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Tributes to popular Blues fan

Condolences pour in for Wycombe superfan Alana Hurford, 29, who died on New Year's Eve - page 11



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Council tax to rise by 4 per cent

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Much-loved footie fan dies after brief illness

Plans for fresh council tax hike



Alana 'Lana' Hurford was an avid supporter of the Chairboys and was seen at home and away games

By James Richings

WYCOMBE Wanderers have paid tribute to a popular and much loved supporter who has recently passed away. Alana 'Lana' Hurford, who was regularly seen at Adams Park as well as the away games, died on Friday, December 31, 2021, (New Year's Eve) following a short illness at the age of just 29. Following her passing, the club have revealed that they have contacted Alana's family to offer their full support 'in any way possible', and have

stated that her family has requested privacy during this sad time. The club have also announced that they are working on plans for a special tribute for Alana, which will take place on January 15 when Wanderers host Oxford United in the M40 Derby. The match will be known amongst fans as 'Alana's Game'. Wycombe said: "Our thoughts are with all who knew and loved her." Many fans have also paid tribute to Alana on social media, with many leaving blue heart emojis on the club's official

Facebook post, whilst others have left heartfelt comments in the supporter's memory. Paula Barlow said: "Such sad news, may she rest in peace." Wycombe boss Gareth Ainsworth has also paid tribute to the popular fan. Ainsworth said: "Lana was a brilliant, brilliant supporter. "She was right there at the start when I came in, always making the noise with that group behind the goal that grew and became a family. "I was terribly sad to

hear that she'd passed away. "She came up to me a few years ago and said thank you for turning the club around and propelling us up the leagues. I said it's not just us. "You, Lana, and your friends have played a massive part of this success story of Wycombe Wanderers. "Rest in peace." Many players have also paid their respects to Alana, by leaving blue heart emojis on the original post that shared the sad news. Many fans soon followed with their own tributes.

One that stood out was from the Twitter user, Pauline Collings, who said: "Never kept in touch with many Chairboys fans after moving but @lana_wffc was one who I chatted with on and off. "She was a lovely girl who said it like it was! "Another one taken too soon. "Love and condolences to Lana's family and friends. "Awful news." The game against Oxford United, which will be in Alana's memory, will kick-off at 3pm.

THE local authority has announced another council tax hike – one year after it raised rates across the county. Buckinghamshire Council today announced a council tax increase from April of 3.99 per cent – this follows a 1.99 per cent hike in April last year.

It will also raise the Adult Social Care Precept by 2 per cent – the same increase it made as part of a Covid-19 response and recovery budget in 2021.

This will mean arise of £1.23 per week for the average Band D property.

In another dramatic revelation, the council said it would reduce the budget for its sixteen Community Boards – groups populated by councillors, local representatives, group leaders and members of the public for various towns and villages across the county – from £3.4 million to £2 million, a reduction of £1.4 million.

Bucks Council said it would also use a one-off £1.36 million sum from the General Fund to "balance the budget" and "mitigate risk" in 2023/24.

Council leader Cllr Martin Tett: "These are tough times and we are having to make really difficult choices as a result. There is no wriggle room in local authority budgets and I truly understand the pressures households are under with rising costs and increasing bills. I do want to stress that there is help available for people who are suffering severe financial hardship.

"Due to careful financial management, I must say that Buckinghamshire is in a better position than many other councils – we are able to dedicate funds to key capital projects that I know our residents have asked us to prioritise and many other local authorities simply aren't able to do that. We're spending more than £100 million on improving our heavily used road network and we are committed to opening an extra Household Recycling Centre – residents have told us that's what they want, and we have listened.

"I urge residents to look at all the details of our proposed budget on the council's website. I know it's not easy hearing about another rise in council tax but I really hope by looking at the details, the reasons behind our proposals are clearer: We have done our utmost to keep this necessary rise to the minimum and have managed to get this to a £1.23 weekly increase for the average Bucks household.

"I really hope as many residents as possible feed back their views to us on the budget plans."

Company wins Household Recycling Centres contract

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE Council has awarded the new contract to manage and operate its nine Household Recycling Centres to FCC Recycling (UK) Ltd. The contract is due to start on April 1, 2022, and run for five years with the option to extend a further five years. Buckinghamshire's

Household Recycling Centres attract over a million visits a year and handle more than 60,000 tonnes of waste. FCC Recycling (UK) Ltd - which manages the current contract for Buckinghamshire's Household Recycling Centres - was agreed as the successful bidder, subject

to contract, at the council's cabinet meeting in December. The new contract is worth £15 million over five years rising to £28.5 million over ten years if the contract is extended. Some elements of the bid include: Partnership with South Bucks Hospice to ensure more waste is reused from all sites

through the shops at Aston Clinton and High Wycombe

- A Waste Awareness and Education Manager to support residents and the wider community to recycle and reuse more
- A target of recycling at least 68 per cent of the waste brought to the sites

Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment, said: "This new contract will continue to encourage everyone to recycle and reuse more, building on our current success with FCC and providing continuity as the new contract begins."



