

Beeks takes over as Lee steps down

BRIAN LEE'S turbulent eight-year reign as Wycombe Wanderers chairman ended this week when he stepped down to make way for local businessman Ivor Beeks.

The GM Vauxhall Conference club announced on Wednesday that Lee has relinquished his position to oversee Wanderers' move to their new ground.

The surprise move comes at the end of a painful season during which Lee came in for some heavy criticism of his handling of boardroom decisions. Many felt that the current board, formed 18 months ago, have not been involved enough in the running of the club.

But Beeks, a director since the inception of the board, has gradually taken an active interest in club affairs, particularly over financial matters.

The decision heralds the start of a new era for the Bucks club. With the move to Hillbottom Road, Sands due to be completed in 1989 and with an ambitious manager at the helm, Wycombe seem to be in the mood to go places.

At Wednesday's Loakes Park press conference Beeks commented: "The future of Wycombe Wanderers is very exciting, particularly the move to the new ground."

"The board believe that this move needs careful planning and a director responsible for overseeing the details.

Challenge

"To this end the present Chairman Brian Lee, who has vast experience from Bisham Abbey and serving on



■ Ivor Beeks - stepping in.

League management committee's, has agreed to act as director and relinquish his position as chairman of Wycombe Wanderers."

Beeks, who runs his family's successful residential and commercial property development business in the town, added: "The move to Sands is one of the most exciting developments in the area. Our ultimate aim is to get into the Football League but the standards they set are exhaustive which is why we must get it right first time."

"Brian Lee has made an invaluable contribution over the past 20 years and the club is indebted to him. I now look forward to the challenge of providing the town of High Wycombe with Football League status."

Lee, a life vice-chairman, will still be involved in the running of the club but predicts his new role will keep him busy for the next two years.

The Yorkshireman has been known as 'Mr Wycombe Wanderers' ever since his appointment as manager in 1968.

During his seven full seasons in charge, Blues won the Ishtman championship four times, finished runners-up twice and were fourth on the other occasion. They reached the semi-finals of the Amateur Cup, won the Anglo-Italian trophy and carried off the Berks and Bucks Cup on numerous occasions.

He had a reputation for bringing the best out of players and in 1976 this talent was recognised when he was made the first England non-league manager.

In 1980 he took over as chairman from Reg Williams a position he maintained until this week. During his term in office the club has enjoyed mixed fortunes under a succession of managers, winning championships, breaking records but also being relegated for the first time in their history.

"Being manager always gave me more satisfaction," said Lee this week. "As chairman you are left in an advisory capacity."

"I am looking forward to my new role because it is an exciting period for the club. It is time for a change and Ivor will be a good chairman."



■ Brian Lee - stepping down.