

It's Wanderers v Chelsea over kids

WYCOMBE Wanderers have set up a meeting with Chelsea and South Bucks District Council after objecting to a new scheme which the authority wants the Premiership club to set up.

Jim Melvin, Blues' youth development officer, said this week: "I've no intention of seeing five years' hard work go

down the drain." Sean Gore, Chelsea's football and community officer, confirmed the club's interest in setting up soccer schools in south Buckinghamshire.

"South Bucks is very untouched. The council approached us to put something together," he said.

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Melvin's possession battle with Chelsea

WYCOMBE Wanderers were left feeling snubbed this week as South Bucks District Council looked set to agree a Football In The Community scheme with Chelsea Football Club.

Members of the council's leisure and environment committee agreed this week to partly fund the project to the tune of £5,000 which will see the Premiership club move into schools in the south Buckinghamshire area.

But the plans, which have yet to be approved by the full council on July 16, rubbed Wanderers up the wrong way.

Jim Melvin, the Division Two club's youth development officer, said: "We are the only professional club in Buckinghamshire and we already run soccer schools in the Gerrards Cross, Stoke Poges and Farnham areas.

"I would have thought if the council wanted to set something like this up, that we would have been their first port of call."

And Wycombe's club secretary John Reardon added: "A letter has gone to the council with our objections concerning the privacy of our area."

The council is now awaiting the letter from the club before they take any further action, but it appears that Chelsea's scheme will go ahead despite Wycombe's objections.

Roger Gill, director of environmental services, said: "We have agreed that Chelsea will be asked to run the community development in this area and as far as we are concerned we are going ahead with that."

"Wycombe have said they are doing community development in this area but we have gone back through our records and have no note of it. If they have, it hasn't been done in consultation

with this district council."

However, Gill believes that there could be enough room in the district for both club's football schemes to run. "If Wycombe have been dealing with a particular school, obviously we would not wish Chelsea to go to that school, but I'm quite sure that when the meeting takes place the situation will be resolved amicably," he said.

Under the Chelsea scheme, which will initially run as a one-year trial period, a development officer would be appointed in September.

The officer would arrange initial free coaching sessions for between six and ten schools in the district, and the programme would then move onto other schools.

The club also intend to target girls, those with learning difficulties and under-privileged children with the football scheme. Other proposals include a Saturday morning soccer club, teacher training days and advanced academies.

Jack McKenzie, chairman of the leisure committee, said: "The scheme in itself is a great success and it would be wonderful for young people to have that opportunity."

The Premiership club were approached by the district council to run the scheme in their area after one of their employees saw the project in action when he worked in Hillingdon.

The club ran a scheme in south Buckinghamshire during half-term, the success of which prompted the council to consider the full-blown project.

Wycombe have run Football in the Community schemes since Jim Kelman was manager in the late 1980s, but they have expanded them in the last few years to complement, and act as a feeder, for their centres of excellence.