

Dear Ronan,

On behalf of the Board of Wimbledon Football Club, I am writing to provide you with an update on our efforts to find a suitable and permanent home for the Club.

The current situation is that we are continuing to talk to the football authorities about our proposed move to Milton Keynes as we want to try to have this matter resolved within the football world. You all know that the Board of the Football League has rejected our request to be allowed to move. However, the Club does not believe that the matter was considered properly and is seeking a fair hearing. Reference has been made to a letter sent by the Club's lawyers in relation to public statements made prior to the Football League Board meeting of 16 August 2001. A letter was sent to the Board of the Football League reminding them of our basic right to a fair and impartial hearing based on fact. It is vital that the Club's unique problems are understood.

The Club continues to pursue the Milton Keynes option because it is the only serious, detailed and adequately funded plan currently on the table. However, if a local solution could be found that provides a similar platform, if this solution were one that the Club could afford and one that would secure the Club's future, then the Club would pursue it. The Club is continuing actively to seek such a local solution.

Merton Council has publicly stated its determination to help the Club find a suitable home in or around its Borough. The Club is very grateful for this public show of support but, to date, no viable site has been identified. The Greyhound Stadium and the original Plough Lane sites continue to be mooted as being suitable. Neither of these sites is owned by the Club, and even if they were found to be for sale, neither presents a proposition which the Club could afford as it would be required to meet the full cost of acquisition and development.

The Club has neither the assets nor the income with which to finance any development of a new ground. There should be no doubt that our financial plight is extremely serious. The only people funding the Club are the owners. Cash flow requirements call for another £7m to be invested in the Club this season alone. The Club needs the security of knowing that an adequately funded stadium is available to provide a foundation for the future, whether in Merton, its surrounds or in Milton Keynes.

The Club notes Councillor Andrew Judge's response to a letter from me asking whether or not the Council would support the development of a stadium on Prince George's Playing Fields, together with the associated financing development we would require. This was a genuine request for guidance given the fact that this is land that is immediately available to the Club. The letter asked what the Council's position would be if the Club were to seek planning permission for the site. It asked whether Cur Judge felt the Council could help the Club, as it had the All England Lawn Tennis Club when its new Number 1 court was built on land that previously held Metropolitan Open Land status. Cur Judge has made it clear that, in his opinion, the Council will neither support nor entertain such a proposal.

By contrast, the Milton Keynes proposal is a very real and immediate solution to our homelessness and one that has broad support in the area. The project is substantially self-financing because of the surrounding (enabling) development that will pay for a new state of the art stadium. We believe that the stadium would offer a very exciting prospect for the Club, as it would provide the platform upon which to build the Club's future and to return it to top-flight football.

The views of certain supporters in relation to our resolving the Club's homelessness are being aired in public. The views of others are not. Shortly after the Club announced its proposal to move to a new home ground, WISA informed the Club that it would not meet at all until Milton Keynes was irrevocably rejected as an option. It is the Club's understanding that this remains WISA's official position. In the absence of a viable and adequately funded alternative, outright rejection of Milton Keynes is not an undertaking that can be given. Through this stance WISA excludes itself from any direct involvement with the Club.

Whilst we all seem to have different views on the current situation and its potential resolution, the only way in which we will be able to clearly understand each other's issues is through open and constructive dialogue. In order to facilitate this dialogue with supporters, the Club would like to establish a liaison committee that will be the forum for discussion. Anyone who is currently an adult member of the Club can apply to join this group by writing to the Club (for the attention of the Official Wimbledon Fans Forum) giving details of their involvement with the Club. A working party can then be formed with the responsibility for formally constituting the Official Wimbledon Fans Forum and electing its officers. WISA is invited to participate in this forum.

The Club would like to discuss with the Official Wimbledon Fans Forum the many issues that surround the move to a new home. The forum will have direct and regular access to the Board of the Club.

On Saturday a small number of fans demonstrated in the Main Stand. Ground Regulations were broken and the Club has received complaints about this. Whilst we recognise everyone's right to peaceful and lawful protest, we cannot accept unlawful actions by some fans that are to the detriment of the enjoyment and safety of others. We urge everyone to consider the implications of such actions.

Finally, many supporters have contacted us over the past six weeks commenting on matters relating to the proposed move. I apologise for not having responded to everyone in person, but all letters and e-mails have been read and I am grateful for the many constructive suggestions that they contain.

We will continue to update you as things progress.

Yours sincerely

Charles Koppel