

Bucks Free Press

EDITORIAL, ADVERTISING
AND PUBLISHING OFFICES
Gomm Road, High Wycombe.
Telephone: High Wycombe 21212.

ADVERTISEMENT AND
NEWS RECEPTION OFFICE
Free Press House, Castle Street,
High Wycombe.

Blow the whistle on this plan

SURELY Wycombe Wanderers will find it easier to score a goal at Loakes Park than put the ball past Wycombe Council's planning committee.

The club's plan to sell its ground, sloping pitch and all, for retail warehousing should be abandoned before a ball is kicked.

Central Wycombe needs two more such stores like a man needs a hole in the head. Land in the town centre is too precious a commodity to be wasted on such a development.

Public need must come before developer greed and the district looks to the Planning Committee to kick this application out of the ground.

Just think of the many more important uses this land could be put to now there is a chance of it becoming available. Top of the pile, of course, are the needs of Wycombe Hospital. Too often in the past have commercial interests and financial restraints prevented expansion of the hospital's services to the community.

The crying need at the moment is improvement in services for geriatrics and in the field of psychiatry. And if land is to spare after these needs have been met then some attention to car parking would be welcomed.

Educational services, too, could be considered with Bucks College of Higher Education occupying an adjacent site and at the moment coping, inconveniently, with a growing syllabus to meet the demands of local industry by operating from more than one site.

The district's housing needs also must come into the reckoning. The shortage of reasonably priced accommodation for young people and first time buyers, for sale and rent, is most acute.

All these claims, and no doubt many others, are more worthy of the planners' consideration than discount warehousing.

No one objects to the club's ambition to find, eventually, a place in the Football League. That surely must remain a long term dream unlikely to be realised for decades without a major revision of football in this country.

Nevertheless, in many quarters, the club's foresightedness and drive to succeed at the highest level will be welcomed. And it is appreciated that the sale of the Loakes Park ground is an essential in the club's long term plans for a super stadium and ancillary facilities at Sands.

But if the Planning Committee does its duty and serves the real interests of the community, Wycombe Wanderers will need to think again and find another path on its way to the Football League.

Has the hospital missed out again?

EVER since the Health Authority missed the opportunity of buying the land which has now become a Garden and DIY Centre there has been speculation about the possibility of getting Loakes Park if ever it came on the market.

It surely cannot be true that the opportunity has again been missed to develop the services of Wycombe Hospital towards the football ground.

If the application by the developer to build two DIY warehouses on Loakes Park is approved it will indeed be a disaster for Wycombe people for generations to come.

The plans the Health Authority has to provide for elderly patients on the Wycombe site unhappily will not go ahead and the alternatives explored will not be possible because of the prohibitive cost of building suitable facilities further up the Marlow Hill.

As readers will appreciate the services for the elderly mentally ill in particular have for many years, been grossly inadequate in this district.

For years we have struggled to cope with the ever increasing demand because of the expanding population of elderly people. With the projected closure of St John's Hospital, Stone, and the allocation of special development funds from the Regional Health Authority, there seemed recently to be the prospect of at last expanding the service along adequate lines.

If Wycombe Wanderers football ground is developed for commercial purposes, then we should all be thoroughly ashamed that business considerations have submerged an obvious public interest.

I call for the support of the Wycombe population to prevent this happening — and to ensure that Mr John Camp the Authority Chairman is successful in his appeal to the council. Public opinion we know can influence decisions of this nature. We must all feel responsible for this obvious anomaly and raise our voices to prevent a superstore being built on land that clearly the local population needs for an enlarged hospital. — **H. R. Simons, Consultant Psychiatrist, Dept of Mental Health for the Elderly, Shrubbery Road, High Wycombe.**

Increased traffic dangers

SURELY I cannot be the only Wycombe resident who remembers the extensive publicity given to the plans of Wycombe Hospital about 15 years ago, when they were trying to persuade a reluctant football club to sell them their grounds for much-needed expansion, then.

There were architect's models, glossy brochures, exhibitions and open days, all to demonstrate the hospital's cause. But the football club stayed firm and said they could only serve their fans by remaining central and not moving to an out-of-town site which the council had offered.

But now, suddenly, that is quite acceptable. Could it be that the cash inducement is much greater?

Since, by the year 2000, one in 10 of this

country's population will be over 85; which will Wycombe need then — a geriatric unit in the centre of town of 72 beds or two more super-stores.

These stores will dramatically increase the traffic load in an already over-burdened Suffield Road, which will affect those using the hospital and the college.

This increased traffic will also endanger the children who attend the Church of England school in Loakes Road.

On all possible considerations, the whole idea is monstrous. Please put the power of your paper behind preserving Wycombe from the rank hypocrisy of all those concerned in this sordid money-making deal. — **Mrs K. Phillips, Pinewood Road, High Wycombe.**

We love Loakes Park

MANY Wanderers supporters are as distressed as I am at the thought that Loakes Park might be sold for warehouse redevelopment and the club moved to Sands.

The majority of supporters I spoke to at Saturday's match said they would not continue to watch Wanderers if they moved from Loakes Park.

Pensioners find it conveniently near the bus station and many, like myself, sincerely feel Frank Adams' most generous gift should not be sold.

This summer's voluntary work by supporters, painting and repairing the terraces, should show how much the club and

Loakes Park mean to the true "never miss a match" supporters.

Brian Lee's ambitions for the big-time will only bring big league problems to the town, as happened in recent cup matches. Let Wanderers remain a small, friendly club with its nicely old-fashioned ground. We are proud of Loakes Park, with its 80-year-old grandstand and famous sloping pitch.

Loakes Park is Wycombe's past, present and future. Don't insult the memory of Frank Adams by destroying it. — **Stephen Matthews, Tower Street, High Wycombe.**