Bucks Free Press

Serving Wycombe, South Bucks & Chiltern districts



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Talking BUSINESS



ON NIGHT THAT CHANGI

A dream dies...



...but this is revived

IN one dramatic night this week, four councillors changed the future by throwing out plans for a stadium and sports village at Booker - and instead agreeing to spend £500,000 on looking into a total reconstruction of the sports centre at Handy Cross.

There was joy from campaigners, misery for bosses at Wanderers and Wasps, and a host of questions still to be answered - including: will Wasps now be able to stay in Wycombe?

SEE PAGES 4, 5, 12 & 159 for analysis of the night that altered the course of our history



Failed project is branded 'deplorable waste of money'

"deplorably wasted" on the fallen stadium project would have been better spent delivering a new sports centre, said the leader of the Wycombe Liberal Democrats.

Trevor Snaith, pictured, launched blistering attack on Conservative-ruled Wycombe District Council following the sensational axing of the stadium.

He said a new leisure complex would already be open at Handy Cross had the council not "deplorably

wasted" £422,000 and two years on the "pet project". He said: "I'm pleased we are not spending any more

9-6

council money on this but that is £400,000 plus wasted. "Had the council and its officers not put the time into this stadium project, they could have delivered the Handy Cross project from start to finish by now.

"It is two years of wasted time from the council, its officers, the councillors and it led to the fact the public had to step forward to fight it." He went on to attack the council's public consultation, which cost £35,000 and was widely criticised protesters, who called it

Former leader of WDC Cllr Lesley Clarke admitted the council got the process wrong in an interview with Marlow FM in June, after May's elections.

Cllr Snaith said: "I hope the council have learned some hard lessons from that poor public consultation and will not make those mistakes

"I'll just point to GASP's demonstration on Saturday, where they interviewed Mickey Mouse who was counted in the council's consultation – and hold up the Bucks Free Press' survey work as the way to go forward in the future."

How council spent your cash

ORIGINALLY WDC earmarked £750,000 to investigate the stadium scheme. This was capped at £500.000 but didn't quite reach this ceiling.

The total spent was £422.041.

This breaks down into two categories: A) Core strategy work – TOTAL £157,991

Temporary Stadium Officer Support Costs £59,557

- Consultation £35.806 Planning Technical Evidence & Advice £62,629 B) Commercial side -TOTAL £264,050

- Miscelleanous - £372 Heads of Terms /

Collaboration Agreement £47.103

- Outline Strategic Business Case / Advice £26,321

- Masterplanning / Design £12.905 - Socio / Economic Study

£6,000 - Covenants Assessment

£8.500

- Legal Advice £16,474 Information provided by WDC

Brief synopsis of the saga so far

 WDC unveiled a partnership with Wycombe Wanderers and Wasps in early 2010 to investigate sites for a stadium

 The council caused public fury by agreeing to spend up to £750,000 on feasibility studies

 A company called Wycombe Sports Developments Ltd was set up to oversee the stadium plan on behalf of the clubs

 A council consultation said the public opted for Wycombe Air Park but campaigners protested the study was flawed. A BFP survev then found mass opposition

Tory council leader Lesley Clarke, whose cabinet backed the Booker plans, stepped down as chief after the May elections. A new Cabinet was formed, headed by Tory Alex Collingwood

Handy Cross reborn

By Simon Farr

sfarr@london.newsquest.co.uk

COUNCIL bosses sensationally axed the controversial stadium plan – moments after agreeing to breathe new life into sport at Handy Cross.

Wycombe District Council's Cabinet agreed to plough £500,000 into planning for a new sports centre to replace the aging Wycombe Sports Centre.

That decision (see below) was made just moments before Wanderers and Wasps owner Steve Hayes' dream of a 17,500 capacity stadium and sports village was ended by members, in a dramatic Monday night in the council

Spectators in the packed public gallery were left stunned as, one-byone, Cabinet members said they would not be taking part in the decision due to council rules preventing those with a "personal or prejudicial" interest from

voting on the controversial topic.

