

The council records show differently

IT is a pity that matters of public protection, such as protection of Green Belt and areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, should be trivialised in the media.

It is doubly unfortunate when it comes from a columnist with an influential following such as Arthur Church.

Apparently he has not examined appropriate records in the Council's Planning Department before dashing into print. Had he done so he could have reported more accurately. Personally I have always found officers at all levels willing to provide any information when they are empowered to do so, and invariably, respond to courtesy with courtesy.

These are facts according to the record:

1. He is incorrect in saying the football club is not seeking one square inch of Green Belt/AONB more than they have now.

If this were true the club would not have applied for planning permission for a further substantial slice of Green Belt/AONB for a second football pitch. Neither would the Secretary of State for the Environment and Transport have called in this application and directed Wycombe Council not to grant permission for the new additional area until he had examined the proposals.

Designated Green Belt/AONB comprises the very best of the countryside and in the national interest Department of Environment legislation is designed to protect what little is left for now and for future generations.

2) Arthur Church refers to "the young mountain of earth and chalk to the right of the stadium as being unsightly, environmentally unlovely and quite useless". But he omits to mention the football club is responsible for putting it there in the first place. Furthermore he omits to mention that it is sited in an area for which they have no planning permission and the subject of the Secretary of State's examination.

The Council has shown exceptional forbearance towards the club for the past year in not issuing an enforcement order to remove it. In delaying so long they have created a precedent for other developers to tip anywhere else in the Green Belt. If the football club can get away with it for a year why shouldn't everybody else?

3) Vehicle congestion in the Hillbottom cul-de-sac and Lane End Road junction has been extensively aired in recent issues of Bucks Free Press. At the Public Inquiry in July 1987, the traffic problem was considered. Mr Brian Lee, as Chairman of Wycombe Wanderers Football Club, in his written proof of evidence stated "Since Hillbottom Road is located out of the town the club will be running courtesy coaches..."

There appears to have been no serious attempt to organise an efficient and businesslike "park and ride" service for their paying supporters, despite the fact that the DOE Inspector took account of this proposal when deciding in favour of the present stadium.

Instead of doing so they now apply for planning permission to extend the existing car park which can only add to the traffic congestion and still not accommodate the required number of parking spaces.

4) Dept of Environment draft "Planning policy guidance on sport and recreation" of October 1990 para 36 states "because of the size of the structures involved, football stadia cannot be regarded as appropriate development within an approved Green Belt." Surely that says it all!

Allan Duggin
Barbers Wood Close
Booker

What about being fair to sick and elderly?

IN their criticisms of J Scruton's letter about Wycombe Wanderers' planning application both D Brown and Arthur Church made the central issue that according to all the rules, a football ground should never have been allowed in its present location.

But the move was to be for the benefit of the sick and the elderly (you couldn't get much more emotive than that!) So the club got its new ground. And the sick and the elderly?

Surprise, surprise, their benefits don't materialise. Is there any wonder that the general public become cynical?

Norman Belson
Littleworth Road
Downley