

## Owners Evening 21<sup>st</sup> August 2018

Ian Smyth welcomed owners for a question and answer evening on the ongoing works and the future of Romford Stadium on the 21<sup>st</sup> August.

Ian confirmed the following: - The temporary marquee holding 200 guests was opening to the public on the 30<sup>th</sup> August and looking to complete the complete works on the stadium by March 2019. In addition to the marquee we have a new temporary presentation podium to which full view is available from the marquee.

Week commencing the 10<sup>th</sup> September the track closes for 5 days for a new track to be re-laid which includes the replacement of 11,000 tonnes of sand.

The new car park will consist of 140 spaces and the new stand will hold 1350 at full capacity

The track is currently in the process of restructuring the way we work and operate & now have a Stadia manager in place - Karen McMillan – who is an outstanding operator. She is already learning more about the product and is starting look in more detail at rehoming and retirement. As a racing manager Peter is top class and will help her learn more about the racing side of our business.

We are keen to do more with our website as a communication tool and are looking to introduce an owners section with controlled access to allow us to communicate more effectively to our owners. In time this could include a streaming facility or the ability to watch races retrospectively. We would also like to bring together our owners package at all four tracks and allow owners to get the same benefits at all of the LadbrokesCoral tracks.

### Questions put to Ian Smyth

- Q – There has been no consultation with owners when schedules changed last year.
- A – We would like 14 races back on a Saturday night; we will also look into extending Friday evenings but need the greyhounds available to allow us to do this. At present moving Monday and Wednesday back to the evening is not likely as we are tied into a contract with SIS - Ian explained he cannot change how things were communicated to the owners but we want to change that in the future and acknowledged we hadn't been as clear with our communications when the problems first became public knowledge in November.
- Q – How long does the SIS contract last?
- A – The contract is for 5 years.
- Q – Could owners have a video coverage of the trials?
- A – This is what I would like to look at as part of the owners section of an upgraded website as we move into 2019.
- Q – Up to 18 months ago the companies were given money for a streaming service – where has that gone; did it go to the GBGB for re-homing?
- A – We do get money that goes to the business operation. As far as I am aware that is a track deal and not linked to the GBGB. We do make a contribution to the GBGB for every race run and also

plan on putting significant sums into rehoming though this is an area Ian explained he wanted to achieve better results from by working with the R.G.O.A. and setting up alternatives locally.

- **Q – What will the distance be that was 400?**
- **A – It will still be 400m. We will flip the track, and then have the distance confirmed by the GBGB.**
  
- **Q – Are you not missing out by not making the track bigger to hold more distances and cover more competitions?**
- **A – I don't know if the answer would have been different prior to Towcester closing but it would have been down to cost and considerably more work. We would have to enter into the area designated as a car park and that may have impacted on planning so we intend to stick to what we have as a 400m track.**
  
- **Q - How are going to get people back after the refurb?**
- **A – We need to be commercially better than we've been for 10 years. I think we have a good catchment area to get the numbers back into the track and the proximity to London gives us a huge opportunity that no other track has. It's my job to ensure we have 1500 people back here on a Friday and Saturday night, we will need to start our campaigns from November onwards.**
  
- **Q – Will you have a professional watering system?**
- **A – All of the budget is accounted for this year but watering systems are is on my list to look at across all of my tracks in 2019.**
  
- **Q – What are the problems with the track?**
- **A – The drainage is the biggest challenge; it makes it difficult to keep it consistent in periods of extreme weather. We set aside funds for welfare as part of the refurbishment and I took the decision to invest that into the running surface as we will never have a better opportunity to make that level of investment.**
  
- **Q – Is there a bias?**
- **A – At times results would suggest so.**
  
- **Q – Will there still be standing where the main stand presently is?**
- **A – No, we need as much room as possible for car parking spaces; there will not be room for standing on the main stand. We also think it would hinder planning applications if we could not provide enough spaces in the new car park.**
  