This left four members – leader Cllr Alex Collingwood, deputy leader Cllr Arif Hussain, and Cllrs Audrey Jones and James Malliff – to make the all important decision.

They all plumped for option one, to ditch the stadium and sports village proposed to be sited on land at Wycombe Air Park which is owned by the council.

But members hit out the red-tape with Cllr Jean Teesdale calling the council's rules a "sad day for democracy" and Labour leader Steve Hayes' sports village dream is dramatically ditched as new Cabinet looks to revive Wycombe Sports Centre instead

Victoria Groulef said the debate 'bordered on laughable'

Council rules state 25 per cent of members are required to make a

The Cabinet has ten members, nine on the night, meaning a minimum of three were legally required to make the

As far as the actual stadium debate was concerned, Cllr Simon Parker said the plan "had more holes than Swiss cheese" and Cllr Doug Anson added: "I'm totally opposed to building a private venture for a private person."

Lib Dem leader Cllr Trevor Snaith unloaded a blistering attack on the previous Tory regime, saying they had wasted council money on a pet project'.

Just ex-deputy leader Cllr Tony Green spoke up for the project, saying

the sports village would "increase the Wycombe offer

Cllr John Savage and Cllr Bill Bendyshe-Brown also urged members to plump for option three business case. Cllr Bendyshe-Brown believed the council would be 'foolhardy' to ditch the plan having spent £422,000, just weeks before a full

business case was ready.

But Cllr Collingwood said the council would have to provide £31m towards the project, with the taxpayer footing the £10m shortfall – to gasps from the public gallery.

And on that bombshell, the vote was taken and the stadium plan was sunk – queuing delirious celebrations from protesters and casting a shadow over the future of London Wasps and Wycombe Wanderers.









THE FOUR WHO KILLED A DREAM: Cllrs Collingwood, Jones, Malliff and Hussain

Is there now another battle on the horizon?

COUNCIL chiefs have agreed to pump £500,000 into plans for a new state-ofthe-art sports centre in High Wycombe - but the scheme hinges on a familiar

Cabinet unanimously agreed to look to replace the aging Wycombe Sports Centre at Handy Cross before the stadium drama unfolded on Monday

But 'Plan B' of a revised 'masterplan' again relies on the council finding a new home for a running track and synthetic turf sport pitches

Plans for a gateway coachway, sports centre and office blocks at Handy Cross were scuppered last year after Hazlemere residents won a campaign being prevent the track from relocated to Sir William Ramsay School

Council leader Cllr Collingwood said a replacement leisure centre for the 21st Century would be the plan, not a refurbishment of the current facility.

Councillors agreed to draw a total of £500,000 from the authority's Major Projects Programme to fund an outline planning business case and applications.

The council estimates the project which retains employment space and a 'down-sized' coachway park and ride – would cost between £25m to £35m.

Additional cash would also be required for further infrastructure

Council bosses say they will 'cross finance' this by selling off developable land on the site, Cressex and from 'elsewhere' - specific sites were not identified.

Deputy leader Cllr Arif Hussain Ided: "The current leisure centre had a lifespan of 25 years when it was built.

"It has now been there for 40 years we need to spend money and deliver a new sports centre."

Cllr Jean Teesdale added: "People say it [Wycombe Sports Centre] is run down and a new centre would be an asset to the whole district. I welcome

Work on the project is already underway, including potential sites for the relocation of the running track and synthetic pitch.

case is due to be business presented to Cabinet in November.
Wycombe District Council will

its agreement management co Leisure until 2015. company Parkwood

Interim repairs will be made to the current sports centre.

> To read a live feed, minute by minute from the meeting, go to

rands decision a 'victory for democrac stifled debate and reduced the councillors from voting on the key

WYCOMBE MP Steve Baker. pictured, released this statement yesterday:

LEX Collingwood and Wycombe District Council's Labinet have made a sound decision to stop exploring proposals for a new sports village. Local democracy has worked: protestors against the plans have made their case and won.