SPORT

Analysis
on Ipswich
defeat

Wanderers lost to Ipswich Town

WYCOMBE assistant manager Richard Dobson believes the Chairboys were 'a little rusty' following their 1-0 away defeat at Ipswich Town.

A James Norwood goal a minute before the break gave the Tractor Boys all three points at Portman Road, following the Chairboys' first match in nearly three weeks.

Speaking after the loss, Dobson said: "We looked a little rusty as it seems such a long time since our last game, but we did do better in the second half as there was lots of territorial possession.

"This forced them back with a bit of momentum and we got into good areas, but, our final ball was missing tonight [December 29] and that was the rustiness.

"We need to be more clinical, but it wasn't to be."

The assistant manager took charge of the fixture alongside player/coach Matt Bloomfield, after Wycombe boss Gareth Ainsworth tested positive for Covid over the Christmas period.

Kaikai
heads to
Cameroon

WYCOMBE winger Sullay Kaikai has been selected for the Sierra Leone squad for next month's Africa Cup of Nations in Cameroon.

The 26-year-old, who signed for the Chairboys in the summer on a free from Blackpool, has played 17 times for the club.

For the national team, he made his international bow this year and has so far played four games and has scored once for the Leone Stars.

Following the announcement, he said on Twitter: "Honoured to make the squad for AFCON and be able to represent my homeland on the big stage.

"A proud moment for me and my family. Let's go!"

The tournament will start on Sunday, January 9 and will end on Sunday, February 6

How did Wanderers
end their Valley jinx

By James Richings

RICHARD Dobson has revealed his tactical decisions following Wycombe Wanderers' 1-0 victory over Charlton.

Going into the match at The Valley, Wanderers made three changes to the team that lost at Ipswich three days previously, with Jack Grimmer, Josh Scowen and Anis Mehmeti replacing Anthony Stewart, Curtis Thompson and David Wheeler who dropped to the bench.

The move paid off as Mehmeti worked well with the Chairboys' man of the season so far in Garath McCleary, to set up Sam Vokes' winner on 35 minutes.

On the changes, Dobson said: "I just thought we could have used the ball better the other night [at Ipswich].

"We didn't use it well enough through the midfield and I felt we needed to get Garath McCleary and Anis as they combined so well together in more attacking areas.

"It worked to an extent but as the game went on Charlton started to get a head of steam and we felt Anis' attacking threat was lost so that's why we brought on David Wheeler.

"Charlton applied a bit more pressure in the second half as they were a little bit more purposeful with their attacks, but this opened up space on the counter which we used two or three times.

In the absence of manager Gareth Ainsworth, who is recovering from Covid-19, the match was the second in three days that he and the club's captain, Matt Bloomfield, had taken charge of.

Dobson also revealed that the team selection and substitutions were his decision.

He said of Ainsworth: "We have spoken as the week has gone on.

"I think he has relaxed a little



Chris Forino had a brilliant game as he registered his first league clean sheet in Wycombe's win away at Charlton on January 1. He has now played six games for Wanderers and has scored once (PA)

bit as the week progressed.

"Obviously, it was tough for him but we spoke on New Year's Eve and said 'I'll leave you alone tomorrow, as it's up to you. It's on you tomorrow' and that was great to hear as it shows great faith and trust from him."

Finally, the assistant manager praised Chris Forino on what was

only his third league appearance of the season.

On the young centre back, Dobson said: "I am delighted for Chris. "He is a young lad learning his trade and he has come straight into the first team which is sink or swim time and he is swimming, which is great to see.

"He is ably supported by the

older heads around him such as Jacobson who was outstanding, Jack Grimmer who came into the side who I thought was excellent as he read the danger well, and they're two solid citizens we've got and that we can rely on."

Forino has played six games for Wanderers and has scored one goal.



Wycombe Wanderers will play Bolton Wanderers on January 11 (PA)

New date for the trip
to the Trotters in Jan

WYCOMBE Wanderers' postponed away trip to Bolton Wanderers has been rescheduled.

The match was due to take place at the University of Bolton Stadium on December 18, but, following a Covid breakout at the Greater Manchester club, the game was called off.

