

Football fan puts his position

I READ with interest Valerie Letheren's letter last week in respect of the planning application for the proposed new stand at Adams Park.

I am not a full member of the planning application panel and I will be on holiday when it is debated, so I feel free to comment.

Before I do, let me declare my interest. I am a dedicated fan of football. Having supported Chelsea for over 30 years, many as a club member, I have to be. But I have in the past often visited Loakes Park and I believe I was the first member of the public to buy a stand season ticket at Adams Park, which I have continued to renew. I also attend Marlow games. My best 1994 game anywhere was Marlow against Oxford.

Until recently my daughter lived in Pinewood Road and I have experienced through her and her family the problems fans bring to local residents in Sands on match days.

I am against development of this kind in the Green Belt and I believe Wanderers to be a badly-sited user at Adams Park. I believe the club believes this also, along with most of the councillors, the planning staff and anyone else who looks at the situation dispassionately.

The planning history is well known and does not add to the current debate by repetition. Except to say the club did not want to be at the current location.

The club is a commercial enterprise that has not only given many fans great pleasure, but has brought incalculable credit to the town by its commendable success. As a commercial success the council would be wrong in my view not to give support in so far as they can, having regard to the well-being of local residents.

Many solutions have been put forward in the past and currently to the problems that the club's success has brought and I am a great believer in planning for success, in this case even greater success by the club. Yes, there has to be consideration of the possibility of Premier League attendances of 15,000.

So where do we go from here? Well, the club is at Adams Park. It would take millions to move it to another site, even if there was one. Millions the council doesn't have, nor does the club. Nor would Government money be forthcoming and unless Pavarotti can be persuaded to sing from the centre spot each home game, lottery money isn't on either.

Other solutions have to be found. These will take time. Recently talks have taken place

again between the club, councillors and officers of Wycombe District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council, the police, the fire brigade and the bus company to explore ways of alleviating the current problems. The results were not earth-shattering, but they did indicate the resolve that all the parties have to address the problems to residents and fans alike of the location and restricted access.

The real solutions are long term and do require real money. I believe, and I know many of my councillor colleagues believe, that these solutions can only be achieved by close cooperation between all interested parties, including the local residents' associations.

In the meantime, snide remarks about the councillors on the planning committee not knowing where Adams Park is are not helpful.

Each application is treated on its merit, each requires careful consideration of all the factors, every aspect has to be weighed to ensure that the decision taken is unchallengeable by anyone, friend or foe.

Cllr Ted Collins
Wycombe District Council
Queen Victoria Road
High Wycombe

WHAT a pity that the many members of the public who attended last Wednesday's Wycombe District Council planning meeting especially to hear the decision on Wycombe Wanderers' application for a new stand, went home disappointed!

It was clear from the debate that took place, many councillors went prepared to make a decision on the night.

However, because of Cllr Billingham's silly and thoughtless display of an unauthorised model of the proposed stand in the council chamber, legal advice was clearly given that a decision should not be made that night; that it would be wise to visit the site as officers were recommending.

Councillors who make decisions against legal advice leave the council - and taxpayers - open to expensive challenge.

It would have been sensible for Cllr Billingham to have had the accuracy of the model checked by planning officers beforehand. It is not really acceptable to plead ignorance in such situations. All councillors, but especially new councillors voted by colleagues into positions of responsibility, should recognise the limits of their knowledge and have the humility to ask for professional advice before taking action.

Kathleen Peatey
District Councillor
Green Hill and
Totteridge Ward
Rectory Avenue
High Wycombe

IT'S too late for public recrimination and wrangling over the proposed extension to Wycombe Wanderers' stadium in Sands.

The club must comply with legislation if it wishes to progress to higher levels of footballing success.

The days of amateurism in football are long gone, and the town would, no doubt, be the poorer for not having a club which befits its size and growing importance.

Having been granted permission for the relocation of the club, it ill-becomes Wycombe District Council to put obstacles in the way of its development. Had the new ground not been constructed at Sands, exactly the same problems of parking, noise, Green Belt desecration, access and so on, would have arisen at any of the alternative locations suggested at the time - all of which were fiercely resisted by local inhabitants - especially, no doubt, those who have no interest in football. Wycombe is a compact town, hemmed in by hills and blessed with very little flat land capable of accommodating a football stadium of any importance - unless it be located well away from the town itself - which would, of course, meet with objections from environmentalists and would mean even more cars, parking and congestion than is currently the case.

Wycombe either wants a first-class football club or it doesn't.

There's no half-way house and if someone can come up with a suitable alternative solution - let's hear about it. If as is fairly obvious, there IS no alternative solution, then let's get on with providing better access, parking, public transport etc., for the ground we DO have and stop crying over spilt milk.

A Smith, Mill End Road, Sands.

Councillor gives me the Blues

I AM writing in utter disbelief at the comment made by Cllr Pam Priestley, in the Bucks Free Press (September 1), regarding the colour of the proposed new stand for Wycombe Wanderers at Adams Park.

She suggests "greens and browns to blend in with the countryside". Does she live in the same environment as the rest of us? As I drive through the countryside on the M4, M25, M40 etc, I see bright BLUE signs directing traffic. Are we to see this trend discontinued and these awful signs which we have all lived with for so many years, changed to greens and browns to blend in with the beautiful motorways that so marvellously complement our countryside. I don't think so!

When Tesco, Homebase, MFI, Halfords etc build their new superstores on the outskirts of the town do we say, "I'm awfully sorry, you must use suitable colours to blend with the countryside"? Of course we do not (and indeed why should we?). They are allowed to do precisely what they want

regarding colour schemes. These comments are yet another pathetic attempt to stop Wycombe Wanderers from improving what is a superb set-up for local people to go and watch their football team. It is time for the council to stop coming up with such incredible excuses and grant planning permission.

D G Baker (Mr)
Cromwell Avenue
Thame

Let's not stand for camouflage

I WAS intrigued by the comments of Cllr Pam Priestley regarding the colours of the proposed stands at Adams Park. If she has such a strong objection to the traditional colours of the football club then I trust she is also going to enforce her blending into the environment campaign on the factories along Hillbottom Road.

Maybe if all the lorries entering Sands were coloured green and brown, then there would be fewer complaints from the residents? Or of course Wycombe District Council might recognise that such an idea was ridiculous, unnecessary, and not in the town's interests.

Colin Gray
Long Wood Drive
Jordans