

More concrete will spoil our town

THIS group has considered the report about parking problems at Wycombe Wanderers football ground (BFP February 21) and can understand the knee-jerk response of demanding another car park and a new road.

Such a proposal might just have been plausible ten years ago, but even then it was well recognised that car travel was not appropriate transport where several thousand people wish to concentrate in a small area such as a football stadium, least of all one situated in the Green Belt.

Furthermore, over the last five years or so, experience world wide has been teaching us ever more forcefully, that with widespread car ownership we can none of us drive and park our cars just where and when we wish. Also the police and many local authorities have now gained useful experience in controlling on-street parking, as described in the recent ITV London Programme.

For example, in Kensington, parking in residential streets is restricted to permit holders only. Residents are limited to two permits per household, each costing £57 per year, and these arrangements are enforced.

We note that park and ride has been tried but with little success. Nevertheless, park and ride is the only sensible principle with which to tackle this problem – but simply opening up a school playground and hoping, is not the answer.

What is required is intelligent, enthusiastic collaboration between the clubs (of the home team and their visitors), Wycombe District Council, the police and the bus companies, with the object of thoroughly planning the allocation of sufficient parking places, in regular and temporary car parks well away from the ground, together with efficient bus services to and from easy walking distance to the ground.

Such arrangements, plus other special bus services, must be backed up with absolutely first rate advance publicity, involving the information services within both clubs in question, their local press coverage, posters in pubs, work places, bus and rail stations or wherever, and clear information along the relevant approach roads, starting several miles from the ground.

In addition, lessons must be learned from authorities elsewhere with experience of effectively controlling on-street parking, and then applied to all the vulnerable roads.

It is essential to recognise that people do not readily abandon the cherished privilege and practice of free on-street parking, so we should not expect overnight success. But with wisdom and persistence, drivers would eventually learn that rather than the hassle of trying to park illegally, it is better all round to follow the clearly signposted information leading to the recommended parking.

Roads are not the solution for Sands

A CASUAL observer of the BFP report of the traffic problems at Adams Park (February 21) might wonder why the 'Park and Ride' scheme employed by the fans for away matches cannot be employed for home matches, or even, perish the thought, pedestrian transport.

However, if the provision of a car park (for 200 cars, for a realistic maximum of 800 supporters) and a new road can be presented as a 'solution', as well as securing the consent for the training pitch – so obviously vital now but not apparently even thought necessary for consideration when the original plans were submitted, which would also be offered for use to the community as a whole (when not required by WW) – then the easiest and quickest way to achieve this would be to ignore any alternative means of getting to the ground and create as much traffic chaos and annoyance to the local residents as possible.

It could solicit the assistance of the local media to pressurise the council (who opposed the siting of the ground in the first place, possibly partly for these very reasons) to wave a magic wand and 'do something about it'.

The residents of Sands can be assured that the building of a car park and a new road will not alleviate the problem any more than the building of Handy Cross or the M25 alleviated the problems they were built for.

I recall that 25,000 supporters used to be able to get to Kenilworth Road, Luton, without causing traffic chaos on the road system of the 1950s.

The fact that, with all the road system 'improvements' of the last 40 years, 5,000 cannot achieve this at Adams Park, seems pretty conclusive evidence that building of roads and car parks cannot solve the problem.

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Perhaps the Wycombe System would become the model for other clubs. No doubt all this would mean unwelcome extra work and financial costs, but they are the price that must be paid for the extraordinary shortsightedness, as recently as the 1980s, of ignoring the wise wishes of Wycombe District Council, in order to plan and permit the removal of a football stadium from a place with easy communications, and its transfer to the Green Belt close to a residential area.

The response to the present problems must be emphatically 'not more concrete' – for cars or anything else.

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Why don't people park and ride?

WITH reference to a report in last week's Bucks Free Press, Councillor Andrew Green stated that people preferred to park a mile away and walk to the ground rather than pay £1 for the ride.

I think Cllr Green should ask people why they are not using the park and ride before he voices his opinions.

I, and my family, among other Wycombe supporters used the park and ride for every home match, and gladly paid £1, but the main reason people didn't continue using the transport is because by the time we had to wait for the bus to get along Hillbottom Road, (usually at least 40 minutes after the match) we could have walked to our cars.

If the buses were allowed out before all the cars in Hillbottom Road, or if the buses were waiting outside Searles, then I'm sure people would use the park and ride.

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