

County traffic bosses have rethink on Wanderers' parking problems

TRAFFIC bosses have bowed to public pressure and agreed to move the goalposts over parking around Wycombe Wanderers' football ground.

Following opposition to previous parking restriction proposals, highways staff at Buckinghamshire County Council have changed their plans. The proposals, which now go out to public consultation, will introduce match-day waiting restrictions in:

- two stretches of Lane End Road, either side of junction with Roundwood Road
- whole of Hylton Road
- both sides of Toweridge Lane

There are double-yellow line proposals for:

- Pinewood Road at junction with Stanley Road and at junction with Hylton Road
- the short private stretch in

Hillbottom Road

- Progress Road, down north side and on both sides at junction with Hillbottom Road and Lane End Road

- north side of Toweridge Lane, and eventually revoke match-day restrictions; also at south side of Toweridge Lane at junction with Pinewood Road

- junction of Chapel Lane and Toweridge Lane

- junction of Booker Hill Road and New Road

- west side of Warwick Avenue and short way up both sides of Carisbrooke Avenue.

Engineer Colin Dight told members of the county traffic and road safety panel on Monday that he had received 231 letters objecting to previous proposals and only 12 supporting them. The most frequent complaint was that

restrictions would cause cars to be parked further out of the immediate area of the Adams Park.

A number of alternative schemes had been suggested, including park-and-ride, residents' parking schemes, and stewards provided by the football club to organise parking. None, he felt, were suitable. Park-and-ride or stewards could bring public disorder problems, and parking schemes for residents would prevent other people, including doctors, calling.

In a reference to Kathleen Peatey, leader of Wycombe District Council, Welshman David Rowlands (Con, Winslow) told members: "I would not like to inflict on Mrs Peatey's nice town centre the supporters of Swansea and Cardiff City in a park-and-ride

system. They are the biggest thugs and hooligans that ever came out of Wales."

David Shakespeare (Con, West Wycombe and Sands) described the parking problems as a 'minefield.' He said: "Wycombe Wanderers is suffering from its own success, as are all the residents around."

Mr Shakespeare suggested the answer could be for the club to find a nearby parking site and gain planning permission for it. Another idea was a dedicated shuttle service, funded by Wycombe Wanderers and travelling non-stop from a car park to the ground. "Something has got to be done for the start of the season," he said.

Members agreed to hold a site meeting at the end of an evening match in September. They will not attend the match.

Parking rules are on the line

Controversial plans to stop neighbours parking outside their own homes on Wycombe Wanderers match days have been dropped.

Councillors bowed to public pressure after hearing on Monday night how more than 200 people had written objecting to the plans.

Wycombe Wanderers said this week they were delighted by Bucks Council's short term decision.

But the council is now preparing to announce plans for double yellow lines along many of the residential roads near Adams Park.

Since the football ground first opened in 1990, neighbours in nearby Sands have complained about fans parking outside their homes.

But their plans to solve the problem backfired when residents were told that restrictions placed on parking on match days would prohibit home owners from parking outside their own property.

Bucks Council received 180 letters and two petitions about the plans, with 219 objecting, and just 12 supporting the proposals.

At a meeting of the council's traffic and road safety panel on Monday night, it was decided that match day restrictions will only apply to Hylton Road, Toweridge Lane and two stretches of Lane End Road - either side of the junction with Roundwood Road.

Those spots have been designated after Thames Valley Police requested they be left clear to assist emergency vehicles.

The double yellow line proposals, to be announced in the next three months, will affect many areas in and around Sands, but Wycombe Wanderers predict those plans will find more

► **DID Bucks County Council score an own goal in proposing parking restrictions near Adams Park? Stephen Deal tells how they have had to drop the proposals.**

favour with residents.

Members of the panel will witness the traffic problems for themselves when they visit the area on a match night.

A council spokesman said: "In arriving at all these decisions, we took into account views of the residents and the football club. It is a bit of a compromise. Clearly, no-one is going to be ecstatic."

But Wanderers' marketing manager Mark Austin was. He said: "We're delighted. I am grateful they have listened to the views of both the Thames Valley Police, the football club, and, indeed, the residents.

"The club supports any safety measures."

The Blues expect average gates of between 6,000 and 7,000 when the Second Division season gets underway in August.

- Wycombe will play Chelsea in a pre-season friendly on Wednesday, August 10. The game will kick off at 7pm, because of work to upgrade the Adams Park floodlights.