

Blues to go ahead with £500,000 pitch

WYCOMBE Wanderers have agreed to go ahead with a £500,000 gamble on a new pitch for Wasps – even though they still have to win council approval for the groundshare.

The BFP can reveal that chief executive Simon Monkman has given the go-ahead for the new pitch to be laid in the summer complete with undersoil heating.

The decision shows Wanderers' commitment to groundsharing with the rugby club, even though they lost round one of their battle to have them as tenants in the council chamber.

Wanderers will pay for the pitch themselves but are confident they will recoup the money when Wasps do move in.

Monkman said: "It shows how serious we are. It tells Wasps that when they are ready and we get permission, we've got a pitch for them."

Wanderers are convinced they will win permission to host rugby even though the council ruled it an unlawful use of Adams Park under its planning guidelines and are now talking with the council to discuss their next move.

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But Monkman insisted: "Wasps will come here. It might not be this year but we're still their number one choice and if they go somewhere else for a year so be it. We will be ready to welcome them the following year.

Wasps director Charles Levison said: "We still expect the Wycombe deal to go through after an appeal but in the meantime, we're looking at other alternatives. Oxford is one of them."

Meanwhile Council Leader Roger Colomb has hit back at critics who suggested that the council did not help the club.

Writing in a letter to the BFP Midweek, he revealed that the council offered Wanderers advice, which they subsequently went against.

He said the council advised Wanderers to submit a proper planning application, instead of applying for a certificate of lawfulness like they did.

He said: "Our officers met with Wycombe Wanderers' agent in January this year and explained that our recommendation to the committee would be to refuse the certificate of lawfulness based on legal advice received from experts.

"We strongly suggested to the club at that time to submit a formal planning application to allow rugby to be played at Adams Park, which would be dealt with under the usual planning process."

And he advised the club to submit that application now.

He said: "We're more than happy to work with the club to pursue their current options and would welcome a planning application soon, which would also allow local residents to Adams Park to have their opinions heard."

Hat-trick hero

RUGBY: Jane Morris scored a