

Football manager 'lost £400k' in scheme



Michael McIndoe

A well-known Championship football manager lost up to £400,000 in a cash investment scheme linked to ex-Wolves player Michael McIndoe, it has emerged as police inquiries focus on the role of a lower league journeyman.

A source close to the investigation has revealed Scotland Yard is due to speak to the manager who was once a close friend of McIndoe. It is understood they see him as a key witness.

And it is understood officers are looking at a little-known defender who mainly jumped between non-league and England's fourth tier as a key player in the investigation. Neither the manager or the defender can be named for legal reasons.

A source said: "This manager was a close friend of McIndoe and put a lot of trust in him. He has lost a small fortune worth around £400,000 and feels betrayed. From speaking to other witnesses, police are

Report by Rob Golledge

now looking at the role of a non-league player as a possible suspect in the case."

The Metropolitan Police is investigating the scheme after it was reported to them last year. More than 50 footballers have been interviewed.

Trust

It was previously revealed that 17 men are owed nearly £3.5 million according to a list prepared for the official receiver of McIndoe's bankrupt estate. A source close to the club said that a consortium of Wolves players gave McIndoe, aged 36, more than a million pounds in cash in a single payment in 2011.

There is no suggestion that any of those paying money into the scheme were anything other than genuine investors. Some footballers were flown out

to a luxury resort in Marbella where they partied with models for a month in the sun. Receipts showed how McIndoe's bar bill totalled 38,000 euros for a single day.

Footballers were attracted to McIndoe's scheme that promised 20 per cent interest per month. News of the scheme spread throughout the football world and initially players received their payments.

It was at its height during 2010 but by the end of 2011 the money dried up and the payments stopped during the same season Wolves were relegated from the Premier League.

At a bankruptcy hearing at the Royal Courts of Justice, Registrar Nicholas Briggs, said more inquiries were needed.

He said he was satisfied that McIndoe was co-operating with inquiries. Another hearing is set to take place later this year.

NEWS BRIEFING

Travellers back near museum



Caravans have moved onto the car park

Travellers have moved on to a car park near Black Country Living Museum – just weeks after camping on two separate sites in Dudley. More than five caravans are camped on the site on Tipton Road and it is believed they have been there for more than a week.

It comes after two separate incidents were reported last month, where more than 40 caravans moved on to the car park at the Showcase Cinema complex at Castlegate, before being forced off and re-locating to Dudley Leisure Centre.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said the council are working together with the police to resolve the issue.

He said: "I believe these travellers have been camped up on the site for more than a week. A possession order was processed last Wednesday, where they had until Friday to leave. Today we will be going to court to order bailiffs, recovery trucks, dog wardens and police to move them off."

POLICE

Pensioner robbed in her own home

A 78 year-old woman was pinned to the floor and robbed in her Halesowen home.

A group of three men barged their way in and one, wearing a glove, held his hand over the mouth of Joyce Bennett.

The others searched the property and made off with a quantity of cash, a handbag and purses.

The victim was taken to hospital with a fractured arm following the robbery between 9pm and 9.25pm last Wednesday.

Relatives of the grandmother-of-four have made a plea for information.

Daughter Helen Neville said: "My mum is a really lovely lady, who is well liked it's heartbreaking that this has happened to her." Detective Sergeant Richard Narrowmore, from Dudley Police, said: "This was a horrific ordeal for the victim."

Call police on 101 to help.

PLANNING

Waste site scheme axed

Plans to build a massive waste treatment plant in Kingswinford has been withdrawn. The proposal for the plant on a site off Oak Lane was put forward by S & R Construction Ltd, of Brierley Hill, which has now withdrawn its application to the council – with no further details given.

Former magistrates building to be turned into homes

OLD COURTHOUSE TO BE FLATTENED

By Richard Guttridge

A FORMER court building in Halesowen will be knocked down to make way for a three-storey apartment block under new plans.

The old magistrates court at the junction of Queensway and Laurel Lane has been empty since it closed five years ago and has been up for sale for the past few years. Now Ruskin Properties has unveiled plans to flatten it and create a housing block.



How the apartments could look

A total of 30 two-bedroom flats would be created in the block, with 42 parking spaces to be provided.

Experts behind the scheme have promised a 'stylish, modern development' on an 'important gateway' into the town. The dated court building, which opened in the 1970s and is opposite a multi-storey car park, is just a short distance from the town centre.

The plans have been lodged with Dudley Council, with a decision expected to be made in the next few weeks.

A statement submitted with the plans said: "The proposed development would make a positive contribution to local character and the distinctiveness of the area. The proposals would result in a high quality residential development that would compliment and enhance the character and quality of the area within which it stands."

Jobs

Halesowen Magistrates Court closed in 2011 with the loss of around 70 jobs after being among several court buildings across the Midlands which were culled as part of Government cuts. It was among court-houses that were judged to be underused, with ministers saying it was no longer 'necessary or sustainable'.

West Bromwich has also remained empty and was put up for sale in February. It also comes weeks after it was announced Sandwell Magistrates Court in Oldbury would also be closing, meaning another Black Country court building will no longer be used.

Halesowen councillor Hilary Bills said she was pleased the site was finally going to be used again.

She said: "I am just glad people will be able to come into the town and use our shops. Once the decision was made to close the court housing was the only option left for that piece of land. We would have liked to have kept our court and police station and everything else we have lost in Halesowen but it's an empty building and it isn't going to be used again so I'm glad."

Incredible tale of bishop's life



A choir helps sing the praises of Bishop Francis Asbury 200 years on from his death

An event to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the death of Bishop Francis Asbury was held at Black Country Living Museum, with guest speakers from America celebrating his legacy.

Born to a working-class family in 1745, Asbury lived in Newton Road, Hamstead.

The Bishop was a humble metal worker when, in 1771, the founder of the Methodist Church John Wesley called for men to become preachers in the

By David Callaghan

soon-to-be-independent America. Asbury answered the call and his passion and determination meant Methodism became important in the founding of the young country.

He travelled a remarkable 225,000 miles on horseback where he preached to anyone who would listen in the burgeoning New World.

On the family fun day on Saturday, members of the Methodist

church from Baltimore and Philadelphia spoke about his 'incredible impact', which made him one of the most significant religious leaders in American history.

Reverend Fred Day, general secretary of the united Methodist church general commission on archives and history, said: "Francis Asbury was a gift given from the Black Country to America, and can only be described as an unsung founding father of religion in America."

Jobs cuts on way as Villa face the drop

Up to 50 job losses and 'huge pay cuts' are expected at Aston Villa after they were all but relegated to the Championship.

Villa's 2-1 home defeat to Bournemouth on Saturday made it virtually impossible for them to be saved from relegation, leaving them 15 points from safety behind Norwich City with five games left. The club will be relegated if the team fails to pick up three points away to Manchester United next Saturday. But the financial repercussions for the club could be catastrophic, with new chairman Steve Hollis announcing that players will face huge pay cuts in the Championship.

As part of the cost-cutting measures, meetings have been scheduled today for all full-time, part-time and zero hours employees, with up to 50 thought to be facing redundancy this week.

Meanwhile, all players signed in the last five years have clauses in their contracts to see their wages slashed.

The club will be losing out on £100million as part of the new Premier League TV deal coming into play next season.

HOLIDAYS
 from **£15*** PP
 Provided by **BreakFree HOLIDAYS**
TOKEN - INSIDE