This victory for democracy is good news in the context of the greater local freedoms, responsibilities and powers which the Government has promised under the Localism Bill, which is currently in the Lords.

For example, instead of top-

down, imposed housing targets councils will have greater planning freedoms and financial incentives to build.

This is just

one reason why those for and against development will need to pay close attention to local government, right across the country. Local Conservatives recently resolved to protect the green belt at our AGM and I am sure this will be well-received by local people.

Many sports enthusiasts will be disappointed that the Council has stopped these plans.

Steve Hayes has made a huge personal contribution to Wanderers and Wasps, bringing welcome business and entertainment to our town.

I know he will be massively disappointed by this decision. It's now for the two clubs to

figure out their futures and I know thousands of people will wish them the very best. Under the current law, too few

councillors were able to vote on this decision Thankfully, the Localism Bill reforms the relevant rules on

'predetermination' which have

quality of local democracy. The guide to the Localism Bill

'The Localism Bill will make it clear that it is proper for councillors to play an active part in local discussions, and that they should not be liable to legal challenge as a result. This will help them better represent their constituents and enrich local democratic debate. People can elect their councillor confident in the knowledge that they will be able to act on the issues they care about and have campaigned on.

It is my hope and belief that this Bill will resolve the ridiculous situation which prevented local

issue which mattered to their

Finally, as I have always said, I am profoundly sceptical of entrepreneurship by government at any level.

It would be far better if in future commercial projects were brought forward to be judged under the planning process, with direct financial risks and rewards falling to investors, not taxpayers.

The Plain English Guide to the Localism Bill is here:

http://www.communities.gov.uk/ documents/localgovernment/pdf/1 923416.pdf

Steve Baker MP

bucksfreepress.co.uk

as stadium is axed





PROTESTS: Hundreds join the march through High Wycombe on Saturday, led by Gary Nuttall, above

Pictures: ANITA ROSS-MARSHALL



Post match inquest starts

HE final whistle has been blown. The stadium saga is over. But the postmatch inquest is only just beginning. Despite the Wycombe Air Park plans getting the guillotine this week, questions still remain.

Will there be an inquiry after £422,041 of council cash was, in Lib Dem Leader Trevor Snaith's words, "deplorably wasted"? GASP Chairman Gary Nuttall repeated his calls from June for an investigation.

Others may argue it was necessary to spend the cash on the various reports to come to this answer. The £35,000 consultation was part of this spend. Campaigners called it flawed. Even ex-leader Lesley Clarke has now suggested it could have been better. So what will the council do to avoid a repeat in future?

Businessman Michael Garvey has called it a lost opportunity in an article in our

music

POLITICS REPORTER business section today. He asks how Wycombe is now going to solve its increasingly growing unemployment problems and attract more businesses to invest and help it prosper?

A new home needs to be found for a running track and synthetic turf sport pitches if the Handy Cross revamp goes

Will there be a re-run of the controversy in Hazlemere where residents successfully fought off relocation to their

And what now for Wasps? Will they seek pastures new? Can Adams Park be expanded or even rebuilt?

The final chapter of the stadium saga may have been

But how will the epilogue

Campaigners celebrate as clubs work out where to go next after crushing blow

CHEERS worthy of Blues fans after a victory at Adams Park rang out in the council chamber on Monday night.

Campaigners poured out of the meeting into the foyer with beaming smiles and hugs of congratulation.

The building was buzzing with excitement and the glee was evident on virtually every face.

It was almost like a post match victory celebration.

Councillor Simon Parker, speaking afterwards, hailed it as an 'astonishing' decision. Just two months previously he had been elected on his vow to fight the plans. Now, surprisingly, victory had already been secured.

Gary Nuttall, chairman of GASP

(Groups Against Stadium Proposals) was modest and relatively reserved in his response, but said his fellow protesters were 'delighted' their hard work had borne

the hours building up to the

ALSO

crunch meeting, Steve Hayes, owner of the two clubs, said it would be "a defining moment for the council" and "important for the future of Wycombe".

