

Council is failing to support soccer club

AROUND the turn of the century, the Lord of the Manor acceded to a request from his Head Gardener and granted a lease to the Town Football Club. The meadow, located on the outskirts of the town, had a steep slope, but with enthusiasm a pitch and tennis courts were carved out. A stand was erected and the ground became one of the best in amateur football.

The club prospered and became known and respected throughout the country, attracting crowds of 4-5,000 regularly and on one occasion as many at 15,000. As the town's boundaries expanded, the club acquired neighbours in the shape of a hospital and a housing estate. The town councillors and prominent business and professional people were keen supporters.

A former Captain purchased the Freehold and presented it to the Club. It was vested in Trustees to ensure that the Club's assets could not be taken over. Inevitably, the old town became the business centre of the enlarged Borough. The ground, once a country meadow, became a prime target for Developers.

The Club received an offer it could not refuse. Its plans for a new stadium on the outskirts of the town were refused by the successor to the Borough Council, namely Wycombe District Council. An appeal succeeded, but the costs spiralled.

The Taylor Report has recommended that where possible town centre grounds should be re-located to the outskirts. This has been done at Weymouth. Yeovil Town is moving from the town centre, both with the support and encouragement of their district councils.

I wonder whether the old borough council with its 50-50 mix of Tory and Labour councillors would have dealt with the efforts of Wycombe Wanderers Football Club in such a shabby way. I doubt it, the council was always a progressive and innovative body.

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How are the fans going to be controlled?

WITH the completion of the new football ground approaching I have noticed a stream of, no doubt, influential visitors taking a look at the facilities.

Being a daily user of the open spaces around the football ground and also a resident of Lane End Road, I have been wondering when the authorities will be giving explanations as to how people, traffic, parking and litter, will be controlled.

I would consider these authorities to be the football club, High Wycombe District Council and also the police. I know that local residents, and in particular the elderly, would be glad to have these strategies explained.

I do however, wish the club every success in its new venue and hope that the supporters will treat the area considerately.

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