

# Wimbledon Independent Supporters Association

## Ordinary General Meeting

Wimbledon Community, St. George's Road, Wimbledon  
Thursday 6 March, 2003 at 7.30 pm

### MINUTES

**1. Apologies for absence received**

Stephen & Jacqueline Airs, Charlie Bell, Peter Bowles, Dave Boyle, Joanne Fotheringham, Trevor Pearce, Kevin Rye, David Silsby and Lee Willett.

**2. Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting (OGM on 28 November, 2002) were agreed and there were no matters arising.

**3. Treasurer's report**

Sean Fox reported our current balance is just over £16,000. There were two items of expenditure over £500 paid this quarter:

£895 coach to Wolves (last season)

£500 donation to York City - the meeting endorsed this payment

**4. Elections**

Peter Bowles and Graeme Boulton have stepped down from the committee. We wish them, and their future wives, every happiness. Graeme was Club Liaison Officer but it was proposed to not fill that specific role now as it may change. Two nominations had been received – Ross Maclagan and Gail Moss – and both were elected.

**5. Report on WISA's recent activities and debate on current and future plans**

**5.1 Report on MK-related activities**

Ian Pollock provided an update. WFC have signed a deal with the hockey stadium in MK. We lobbied the hockey authorities extensively but they are desperate for the money this arrangement can offer. However, although planning permission was granted in principle last July, WFC appear to have overlooked securing a section 106 agreement. This deals with various matters, particularly transport, and must be in place before they can play at the hockey stadium. We have also been regularly lobbying the FL as they have to agree any temporary move.

The MK local authority has published its development plan, which includes approving in principle a new stadium at Denbigh. WISA and one of our members, who lives in MK, have lodged appeals and we will be able to have our say at a public meeting taking place later this spring.

WFC and Asda (who are the main driving force) have said they plan to lodge a joint planning application for the site at Denbigh North. We will review this thoroughly and submit our objections. This will be a huge development and we expect the plans to be called in by the government, which will add at least 2 years to the whole process.

**5.2 Complaint to Independent Football Commission (IFC)**

Nicole reported that we still have not received a response from the FA directly, though the IFC sent us a copy. Therefore, after 9½ months, we are now able to submit our complaint to the IFC. The delay is the fault of the football authorities, who have still not answered the questions we originally raised. We await news from the IFC and will keep you informed.

### 5.3 Two significant dates – 28 May and 30 May

It has been suggested we congregate outside the FA's Soho offices at noon on the 28<sup>th</sup> and perhaps conduct a 'funeral' service.

A party to celebrate the decision to start AFCW is planned for Friday 30<sup>th</sup>, with Jaspers or "The" (both in Wimbledon) being possible venues.

If you have any ideas for either of these events, or would like to help, please contact Simon Wheeler at the above address or by emailing newsletter@wisa.org.uk

### 5.4 Franchise EGM

Franchise held an EGM on 27 December to authorise increasing the share capital from £160,000 to £15m. We believe the meeting was invalid since a special resolution (as this was described) requires 21 days' notice, not the 14 given. Koppel pressed on regardless but promised to call a further EGM if our point of order proved to be valid. Either way, WFC Ltd would write to all shareholders informing them whether the December meeting was valid or needed to be reconvened. So far, they have failed to notify shareholders. They have also not produced the information requested from them by a proxy-holder and a shareholder, information the company is legally bound to supply on request. We will be following this up and keep you informed.

### 5.5 History & Identity motion

Sean Fox proposed the following motion on behalf of the committee:

We deplore the continued attempts of Charles Koppel and Franchise FC to claim our history as their own. We particularly condemn the patronising and insulting suggestion outlined in a recent Franchise FC home programme that a statue should be built in Milton Keynes commemorating **our** history.

#### **This meeting resolves to:**

1. Write to Dave Beasant, Vinnie Jones, Lawrie Sanchez and any other former Wimbledon FC player who has been proposed as a subject of this statue asking that they:
  - a) condemn the move to Milton Keynes as representing the death of Wimbledon Football Club;
  - b) indicate their support for the decision taken by the vast majority of supporters to refuse to be duped by football franchising;
  - c) make clear to Charles Koppel and the press that they have no desire to have their statue outside any stadium in Milton Keynes.
2. Call upon Merton Council to build a suitable statue in a prominent place in the London Borough of Merton.
3. Call upon the Football Association and the Football League to instruct Charles Koppel to hold a ballot of 2001/2 season ticket holders and members on the following question:

*If Wimbledon FC Ltd relocate to Milton Keynes, do you believe they should be required to renounce their claim to the history, name, badge and moral right to associate themselves with a club bearing the name "Wimbledon"?*
4. Call upon the Football Association to recognise that the rights of the majority of supporters have been denied by the recommendations of the FA Commission. In view of this, the FA should revisit the provisions set out supposedly to protect the interests of the disenfranchised supporters who have now become AFC Wimbledon.

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There was general consensus that Franchise should not be allowed to take the name and history identified with "Wimbledon". On the mooted idea of a museum in MK, it was pointed out that the fans own the vast majority of memorabilia, leaving little, if anything, to be put in an MK museum.

A vote showed overwhelming support for this campaign to be pursued.

## **5.6 Direction and purpose of WISA**

Nicole explained this is a debate the committee has been having, which needs to be broadened to determine the view of the whole membership. For example, at the last AGM when it was agreed to set up AFCW, some felt that, if we were to win WFC back, the new club might be used as a feeder team. What is not known is how people view such a proposition now.

