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Plus 'We can win big derby cup tie' — Waugh



# Clifton bids to oust Morritt



● Alan Clifton — power bid.



● David Morritt — challenged for the chairman's post.

WEALDSTONE director Alan Clifton has launched a dramatic bid to oust millionaire builder David Morritt as chairman of the Lower Mead club.

His decision has plunged the club into civil war and sparked a power struggle which will end in a straight vote between the two men by shareholders at an extraordinary general meeting within a month.

Mr Clifton has been carefully planning his bid for the last month. Last week, David Morritt heard of it and decided to sack his vice-chairman.

"When I realised that he was going to sack me I knew I had to do this now," said Mr Clifton.

"I want to become the chairman of Wealdstone and oversee the renaissance of this club. Because of David Morritt's interests abroad, he will not have the time to do this."

Mr Clifton confronted David Morritt on Monday morning to tell him what he was doing. He asked him to stand down, but remain on the board as a

director of Wealdstone. But Mr Morritt angrily replied: "I will be chairman of Wealdstone till the day I die."

The two men clashed again at the Wealdstone supporters club annual general meeting on Monday night.

Mr Morritt said: "From this evening I have got the fire back in my belly again. People have been stirring up a lot of trouble in my club, but if you think I will walk away, forget it."

But Alan Clifton replied with a rousing speech which was rapturously received from the floor, and after he had finished, a vote of "No-confidence" in the chairman was passed by an astonishing 36 votes to one.

He said: "This club has lost direction over the past couple of years, due to David Morritt's business interests in America and the heavy workload of other

BY AARON GRANSBY

members of the board.

"I have personally worked unstintingly on a full time basis as the club's vice chairman and I want to direct this club back on course and bring renewed success for the benefit of all. I know that I am the man for the job."

He went on to praise Mr Morritt's past record though. "I have a great amount of personal respect for David Morritt. He has certainly been very good for the club, bringing new hope for the future with his optimism and motivation.

"But due to his business interests, that optimism and motivation has sadly declined. Now unless immediate steps are taken to rectify the situation at Wealdstone, there is a real danger of the club going out of business."

Wealdstone are currently losing £50,000 a year and

have not been able to find a ground to re-locate to despite three years of searching.

Mr Morritt replied to criticism of his absences with the promise: "I am going to extend the board by bringing on three or four new directors, all with footballing knowledge."

One is almost certain to be former club chairman Fred Deanus, who left Wealdstone to take charge of Southern League club Ruislip.

David Morritt's close friend, vice-president Les Hobbs, is thought to be another.

But Mr Hobbs told the Observer: "There is no way I want to become a director. I was offered the vice-chairman's post before Alan Clifton, but turned it down. I am not interested."

Mr Clifton says that, if he is successful, he will assemble a board with representatives from the supporters' club, the vice-presidents' club, the shareholders and the ordinary supporters, to sit alongside himself and two professional business people.

"I would like David Morritt to stay on with

me, but it appears he is intent on working against me," he said.

"It is sad because we have worked very closely together for the last seven years. But on several occasions I have disagreed with him over things and always told him that I was disappointed with his decisions."

"Out of loyalty to the board I have always supported him publicly but over a period of time I found it increasingly difficult to do so."

"I have not taken this decision lightly. I have given it a tremendous amount of thought and consideration."

"But at the end of the day I thought that the interests of Wealdstone Football Club were bigger than any one director and action had to be taken now."

"I say that David should be a gentleman and take the honourable course by resigning his position as chairman, and allowing me to take over in his stead."

At Monday night's meeting, Mr Morritt said he would not resign despite the vote of no-confidence by the supporters club.

"Alan Clifton will take over as chairman over my dead body," he claimed.

But the supporters club committee has made clear its support for Alan Clifton's bid. Chairman Ray Kemp told the meeting: "I have completely lost my faith in David Morritt and I think the man to run the club in the future is Alan Clifton."

Secretary Nick DuGard added: "We have failed as



a club now for three years, I believe that David Morritt, as chairman, should take responsibility for that failure."

And a statement issued by the committee on Tuesday said: "In effect David Morritt has already abdicated sole responsibility for the running of the club to Alan Clifton, who has been left by himself to pick up the pieces."

"No-one more deserves the job than Alan and we fully support him in his courageous bid for the chairmanship."

"We believe that there has been a consistent failure by the chairman to convey his intentions and plans for the future of Wealdstone in a meaningful and concrete form. We are only interested in action, not words, specifics rather than fantasies."

If Mr Morritt decides to resign or loses a final vote, which is unlikely, the club will have to repay him a sum in the region of £650,000 which is owed to him.

Alan Clifton has claimed that he has the money available to repay the debt and run the club for a further three years, even if re-location is not achieved in that time.

## Blow for Chairman as Macario quits

FINANCIAL expert Michael Macario has quit his seat on the Wealdstone board.

The news comes as a great blow to beleaguered chairman David Morritt, who spent four weeks trying to persuade Mr Macario to change his mind.

Mr Macario is financial advisor to David Morritt and a close personal friend.

He was also the man behind Wealdstone's attempted takeover of first division club Watford earlier this year.

In an exclusive interview, Mr Macario told the Ob-

server this week: "I decided to resign immediately after the national press got hold of the Watford story."

"I saw a tremendous opportunity there for our club, so I contacted David Morritt and made an approach to Hanover Druce, Elton John's brokers."

"They didn't like the offer too much because it was dependent on us getting the club members' support, so we asked for a two-month period when we would be able to talk to everyone about it."

"We agreed to say nothing to the press but

when the story broke, it showed David in a very bad light."

"We had tried to keep it quiet but it leaked out due to indiscreet talk to the press and I felt I could not stay on."

"I had also received abuse about not attending matches. As far as I was concerned, I was there to look after the finances, not attend football. I just could not see the point of continuing."

David Morritt said: "Michael Macario had given the club excellent service over the years and I am very sorry to lose him."



● Michael Macario

## Cadogan keeps Lions on 'double' course

WEMBLEY 2 Feltham 1 WEMBLEY kept on course for a repeat of last season's County Cup double on Tuesday when superbly struck goals from Eamon O'Connor and Lance Cadogan saw them to victory over Feltham, writes John Comfort.

It was a win which puts them into the semi-finals of the Russell Grant Middlesex Charity Cup - and the prospect of an attractive tie against either Kingsbury or Brentford. They are already in the last four of the Middlesex Senior Cup in which they face neighbours Harrow Borough on Saturday.

Lions came from behind to beat Feltham after poor marking allowed Thistleton to head the visitors in front in the 14th minute.

Derek Brown had headed wide of an open goal in the opening minute and Feltham's goal was a further blow from which Wembley struggled to recover. But

recover they eventually did and 10 minutes from the break they drew level when a good build up down the left culminated in Tony Simpson squaring the ball for O'Connor to drive home a low shot from 20 yards into the corner of the net.

Rejuvenated Wembley took just two minutes of the second half before edging in front. Brown supplied the cross, Gary Dolling nodded it down and Cadogan shielded the ball superbly from a defender before cracking it past keeper Haxton.

From then on there was only one team in it and Wembley could have won far more convincingly. But Paul Janaway's bullet header hit a defender on the line and Haxton saved magnificently from O'Connor's blockbuster of a shot.

Wembley: Fanner, Flaherty, S.Lucas (Simpson), Murphy, Janaway, Smith, Bhatia, Brown, Dolling, Cadogan, O'Connor. Other sub: Shodeinde.

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