



GILLINGHAM FOOTBALL CLUB LTD

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Cllr Vince Maple
Medway Council
Gun Wharf
Dock Road
Chatham, Kent. ME4 4TR

9th May 2018

Dear Cllr Maple

Thank you for your letter of yesterday, (8th May), in regards to the sponsorship agreement between Medway Council and Gillingham Football Club, and specifically my statement in regards to this initiative published in the media on Monday of this week.

My statement was released following comments made by you personally on Saturday evening whereby you stated amongst other things:-

“This shirt sponsorship deal is completely inappropriate in this time of huge cuts in local government funding. There is quite a difference between no burden and no cost to the taxpayer. The cost of letting the team use the facilities for free could lead to loss of revenue”.

You had no idea of details of the deal when you made these comments, nor what responsibilities the Club will be undertaking in coaching local children on Council pitches etc.

Your comments were also made prior to the official Club/Council press release being issued (which was embargoed until 11pm) on Saturday evening and given this partnership was being announced at the Club's Official Player of the Year event that same evening, your comments that the shirt sponsorship deal was inappropriate, were misguided given the above.

In actual fact, and in my view, this sponsorship would only be challenged by those with little vision, given the manner in which it will raise the profile and standing of Medway for the benefit of all.

You should be aware, that we as a community football club, continue to pay full fees for use of Beechings Cross as we have done for many years, and at no time did I ask for, nor wish for, any reduction or benefits from the Council, in fact we are investing our own money into the council pitches at Beechings to improve the quality. As such we will be able to do more coaching and sports for our GFC school children, our Community Trust projects, and for the benefit of the local community teams that use them.

Had you the decency to wait for official comment and/or detail of the deal, or indeed contacted me for a discussion on the issues on which you required clarification, you would have realised that, far from having any form of negative impact on Medway tax payers, this is a superb opportunity for everyone that lives, works or indeed is educated in Medway in that this high profile sponsorship will greatly lift awareness of Medway nationally and internationally, which must be a good for everyone.



Cllr Vince Maple (cont)

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Mr Maple, I am not a politician, nor do I much care which party is in power and control of local matters, I am only interested in developing Gillingham F.C., and seeing Medway prosper and grow. I do not appreciate being used as fodder for your own political ambitions or gain.

Cllr Jarrett, Leader of the Council, and his staff struck a hard deal in our negotiations, which I only agreed to accept for this one year given it is a special year of celebrating 125 years since the Club was formed as Brompton FC.

My dealings with the Council over the past 23 years have not always been smooth, however, I have huge respect for the Officers and Members that run the organisation, and I have seen Medway grow and prosper against the background of budget cuts and other challenges, thus credit should be given where due. The politics for me are irrelevant, it's the people that make it work.

My father used to say "it is a weak man that criticises others when, being in the same position, they would have made the same decisions themselves". I suggest if the tables were turned you would indeed have made the same decisions yourself, and as such would be worthy of the credit yourself.

Finally, as to your letter of yesterday, I did not say either yourself or your party had made the comments to which you refer, I said the comments were "probably opposition parties I suspect..." however, for sure, whoever made those comments only did so on the back of your irresponsible and ill-informed statement, which, had it been accurate would not have attracted such unpleasant comment in response.

In addition, I have no idea what the main opposition group on the Council speak about – it is not my business, so I cannot clarify, nor alter my statement of Monday.

What I can say however, is that I am hugely disappointed at the way you have handled this situation, and I suspect people of Medway will be less than impressed, irrespective of their political persuasion.

As you have placed your letter to me in the public domain, it would be appropriate for me to do so with my response.

Yours sincerely

Paul D P Scally
Chairman