

Blues chief blows the whistle on his critics

THE town's top soccer club, Wycombe Wanderers, has slammed back at its supporters who've used Midweek to criticise the club's policies.

A month ago in our Frankly Speaking column, the club was accused of having little interest in promoting closer links with its home town.

And in letters to Midweek recently, the club's committee has come under attack on various fronts.



Midweek offered "The Blues" space for a detailed reply to its critics. The club ignored this offer.

Instead, in last week's match programme, it launched an astonishing attack on its critics and, without naming it, this newspaper.

Club secretary John Goldsworthy wrote: "There has been a fair amount of acrimonious correspondence in the local paper of recent weeks, undoubtedly encouraged by the editorial because of the shortage of copy regarding the club.

"There is no way that the Club is going to be involved in a public slanging match. We are well aware of the game played by the Press to provoke a situation which really does not exist in an effort to fill the pages of a paper when they do not have thought or imagination to do it themselves.



"The correspondent and the Club gain nothing. Only the Press gain with columns filled with otherwise they would have to write themselves.

"In spite of the fact that in the past we have invited supporters to contribute to the programme, we have not received one single letter.

"If you purport to be supporters of this Club why not use the proper medium that is available to air your opinions? Perhaps better, why not ask to meet the Chairman or members of the Committee and have a

personal discussion. We will always meet you.

"Why do people write to a newspaper? Is

'Who can blame them turning their backs?'

COINCIDENTALLY, Midweek received more mail last week about the town's football team.

Mr M. C. Ralph of Brimmers Hill, Widmer End, wrote after reading club secretary Goldsworthy's outburst in the match programme.

"Mr Goldsworthy," he said, "asks why people write to a newspaper. I suspect that people do so for much the same reasons as those which persuaded Mr Goldsworthy himself to write to the local paper during the 1979/80 season in defence of Andy Williams — the manager at the time — whose teams selections had been defying credibility.

"In his letter, incidentally, Mr Goldsworthy said that he was pleased that people had 'put pen to paper', that they had written to the local newspaper.

"My own reasons for writing are that I do indeed like to see my name in print; that I feel that what I have to say is representative of the views of a sizeable cross-section of my fellow supporters; and that I fondly imagine that I am reaching a substantially wider readership in the local paper than I would be in the club programme, the medium advocated by Mr Goldsworthy.

"More importantly (and my first point was tongue in cheek, of course) is that I am probably reaching a fair number of those former supporters who have turned their backs on Loakes Park. And who can blame them?

"In this season of unprecedented misfortune and misconduct, it would be surprising if there was not a certain amount of acrimony in the air.

"But what I detect in the letters to the press is not acrimony but sadness and frustration at the visible and accelerating decline of a once-great club."

it the satisfaction of seeing one's name in print?

"What about the person who has not the personal courage to put his name to a letter, instead it 'name and address supplied'.

"It certainly surprises me that a newspaper that purports to be the voice of the people prints anonymous letters. It tends to make you form the opinion that the writer doubts his own opinion or that the letter is contrived.



"In a discussion with a journalist on a national newspaper, I asked why when you print an article, why don't you print both sides of a story?

"The reply I received was to the effect that if both sides are printed there is no story. I think that fairly sums up the Press."

● Midweek's editor replies: "Mr Goldsworthy's failure to make an intelligent and detailed reply to the club's critics suggests that there is some worth in their accusations that the club is 'out of touch' with the town and its own supporters.

"It really is no good blaming the Press and this newspaper for printing criticisms which are freely volunteered to us.

"The job of a local newspaper is to reflect both sides of an argument. We have offered the right of reply to Wycombe Wanderers but the committee has not responded.

"Rather, the club prefers to launch a ludicrous and unsubstantiated attack on anyone who dares to question the committee's wisdom.

"Our columns remain open for all shades of opinion. And that still includes the committee of Wycombe Wanderers.

"Finally, if Wycombe Wanderers feel they can do without the attention of the local press then we suggest that they try."