



Wimbledon Football Club Ltd

Selhurst Park Stadium London SE25 6PY Telephone 0181-771 2233 Fax 0181-768 0640



Councillor Michael Brunt
Leader of the Council
London Borough of Merton
Civic Centre
London Road
Morden, Surrey SM4 5DX

4 July 1997

Dear Councillor Brunt,

First and foremost, my congratulations on your new position. I wish you luck in this most important job representing all the people of Merton and I trust you will have the wisdom, vision and fortitude to make all the right decisions.

I value immensely the fact you are also a Wimbledon supporter and, as such, you must know that the last twenty years has seen the Club develop an increasing frustration and mistrust towards Merton Council.

This is sad and regrettable for, in those same years, Wimbledon has achieved a level of success and status in the game that is unique in the history of football. We are admired and loved the world over.

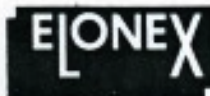
Yet it is my honest belief and the belief of my colleagues on the board as well as our supporters that we have reached this unique position despite - and certainly not because of - Merton Council.

For two decades we have been hampered and hindered by the political manoeuvrings and self-interest of the Council. The tragic result was that we were robbed of our rightful birthplace and driven out of the Borough.

I make no apologies for these bitter words for I am a bitter man and a man who long ago ceased to be impressed by the words and promises that emanated from the Council. Those words were no more than political posturing. What counts are deeds and in that respect there has been nothing. Merton has always made us an offer that we had to refuse.

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It was in this state of despair and disillusionment that I received your letter and the press release. I didn't like them. They smacked of everything that has gone before. I resented them, I felt betrayed again. That is why I insisted on an immediate chat with you and I was grateful for your prompt call and, more importantly, your obvious sincerity. Despite everything, I was left feeling that something can still be done.

Am I wrong? Am I a fool? Are we again going to be the victims? Only time will tell but if you want to give it one more try then so will I. But you must do so with a whole-hearted commitment. No more of the false promises and political posturing that has tainted your colleagues in the past. It is time to put up or shut up. No more words. Just deeds.

There must be no doubting that it has always been our wish to return to Merton. In fact, we never wanted to leave it and there has never been a day since we left that I have not dreamed of the glorious day when we return in triumph.

But it can only happen if you pursue it whole-heartedly. You must recognise what Wimbledon F.C represents and seek and strive to provide us with a stadium worthy of our status. Nothing else will do. Half-measures and token gestures will fail.

Please do not take these as arrogant demands. All I am trying to do is stress the reality of what has to be done. Yes, we want to return but I cannot risk the livelihoods of the players and people I lead. So it has to be to the right location and it must be commercially viable.

This brings me to the suggestion that we might move to the Greyhound Stadium. I have to say it has always been low down on my list of possibilities and even the Council clearly doubted its potential when it chose not to make public the first feasibility study. If you want us to be proper partners in an honest dialogue then please show us this first feasibility study.

As I understand, the Council has been working on a re-hashed feasibility study. Since quite some time we're hearing or reading in the press it's to be ready "shortly".

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Remember though, that the game of football is moving very, very fast and to survive we must confront and overcome a whole series of major problems and challenges. We have done so in the past and we will not be afraid to do so again.

Please believe me when I say that while we clearly have a number of options in respect of our future, the only option we truly want is to be back in Merton. It is our true home - our birthright. But we cannot achieve it alone. It needs you and your colleagues to make it happen.

This is why I have found it so hard to understand how politicians, for whom the interests of the people at large must come before their own political interest, can play with something as important as this Club in the manner that they have for the best part of twenty years.

But I believe that with your commitment and integrity, we can put those wasted years behind us and move into a new era. I ask of you only one thing - to be truthful and sincere in your handling of this so important matter. If, even with the best intentions it cannot work, then let us find out and say so.

Please, no more politics - not with Wimbledon F.C. Then maybe, just maybe, this great Club, this amazing phenomenon, this incredible dream, will return to Merton.

However, nothing practicable can be done until we are able to meet and discuss the content of the feasibility studies and I trust we will be able to do this as soon as possible.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Hammam', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Sam Hammam