

# Wycombe Wanderers Founders Trust



NEWSLETTER - Issue 1 - March 2005

## FOREWORD



by  
**David McGee,**  
*Chairman*

Hello and welcome to the first Newsletter from the Wycombe Wanderers Founders Trust.

Since the change in governance of the football club in July 2004 the Founders Trust has been established, its first Board of Directors has been elected and Ian Mather has been voted by the membership to act as the first PLC Board Representative for the Founders Trust.

Having survived the mammoth administrative battle to conceive the Founders Trust we walked straight into the inevitable and extremely important London Wasps debate. Any issue that affects the core rights of Founder Members and the heritage of WWFC is of key importance to the Founders Trust. So what have we been doing ?

Ian is party to all the ongoing discussions and negotiations between WWFC and Wasps. He touches upon this issue in his interview and also iterates the restrictions in which he is operating. To date he has been unable to communicate the content of these meetings with us but he has made sure that the PLC Board are taking the concerns of many supporters into consideration. As and when these discussions result in a proposal the Founders Trust will then communicate these to the membership and Founder Share holders.

It is our duty to ensure that all communications contain accurate and detailed facts pertaining to the proposal. To make educated and informed decisions we must all be able to access and understand all of the information. Historically this has not always been the

case – we see this as a major role for the Founders Trust Board and are currently working on ways to ensure this can be achieved.

A further area in which Ian is operating on is to ensure the Club complies with the PLC Articles of Association surrounding the core rights of the Founder Members. The enshrined areas within the articles of association are listed and discussed further within this newsletter. These exist and represent one of the last areas of control we, as supporters, have over our club – it is important that we ensure they are adhered to.

I have had a meeting with Steve Hayes to try and establish some of the facts surrounding the discussions with Wasps along with a variety of other issues. This was an honest and open discussion, Steve was able to communicate some of the Clubs policies and intentions regarding lots of interesting issues. He is very personable, demonstrated a genuine passion for the club and a determination to make things work. With regards to Wasps, again, he did not have or could not divulge any information of real substance. We discussed the issue on a theoretical basis and exchanged views on a 'what if scenario'. Naturally I took the opportunity to voice my personal opinions and anxieties over any equity sale of our stadium to our tenants. These comments were substantiated as being my personal opinions and not necessarily those of the Founders' Trust members.

We have further meetings planned with representatives from the club to ensure we maintain good levels of communication and have invited Steve Hayes and John Harrison to attend our next Board Meeting where we hope to establish some further news from Wasps and some of the other initiatives the club are running.

For a modest Football League club, supporters of Wycombe Wanderers have the choice of joining the Supporters Trust, the Founders Trust, the Official Supporters Club or the Independent Supporters Club ! All of these organisations need and depend upon your continued support. Choice is

great, it is something we all need and want but it can present problems.

The Founders Trust and the Supporters Trust both 'fish in the same pool' and share common goals and objectives. So, with this in mind, it was important we formed a really close working relationship. Supporters' Trust Chairman Francis Glenister and myself attend both of the Trusts board meetings, aside from overdosing on bureaucracy this does prevent the two Trusts from inadvertently colliding. We are planning a variety of joint events to raise awareness, increase memberships and generate income for the Supporters Trust.

I 'trust' you will find this newsletter informative. Please do contact us with your views, issues, ideas or complaints. If you are eligible please do join and get involved in the Founders Trust. Ultimately the Founders Trust can only be as powerful as its membership.

Please feel free to contact me at:  
[david.mcgee@wwft.co.uk](mailto:david.mcgee@wwft.co.uk)

## AN INSIGHT



*We take a look at Ian Mather's role as a Board Director of Wycombe Wanderers plc*

The change in governance of the Football Club presented a number of challenges to both Supporters and the new structured PLC. Many reservations were expressed by supporters as to how the new PLC Board would operate and how they would embrace the presence of a Supporter Representative. Ian's early challenges were to include establishing firm working relationships with the PLC and Club employees. He comments, "The

other main board members, Ivor Beeks, Steve Hayes and Brian Kane made me welcome from the outset and got me involved from my very first board meeting in all aspects of the running of the club”.

