

Blues join forces with clubs over ITV Digital

WYCOMBE are joining in the nationwide campaign to force ITV companies to pay league clubs the money owed by ITV Digital.

The Football League clubs are still owed £178.5 million from a three-year deal with ITV Digital, but since the TV giant's collapse, the league has campaigned for the money to be given to the clubs by Carlton and Granada, owners of ITV Digital.

A campaign was launched last Thursday, called Save our Clubs, to try and force the issue.

And Wanderers are playing their part to try and make the television companies pay the outstanding debt.

Blues chief executive Simon Monkman is to write to Wycombe MP Paul Goodman to explain the situation and try and enrol his support for the club.

Monkman said: "As a club, we fully support the League's position and we will be writing to Paul Goodman explaining our position."

And fans have also been urged to get involved and do their bit.

Supporters of Football League clubs have been asked to boycott ITV in England matches and watch BBC instead.

Adam Warboys, chairman of Wycombe Wanderers Official Supporters Association, said Blues fans had not officially organised anything but were well aware of the campaign.

He said: "It's difficult to get anything going in the close season but I would say that anything that brings pressure on ITV companies to resolve the issue would be welcome."

And the initial figures seem encouraging, with BBC attracting more than 12 million fans for the



Joining forces: Simon Monkman and Wycombe are battling alongside other league clubs

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Denmark game, with ITV only receiving £3.6 million.

Even counting the fact that BBC traditionally win the head-to-head clashes, it was a big margin of victory for the BBC.

Monkman said: "I'm sure the fans' boycott would have had an effect. The feeling among the fans is

extremely strong."

Warboys added: "To be honest, ITV's panel of pundits, with people like Terry Venables and Bobby Robson is strong but the difference in viewers between the BBC and ITV is a lot higher than it has been."

"I would normally expect it to be two-to-one in favour of the BBC but it was nothing like that."

Meanwhile Notts County, Wycombe's first league opponents, went into voluntary administration

on Monday, blaming the failure to convert short-term debts into a long-term mortgage.

Club chiefs also blamed along with a lack of income in recent years, which will have been exacerbated by the collapse of ITV Digital.

Wycombe secretary Keith Allen had sympathy for Notts County but said it should make little difference to the Blues.

He said: "It should make no

difference whatsoever. I think it's a security measure and I don't think there's any doubt about that we will start the season against them."

The Save our Clubs campaign will also protest outside the London of both companies, with all 72 club members outside on July 10.

Then, there is then planned to be 12 days of protest and lobbying, with six clubs designated to take action on each day, before the Football League's court action against Carlton and Granada on July 26.

Football League chairman Keith Harris said: "We remain appalled that two corporate giants like Carlton and Granada can be allowed to cause such catastrophic damage to our national sport in the selfish pursuit of their own interests."

A spokesman for Carlton was unavailable for comment.

● Fans still have until Tuesday to book a place on the OWWSA coach trip to follow the Blues on their Scottish pre-season tour.

The trip, for around £200, includes leaving Wycombe on Wednesday, July 24, in the morning, bed and breakfast, coaches to the two games against Ayr United and Dumbarton, and arriving back in Wycombe on Sunday evening.

For more information, call 01296 429307, leaving a name and contact telephone number.

● A meeting between Sands residents and Wycombe has been organised for 7pm on July 30 at Adams Park.

But chief executive Simon Monkman said that if anyone wants to discuss any issues, they can write to or call him at the club.

● Wycombe's Desso pitch is bang on target for completion, according to Monkman.