



Open letter to Greyhound Board of Great Britain

6 September 2023

Sent via email to: info@gbgb.org.uk

Dear Mr Bird,

Re: Welfare of dogs racing at the Valley Greyhound Stadium, Ystrad Mynach

The 'Cut The Chase Coalition' - comprising Blue Cross, Dogs Trust, Greyhound Rescue Wales, Hope Rescue and the RSPCA - is hugely concerned about the welfare of dogs racing at the Valley Greyhound Stadium. In the interests of the dogs involved, we feel compelled to write with our concerns in the form of this open letter. As you will be aware, this track in South Wales has recently obtained a license and is now regulated by the Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB).

Last week saw the first official activity at the Valleys under GBGB licensing, with 23 pairs of dogs racing around the track as part of Greyhound Trader's sales trials. Information shared with the coalition, and observations from the live stream, suggests that dogs are at significant risk of serious injury. At least two dogs were carried off the track, with one dog, 'Know the Danger', apparently seriously injured and withdrawn from sale after a collision. Moreover, numerous dogs struggled to keep their footing, ran into each other, or hit the wall which is extremely close to the hare and has no padding.

Members of the coalition have, for many years, been raising concerns about the safety of this racetrack and once again, the track has proven these concerns to be more than justified. Even when running only two dogs at a time, there were a number of significant issues raising questions as to why the GBGB had licensed the track. With its current design, long run up to the first sharp bend and the new outside track for the hare, it appears many more serious injuries and deaths will be inevitable when racing with as many as six dogs at a time.

The Greyhound Trader has acknowledged that the first bend was found challenging for several dogs during the race. The coalition's fears as to the fate of future dogs racing on the track are shared also by some in the racing industry with suggestions that the racetrack is unsuitable for larger dogs and six dog races. There were also concerns raised as to the condition of the running surface and loose sand that wasn't sufficiently watered.

Given these issues, we are urging GBGB to cease all trials and racing at the Valleys until the welfare of all dogs can be better protected and that, as an absolute minimum, the racetrack is redesigned to significantly reduce the risks of death and serious injury. Events during this auction have added further weight to the coalition's position that the only way to protect the welfare of racing greyhounds in Wales is to phase out the industry. We will be making this case to the Welsh Government as part of their consultation scheduled for later this year, but while racing continues in Wales, we want to do everything to ensure better welfare outcomes for the dogs involved.

Kind regards,

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Affairs
Blue Cross

Claire Calder
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Tim Doyle
CEO
Greyhound Rescue
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Vanessa Waddon
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