

## IN MY OWN WORDS

# JONATHAN NORTH

After a tenure lasting a decade, Jonathan North has agreed to leave the club by mutual consent.

What follows is a message to the supporters of Wealdstone FC, in his own words.

**S**o, here ends ten years. Here's to the broken bones and broken skulls. Highs and lows, wins and defeats. Cup ecstasy and cup agony. Regrets and memories. But all in all, one amazing journey.

At a time like this, it's impossible not to take a step back and reflect. When I first joined Wealdstone in the summer of 2010 it was a club desperate to climb back to former glories, recently moved to the Vale and a fanbase around the 350 mark. In my first season we finished a solid mid-table in the Ryman Premier and the heady heights of the Conference South seemed a long way away.

To be leaving the club in the position it is now, top of the Conference South and with crowds regularly topping 1,000 is something I'm both proud about and pleased about for those who have put so much time and effort into helping us get into this position. When I look back at some of the away trips we have endured together over the past ten years, it is also particularly poignant that I'm leaving in the week leading up to no doubt one of the biggest Wealdstone away followings for a very long time. Train, beer, football at its finest.

If you can leave something in a better place than it was in when you first joined, then I believe you can walk away with your head held high. I've always felt proud to play for Wealdstone and represent a club I felt an instant connection with. Getting the 'Wealdstone Way' is something which is often talked about and I think that's something I understood immediately. Winning is of course vitally important but so is doing it the right way. Playing with passion and pride and building a connection with the fans. As we hopefully continue to move higher up the pyramid and attract new fans and players alike, I still believe it's vitally important we try to keep those principles as a club.

Wealdstone has always been more than just a team I turn up to play for, largely because of the people involved – one of those being Gordon Bartlett. GB re-ignited my love for football, brought back my



confidence and allowed me to play with the knowledge that he had total belief in me as a person and player. He stuck by me during the difficult times, during my leg-break and the somewhat difficult time following my return to action and upon our promotion to the Conference South. Some of the happiest times of my football life came playing under him and that's because of the culture he created and the knowledge that every single win genuinely meant something to him. I don't have many regrets, but if I were to have one, it would be not being able to go to the next step with him. He deserved it.

Of course, you, the fans, have also made my time so very special. I've genuinely made memories which I shall bore people with when I'm old and lonely and so many of those have been alongside you guys. Newport, Southport, Cambridge, Barrow, Margate, Canvey, Billericay, Woking, Bath City the list could go on and on. Every one of those games mentioned will mean something to those who were there and will be a bond we will carry together. You too have stuck by me and I've loved (nearly!) every moment.

My final message is of course about the remainder of this season. Opportunities like this don't come around often and this club is on the verge of something special. I wish that I could be a part of it - but enjoy it, relish it, get behind the team and I have every confidence that the lads will get over the line.

**Thanks for everything & Once A Stone....**

**NORTHY**