"Let's trust the democratic process and its basis in representing the best

interests of all the people," he said.

Yet just hours later, those words seemed flat. Another statement on his behalf just before midnight on Monday spoke of being "very disappointed" and claimed it was "a golden missed opportunity".

But some Wanderers supporters who attended the decisive meeting were more concerned about the clubs' finances.

Wasps, who have debts of just over

£3m, currently rent Adams Park from Wycombe Wanderers, which currently running at a loss of £1m.

Dale Hurman said: "We can't continue to run Frogmoor.

at these losses and we can't continue to support these levels of debt. Steve Hayes needs to make his intentions clear where he wishes to move this club without a stadium to move into."

Less than two days before the decision, hundreds of protesters turned out in force, bearing placards and waving posters, declaring 'no to the

stadium'. The White Elephant March, was organised GASP.

It began at The Rye and snaked to council's offices for a five-minute demonstration.

Shoppers and town centre workers stopped and watched as demonstrators flooded the High Street and

dancing water sports picnics Single and feeling alone? Come along to one of dining our events. tennis

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Bucks Free Press

End the vitriol and

ISTORY will be the best judge of whether or not Wycombe District Council's Cabinet was right on Monday night to flatly reject the plans for a

sports village and stadium at Booker.
The decision, a major U-turn for the council as a corporate body, was both decisive and dramatic. Pulling the plug after already spending £500,000 of taxpayers' money on the project was a brave step for councillors who could have easily taken the safer option and deferred the matter for more investigations.

The Bucks Free Press, which has ploughed a neutral path during this debate, agrees with Wycombe Sports Developments Ltd, the company behind the project, which said after the decision that the democratic process must be respected.

As we said last week, the Cabinet would have been damned for any decision it made, so we must all defer to the greater wisdom here. We certainly share the concerns about the business case and the loss of green belt. The major question for us would be: could this have been resolved during a deferral? We will never now know, but then it's hard to blame the Cabinet for refusing to allow this to drag on.

We congratulate protest group GASP on a magnificent campaign. It was wellmobilised, passionate and intelligent.

We also commiserate with WSDL and Steve Hayes, owner of Wasps and Wanderers. We had no truck with the online vitriol expressed about them. Whatever you may think of their dream, it too was passionate and sincere. Mr Hayes and his team admit now they made mistakes in their initial presentations of the plan. We agree – but boy how dearly have they paid for this.

In the end, one simple question resurfaces: does Wycombe really need a new stadium? Steve Hayes believes it's vital and has indicated in the past Wasps would have to move if it doesn't happen. Critics have sneered: "Well let them move."

The Bucks Free Press must climb off the fence on this point. Wasps should not be allowed to leave Wycombe. They have brought great value to this area and are a feather in all of our caps.

It's time now to heal the divisions, end the vitriol and unite behind a simple idea. New stadium or no new stadium – we must all join as one to fight to secure the future of Wanderers and Wasps in Wycombe.

Same side different agendas

With the season just two weeks away opinion in the Blues camp is divided

MATT Bloomfield says the current Wanderers squad is the best he has ever seen – but team-mate Nikki Bull has played down talk of a successive promotion, saying Blues are in a mini-league for survival.

Bloomfield has played alongside the likes of Roger Johnson, Mike Williamson and Nathan Tyson during his eight years at Adams Park, but thinks his present teammates can do what they couldn't – help Blues challenge for promotion from the third tier.

Bloomfield pointed to the example of other smaller clubs who punched above their weight in

League One last season. He said: "Last year Rochdale, Bournemouth and Exeter, clubs of a similar size to us, have gone on and



MATT BLOOMFIELD: "Last year Rochdale, Bournemouth [made playoffs] and Exeter, clubs of a similar size to us have gone on and done really well. There's no reason why we can't



NIKKI BULL: "We are in a minileague for survival - anything else is a bonus. We're going to have one of the smallest budgets, Survival will be a good achievement. "

By Andy Carswell

done really well and there's no reason why we can't follow suit.
"With the ability and the talent

we've got in the squad, and equally the togetherness, team spirit, camaraderie and competitiveness of the lads, I do honestly believe this is the best squad since I have been here at the club."

