

Five years of fan-owned football: a message from the Trust chairman

Trevor Stroud celebrates a special milestone.



At 7.42pm on Thursday 29th June 2012, Wycombe Wanderers Trust completed their takeover of Wycombe Wanderers Football Club, placing the ownership of the club into the hands of its supporters. Trust chairman Trevor Stroud reflects on the past five years.

By the time you read this, Wycombe Wanderers Trust will have owned our football club for five years!

To say those five years have been interesting would be an understatement, but thanks to a lot of hard work by a lot of people - on a voluntary basis - we now have a football club in as strong a position as it has been for a long time.

We have significantly reduced - and are continuing to reduce - our debt, and all our loans are fully documented and structured. We have restored credibility with our suppliers by delivering on repayment plans.

Furthermore, I feel that all the various organisations that support WWFC are more involved in the club and feel that they have a voice that will be listened to. We have established a Fans Council, which is a route for fans - whether they are Trust members or not - to express their views and get feedback from the club.

Oh, and we have had a lot of fun on the way as well.

There are too many people to thank individually, but I do believe it is worth mentioning just a few.

When we took ownership of the club, we were losing a seven-figure sum every year. Don Woodward took over as chairman and, in conjunction with the Trust Board, made the difficult decisions to significantly reduce the cost base and started us on the journey to achieve a break-even position.

Three years ago, Andrew Howard took over as chairman, and brought his tremendous business acumen to place more emphasis on the commercial side of the business to boost income.

For virtually our entire period of ownership, we have had one manager. Gareth has delivered incredible results with one of the lowest budgets in League 2, and our various cup runs - and the play-off final at Wembley - have contributed significantly to our financial position as well as providing some memorable occasions.

I must mention John Derben, who, with his band of volunteers (the PALS), has saved the club literally thousands of pounds, be it by gardening, painting or cleaning seats and lots of other work.

Finally, I would also like to thank both the football club and Trust boards for all of their time and effort, again on a voluntary basis.

There is still a lot of hard work to be done, and more decisions to be made, but for now let's celebrate five years of owning our football club, and look forward to a new season which promises much.

Let's encourage as many people as we can down to Adams Park and I am sure the new season will provide us with much fun and a bit of heartache on the way.

Trevor Stroud
Trust Chairman