

Trust makes 'Steady' start to share scheme

Wycombe Wanderers Trust say £25k has been raised in first week



Out of 985 Wycombe Wanderers Trust members, 54 have stumped up the cash to put into the community share scheme, which was launched last Thursday in front of Blues manager Gareth Ainsworth and chairman Andrew Howard at Adams Park.

by **GREG STYLES**
gregory.styles@london.newsquest.co.uk

WYCOMBE WANDERERS TRUST chairman Trevor Stroud says their community share scheme has made a "steady" start – despite the fact that fewer than 60 people have so far applied for shares.

The Trust officially launched the scheme at Adams Park last Thursday and have so far collected £25,000 towards their £2 million target, which it's hoped will be raised over a five-year period.

The Trust, which owns Wanderers, turned to the scheme after a proposed takeover collapsed a year ago, and it is desperate for the initiative to raise the working capital that will end the need for loans to be pumped into the club.

Stroud announced at last week's meeting that pledges were nearing the £600,000 mark, but admitted the challenge now is getting people to

turn their pledges into concrete contributions.

Fifty-four people have so far firmed up their interest by applying for shares, 12 of which are newly registered Trust members who have signed up to invest, meaning 42 of the Trust's existing membership, which stands at 985, have applied for shares.

While he wasn't overwhelmed with the figure raised so far, Stroud believes the sum didn't represent a bad return since the share scheme's launch.

He said: "We had the launch but only now are we starting to do the marketing and reminding people (to pay). You can always want for more, but I think that's pretty reassuring in the first week of launch.

"All we're trying to do is remind people that they made the pledge, which was made some months ago. It's really just about reminding people.

"Some people's circumstances may have changed and they may not actually take up the application, but we hope that isn't the case and £25,000 in the first week isn't bad."

Those wishing to apply for shares must contribute between the minimum investment of £100 and the maximum of £100,000 over the course of the five years.

While the Trust's initial presentation was to all those who attended last week's meeting they are hoping that with the right marketing strategy a wider audience of people will be persuaded to put money into the scheme.

Stroud said: "We've now got our full print run of brochures. We start by marketing to Trust members, then fans, then the rest of High Wycombe, then the rest of the UK and then the rest of the world."

The Trust chairman also alluded to a meeting that took place yesterday between officials from the club

and the Trust to co-ordinate their efforts to publicise the scheme.

"There is a project meeting on Thursday (yesterday) afternoon to pull all those plans together," he said.

"That will be very much a linked message between the Trust and the club. We've got Trust representatives and club representatives all on that project team."

Stroud said the Trust had no specific targets which they expected to hit in the immediate aftermath of the launch and instead hoped that those people who made their interest known when the idea was first floated in March 2014 would now follow it up with payment.

He said: "It's very steady, which is good. We weren't expecting the floodgates to open but as long as that keeps going, and we keep getting the message out there and reminding people, then I think we're on the right track."

Gaz: French trip represents Blues' progress



Blues players during a trip to The Somme in France.

WANDERERS' proposed pre-season tour to France shows the strides that the club are making, according to manager Gareth Ainsworth.

It was revealed last month that Blues were in the process of finalising their trip to Europe, which will last four or five days and is most likely to take place in July.

Ainsworth and chairman Andrew Howard are known to be keen on broadening their players' horizons and exposing them to new experiences, with one such trip taking the players to the Footballers' Battalion memorial in the north of France last October.

He said: "We want to create this culture here of togetherness and also learning experiences. The trip to the Somme was fantastic and it opened our eyes up.

"Being away together is good for the boys. With the financial restraints we're going to do the best we can to go away in pre-season for four or five days, which I think is another progression for Wycombe.

"For many years they haven't been away, they haven't been able to do it and I think it's key. I've been on many pre-season trips, I've been lucky enough to be at some top clubs and they're always worthwhile.

"To be able to do it is fantastic. It's a step forward for Wycombe Wanderers and it shows people that we are improving and trying to be better week in, week out, month in, month out and season in, season out."

