

# DON'T LET BRANDON GO TO THE DOGS



IT SHOULDN'T HAPPEN TO A GREYHOUND BUT ONCE THEIR SHORT RACING CAREERS ARE OVER - IT DOES!

A recent story in the Coventry Evening Telegraph reported that Coventry Racing Club, the new owners of Brandon Stadium, have plans to begin greyhound racing. Avtar Sandhu, the man behind the new company, is well known in greyhound racing circles. Back in August 2002, a property company acting on his behalf, asked the Planning Dept. at Rugby Council if they would object to plans to commence dog racing at the stadium. The answer he got was that they would not object and so he moved in. However he wasn't so keen to advertise these plans prior to submitting a planning application to refurbish the existing buildings. There was not one single complaint lodged, as most people thought he was simply tidying up the site and permission was duly granted in March. Only after came the announcement about the greyhound racing.

**This leaflet has been written to inform you of the reality of what it would mean if greyhound racing were to commence at Brandon. It is important for Brandon and Binley Woods residents to be aware of what you may find yourselves living next door to.**

**IT WOULD LEAD TO ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR** - No new dog racing stadia have been built in over 40 years in England – any time they have attempted to build one it has been opposed by local residents. After many years in decline, the greyhound racing industry is now trying to expand on the back of 24 hour world-wide satellite and internet gambling facilities. In May 2003 plans to build a new dog racing track at the Butts, in Coventry, were withdrawn after a storm of protest by local residents and animal welfare campaigners. Dog racing did take place at Brandon Stadium over 20 years ago, so the site was an obvious candidate as a new venue, together with the fact that it is still used for speedway, meaning that planning permission for a dog track would be comparatively easy to obtain.

A major problem that greyhound racing would introduce to the area is the frequency of late night disruption throughout the year, not to mention the daytime meets. Undoubtedly, at this early stage, Mr Sandhu will say “we only intend to have one or two meetings a week”, but this is not the case at other stadia where the norm is three nights a week, with some tracks staging as many as five nightly meetings.

Greyhound racing at existing tracks is driven by gambling and fuelled by drinking. Alcohol is featured in promotional offers at dog racing tracks in order to entice prospective punters along. Residents living near to existing stadia testify to the anti-social nuisance, noise and litter caused by drunken punters as they leave, once the bars have shut. If you take a look at the new adverts for dog racing on Sky TV. You will see that it is clearly aimed at the lager lout generation. In the Coventry papers you will often see adverts offering you not only free admission, but also a free pint, if you go to Hall Green stadium in Birmingham. Crowds are bussed in from far and wide and descend on the area for a night out of which drinking is an absolute essential element.

**CORRUPTION** - The greyhound racing industry are trying desperately to rid themselves of their old “Arthur Daley” image and put on a more corporate appearance. The cloth capped enthusiasts, who used to be the main stay of greyhound racing, have given way to a slick multi-billion pound industry. There has always been corruption and dodgy-dealing within dog racing, but now that the stakes are so high, with such large amounts of money involved, this is more widespread than ever before. A BBC documentary, Kenyon Confronts, exposed how rife fraud, doping and race rigging are within the industry. Very large sums of cash exchange hands at trackside – you don't need to be Inspector Columbo to work out that where you get such huge amount of free floating cash, you also get the criminal underworld. But no need to worry – greyhound racing at this stadium would be regulated. The only “slight” problem being that the industry regulates itself!

**AND CRUELTY** – To satisfy the gambling interests, the priority within greyhound racing today is on running a very high volume of races - which inevitably requires a large and constant supply of dogs. In the year 2000 there were 67,837 races run in England alone. A greyhound's racing career is a short one – it starts when they are 18 months old and is almost always over by the time they reach 4 years old. These dogs are there merely to act as cogs in the gambling machine and are disposed of once they become surplus to requirements. Injuries on the track are routine and tragically predictable, as dogs race at break-neck speeds around tight bends. Using the industry's own figures, 10,000 greyhounds a year are “retired”. And there are thousands of puppies and young dogs who never make the grade and so don't even figure in the statistics. In 2001 the industry could only account for the relocation of 2,200 greyhounds following their “retirement”. Where are the missing dogs? Every dog shelter and animal rescue worker knows all too well about the problems. The only people who don't acknowledge it are the racing industry.

**A new track would mean more races, more dogs bred and more dogs dumped & killed.**

**But who cares when there is so much money to be made? Do you ?**

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Lobby Rugby Council by writing to **Ian Davies, Dir. of Technical Services, Town Hall, Rugby CV21 2LB** E-mail: [the.council@rugby.gov.uk](mailto:the.council@rugby.gov.uk) asking for an enquiry into the ramifications of greyhound racing being allowed at Brandon. Their plan is to start racing by the end of the year. A new track and kennels will be needed – planning permission for neither has yet been applied for.
- Look out for any attempts to expand on licensed bar facilities at the stadium. On race nights a greyhound track is effectively a big pub for thousands of people, with gambling thrown in. Contact Dir. of Environmental Health regarding your worries concerning anti-social aspects – **Karen Stone, The Retreat, Newbold Road, Rugby. CV21 2LG.** E-mail: [the.council@rugby.gov.uk](mailto:the.council@rugby.gov.uk)
- Write to **Mr Sandhu, Coventry Racing Club, Brandon Stadium, Rugby Rd, Coventry CV8 3GJ.** Tell him **politely** why you don't want greyhound racing in Brandon.
- Write to these local councillors and ask them to act on your behalf to oppose the plans – **Cllr D. Hodkinson, Cllr D. Poole, Cllr L. Wright c/o PO BOX 123, Rugby CV21 2ZP**
- Write to the local press and ring to the local radio stations with your views

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