- **Q – What is the capacity of the new restaurant?**
- **A – 180 – we can also keep the pavilion as a restaurant.**
  
- **Q – Will viewing be better in the new stand?**
- **A – The planning outline and drawings shows that the view should be good from the inside; the outside will have additional terracing.**

- Q – I have never had a good meal in the Chase.
  - A – We will get feedback from customers and always look to improve what we offer.
- Q – Are you looking to take more trainers?
  - A – We would consider if the situation dictated but believe as we get closer to reopening and start to drive operational improvements we will have a facility that will attract more would be owners and ex-owners back to our existing group of trainers.
- Q – I have 3 dogs injured and finding it hard to re-home.
  - A – What we achieve in relation rehoming is not where I want us to be at Romford – this is being looked into, You have an owners association and I will always try to do the above and beyond what they are delivering to assist the situation.
- Q - Will you bring someone in to understand and manage the track better?
  - A – We have a new management team for the track. The track manager is more than willing to adapt and make changes, and take learnings from my other tracks. The team will also have a totally new surface which will need to be managed differently from mid September. The challenge that team is that there is no definitive ‘right’ answer and as such everybody seems to have a different view. We have STRI visiting later this year and will continue to monitor, assess and make changes until we are comfortable with the surface being produced.
- Q – Can you get temporary stands?
  - A - Unfortunately no as we would need planning permission.
- Q – Any chance of moving the camera angle?
  - A – It is SIS that positions it and they chose where the camera goes, I can feed this back to them.
- Q – Will we get compensation for the 5 days that we cannot race?
  - A – No, not at this point, if we had to close a second week we will look into compensation for owners.
- Q – Will you be penalised by SIS if you do not open on the Saturday night?
  - A – SIS have been really supportive and helpful in working with us through the period of works. We don’t expect to have a problem with the Saturday but if we do we will work with SIS to look to find ways to overcome them. In reality the Saturday morning is a more important meeting to SIS than the evening session & that is the one we will work towards delivering.
- Q – What about noise when the dogs are racing?
  - A – We stop 1 minute before the off. We monitor this and have had no feedback from the trainers to say there have been problems.
- Q – The race jackets are harder to tell the colours.
  - A – I will take a closer look at the race jackets and feed this back to the GBGB as they form part of an existing trial.

- Q – Will you be refurbishing the ground floor?
- A – Yes
  
- Q – The RGOA have rehomed over 2200 Romford greyhounds in their lifetime but there is not enough people that will home them and it will get worse. What more can be done to help the rehoming situation.
- A – I think we can do more with the RGOA around rehoming and am working with Paul Binks presently to get a better understanding of what we are rehoming from the track's trainers and what we can organise to support fund raising activity.
  
- Q – Will there be a betting shop?
- A – No – we are using the space to create a better customer experience and with so much betting activity on phones and apps now we don't believe it is best use of the available space.
  
- Q – The betting shop used to do betting at other tracks?
- A – See last answer – we have limited space available and believe we can make better use of the space to improve facilities inside the stadium.
  
- Q- Could the tracks do a jackpot together?
- A – Inter track promotions are part of our plan – we may have something in place to allow jackpot betting from other LadbrokesCoral tracks early in 2019.
  
- Q – Will there be a summary of today?
- A – yes on the website
  
- Q – Will there be more meetings?
- A – The R.G.O.A. has regular meetings but we would like to do a separate meeting this side of Christmas for owners in a similar format to this one.
  
- Q – In January SIS said in the post about a streaming service but it still hasn't appeared.
- A – I can take that away and ask them but don't know the specific details.
  
- Q - Will there be disabled parking in the new car park?
- A – Yes
  
- Q – Will Romford go back on RPGTV?
- A – They would love to have us back but it goes back to the SIS deal, I cannot commit at this time.

Ian thanked everyone for their time and confirmed a second meeting would be scheduled for later in the year.