This was highlighted by the baptism of fire surrounding the departure of Tony Adams, Ian explains “I anticipated that to do the job properly would need commitment and time on my part. I was not however, expecting that to be so intense from such an early stage of my involvement. But, who could have predicted the mid term resignation by Tony Adams, or the way in which he chose to handle it ? Even though I was very new to the board at that time, I was not just simply kept informed as to events, but was encouraged and welcomed to be involved in picking up the pieces and in moving the club forward. I was wholly involved in the decision process regarding the ‘caretaker’ management team and, subsequently, in the selection and appointment of John Gorman as our new Football Manager.”

After the appointment of John Gorman the Club have focussed their attention firmly upon bringing positive change to WWFC with Ian maintaining his involvement. Ian describes the process, “The board are continually looking at new ideas, opportunities and initiatives to improve the football club and the quality of overall service (including winning matches) and value for money that can be provided to our supporters. I have fed the board with many suggestions and ideas from supporters, as well as their concerns and complaints. The board have always been receptive and many of the suggestions and ideas will be implemented and the concerns, where possible, will be addressed. Along with other Founders Trust Directors, we have and will continue to meet with other WWFC Plc Board Members on a regular basis to deal with specific issues and to stimulate positive change.”

Many supporters have expressed serious concerns over the long term arrangements with our tenants London Wasps. Any change in this relationship is a key concern to the Founders’ Trust and is an issue very much at the forefront of the WWFT Board agenda. Ian has taken a lead role with this issue, commenting “One such issue is Wasps. Will they be staying? Will they be going? Do they want to buy equity in the stadium? Will the terracing be removed to enable the capacity of the ground to be increased? Unfortunately, and genuinely for reasons not concerning Wycombe Wanderers, we are not in a position to say very much at this stage. What we can say, is that our Plc board has met with Wasps board for preliminary discussions regarding their future in High Wycombe. These were considered fruitful and both sides agreed there was merit in continuing discussions regarding a longer term agreement. There has been much speculation and conjecture over what was discussed but we are not able to say anything further at this stage.”

Supporters may find this lack of information very frustrating. The Board of the Founders Trust are no different. Ian is in a position where he must be careful as to the information he can divulge whilst balancing the needs of the Founders’ Trust for accurate and timely information. This is a balancing act we are quickly coming to terms with. With poor communication from the Club to its supporters being a key issue that Ian wants to address he is approaching the issue carefully concluding, “confidentiality is a key requirement of any senior management position in any business and Wycombe Wanderers Football Club is no different. The position of third parties, such as Wasps, new players, other football clubs etc. has to be respected at all times as well as a need, on many occasions, to maintain commercial advantage. It is for such reasons that board level discussions frequently remain confidential until such time that it is appropriate to bring them into the public domain. When commercial restraints have been removed this information will be divulged in a clear and concise fashion. You can however, rest assured, that I will continue to represent the Founder Members and club supporters to the best of my ability.”

If you have any specific issues or concerns that you would like raised, please feel free to contact Ian via E-mail at: [ian.mather@wwft.co.uk](mailto:ian.mather@wwft.co.uk).



**You won't get through a season watching Wycombe without the word communication being mentioned at least once. It was probably the main reason that Chairboys on the Net kicked into life almost ten years ago now.**

**Since then, some say that COTN has grown into somewhat of an institution but when all is said and done it is merely an historical record of Wycombe Wanderers. The aim was always to deliver information in a factual way and without too much opinion, preaching or spin. You can decide for yourselves whether that aim has been achieved.**

**As for the Club, some say that communication during the same period has been poor. In reality it has probably never been better. However, before we start dishing out any awards for services to the media it is worth stating the obvious; and that is, what has changed beyond all recognition in the past ten years is the expectation of the public to have information literally on demand. There appears to be little patience in waiting for the newspapers to report on matches, injuries and transfer news. Meanwhile, off the field activities are analysed in more and more detail by an increasingly sceptical and media informed audience.**

**This pursuit of information will continue to snowball with the more widespread use of broadband internet connections, mobile devices and digital TV. It will certainly be a challenge to use these mediums in an appropriate and efficient way to avoid an information overload.**

