

Resident cries foul over parking

AS a member of the public who attended the meeting of the Thames Valley Police High Wycombe Area Community/Police Consultative Group at Adams Park on April 2, I read the report by your reporter Mark Race with interest.

Factually the statements reported were correct, but the report did not express the frustrations and hopelessness expressed by both the police as well as the residents in coping with the siting of the football ground.

Although Inspector Edwards gave everyone assurance on the capabilities of controlling events within the ground on all matters of public safety, and the fire incident in January emphasised the police confidence, the "short straw", which Inspector Kirby publicly admitted he had drawn, namely the control of traffic and the maintenance of access for emergency services was anything but satisfactory.

Under questioning, he admitted that the services he relied on were mainly police staff on "overtime", and that this cost was subject to adequate funding being made available by the local authority, or more precisely, the community chargepayer.

Additional car parking at the ground, which was not mentioned by your reporter, also produced an interesting comment from Superintendent Becks. It appears that despite a constant request from the Football Club for more internal parking, which now appears to be receiving the "nod" from Wycombe District Council, the traffic congestion around the ground will not be reduced, it could become worse.

Additional parking within the confines of the football ground may produce a bottleneck which will need additional policing over a wider area to ensure a good traffic flow. After a few weeks on-street parking would move further from the ground bringing potential chaos to more poll taxpayers and a "white elephant" car park. The use of Park and Ride cannot be used successfully due to the single line and the cul-de-sac nature of Hillbottom Road.

I hope the Wycombe district councillors who attended the above meeting have taken note of the feelings of the residents and the limited resources that the police have in coping with a problem which should not have arisen.

In 1987, the police stated that a dual carriageway in Hillbottom Road was essential if emergency services and traffic flow was not to be unduly impeded on match days, should a football ground be sited at the location.

What will the final solution be? Restricted crowds - ticket only, and resident car stickers to allow reasonable traffic movement during football matches? Perhaps the Town Mayor and her colleagues can rethink their ideas.

Public annoyance in Sands to the siting of the football ground is reaching Clochemerle standards. When will the troops be called out?

Finally, I'm delighted the Blues are vying for the top spot, may they be there at the end of the season. However, the ground is still in the wrong place!

Reg Rundle
Address supplied.

By MICHELLE DAVIES

RESIDENTS have hit out at plans to stage an open-air carol concert at Adams Park which could pave the way for similar outdoor events at the ground.

People living near the ground at Hillbottom Road, High Wycombe, were dismayed to learn the stadium may be used for the Christmas celebration on December 14.

They predict the current parking problems experienced before football matches will be ten times worse.

Kenneth Pearce, of Lane End Road, said the event, expected to attract around 5,000 people, will cause traffic chaos.

He felt the numbers would be increased if the promoters were intending to use the pitch as a standing area.

"If they can get 72,000 in Wembley Stadium, then they can get 20,000 down there," he said.

Bob Mahoney, also of Lane End Road, criticised the club for not informing nearby residents about the concert.

"They are pushing their luck down there. Not one person from the football club has had the decency to walk down the road and get our views," he said.

Mark Austin, sales and marketing manager for Wycombe Wanderers, confirmed there had been plans for a pop concert at the ground in the past.

"There was a possible pop concert but that never got off the ground as the organisers did not follow it through," he said.

Mr Austin did not rule out the possibility of another pop concert being staged, provided it did not cause a nuisance to local residents.

The club, as stadium owner, has to seek council approval for any event other than football to be staged at Adams Park.

The plan for the Christmas concert is due to be approved by Wycombe District Council's planning applications panel, which meets tomorrow.

Thames Valley Police have agreed to the event on the understanding people will be encouraged to share transport to the ground.

The concert is being organised by Wycombe Renewal, a union of ten local churches:

Its chairman, the Rev Clive Collier, said it was still considering whether Adams Park was the best venue.