

Wycombe can't wander again

I WRITE to applaud Alan Page's letter concerning Wycombe Wanderers (Bucks Free Press, September 8). The club has indeed put Wycombe on the map and must have support from our local councils. It is no good harping on about the unsuitabilities of its siting. The club with all its excellent facilities is established at Adams Park. Current efforts should be to build on the positive aspects of its location and eliminate, as much as possible, the negatives.

The positives are that the ground is situated away from housing in an area already defaced by factories, and with space around it for expansion and for the newly-required facility. The obvious negative is that it is at the end of a cul-de-sac and its approach is through a heavily built-up residential area. My services are regularly called upon to chauffeur family members to the vicinity of the ground, so I am well aware of the dreadful congestion, bad parking, noise, litter and so on, inflicted upon Sands' residents on match days.

The answer can only lie in improving access to the ground and this must involve a through road. Dare I suggest a new road linking the M40 from the Lane End overpass? If this could further be continued to link up with the Risborough Road, could we not also eliminate much of the west of town traffic from Wycombe, Marlow Hill, Handy Cross etc? Hillbottom Road could even be closed to traffic at Adams Park altogether. Would this not also be a better long-term solution than tinkering with Handy Cross with all the chaos that is bound to produce?

Yes, I know this suggestion will bring an outcry from conservationists. I know people will be shouting about cars ruining our countryside - other people's cars, that is! We all wish everyone else would leave their cars at home. Let's be realistic. They won't. Mostly, they can't - if they want to go anywhere! Therefore, we need an adequate road system to divert traffic from town centres and residential areas.

The positive side of building

additional access to and around Wycombe Wanderers is that it would improve the quality of life for almost everyone throughout the week as well as for Sands' residents on match days. I know there are negatives and I know cost is high on that list, but we have to think boldly and long term. The car, and Wycombe Wanderers are here to stay!

Meanwhile, providing extra seating at the club is not going to increase the traffic or any of the other problems. Wycombe Wanderers must have its new stand - and, come on Pam Priestley, it must be in club colours. Come on you Blues!

Jenny McGee
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Stand by facts of Taylor Report

WITH regard to Wycombe Wanderers' proposed stand, I realise that it is a shame to sacrifice a good story on the altar of truth, but I feel that you should check your facts before toeing the party line with such enthusiasm.

If you have read the Taylor Report, which I have, and more importantly the subsequent ministerial statement, you would know that Wycombe Wanderers will not be expelled from the League if it does not build the stand. It may be a convenient argument to link the two, but it is not the case. This statement rescinded the Second and Third Division recommendations.

Wanderers have to have another 800 seats by May 1998, not 5,000 now. If they are promoted, they have three years from the promotion date to become all seater.

Of course, the Bucks Free Press must support Wycombe Wanderers, but not to the exclusion of balanced reporting. Also have some sympathy for the Sands residents who have to plan their lives around matches in which they may have no interest.

Similarly, it is all too easy to pillory the councillors who have to take responsibility for the decision. If they take the decision on planning issues alone, there is no decision to make, the application falls.

Of course there should be a site visit to put the proposal in the context of the setting, before agreeing to put a stand (undoubtedly the first of four) of such dimensions in the Green Belt

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Police pass to Blues

POLICE are set to pass on some of their football duties and take a trial of their own.

Following an aim set by the Association of Chief Police Officers, High Wycombe police will patrol only the outside of Adams Park, leaving stewards in control inside.

The move will last for an experimental period of a month and will operate on minor matches only.

Insp Roger Doe, football liaison officer for High Wycombe Police, said the idea reduced their commitment to crowd control.

"The responsibility for safety should be down to the club. Stewards have a civilian's power of arrest and can eject anyone breaking the rules out of the ground.

"We have a responsibility for people as they leave and enter the stadium and shall continue to patrol the area from a crime prevention point of view."

At last Saturday's Blues match a man ran on the pitch, picked up the ball and remonstrated with the goalkeeper. The police outside were called in by stewards and the man was arrested.

Insp Doe said: "We are there outside to react if necessary but if we are not needed and the stewards can cope then the officers can be used elsewhere.

"It takes a lot of organising and there is a lot of planning that goes into every match."

The final decision to limit police presence will be taken by the Blues' safety committee, which includes a panel of police officers, ambulance staff and officers from the district and county councils.

For Tuesday's Blues match against Manchester United, around 50 officers were on duty in the stadium and in the town.

Half of the officers were borrowed from Slough.

Insp Doe said: "It costs money to get outside officers into High Wycombe."