

Blues parry decision on pitch future

WYCOMBE Wanderers refused to confirm whether further development would take place on land planned for a training pitch, a public inquiry heard.

"I can't give you a categorical assurance as to what may or may not occur. That is a fact," said Tim North, representing the club at the inquiry into the Wycombe District Local Plan.

Wycombe Wanderers are objecting to the plan's Green Belt status for its ground and adjoining land at Adams Park. The club already has permission

for a training pitch and extra parking for 224 cars.

Mr North was replying to Department of Environment inspector Ian MacPherson, who asked him on Thursday if other forms of development could take place if Green Belt status was removed.

Mr North, of North Crook Planning of Watlington, urged the inspector to look at the history of the site and repeated efforts made by the club to get permission for the synthetic training pitch. Five applications were made before the plan was approved in August this year.

"It has taken two years between the submission of the first application and the approval," said Mr North adding that all the Green Belt boundary did at present was to distinguish between one area of commercial development and another.

"If Green Belt policies are to mean something to people then they have to have some specific purpose," said Mr North.

However, Wycombe District Council told the inquiry: "The existing boundary is perfectly logical and defensible and divides urban industrial

development and urban fringe."

The council also expressed its fear that if Green Belt designation was removed, development could encroach into the adjoining fields.

● The council is to give temporary permission for a 136-stall Sunday market on the club's car park. Residents fear an increase in the already-unbearable level of traffic noise on Hillbottom Road. Council officers will take measurements before and after the experiment in order to decide whether permanent permission should be granted.

■ FOOTBALL

BERKS and Bucks Football Association beat Cambridgeshire 1-0 in the FA County Youth Cup first round on a waterlogged pitch at Buckingham.

The hosts had the better of the early exchanges and took the lead through Shaun Stevens on 22 minutes. The visitors threatened, but goalkeeper Trevor Nicholas kept his goal intact.

O'Neill fury over Fiore

WYCOMBE Wanderers' manager Martin O'Neill has denied describing Slough Town's talented Mark Fiore as 'wasted' being played at left back.

The 'Observer' wishes to make it clear that it's efforts to clarify Mr O'Neill's alleged interest in Fiore, as reported in another newspaper last week, were bona fide.

Reliable sources at Wycombe had indicated that the Blues boss had never shown an interest in Fiore.

Mr O'Neill said this week: "I have not discussed the player. I have never spoken to the player. I have never spoken to John Docherty. And it is certainly not for me to question how another manager sees his own players."

Russians take up Wycombe's blue banner

WORD of Wycombe Wanderers has reached Russia's Siberian desert.

Now a considerable following is building up in Kachkanar, between the Urals and western Siberia, where locals have forsaken the delights of Ural Mach to adopt Blues.

Most of the company's managers now have Wycombe scarves and ties after brothers David and Colin King, who were born and brought up in Holmer Green, waxed lyrically about Wanderers during business trips there.

"Children in Kachkanar wear Wanderers scarves. And one manager, instead of wearing a Communist tie, wears a Wycombe tie," said David.

The pair, Colin still lives in Flackwell Heath, have made around ten trips to Russia after receiving a contract to supply equipment to the vacuum cleaner manufacturer Formanta.

The Russians are in High Wycombe this week and David and Colin hope to take them to Adams Park tomorrow to see Blues in action against Lincoln.

"Obviously we are delighted if we are supported all over the world," said Mark Austin, Wanderers' sales and marketing manager.

"Once people have heard about us and have had personal contact with supporters, they tend to follow Wycombe."

Returns trim casualty count

MARTIN O'Neill's injury list shows promising signs of shortening.

Wanderers' opening casualty of the season Duncan Horton, injured against Carlisle, played his first full game last Saturday. Steve Thompson also had his first League start for around two months.

On-loan 18-year-old Graham Potter is now heading back to Birmingham City after filling in at left back after Horton's replacement David Titterton suffered a torn cartilage.

Titterton is now back in light training following an operation.

Striker Tim Langford is already training again after surgery on a hernia two weeks ago.

Simon Stapleton is about to come out of plaster after an operation to treat twisted ankle ligaments. The midfielder is intent on returning to action within six weeks.

Mark West is now able to put plastered foot to floor after breaking his leg while on-loan at Kidderminster last month.