



THEY SAY that no news is good news but for the fans of clubs who are facing serious problems any news is good news.

Last week Chester City were ordered by the FA to cancel all their pre-season friendlies until their licensing problems are straightened out. But that's all we know - we have been left in the dark and fearing the worst for our club.

We've been through some bad days at Chester but we're now going through hugely uncertain times and in many respects that is much worse.

We were told by the club last week that the problem with our licence was a 'paperwork issue' and then two days later the club was forced to cancel our friendly against Marine and subsequently the ones against Liverpool and AFC Telford.

Something is seriously not right - if it is just an administrative problem then why hasn't it been completed and the elusive paperwork delivered to Soho Square?

The fans haven't been getting anywhere near enough info from the FA or from the football club and that is a huge problem.

I'm not being unrealistic. I run a painting and joinery business and know that you can't let all the problems be aired in public. But if there is information available that can be divulged then the fans should know about it.

Since he took over the club chairman Stephen Vaughan has always held bi-monthly meetings with the fans to discuss how the club was going. But there seems to have been a closing of ranks since all the recent trouble began.

The FA are just as bad and trying to get information from them is ridiculously hard. When clubs are penalised by the FA for breaking rules then everyone should be kept in the loop and statements released as a matter of course.

When a club is told to cancel their pre-season games then something must be seriously wrong. I've been a grass-roots football fan for 45 years and I have never known any team to have to do that.

I know there have to be penalties for breaking the rules. But

Fans are kept in the dark



TROUBLED TIMES: The Chester City faithful just want to start the season

from what we've seen in the last few seasons there does seem to be a scattergun approach to how the penalties are administered.

Clubs need to know the punishment they will get for breaking the rules rather than having to wait and see what decision will be made.

Luton were docked 30 points and then Rotherham were docked 17 for very similar infringements and things can't carry on like that. There needs to be rules laid down by the FA so everyone knows where they stand - clubs and supporters.

There is a complete lack of transparency from clubs and the FA and that is how rumours begin which damage the reputation of the club - it's completely heartbreaking for the supporters.

I have read the messageboards and have contact with fans from other clubs and this breakdown

in communication is not just a problem with Chester City - it is indicative of the way that fans are being treated from the top of the game down to grassroots level.

The relationship between fans and football clubs has always been one built on solid foundations. But cracks are beginning to appear and clubs need to take notice.

Most fans like me would never dream of going to support another team. But I think clubs and the FA can push that loyalty and take advantage of the fact that we love our football club.

We support the team through thick and thin and put a lot of time and money into the club. I know the fans are not the ones who are ploughing thousands of pounds into the club. But things like season tickets add up.

Maybe I had a sixth sense that something was wrong at the club

because for some reason I didn't buy my season ticket this year.

But there are a lot of fans out there who have and are very worried that it will be money they have just thrown down the drain - their concerns need to be addressed as soon as possible.

But the relationship works both ways and fans need to support their club as best they can and rally around at times of crisis. As things stand at the minute we have no idea what will be happening and don't know if we'll even be able to start the season.

If we drop out of the Blue Square Premier it'll be disastrous, but one thing's for sure - as long as there are fans who care about the club, then there will always be a Chester City FC.

And I'll always be there to cheer them on.