**The additional challenge to the Club and the various supporter groups at Wycombe is to communicate relevant information in an understandable and consistent manner.**

**Newsletters such as this are just the start. How many times over the years have we seen similar newsletters and publications from the Club fall away after just a handful or in some cases only one issue?**

**Can a supporters' group do better? I would say that undoubtedly it can. The fan base at any Club is made up of any number of people who possess the necessary skills to achieve this. One of the encouraging aspects of the Founders' Trust has been the emergence of some new faces on the supporters' group scene. It proves that the people are out there and it was just providing the necessary catalyst for their and others involvement. You could be the next.**

**Of course it is important that the process is an ongoing one and this includes providing feedback and progress on the various issues to all. It is also vital that any supporters' group is seen to be proactive as this will ultimately generate the credibility necessary to encourage new membership and make the organisation a long lasting one.**

**Paul Lewis, Producer and Editor, [www.chairboys.co.uk](http://www.chairboys.co.uk)**

# WARNING

*The following short article  
will bore you, but it is  
**IMPORTANT***

*Joe McKenna describes the key areas controlled  
by the Founder Members*



When the Football Club abandoned its status as a members club in 2004, the new PLC was created with some important safeguards ('Enshrined Articles') written into its rules (Articles of Association).

At the same time, the 500 existing Members were given one 'Founder Share' in the new company. The 'Enshrined Articles' can only be changed with the agreement of the holders of the Founder Shares.

When a Founder Shareholder ceases to hold a Season Ticket (or dies or is declared bankrupt) the Share will pass to the ownership of the Founders Trust. The Founders Trust has the responsibility to vote with these Shares if any changes to the 'Enshrined Articles' are proposed. Obviously, as time passes, the Founders Trust will have the custodianship of more and more Founder Shares.

## **The 'Enshrined Articles' prevent the PLC from: . . . .**

- ⚽ Proposing any resolution to dispose of its interests in the football ground at the Causeway Stadium (Adams Park), including any proposal involving a sale or leaseback;
- ⚽ Taking any action to sell, assign or dispose of a substantial part of the PLC's business, property or assets;
- ⚽ Taking any action to change the nature of the PLC's business from that of the operation of a professional football club;
- ⚽ Convening a meeting to consider changing the rights attaching to the Founder Shares;
- ⚽ Taking any steps to wind up or dissolve the PLC;
- ⚽ Taking any steps to relocate the business and playing activities of the football club outside of a 5 mile radius of the Causeway Stadium (Adams Park) and
- ⚽ Allowing any single shareholder to acquire a stake in the PLC greater than 25% of the issued share capital

**. . . . .without the consent of the Founder Shareholders.**

## Wycombe Wanderers Supporters Trust

### AN UPDATE

*Francis Glenister, Chairman*

Wycombe Wanderers Supporters Trust has paid the first instalment of £50,000 to buy 100,000 shares in Wycombe Wanderers Football Club plc. As a result of this investment, Keith Blagbrough has been appointed as the Supporters Trust interim representative on the board of directors of Wycombe Wanderers Football Club plc. Supporters now have two directors on the board and I know that Ian Mather and Keith will work together to make a positive contribution to the Club, whilst representing supporter interests. The Supporters Trust must now raise the second instalment of £50,000 by February 2006. If we fail to do so both the partly paid shares and the entitlement to board representation will be forfeited. Our membership is now approaching 180 people and £5,000 has been raised towards this second goal. Nearly 100 of the 500 founder members of Wycombe Wanderers Football Club have joined the Supporters Trust and over 60 people have joined both Trusts. If you are a member of both, thank you. If you are not yet a member then the boards of the two Trusts urge you to join both. There is excellent co-operation between the boards of the two Trusts with those eligible being members of both Trusts. In recent weeks, jointly the Supporters Trust and the Founders Trust have purchased a pitch side advertising board and David McGee and myself have attended board meetings of both Trusts to increase co-operation further. This update in the Founders Trust's newsletter is a practical example of this increased co-operation and we will be announcing further joint initiatives in the coming weeks. Further details of the Supporters Trust can be obtained from our website [www.wwst.org](http://www.wwst.org) or by contacting the secretary at 1 Allen Drive, Walters Ash, High Wycombe, Bucks HP14 4SS Tel: 01494 563697.



