

Blues looking to fix pitch problems at Adams Park

Committee assembled to tackle turf issues at Wanderers' ground

by **GREG STYLES**

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THE Adams Park pitch is two years past its shelf life, says Wycombe Wanderers Trust chairman Trevor Stroud who stated decisions will be made soon about whether to replace the surface.

Blues' vice-president Ivor Beeks is responsible for the pitch and any decisions made on the matter will be done so by the club's former chairman.

Beeks installed the Desso pitch, which is currently down at Adams Park, in 2002 at a joint estimated cost of £500,000 with former tenants Wasps.

Four home games remain this season and Stroud says decisions will be made shortly.

"There is a management com-

mittee looking at that at the moment. Decisions have to be taken fairly shortly because the work has to start as soon as the season ends, which we hope is May 2," he said.

"The pitch is at the end of its shelf life. The Desso pitch has a shelf life of ten years and it's been down 12 years. There are some key decisions that have to be made and that's a football club matter.

"Our vice president Ivor Beeks is responsible for the pitch and he's got a team of experts around him who offer him advice and suggestions."

In reply to a question from a members' meeting in September 2013 the Trust admitted that back then situation was being discussed.

They said: "The 'Desso' pitch is nearing the end of its life and

therefore, for the longer term, we will have to decide whether to have another tenant and replace the pitch with one that can withstand two teams, or have a standard (and much cheaper) pitch for ourselves only."

Manager Gareth Ainsworth has been critical of the surface this season and said last month that the pitch was affecting the way he wanted his team to play.

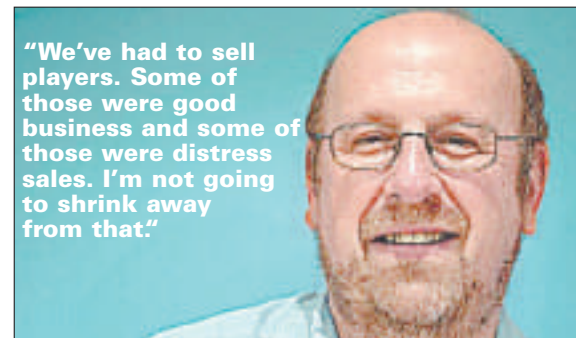
He said: "I do say that our pitch needs a bit of work and hopefully we can get that. The rugby really has hammered it.

"Our groundsman does a fantastic job, they really do as much as they can, but they're fighting a losing battle because the pitch has been hammered over the years. It's really hard, the ball bounces really high and these things do affect it."



The pitch at Adams Park has come in for criticism this season.

Share scheme is the answer



Wycombe Wanderers Trust chairman Trevor Stroud hopes the share scheme will provide working capital for the club.

Continued from back page

to recovery, but it will only slow it down and not stop it".

Howard's statement is reflected in the Trust's projection that the club will lose £229,000 in 2015/16 – the first season without the rugby club – before it hopes to make a small profit of £10,000 in 2016/17.

Wanderers' main problem as a Trust owned football club since they took over has been securing enough working capital to ensure they can run effectively as a business.

Stroud hopes the share scheme, which aims to raise £2million over five years, is the answer to those problems after a series of other avenues were explored.

"We sold and leased back the training ground, we got 30 loyal supporters who formed a com-

pany called Chairboys Funders and they put £450,000 into the club, albeit for a very healthy interest rate which suited both sides," he said.

"We've also had to sell players. Some of those were good business and some of those were distress sales and I'm not going to shrink away from that. The last two I believe were very good business."

"Prior to that Kortney Hause was probably sold below his market value, but we do have additional clauses which will hopefully reward us in the future rather than immediately."

"What we need is an injection of working capital which the share scheme will provide."

The Trust has already begun taking investment via the share scheme with Howard one of those people who has pledged money into the initiative over

the five-year period. In excess of £550,000 has been pledged according to Stroud – a figure that they hope will turn into payments which come in the form of monthly, annual or one off sums.

A minimum pledge of £100 can be made by anyone who signs up to be a Trust member, while the maximum amount payable over the five years is £100,000 and funds must come from a UK bank account although the Trust hope to attract investors from beyond these shores.

Stroud said: "We will be marketing it on a national basis. Stage one is to Trust members and fans, stage two is to the wider High Wycombe community and thirdly will be the wider football community and worldwide."

The Trust says the money raised by the share scheme will be used to improve areas of the club which can help generate extra revenue and may also be used on projects such as upgrading the floodlights and facilities at Adams Park.

"It will be general funding within the club and there are specific areas that have been targeted," said Stroud.

"We don't want fans to think there is just a big black hole that the money is disappearing into."

"We have said that the money will not be used to bump up the playing budget, which probably isn't good news to Gareth (Ainsworth) but it's not a position where we're asking fans to buy a player or build a squad."