

NORTHWICH Victoria are looking for a September date for what should be an extremely attractive GM Vauxhall Conference Shield home game against last season's champions Wycombe Wanderers.

As winners of the Conference Cup — the Drinkwise Trophy — Northwich will have gained advantage against Wycombe, now fully-fledged members of the Football League and ready to go in their first season in the Third Division.

Meanwhile, work is going ahead fast on Northwich's ground to upgrade facilities in line with Conference requirements. New turnstiles and toilets are being installed and a new perimeter fence is being erected.

Says Vics chairman Dave Stone: "We haven't been all that active in signing players yet, but it's been hectic on the

ground with scores of volunteers giving up their spare time to spruce up the Drill Field.

"By August 21, supporters are going to see large-scale improvements."

Northwich have failed in a bid to bring one of their former players back to the Drill Field.

They made an approach for big centre-back Graham Abel when he was released by Chester City, but the man who brought the club an £8,000 fee in 1986, opted to stay in league soccer at Crewe.

Abel will, however, be seen by Northwich fans next Thursday, when Crewe visit the Drill Field for a pre-season friendly.