But Bull has tempered those expectations and believes finishing fifth from bottom of League One will spell success this time.

The Blues goalkeeper said: "I'm realistic and I believe there are only eight sides that could go down. We are in a mini-league for survival anything else is a bonus.

Wycombe have been a bit of a yo-

yo club and we've got to put an end to that. I'm not getting carried away, I've said from the day we went up that fifth from bottom would be a success. People will say that's a lack of ambition, but we're going to have one of the smallest budgets.
Survival will be a good achievement."

Manager Gary Waddock has made six signings in the summer, but heavy the absorption of the summer, but heavy the absorption of the summer, but heavy the absorption of the summer, but heavy the action of the summer, but heavy the action of the summer, but heavy the summer and the su

but hasn't opened the chequebook in bringing those new faces to Adams Park.

Bull – who played with Scott Donnelly, Joel Grant and John Halls earlier in his career at Aldershot Town -thinks they are all canny acquisitions who will fit in well with the players already at the club however.

He said: "Fans would have liked

to have seen us sign your Clayton Donaldsons, your Ashley Grimes and Cody McDonalds, but there are 20 other clubs out there in the same division who want to sign them and

have bigger budgets.
"I think the gaffer's been really clever in the summer. He knew the players would give their all and fit in with the group already here, and I'm sure he'll be rewarded.

"They'll bring a bit of continuity from last season. We didn't have the best team, but we had a fantastic team spirit, a good will to win and a team that went out and gave their all. If we're going to stay up, we have to have that spirit."

Bloomfield added: "I don't think

there's anybody who's come into our dressing room this year who didn't already know someone, except maybe Tunners [James Tunnicliffe].

"It's helped them settle in quicker. Sometimes it can take a new player a couple of weeks to settle in and feel part of the squad From day one the lads who've come in have felt part of it.

"Last year our team spirit and togetherness helped us get promoted and we are going to need every bit of that this year to achieve what we want to do.

Give us your views

If you've got something to say about this story, join the debate and log on to

www.bucksfreepress.co.uk

Scott's ready to come in from the cold and hammer at England keeper's door

SCOTT Rendell could be back for Wanderers tomorrow and walk straight into a shootout with England keeper Rob Green when the Blues take on West Ham United at Adams Park (ko 3pm).

Last season's top scorer sat out Saturday's defeat at non-league Braintree and Tuesday's draw with Championship outfit Crystal Palace with a cold.

He has been kept away from pre-season training, but sources say he is now ready to come back into the squad and build on his two 45-minute outings so far this summer. Centre half Dave Winfield is less likely

to make it though after picking up a knee injury in a collision with Palace striker Glenn Murray in midweek.

That knock forced him off at half time.
A scan has revealed no serious damage and he could be fit to play, but with the season set to kick-off in two weeks' time he might not be risked against the Hammers.

The match will be a big test for

Wanderers. West Ham were relegated from the Premiership last year and this will be their first game on English soil under new

boss Sam Allardyce.

And they could come up against last year's Football Writers' Player of the Year Scott Parker, who is expected to be in the visitors' squad.

Meanwhile Wanderers boss Waddock says he is getting closer to knowing his first choice XI which will kick off the



ARMED AND DANGEROUS: Scott Rendell is ready to fire his bullets again

season at home to Scunthorpe on August 6. He said: "Now it's a case of getting players closer to 70, 80, 90 minutes. Once that final week of pre-season comes around, everyone's got to stake a claim and obviously one or two have in the couple of games we've had."

After tomorrow's clash, Wycombe go to Wealdstone on Tuesday as part of the deal which took Marvin McCoy to Adams Park, before completing pre-season with a trip to Northampton Town next Saturday.