However, both clubs have confirmed that the match will now take place on Tuesday, January 11, three days after the Chairboys take on Sunderland at Adams Park.

It is also not yet known whether the

game will be eligible for live streaming.

For fans who plan to attend the fixture, mandatory Covid-19 certification requirements will be in place.

This will mean supporters will have to show the following:

- An NHS Covid Pass – either digitally via the app or a paper pass.
- An approved international equivalent.
- A valid text or email confirmation of a negative test result within the last

48 hours.

To acquire this proof, you will need to have:

- Two vaccination doses of an approved vaccine.
 - One vaccination of the single-dose Janssen vaccine.
 - A negative PCR or rapid lateral flow result within the last 48 hours.
 - Approved medical exemption.
- For information on ticket availability, visit www.wycombewanderers.co.uk/news/2021/december/bolton-game-rearranged

Grimmer is gleeful

WYCOMBE Wanderers defender Jack Grimmer has shared his thoughts following his side's 1-0 win over Charlton.

The New Year's Day victory, thanks to a solitary Sam Vokes strike, was the Chairboys' first at the Valley in the league in their history, and it sends the Adams Park outfit to fourth in the League One table on 45 points.

It was also Wycombe's first clean sheet since the 3-0 win away at Plymouth at the end of the November.

Speaking after the game, Grimmer said: "It is a great way to start the year after the midweek game at Ipswich.

"They have had that new manager bounce and I think a few of us had

said it, but, we hadn't had a game for a little while.

"But today [January 1] blew the cobwebs out of our legs and we were back to battling, being hungry and showed a lot of desire which is us being back to our normal self.

"We managed to win and keep a clean sheet which I don't think we've managed to do as often as we as would have liked this season.

"It was a tough second half as they have got a lot of good attacking players.

"They really threw caution in the wind as they put Inniss up top and at times, it was a backs-against-the-wall type job, but I think, since I've been here, we do those jobs well and you have to do that during a promotion push."



Wycombe defender Jack Grimmer started and played the whole 90 minutes in the win at Charlton but he has only played 17 games so far this season (PA)

Grimmer on Forino's attitude this season



Forino and Jack Grimmer (PA)

WYCOMBE defender Jack Grimmer has praised the attitude and performances of centre back Chris Forino.

Forino, who joined the club on a free transfer in the spring, has played six times for the first team and has scored one goal for the Chairboys, which came in the 2-2 draw away at Hartlepool United.

He made his league debut in the league victory over Burton Albion 2-1 on December 7, where he was awarded Man of the Match.

Speaking after the victory at the Valley on New Year's Day, Grimmer said: "He's come in and has been a great character around the place like all the young boys.

"First and foremost, the club look at characters ahead of ability and I think that whole changing room is hungry, and I am sure he will not be the only one that will come through in the seasons to come.

"He is the next one following up in Anis' footsteps and his story is incredible.

"He seems to take everything in his stride, and he doesn't take anything for granted.

We want to hear from you in the sports world

THE Bucks Free Press can happily announce that we plan on expanding our sports section.

In the coming weeks, we plan to publish match reports from not just the Non League football teams within Buckinghamshire, but also report on all the goings-on at other clubs in rugby, tennis, golf, bowls, cricket, swimming and much more.

We want to share the exciting sports news that is taking place in and around the county and we can't wait to hear from you.

If you have a story that you would like to share, send in your sports reports to James.richings@newsquest.co.uk.

Dobson on the win away at Charlton



Same Vokes' goal was the seventh of the season for the Welshman, and it was his first since the win against Plymouth in November (PA)

WYCOMBE Wanderers' assistant manager Richard Dobson believes the Chairboys' 1-0 away win at Charlton Athletic was the perfect response following their midweek defeat at Ipswich.

The Adams Park outfit fell to a 1-0 loss at Portman Road on December 29, which was their first fixture in 18 days following two postponements due to Covid-19 cases in opposition camps.

Their shortcomings in Suffolk, coupled with Charlton being at full strength, meant Wanderers would have it all to do if they wanted to start 2022 off with a positive result, especially at a ground where they have never worn a league fixture.

But a Sam Vokes strike on 35 minutes secured the Light and Dark Blue army their inaugural victory at the Valley, which has sent them up into fourth place in the League One table.

Dobson, who took co-control of the team alongside Matt Bloomfield, as manager Gareth Ainsworth continues to recover from Covid-19, said: "I am delighted with the response.

"We knew we weren't quite at it [against Ipswich] and we knew the reasons why, as it's fairly obvious when you haven't played for quite a while as you lose your rhythm.

