

TALKING POINT: CRITICISM OF PROPOSED SPORTS VILLAGE

Stadium could create jobs and grow our economy

RE: Last week's letter from Rex Pawley criticising councillors for spending up to £750,000 on feasibility studies for a community sports stadium to replace Adams Park.

I REFER to Mr Pawley's letter in last week's *BFP*, in which he accused Wycombe District Council of failing to replace closed-down manufacturing businesses with new entrants to the Wycombe employment scene.

Despite the recent recession, Wycombe has been fortunate in maintaining a low level of unemployment and the change in employment from manufacturing to other types of business has been comparatively smooth locally.

In recent years, the council has done more to aid this employment sector transition. The town centre renewal resulted in 2,000 new jobs and, despite the recession, the council is continuing to successfully facilitate new investment – a new hotel, a new discount supermarket and a new care home are all on their way.

The council has also invested heavily in regenerating the former Compair/ Broomwade site (Hughenden Quarter) to



retain it as employment land, in addition to gaining consent for a new prime business park at Handy Cross. On the high-tech front, the area around the town has gained one of Europe's largest data centres, reusing another former manufacturing site at Saunderton. In addition a former pharmaceuticals building has been brought back into use as a business centre for charities.

However, to continue to attract employers to the town, more needs to be done to make it competitive. It is important to ensure the town's leisure offer supports its business space and residential offer. That's where the proposed community stadium is relevant to the district's future. Through the Wycombe Community Stadium and Sports Project, we are considering improved sport

ing and leisure facilities for the whole community to potentially create a new sporting destination for both local people and visitors.

It is not a case of funding a millionaire's dream, as Mr Pawley suggested, but more a case of taking the opportunity to get to grips with the needs of two well-known sports teams and explore the possibility of creating state of the art sports facilities that would benefit the whole community and, importantly, attract future employers to our district.

This could not only create jobs, but could increase the profile of the district, thereby positioning it to continue to grow the local economy and provide new opportunities for future generations.

Cllr Roger Colomb,
Cabinet member,
Wycombe District Council

STADIUM BID:

Officials from Wanderers, Wasps and the council earlier this year at a press conference to unveil the proposal

I hope I live to see this new stadium

ONCE again, 'Grandad' Rex Pawley has used up precious space (*Letters, August 27*) to hammer away at his own personal vendetta against the council and its plans for a new stadium, the football and rugby teams, and particularly Steve Hayes – the owner of the teams – who really gets up his nose, possibly because he is well off and has the influence to get things done.

Mr Pawley is 83 and has lived through a previous recession. He has also lived through times when children and young people played in the streets, in the fields, went off fishing, climbing trees, building bonfires to cook potatoes until they were black, scrumping for apples, all in safety. Out all day, only coming home when they got hungry.

I was there too you see, and I know by just looking around at the kids of today, something good has to be put in place of all those pleasures. They have to have somewhere safe to go and use up all that energy instead of 'hanging out', drinking in the local parks, and being what the oldies call a damned nuisance.

If the proposed sports village materialises, I suspect the range of ages of users of the facilities would be from toddlers to OAPs, because these days, if you want a long life, you have to stay fit. It is a very selfish attitude to deny pleasure to our young people by saying "if you have fun when you are young, you will pay for it when you are old".

I spend a lot of time in Wycombe, though unfortunately I no longer live there. However, I still get my *Bucks Free Press* just to keep up, and I hope I live long enough to see the new stadium open.

Mrs Margaret Webb, Harthall Lane,
Kings Langley,
Herts