Waddock says there are no plans to introduce another friendly into the schedule after a planned trip to Wolverton was called off as their new ground is not

The Blues boss said: "It would have been more of a younger team with one or two trialists in there.

'Now the game's off I'm not going to put another game in."

Benyon won't fall down on fitness while out injured

INJURY won't stop Elliot Benyon from being able to take his place in the Wanderers team once he's recovered from his broken hand, believes manager Gary Waddock.

The striker underwent surgery last week to assess the problem after he fell awkwardly during a training session and broke his hand.

But Waddock says the High Wycombe-born forward, who has joined on a season-long loan from Swindon Town, will be fit and raring to go when the injury has healed thanks to a recovery programme from physio Stuart Ayles.

He said: "The positive thing about it is he'll be with Stuart Ayles and he'll definitely get him fit.

"Losing him is a blow. He's taken it in the right way. It could have been a lot worse, we could have lost him for a lot longer if it was

another type of injury."

The Blues boss pointed to the example of fellow frontman Matt McClure as an example of the difference Ayles' influence can have on the Wanderers players

Waddock said: "He's filled out a little bit with the programme Stuart's put him on over the summer. He'll benefit from it."

He added: "We've got some really decent strikers at the football club. Matt is a very good player and I like him. He's staking a claim [for a starting place].

"We have to make sure our strikers score goals and between the five of them, when Benyon gets back, there's competition up there and there is.

It's the toughest pre-season ever

NIKKI Bull was glad to have the day off on Wednesday after taking part in the toughest pre-season training regime he's ever faced.

Wanderers' number one played the full 90 minutes of Blues' game against Crystal Palace on Tuesday night, having taken part in extra training sessions earlier in the day.

Manager Gary Waddock said after last Saturday's game with Braintree he was expecting his players to be tired after being put through a punishing regime by physio Stuart

Bull said: "It's probably been the toughest pre-season I have ever known. We've been getting in early and not leaving until 5pm some days. "We played Palace last night and did

weight training and running sessions the same day, so they've certainly been getting their pound of flesh out

The goalkeeper kept his first clean sheet of the pre-season campaign and showed the form that won him both player of the year awards last season with a stunning save from a closerange Glenn Murray header.

He said: "It was good to get the 90 minutes under my belt. I haven't been one to play games too early in preseason, I'd rather have a week on the

training ground getting sharper.
"When I came I sat down with the gaffer and we earmarked the games I would play in and we said I'd play 90 minutes against Palace, West Ham and Northampton Town.'

The jury's out

OPINION is still divided among Blues players as to whether Chelsea's Yossi Benayoun meant to score the wondergoal that's become an internet sensation with 875,000 hits.

The Israeli midfielder scored a stunning backheeled lob over Wycombe keeper Nikki Bull last week, with the goal doing the rounds on YouTube and Twitter.

Bull, said: "At the time I didn't think he meant it. I came out to narrow the angle – like to close the gap so they just hit it against me – and I thought he was going to take another touch. Looking back, he definitely

"That's life – bigger and better and well-paid goalkeepers have let in goals like that. You take it on the chin. As a goalkeeper I will make mistakes that cost goals or make you look silly but that's the life of a goalkeeper. You're always walking that tightrope."

Team-mate John Halls wasn't as certain.

He said: "I haven't seen it again but the I thought he was trying to get away from our two big defenders that were around him and he was lucky to get it over Bully's head. A few people have told me he meant it and I'm still not too sure."

Matt Bloomfield said: "I think he meant it.
On the day he was their stand out player. He's a fantastic footballer and they missed him last year when he was injured. This year he's going to be a real plus to them.'

Honours shared after Blues' Palace meeting

Wanderers 0, Crystal Palace 0 **ANDY CARSWELL reports**

WANDERERS' new signings had

WANDERERS' new signings had their first taste of action at Adams Park during a goalless draw against Championship side Crystal Palace on Tuesday night.

James Tunnicliffe, Ben Harding and Joel Grant all started the game with John Halls joining the action from the bench in the second half in the second half.