We are also obliged to review the constitution annually and references to WFC, particularly in the aims and objectives, may not be appropriate. However, some members at the meeting believed that, since the campaign against franchising and WFC's move to MK is not secured, we should keep our options open.

We therefore propose to send a questionnaire to as wide a distribution of Wimbledon supporters as possible. Ronan Warde explained that the questionnaire will be based on 3 angles:

- Individuals – whether they are members of WISA, the Trust and/or season ticket holders, how often they go to games, etc.
- Views on the Club and the Trust
- Views on WISA and where it should focus its campaigning

As we want to canvass the ideas of as many people as possible, we intend sending the questionnaire to all current and former WISA members and members of last season's Official Fans Forum. Copies will be available at the forthcoming Trust meeting and at home matches and we will seek publicity in *Yellow & Blue*. To encourage responses, we suggest enclosing stamped, addressed envelopes to those posted out. All this will cost in excess of £500.

The meeting agreed with the principle and the expenditure involved.

## **6. AFCW matters**

The meeting was invited to put any questions or comments to the various officials present. Answers were mainly provided by Kris Stewart (KS) for the Club and Roger Dennis (RD) for the Trust.

### **Dons Trust SGM on 24 March and related ground issues**

#### **a) Will the agenda be sent out soon?**

KS: Yes. A letter has been prepared and will be sent out tomorrow. The rest of the information people need is still being worked on and we intend to get out more information before the meeting. KS also confirmed a decision had to be made on the night.

#### **b) Ron Noades' option at Kingsmeadow**

It had been rumoured that Noades had not exercised his option, which expired on 28 February. Has he extended his option and paid another £60,000? KS replied that this is a private transaction between 2 people, which does not include us. We do not know if the option has been extended.

**c) LBM planning meeting on Imperial Fields stadium**

KS: Tooting & Mitcham's planning application covers the ability of another club (i.e. us) to play there. There is the question of extra seats, putting roofs on terraces, building a training pitch, extra car parking, etc. If members reject the T&M deal, it would cost us nothing further; there are no penalty charges.

d) KS confirmed it was highly unlikely the AFCW board would make a recommendation to the DT meeting on the groundshare options.

**Any developments on Sir Joseph Hood?**

KS: a proposal is being worked on for a training ground and possibly an academy at Sir Joseph Hood playing fields. There is no more news at the moment.

**Who should I give my money to – DT or AFCW?**

KS: in terms of donations, there are no special tax advantages for either option, as neither is a charity. If you want to support the stadium fund, give money to the Trust. If you want us to buy a player like Gazza or Shipperly, give it to the Club!

**What is the possibility of combining DT membership with season tickets?**

KS: under the current structure, that is more complicated than it should be, for tax reasons.

**Will the fans be balloted on the price of season tickets for next season?**

KS: that has not yet been discussed.

**Have any pre-season friendlies been agreed yet?**

The earliest date for a pre-season friendly is likely to be 19 July. We are awaiting written confirmation of a few fixtures and there is a proposal to play a match against Netherne to thank them for all the help they have given us. However, no dates or fixtures have been finalised yet.

**Will the Club be running any more teams next season?**

KS: we will have a reserve team.

**Are we going to have the seats numbered next season?**

KS: we need to.

**Is it Terry's decision who plays?**

KS: yes!

**Will there be a player of the year (POTY) award in May?**

RD: there is a group looking at this and it will be the WISA POTY award, if WISA agree. We want to present it at the last home game of the season, likely to be the Raynes Park Vale game on the Bank Holiday Monday (5 May). We are also looking at an end of season party, possibly held in the bars at Kingsmeadow or the athletics stadium. The latter could be problematic as they need special permission for any event after 5pm.

**When is the last date by which Withean must complete their league games?**

KS: according to the CCL, the season can go up to 31 May. There was a league meeting last week and the league believe every club could finish their season by 10 May.

**Changes to the structure of the Conference**

KS explained that the Conference are proposing to have a northern and southern division feeding into the current Conference, starting next August. However, the FA claim the Conference cannot make such a change without the FA's permission, which the Conference disputes.

## 7. Any other business

### **Andrew Judge**

Nicole reported that some anxiety had been expressed following Andrew Judge's comments in the Non League Paper saying T&M was the place for AFCW. He claims he did not say that. His view is that Imperial Fields would be an excellent venue for us in the short term but the longer term needs are up to us – LBM will help us whenever a new stadium is needed.

### **Commemorative book**

Ian Pollock explained that, having conducted a number of interviews with ex-players last year, he had floated the possibility of combining these with photographs to produce a commemorative book. The Trust had been approached but since their role is fundraising and it was uncertain they could sell sufficient copies, felt they must decline. WISA, being under less pressure to produce a quick return, was therefore being asked.

The budget would be c.£3,000 and the book would be published in WISA's name, in May, to coincide with the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1963 amateur cup final victory. A show of hands revealed that most people would buy it and a vote on a proposal to spend £3,000 was carried.

### **Forthcoming events**

- **Nostalgia evening – Friday 21 March**

Mick Pugh has organised this event, being held at Motspur Park private members club. It will show footage of the 1963 and 1988 Wembley finals and it is hoped players from those teams will come along. Cost is £15, which will include a programme. Tickets will be on sale at the Ash game on 12 March and our home game on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

- **Family fun day – Sunday 24 May**

Another event being planned for Motspur Park. Enquiries should be made to Roger Dennis.

- **London Marathon**

Steve Elson and Lee Willett are taking part in aid of Hemihelp and AFCW.

- **Farnham game – Saturday 15 March**

WISA are sponsoring this game and hope our 10 winners and their guests enjoy the day.

## 8. Pub

A fair number repaired to the Alex after the meeting.