

'We've got nowhere to go'

"WE'VE got nowhere to go". That was the main complaint of members who attended Wycombe Wanderers annual meeting at Loakes Park on Friday night, writes MICHAEL KNOX.

The point was raised by Mr Andy Warboys, who queried the status of the Isthmian League in non-league football. "My opinion is that since Rothmans left the standard has gone down," he commented.

"We should consider in the near future applying for the Southern League. It would prove better and it's well worth thinking about," he added.

Former manager Mr Brian Lee, now vice-chairman with special responsibilities towards the playing side, agreed that the club at present had nowhere to go. "But it's the easy way out to change direction," he said.

"The Isthmian League is not as good as it was. There are standards to get into the league which are not kept up once the clubs are in. It is up to us to stay and influence the Isthmian League to improve their standards," he added.

He then turned his attention to what would happen to the club if they joined the Southern League, which at present is the only way that clubs such as Wycombe can gain entry into the Football League.

"People in this room would suffer if we joined the Southern League," he said. "There would be more travelling and no local derbies. The Southern League offers only one thing — an increase in expenses.

"They have the same fixture problems, players have to get off work early and cannot lead a normal life. Most of

them are miserable full time footballers, who have to work as well."

At the end of his reply Mr Lee said: "I think the Isthmian League were wrong to expand. They got a little bit greedy. It's up to the clubs to get together and influence the running of the league."

Chairman Mr Reg Williams announced that the club were not going to enter the Shaw and Kilburn Floodlit League this coming season. Instead they hope to arrange some attractive friendlies. It was a backlog of their Shaw and Kilburn fixtures that led to the great fixture pile-up at the end of last season.

Mr Lee explained that in addition to the pile-up the Shaw and Kilburn added to the travelling bills. "Attractive friendlies can be arranged with 12 at home. It gives the club more income — that is what it's all about."

Concern was expressed by members at the lack of advertising before matches and the fact that the match boards outside the ground were some times out of date. Mr Williams said he would look into these matters.

SPONSORSHIP

The highlight of the annual report presented by secretary Mr John Goldsworthy, was that once again Wanderers did very well out of sponsorship. They received £200 for finishing third, and approximately £450 from the Sportsmanship Pool.

Wycombe collected only two bookings in the league

season, and over the five years the league has been sponsored they have incurred only six bookings in 210 matches. "We are more than proud of that tremendous record of sportsmanship", he said.

This sponsorship money in addition to the £10,000 transfer fee from Millwall for Ian Pearson enabled Wycombe to make a surplus for the season of £5,000, despite a halving of the proceeds from home matches.

Proceeds from league and friendly matches fell by £2,000 to £6,700, but the main fall came from cup ties, £5,500 to £800. This was partly off-set by the club having to pay less to visiting clubs.

The Malta tour at the end of the season cost the club more than £2,200, but none of the other items went up much more than the annual inflation rates.

The Blues Development Fund brought in more than £17,000. There was no donation received from Wycombe Wanderers Supporters Club, but they were roundly praised for the way they arranged the hiring of trains to their F.A. Trophy games at Bridgend and Goole.

These were said to be outstanding successes with absolutely no trouble from vandalism. In his report Mr Goldsworthy praised them for: "their magnificent organisation."

New manager Andy Williams was unable to attend the meeting, while the list of pre-season friendly matches will be announced in the near future.