

24/05/02

Sting in the tail for the Wasps

Town buzzes as rugby giant moves in, but there is a warning ...

DAVE PETERS

SPORTS EDITOR

WYCOMBE Wanderers chief executive Simon Monkman celebrated bringing top flight rugby to Adams Park by telling the town: "We've brought you Wasps - now make sure you don't lose them".

The arrival of Wasps comes in the same week it was announced that the town will lose one of its other attractions, the Wycombe Show, which will be cancelled this year for the first time in its 54 year history.

Wanderers were granted permission to groundshare with Wasps at a special meeting of Wycombe District Council on Monday night. The deal is worth £1 million to the Blues.

But the approval came on the condition that the two clubs now implement a comprehensive Green Travel Plan to reduce traffic and parking problems in the area on match days.

And the council warned that if fans park unsociably in Sands, or the club fails to carry out its promise to try to reduce match day traffic by a minimum of 20 per cent - through initiatives such as car sharing and shuttle buses - they could seek an injunction to revoke the planning permission.

The Blues faced fierce opposition from the Sands

Residents Association over the groundshare. The group's spokeswoman Karen Isaacs doubted the effectiveness of the travel plan because of the car parks at the ground.

She said: "It will never be fully effective. If the fans think there is any chance to drive there and park they will try."

But Mr Monkman said: "We will start the rules from day one. Both ourselves and Wasps are committed to being good neighbours."

"We will do our best along with Wasps to meet them. If we don't maintain it we know we won't get permission again in two years time."

Wanderers now plan to employ a travel and parking officer of their own and they will also contribute to the costs of traffic wardens.

They will hold a minimum of three meetings a year with the Sands Residents Association to monitor the situation.

Wasps' chief Alistair McLean said: "We are determined to alleviate the problem here for residents in terms of parking and congestion. One way to do that is to seek to bus people up from Loftus Road and collection points in and around London."

● See Sport: Pages 16, 17 & 8



Showing his true colours: Lawrence Dallaglio celebrates the groundshare of Wycombe Wanderers and Wasps

Picture by SALLY SWIFT 02-1299F20

But jubilee could still be saved

THE Scout movement has stepped in to help prepare a recovery plan for High Wycombe's official Queen's Golden Jubilee celebrations on The Rye.

When the future of the event on June 3 looked bleak the group felt they had to honour their promise

to honour God, Queen and country, and make sure the town did something to mark the historic occasion.

Jeremy Hassell, district commissioner for the Scouts, said: "We have over a thousand Scouts to run it and we have offered to coordinate the recovery

plan for the event."

But he added: "The cadets, Lions and Rotary are all supporting it and we don't want to be seen as the Scouts coming in and saving the day. We are part of a team that is already in place."

● Comment: Page 2

Hello to them, but goodbye to all this

DAVID LANGTON

WYCOMBE REPORTER

THE Wycombe Show has been cancelled for the first time in its 54-year history.

Heartbroken organisers were forced to pull the plug on the popular community show, which in its hey-day attracted up to 15,000 people, after a lack of funding and committee members to organise the two day event.

The show had been due to take place on The Rye on August 31 and September 1 but, at a meeting last Thursday, the organising committee agreed staging a "half baked show" would cause more damage to the event. Ernest Neill, honorary secretary, said: "We are very disappointed - people look forward to putting the show on each year."

The news has saddened community leaders who warn other events may follow the same fate.

New High Wycombe Mayor Ian McEnnis said: "That is a real shame after all these years. If we want the Wycombe Show to be something for the future we need people to come forward."

Organisers of the Wycombe Charity Carnival, which is also staged on The Rye, expressed their sympathy.

Jim Tanner, a former

town mayor and chairman of the carnival, said: "I'm staggered. I think it will be a big blow to the town. The Wycombe Show is one of the highlights of the year. I think the whole town will be disappointed."

Last year about 9,000 turned out for the event. It has about 100 trade stands, six big themed marquees including craft and horticultural, a main arena and fairground rides. The Sea Cadets and Air Training Corps also traditionally take part in the day.

Mr Neill, who has been involved with the show for the past 40 years, added: "The show has been postponed with the hope that this will give the organisers time to prepare a show for September next year."

He added: "Everyone on the committee is getting older and it is difficult to get young people involved. We really need more people to help and support from the business community."

"It is hard because there is a lot of competition for charity money."

☎ If you can help contact Ernest Neill 01494 532229

● Comment: Page 6