Youngsters Kadeem Harris and Jordan Ibe showed plenty of skill when they too came on but ultimately this wasn't a game that will live long in the memory.

Blues can be happy however with a clean sheet against a side whose forward line included former Wanderers striker Jermaine Easter and Glenn Murray, who scored 22 times for League One champions Brighton



TAKE IT FOR GRANTED: Joel Grant in control on Tuesday

last season.

Easter in particular endured a frustrating game as he was thwarted time and again by the Blues defence.

The former Chairboy had Palace's first effort of note when Tunnicliffe made a fine sliding tackle just as he was about to tuck away Wilfried Zaha's well timed pass. Moments later he had the ball in Nikki Bull's net but he was comfortably offside.

The closest Blues came in the first half was when Gareth Ainsworth was narrowly off target with a 25-yard drive that looked like it was arrowing towards the top corner of birthday boy Lewis Price's net.

Generally speaking it was the Championship side who had more of the openings though and Owen Garvan stabbed captain Darren Ambrose's cross inches wide from close in before Bull pulled off a stunning block with his foot from Murray's powerful close range header.

At the other end Harding was just unable to get onto the end of a cross and defender Dave

Winfield had a rare effort from the follow-up but his shot clattered away off a defender as the first half petered out.

Half-time substitute Matt Bloomfield's first act was to tee up Kevin Betsy who in turn fed Grant, and the winger forced Price into his first save of the evening when he turned away his near-post effort.

Scott Donnelly and Leon Johnson also came on at the break but it was Bloomfield who was doing the most to create space for his team-mates, and he freed Betsy again but the winger overhit a cross with Ben Strevens

Murray, who scored four on his last visit to Adams Park when a Brighton player, glanced into the side netting when he should have done better after being left unattended from Garvan's quickly-taken free-kick.

But Blues were now having the better part of it and Price was at full stretch to touch Donnelly's rising shot over the bar.

South London-born wonderkid Ibe was one of a number of substitutes to come on during the second half, which broke up the pattern of the play, although one of Palace's replacements, Ibra Sekajja, hit the post after Jon Williams had driven at the heart of the home defence.

Stuart Beavon had a glorious chance to open the scoring from a fantastic Danny Foster cross but his flicked header crept inches wide of the upright. Tunnicliffe sent a header over and Donnelly and Beavon were also off target in a flurry of late chances as the game finished goalless.

Blues: Bull, McCoy (sub Foster), Winfield (sub Johnson), Tunnicliffe, Sandell, Ainsworth (sub Donnelly), Lewis (sub Halls), Harding (sub Bloomfield), Grant (sub Harris), Betsy (sub Ibe), Strevens (sub Beavon). Substitutes not used: Arnold, Dunne.



ACROBATICS: Andy Sandell clears his lines, while left 15 year-old Jordan lbe take on the Palace defence





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West Ham match

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Bull: Stadium decision could have 'massive consequences'

By Andy Carswell

acarswell@london.newsquest.co.uk

WANDERERS keeper Nikki Bull has warned that the council's decision to turn down plans for a new stadium will have 'massive consequences'

The 29-year-old tweeted his comments on Monday night immediately after the council axed the controversial proposals for Wanderers and Wasps to share a new stadium in a purpose-built sports village at Wycombe Air Park.

The former Aldershot glovesman commented after watching the Bucks Free Press' live internet feed of the make or break meeting.

He did not elaborate on his statement which is the last public from anyone comment Wanderers or Wasps.

Players and staff at both clubs have since been barred from speaking out on the topic while the clubs consider their next move.

Wasps are currently Wanderers' tenants at Adams Park but Steve Hayes, the owner of both clubs, had previously warned that Wasps may have to quit Wycombe altogether if the stadium decision went against



WARNING: Nikki Bull commented on Twitter

him.

Hayes has made no comment since and a statement from both clubs' press office said there would be no further comment from Steve Hayes Wycombe Sports Developments Limited (WSDL) or

either club until further notice.

That has left fans with only the statement which was issued by WSDL within hours of the council's decision to go on.

