Four Trophy - a quote for a replica had been obtained from the EFL but the cost was considered to be prohibitive whereas an alternative quote obtained from another supplier was much more competitive. AL advised that the EFL had stated that they were unwilling to give their consent to a copy being made from an alternative supplier. It was agreed that, for a number of reasons, a replica (or close copy) of the trophy could be a significant asset that fans would enjoy. PF undertook to consider copyright aspects and whether a way forward could be found.

ACTION - PF/AL

2.17 Backpass Article: AL's article on club museums had been published in the December edition.

3. FLOODLIGHT CASINGS

These had been due to be scrapped as part of the club refurb of the floodlights, but AL had obtained club agreement to acquire all 88 casings (minus the bulbs which are deemed hazardous and will be disposed of). Nine will be retained by the Group for future display purposes. Within a

few hours of being advertised, reservations for all 77 available, at £100 each, were received and additionally there is a reserve list (now closed) of over 70 names. The first floodlight (22 casings) is due to be refurbished during the second week of February with the timetable yet to be established for the remainder (there are many factors that can affect timing, including weather). Permission had been granted by the club to temporarily store the casings in the classroom by the Shrimpers Bar. It was noted that the current plan was to contact all prospective casing buyers and advertise a first collection date of 27.02.26, with monies being collected in advance via the Trust website. AL will be on hand for this collection date - volunteers will be needed for other dates. It was anticipated that this could become quite an involved process and that we will need to be firm on collection options to make things manageable.

ACTION - AL

4. THE SOUTHEND UNITED PIONEERS

This book project was being undertaken by AL, PF and Terry Hamlyn. It will chart the lives of all 16 of the players in our first 1906/07 season (plus four others including club-founder Oliver Trigg) and the aim is to publish a book (similar size to *'Roots & All'* i.e. circa 100,000 words) in July. AL said that it was proving to be a huge undertaking and taking up vast amounts of time, but the findings so far have been quite remarkable and there are some wonderful stories - it is not just football, it is a wide-reaching dive into social history.

Further, living relatives are being traced for all and, thanks to Terry, have been successful for all cases explored to date. Keith Bird is painting portraits for all 20 (five done to date) - these will be used to create a poster, plus they will be part of the book. What to do with the original oil paintings has yet to be determined - a pop-up museum display in conjunction with Southend Museum is one idea, then perhaps a home can be found for them at Roots Hall. A teaser social media poster about the project was put out in December, and the current aim is that subscriber sales will be sought during circa April/May. The book will be sold via the Trust website and then at various events including MTBD 2026. It will form part of the club 120th anniversary legacy project and, when the fixtures are known for the 2026/27 season. It has been provisionally agreed with the club that we will seek to make the nearest Saturday home match to 01.09.26 a celebration and invite the living relatives of the 20 to come along - many have said they are up for this including some overseas. Ideas so far include the relatives creating a line to clap the teams out on to the pitch and the relatives of our legacy number one player (William 'Jerry' Thomson) carrying the ball out to the centre spot. We have asked the club to reserve the d2 lounge (subject to the fixture schedule) so we can host the relatives there - we will need to fund the cost of this from the SUEPA Fund but will also seek sponsorship.

ACTION – AL, PF

5. SUEPA FUND UPDATE

It was noted that, at 30.12.25, the SUEPA Fund net balance stood at just over £4,000. AL advised that this should be considerably boosted in the coming few months by a) net proceeds from the 28.02.26 SUEPA Evening With event and b) the floodlight casings sales. A full SUEPA Fund spreadsheet account is provided for each Shrimpers Trust Board meeting.

6. MEMORABILIA/DISPLAY CABINETS NEXT STEPS

The following current status was noted:

- We have six display cabinets (with lighting - untested) currently stored in the classroom. They need to be out and either used or stored elsewhere by 01.06.26 (as does the other club memorabilia that was previously stored with SD but is now in the classroom).
- Josh should be calling AL next week to discuss where the cabinets might be placed (and to then put a proposal to the club). Security is an issue. The Boardroom is one option but that can maybe house only one or two. Other options might include the Shrimpers Bar and the East Stand reception area.
- A quote has been obtained from Solopress to replace all of the existing AFC Wimbledon branding (cost circa £400 (post meeting corrected to £850)). This has been placed on hold, but needs acting on once the positioning of the cabinets has been agreed. The existing branding will also need removing and the new branding fitted.
- AL currently holds the cabinet keys.
- A helpful meeting was held with Southend Museum on 26.09.25 (with DG, PM, SD and MP in attendance) and their written advice document was provided on 03.10.25 - they are keen to help.
- Aside from the memorabilia held in the classroom there is some held at the homes of DG and AL.
- AL has asked the TV restoration programme if they would be interested in helping with the 1914 poster but no response has been received to date.
- We have an offer from Chelsea for a free museum visit and to meet their curators, and the same help will be forthcoming from Charlton. Training has also been offered by Southend Museum.

After discussion, it was agreed that we need to:

- Start acting on the Southend Museum advice, deciding what items need restoration, getting quotes (for approval by this Group) and getting things restored.
- Work out what items we could now use to create displays in the six cabinets available and then when the cabinets are in situ/branded, create those displays.

MG undertook to drive matters going forward (once her pub move had been finalised in the next month) and MP agreed to assist where he could. AL will follow up on the meeting with Josh and club agreement regarding display cabinet placement.

ACTION - MG, MP, AL

7. WORKING WITH OTHERS

For reference, AL advised that:

- He had set up a WhatsApp Group for Former Player Group organisers. Following a recent effort to expand this, it now has 30 different clubs represented within it, exchanging ideas on projects, share experiences etc.

- Similarly, he has just joined a WhatsApp Group organised by another person regarding Football Club Museums. This now has 57 members (some clubs have multiple members). Again, lots of ideas sharing – AL will get MG and MP added to it.
- On 14.01.26 he had a video meeting with the Premier League about taking forward a previous idea about creating a national network of former players groups (the PFA after years of debate declined to set one up and TPF are unable to as it will impact on their charitable status). The PL have recently established their own FPG network amongst their 20 members, employ Paul Lake one day a week to run it, and have invited AL to attend (and possibly present) to their next FPG meeting in May (date TBA). Seeking PL help to extend the network to non-PL clubs (but run by the PL possibly with EFL help) is one option now being explored, though it seems there are many different conflicting interests to resolve.

AL viewed that the above networking was useful to us as a Group as and when we want to seek help from others or just share our own experiences, and that it also all helps to promote our club.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

8.1 Echo Article on Southend Athletic – RC advised that this had recently been published and that it would be interesting to find out whether the author (Emma Palmer) would be interested in working with us to tell other club history stories. AL advised that he had already contacted Emma and was currently awaiting a response.

ACTION - AL

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be determined (held on a 'need' basis but possibly within the next two months).

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm