

Time to tackle the cash issue

FOR some years now Wycombe Wanderers have been living beyond its means. This was disguised when we first reached the second division by the surplus accumulated in the glory years when we joined the Football League and gained promotion.

But that surplus was dissipated during the Smith/Gregory regimes and since then, in spite of off-field trading activities, the club is making annual losses. Two years ago, to balance the books, we had to sell Matt Lawrence and although last year showed a profit, this was only due to the cup run. The underlying trend is one of increasing deficit.

At the recent supporters' forum, the loss for this season was quantified as £440,000, a figure arrived at after taking back the cash Lawrie Sanchez didn't spend on players, so the operating loss is still in excess of this. Lawrie also pointed out that his players' salary budget is the same as it was three years ago. In the light of this and the fact that gates have increased last year what are the club doing to bring this continuing deficit under control and why has it continued for so long without action being taken?

I feel this issue must be tackled before supporters who have just been told about rises in admission charges are asked to contribute to the Friends of Wycombe Wanderers scheme.

All supporters appreciate costs increase but the press release for the Friends scheme said that the money would be used for transfer and signing on fees (no problems there) but also for wages. Maybe I am being over suspicious but I would suspect that more money will go on this item to mask the ever increasing losses and the benefit will be lost

unless the underlying deficit problem is tackled.

Off the field the club has not covered itself in glory with the newly acquired training ground a year late for use, the scoreboard saga, and the Wasps fiasco.

We have a great club, and we do not need adverse publicity telling the world that we are being annihilated. Although we need to know the true position of the club, warts and all, over-the-top statements such as this are really not helpful.

Keith Blagbrough
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Wasps will be good for Wycombe

I WAS very disappointed to see that the council have not, initially, felt able to support the application for Wasps RFC to groundshare at Wycombe Wanderers.

I work on behalf of sport in the community and the presence of such a famous and far sighted club would bring tremendous benefits to a far wider audience than it might first appear. The Active Sports programme is being backed by the Government to support nine sports across the country, of which rugby is one. The ability to take sport into schools and colleges encourages children to establish a worthwhile interest and contributes to their health and well being. Wasps RFC play their full part in this by placing their full squad in the community in a teaching and coaching context.

In addition, rugby has long been regarded as a sport that teaches self

discipline and friendship as is amply demonstrated by the lack of friction and trouble at even the biggest matches and local derbies.

The local community would also benefit from the increased trade and employment that the presence of a first class club would bring to the town, together with the prestige of being associated with a successful club; Wycombe Wanderers' cup run last year is a good example of this working in practice.

I hope, sincerely, that the council will think again and support this excellent initiative to promote education and trade in one of major towns.

Charles J Owen-Conway
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