That statement says a 'golden opportunity' has potentially been

lost - and added that they will leave 'no stone unturned' in the hunt for a solution.

The full statement reads: "Wycombe Sports Developments Limited is clearly very disappointed with Wycombe District Council's decision tonight to end its partnership with us.

"WSDL's outline business case sets out a sustainable plan which delivers long term economic and social benefits to the whole area.

"The Wycombe Sporting Village creates at least 400 new jobs in the area, generates at least £125million worth of social benefits over the next 25 years, produces a projected £12.5m of rent receipts for WDC over 25 years, secures professional sport in Wycombe, provides affordable housing and offers world class leisure and recreational facilities for the community.

"It also opens up currently inaccessible green space to the public for recreation.

"We respect the democratic process.

Tonight the public have raised questions about the council's decision making process and these questions should be cleared up.

"In the coming days we will seek to understand more fully the basis on which the council has made this

"Our commitment to both sets of fans and to our loyal and hardworking staff remains as strong as ever.

"We will keep you fully informed every step of the way as we examine the implication of the council's decision.

"We will continue to leave no stone unturned in endeavouring to secure the best possible future for professional sport in Wycombe, for the benefit of all in the community.

"The council's decision tonight represents the potential loss of a golden opportunity to build towards a better future for Wycombe.

'Despite their decision, our belief in the sporting village remains.

To all the many people across the district who have understood the need, seen the opportunity, shared our vision and given us support, we thank you.

Tonight we will reflect on the council's decision.

"We will comment further in due

Ex-players blast the council as sports village is axed

LEGENDARY former Wanderers players Steve Brown and John Maskell have hit out at Wycombe District Council's decision to block plans for a new stadium and sports village.

Brown branded the decision as "short sighted" while Maskell said the councillors who voted against the plans blew the chance to secure the future of sport in High Wycombe.

Former midfielder Brown said the scheme was comparable to the bid put together by Bucks rivals MK Dons as part of England's campaign to host the 2018 World Cup, which he felt would have put Milton Keynes on the map.

And Maskell, who kept goal for Blues 616 times from 1964-80, said: "I believe the decision is very short sighted and could affect the lives and wellbeing of people in Wycombe and the surrounding area for the foreseeable future.

Wycombe Sporting would have been Village something to be very proud of and would have offered some of the best leisure, recreational and social facilities anywhere in the



A GAME OF TWO HALVES: While Wanderers and Wasps officials are reeling the anti-stadium lobby are celebrating

country as well as putting the town on the map.

The four councillors involved probably had to make the biggest decision they will ever make as councillors and they blew it. They had the power in their hands to shape the future for sport in Wycombe and secure the future for generations to come. They had the opportunity to make history and be one of the people who saw Wycombe.

"Alas they were swayed by vocal minority who opposed it. If councillors had supported the same impassioned pleas not to build years ago, Adams Park would not be where it is today.

"I cannot understand how sport in Wycombe is meant to grow without this sort of development taking place."

The plans included facilities for sports including badminton, hockey and cricket and a larger capacity ground for Wanderers and Wasps

Maskell added: "We all talk about the economy going to the dogs. Yet, when a development such as this, which would have provided much needed local employment and support local businesses to grow, we want to fight it tooth and nail.

"Sadly, I firmly believe that history will prove that this decision was the wrong one, but alas it will be too late.'

Brown, had a ten-year Blues career said: "You only have to look at England proposals for the

the future and brought it to 2018 World Cup - Milton Keynes got in it. Can you imagine if Wanderers had a stadium similar to that?

> "I'm not saying they needed a ground with that capacity but there were a lot of facilities, a lot of opportunities, that would have come out of it. There would have been a lot of benefits

> Brown believes progress on the pitch will put Wanderers in a stronger position - and the blow of having the plans rejected could work in their favour.

> He said: "It's a setback but it could be motivation for them to push on and progress. Steve Hayes had a five year plan to get into the Championship - if we get there we can look at it again.