"But today [January 1], it was much better as we were like us and even though we can still be better on the ball at times, especially during the first half, but the goal was well worked and I thought our shape and the way we

By James Richings

defended was outstanding."

In a game of two halves, the opening stages saw very little quality from both sides until Wanderers went 1-0 up thanks to Vokes' seventh strike of the season.

The second half, however, saw the home team step up their play, and if it wasn't for David Stockdale's saves, and an incredible miss from Jonathan Leko, Charlton could have found themselves leading during the contest.

For large parts of the latter stages, the Addicks were in the ascendancy, but Wanderers held on for a very important three points.

Dobson continued: "The goal was the first real moment of quality between the two sides as they cancelled each other out in the first half as not a lot had happened, and we spoke about how transitions were going to be so important and with ours, it worked.

"It was a key message to the boys as Charlton score a lot of goals on the transition as they are a quick counter-attacking team and we needed to stop them from doing that and go the other way.

"We knew with all their attacking players we knew there was going to be a lot of space, so we made it work and fortunately, it was the one that got the goal."

Up next for Wycombe is a home match against Sunderland on tomorrow (Saturday).

The match will kick off at 12.30pm.

SPORT

0963-2336



How does Jan look for the Chairboys?



David Wheeler in action (PA)

Century and counting for Wheeler

WYCOMBE midfielder David Wheeler made his 100th appearance for the club during the festive season.

The fan favourite came off the bench in the 1-0 loss at Ipswich on December 29 to mark the milestone.

The former Exeter City man is in his third season with the club following his release from QPR in the summer of 2019. Wheeler said: "I feel very fortunate to have found myself at Wycombe.

"Was made to feel at home from day one, gained promotion, a season in the Championship, and enjoyed the positive environment throughout.

"Proud to have made 100 apps!"

Since making his professional debut in 2008 for Lewes, Wheeler has played 337 games and has scored 57 career goals. He has also played for Portsmouth and MK Dons.

New date for football fundraiser

FLACKWELL Heath FC's fundraising football match has been rescheduled for the end of January.

The match, which was due to take place on December 28 at their home in Wilks Park against Broadfields United, was to celebrate the positive news that the club's chairman Terry Glynn had defeated prostate cancer for the second time.

However the match was called off due to a high number of Covid-19 cases amongst the players.

Thankfully, a new date for the fundraiser has been confirmed and it will take place on January 22 when Arlesey Town come to Bucks.

Fans will be able to watch the match for free but are asked to donate to the Prostate Cancer UK charity.

To donate, go to www.justgiving.com/fundraising/FlackwellHeathFC.



Josh Scowen started the match at Charlton following his return from injury. It was his first start since the Hartlepool defeat in November (PA)

By James Richings

FOLLOWING their New Year's Day in away at Charlton, how does the rest of January look for Wycombe?

Throughout the opening month of 2022, the Chairboys will host Sunderland in their first home game of the year on January 8, with the battle being shown live on TV.

A week later, Oxford United will make the short trip across the M40 to Adams Park on January 15, before MK Dons travel down on January 29 for the Buckinghamshire Derby.

Between these three home matches, a rescheduled mid-week clash at Bolton Wanderers

has been penned in for January 11, before the Chairboys travel up to Morecambe 11 days later.

With three of the fixtures being against teams who are all up there with Wycombe in trying to fight for a place in the Championship, January looks like a mammoth month for Gareth Ainsworth's men.

However, assistant manager Richard Dobson has revealed that there 'is no important month or so', as the club look at each match on a game-by-game basis.

Up until now until the end of the season, Wanderers will have 12 home games to play, and 10 on the road.

Speaking after the victory over Charlton, Dobson said: "It is a

really, really tough division.

"You look at the points the top teams have got, and, they don't lose very often.

"So at this moment in time, it's going to be a very high points total to get promoted this season and for us to be in and around that, it is important for us to keep stringing these wins together.

"You can't afford to lose, and the other night [against Ipswich] it was difficult for us.

"But at the same time, other clubs are going through the same process at moment, so this is a crucial period and if we can get through it and pick up points, others might falter due to the amount of games that have been lost along with the fixture congestion.

"These are big games but there is no important month or so.

"Every game is important and you have got to beat the teams around you to stay in the fight, so if take points off those teams, it's helpful at the end of the season."

Finally, on the Sunderland fixture which will be shown live on TV, Dobson said: "It was really important to get the win as you don't want to lose two on the spin and end up with Sunderland at home.

"I'm really looking forward to the Sunderland game as they are the ones that we do really well in at Adams Park, so these are great games ahead of us, but, obviously, you want to get a win on the board after a long break."

The Sunderland match will kick off at 12.30pm.