# HAVING THE BOTTLE

*to promote  
the Founders Trust,  
by Colin Smith*



The Founders Trust are always looking for ways to promote the Trust to potential members and to raise awareness to supporters in general. As one of the Trust directors works for Bottlestore in Tring, who manufacture a range of plastic bottle and, as one of their big selling items is sports drink bottles, it seemed logical that we should have our Founders Trust logo reproduced on a 500 ml sports bottles as a promotional item.

The Founders Trust Board felt that as the Chester match will see many of our younger current and hopefully, future supporters in attendance, that we should distribute our bottles free to the youngsters to give them something to remember their day at Wycombe

Wanderers. During the half time break members of the Founders Trust will distribute 2,000 bottles amongst the young fans. We have to thank the WWFC Safety Officer for allowing the Trust to distribute these bottles.

The Founders Trust will also be taking part in supporting the football club at the forthcoming Sportsman's Dinner on Monday 14th March when the main guest and speaker is former World Snooker Champion Dennis Taylor. The Founders Trust will be sponsoring the pre meal raffle. Once again the sports bottle will play its part with every bottle containing a raffle ticket which will be sold for £5. The winning ticket holder will receive a limited edition picture signed by Ricky Villa

scoring his winning goal for Spurs at the 1981 Wembley Cup Final replay against Manchester City. An item well worth winning. All the takings from this raffle will be donated to the football club funds.

The Founders Trust has a number of places available at the Sportsman's Dinner and if you would like to attend, please contact either Ian Davies or Suzie Clarke at the football club for more details.

If you become an owner of one of our promotional drink bottles, we hope that you have many healthy hours of using it. Our thanks go to Bottlestore for their support in this promotion.

## Wycombe Wanderers Founders Trust

### Objectives

Wycombe Wanderers Founders Trust will fulfil the following Objectives.

#### Premier Objectives

- To protect and preserve the enshrined areas of control within the Memorandum and Articles of Association for all supporters of WWFC.
- To preserve and uphold the proud heritage of Wycombe Wanderers Football Club.

#### Core Objectives

- To represent and express the views and opinions of the Founder Members & Supporters to WWFC PLC.
- To communicate the policies and strategy of WWFC PLC to the Founder Members & Supporters.
- To encourage WWFC supporters to join and participate in the Founders Trust to present an active and professional organisation.
- To secure close links with the Wycombe Wanderers Supporters Trust and provide support and assistance.
- To encourage WWFC supporters, local commerce and industry to join and participate in the Wycombe Wanderers Supporters Trust.

### Membership Criteria

Supporters will be eligible to join the Wycombe Wanderers Founders Trust if they meet and continue to fulfil the following Membership Criteria.

#### Joining the Trust

- You are a Founder Member and hold a current WWFC Season Ticket.
- You are a current WWFC Season Ticket holder and have owned a WWFC Season Ticket for the 3 previous seasons.
- You are in your fourth year of continuous employment by WWFC PLC (formerly WWFC Ltd.), either full or part time.
- You are a Life Member of Wycombe Wanderers Football Club.

#### Maintaining Your Membership

- You renew your season ticket before the completion of the first WWFC home fixture in October of that season.
- You are continued to be employed by WWFC PLC.

#### Procedures

- Three weeks prior to the deadline date, Founder Members who have not renewed their season ticket will be notified by the club advising that if their season ticket is allowed to lapse, their Founder Member Share will revert to the guardianship of the Founders Trust.

## Wycombe Wanderers Founders Trust

### Contact Information

visit the Trust's website [www.wwft.co.uk](http://www.wwft.co.uk)  
or e-mails can be addressed to [info@wwft.co.uk](mailto:info@wwft.co.uk) or  
Mail can be addressed to:

**Wycombe Wanderers Founders Trust,**  
c/o Wycombe Wanderers Football Club,  
Adams Park, Hillbottom Road, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP12 4HJ.

