

'The whole thing stinks' — Supporters Club chairman Ray Kemp
'Totally unacceptable' — Supporters Club secretary Nick DuGard

Morritt Watford bid is blasted



● Ray Kemp — 'It's a stitch-up'



● Nick DuGard — 'Amazed at proposal'

WEALDSTONE chairman David Morritt wants to take over first division club Watford and sell Lower Mead to finance the deal, the Observer can exclusively reveal. He would then take over as chairman of Watford in place of Elton John and move Wealdstone in to Vicarage Road to ground share.

A move would mean Stones no longer having a home base of their own and a 20-mile round trip for most Wealdstone fans to make every Saturday to see their team play. And the club's supporters have reacted angrily to the news of Morritt's bid, claiming: "It's a stitch-up."

Ray Kemp, the chairman of Wealdstone supporters club and 25 years with the club, said the plan showed Morritt's true intentions for Wealdstone.

"We have always been straight with Morrirt in the past and thought we had built up some sort of trust with him. But this sounds like a stitch-up to me. "It will certainly give all those people who have always said Morrirt just wanted Wealdstone so he could build a block of flats on the ground some ammunition.

"The whole thing stinks. What exactly is going on? Even if the move does not come off, this has still happened. I am sure there are a lot of other things going on that we don't know about.

Observer Sport
Exclusive by
Aaron Gransby

"I understand some things have to be kept secret for the good of the club, but I can hardly call this delicate negotiations behind closed doors for the benefit of Wealdstone. "It would mean us never getting into the Football League. The new rule which basically means 'one man, one club' would rule us out. All our best players would probably be taken by Watford.

"The incentive would not be there. It is a most fundamental issue, we want League status. It is bad news. What will Morrirt want to do next? Will we be playing at Stamford Bridge, or QPR? Will we be playing at all?"

Nick DuGard, the supporters club secretary, was equally opposed to any move.

"I am totally amazed at this proposal, it comes as a complete surprise. To me it is totally, completely and utterly unacceptable. "It would appear that the interests of the supporters are being totally disregarded. I cannot believe that such an arrangement would work in the interests of either the long-term future of the club or its supporters.

He too questioned David Morrirt's motives for the bid. "One has to question the motive

and the reasoning behind such a move because, on the face of it, it does not seem to make any sort of sense."

Both fear for Wealdstone's future if the move were to become a reality. The club's biggest asset, Lower Mead, would no longer be theirs.

The whole site which includes the adjacent chest clinic and car park, is believed to be worth something in the region of £6m.

If the ground was sold, a third of that money would be needed to buy Elton John's Watford shares in a £2m deal.

David Morrirt could take some of it if he wanted to, for Wealdstone owe him money that he has put into the club over the years. Estimates of exactly how much range from £200,000 to £600,000.

The Observer understands that Watford have put a condition on Morrirt taking over the club. It is that he pumps in £1m for players. That could mean another third of Wealdstone's money being lost.

If David Morrirt's offer is accepted by Watford, he would still have to get it ratified by Wealdstone's members. The club's board of directors have a majority of shares in Wealdstone, so collectively they would be able to vote it through if they all agreed on it.

This week, David Morrirt was in America and his vice chairman, Alan Clifton, was not available to comment.

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Borough and Stones on Trophy trail

Injury crisis stuns Stones

By **Aaron Gransby**

TELFORD United will be gunning for goals against a weakened Wealdstone defence at Lower Mead on Saturday.

Stones enter the second round of the FA Trophy definitely without two of their three centre backs, and the third is also doubtful.

Ian Bowyer, Stones' loan signing from Banbury, is cup-tied and will have to wait another week before making his competitive debut, while Dennis Byatt is still out with a knee injury.

But Paul Bowgett may return to help the club out, although he has

been advised to wait until next week before resuming after having his broken nose set.

Telford are in the middle of a rich vein of form, having won their last four matches, scoring 12 goals in the process.

Striker Steve Norris, is currently the top scorer in the GM Vauxhall Conference with 19 to his credit, including two goals in each of his last three matches.

Another striker to be feared will be

Steve Biggins, who scored twice at Lower Mead earlier this season when the two sides drew 2-2.

Their other meeting this season was at Telford's Bucks Head ground, where the score was 1-1.

Wealdstone manager Tony Jennings saw their win on Saturday and said: "If we play our normal game and Telford do the same, we are likely to come unstuck. We have to raise our game and play it a slightly different way to adapt to the opposition."

Another problem for Jennings could be the fitness of winger Tony Lynch, who has a groin strain and is doubtful

Borough head north into the unknown

By **John Comfort**

HARROW Borough journey very much into the unknown on Saturday when they make the 250 mile trip to County Durham to face Spennymoor United of the Drybroughs Northern League.

On paper Spennymoor's credentials are impeccable, having consistently been in the hunt for honours in recent seasons.

They finished third in the league last season and won the league cup and they began the new campaign in style, reaching the first round proper of the FA Cup before narrowly going out to Tranmere.

But their league form has been somewhat sketchy since they sold centre half Mick Heathcote to Sunderland. They are currently fourth in the table, but with most of their rivals holding games in hand, a

final mid-table place is likely.

Injuries have also played their part but Spennymoor will be boosted on Saturday by the return of striker Denis Foster who has been out for a month with a virus infection. He will link up with the club's leading scorer Barrie Fowler.

Boro's boss Keith Chamberlin has had Spennymoor watched twice. "They are a very very competitive side," he said. "It is vital we compete in all areas.

"When you reach the last 32 of the Trophy you don't expect to play any easy sides, and this will be no exception. It will be a battle and at the end of the day I'll settle for bringing them back home for a replay."

Colin Payne will miss



● Keith Chamberlin — will settle for bringing Spennymoor back to Earlsmead.

the match through illness but Trevor How is expected to be fit after missing Monday's match at Bognor with a hamstring injury. In form Phil Dicker could well force his way into the side.

● Replays for either of the Trophy matches will take place next Tuesday if required.

OBSERVER Sport will be at both of Saturday's big FA Trophy clashes. John Comfort heads north with Harrow to see their match at Spennymoor and Aaron Gransby will be at Lower Mead for Stones' game with Telford. Read their full match reports in next week's Observer.

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