

APPEAL REFERENCE: APP/E3715/W/23/3322013  
Proof of evidence – Sports Issues  
on behalf of the Save Coventry Speedway & Stox Campaign Group



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APP/E3715/W/23/3322013  
PROOF OF EVIDENCE – SPORTS ISSUES  
by David Carter  
on behalf of:  
SAVE COVENTRY SPEEDWAY & STOX  
CAMPAIGN GROUP**



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**Proof of Evidence – Sports Issues**

**by**

**David Carter BSc MSc MRTPI**

**on behalf of:**

**SAVE COVENTRY SPEEDWAY & STOX CAMPAIGN GROUP**

**Site Address:**

**COVENTRY STADIUM, RUGBY ROAD, COVENTRY CV8 3GP**

**Appeal Proposal:**

**DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS AND OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION (WITH MATTERS OF ACCESS, LAYOUT, SCALE, AND APPEARANCE INCLUDED) FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (USE CLASS C3) INCLUDING MEANS OF ACCESS INTO THE SITE FROM THE RUGBY ROAD, PROVISION OF OPEN SPACE AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROVISION OF SPORTS PITCH, ERECTION OF PAVILION AND FORMATION OF ASSOCIATED CAR PARK**

**Appeal Ref: APP/E3715/W/23/3322013 Planning**

**Application Ref: R18/0186 Document Ref:**

**SCS/POE3 DC**

**Date: 22 August 2023**

**Web: [savecoventryspeedway.com](http://savecoventryspeedway.com)**

## **Introduction**

My name is David Carter and my short biography and summary of experience is as set out in my planning proof.

1. This proof relates to the continuing need for speedway and stock car racing to be held at the appeal site and the financial viability of this. My evidence also provides a summary about speedway and stock car racing in the U.K., the role that Coventry Stadium played in both sports and background to the Campaign Group.
2. SCS has provided numerous representations which are before the Inquiry;
  - (a) Responses for Rugby Local Plan October 2016 (CD15.3.6)
  - (b) SCS Response to the Appellant February 2018 (CD10.19)
  - (c) SCS Response to the Sports Needs Assessment November 2018 (CD15.5.3)
  - (d) SCS Summary of Errors and Untruths January 2019 (CD10.18)
  - (e) SCS Response to WYG Report October 2019 (CD15.1.8)
  - (f) SCS Response to revised planning application August 2021 (CD10.20)
  - (g) SCS Briefing Papers September 2022 (CD10.16).

## **Background**

### **UK Speedway**

3. Speedway is a popular motorcycle sport introduced into this country in 1928. It is competed on loose surface oval tracks which require competitors to turn corners by executing controlled skids at high speed. Riders race on 500cc motorcycles, fuelled by methanol (the greenest of all fuels) which have a fixed gear and no brakes.
4. Tracks developed throughout the United Kingdom from 1928 onwards, in many cases sharing facilities with greyhound racing tracks. In addition to individual events including the World Championship, a league system for teams has been in operation since 1928. Four riders (two from each team) compete in each race, with each race being 4 laps of the track. League meetings are contested over 15 races.
5. Speedway is a professional sport operated on a league basis with three separate leagues in the UK. I believe that it is right to say that 6 of the world's current top 10 riders ride in the UK. A British rider has won the World Championship three times in the last 10 years. The GB Team won the World Speedway of Nations event in 2021 and came runner up in the same event in 2022 and runner up in the World Team Cup in 2023. In 2023 Warner Brothers / Discovery will broadcast live 18 British Speedway Premiership events and 19 World Championship events. Speedway riders at the highest level are millionaires. It is not a dying sport as suggested by the Appellant at paragraph 6.1 of its April 2023 Speedway Viability Appraisal.
- 8 Following the introduction of Speedway in this country many tracks were installed at greyhound racing stadia which had been constructed following the introduction of greyhound racing from the United States a few years earlier. As a result Speedway did

not have a 'stake in the ground'. In most cases Speedway Clubs were not able to make decisions about land use and in many cases found that land uses without Speedway were adopted without any ability to influence or control the decisions taken by the land owners.

- 9 Significantly this continues to be a live issue. Wolverhampton Speedway is at risk at the moment, not because of any issues of popularity or viability but because the land owner wants to operate greyhound racing for international sports betting broadcasting on additional days.
- 10 Birmingham Speedway is at risk for the same reason as a result of the decision of the same land owner. Peterborough Speedway is at risk because planning permission has been granted for residential development adjacent to the track.
- 11 Whilst the Appellant suggests in paragraph 6.1 of its April 2023 Speedway Viability Appraisal that track closures are positive reasons to bring Speedway to an end at Coventry Stadium, I believe the opposite to be the case and that the appropriate conclusion from a proper analysis is that track closures elsewhere provide a compelling reason to retain and reinstate Speedway at Coventry Stadium.

### **Stock Car Racing**

- 12 Stock Car Racing was introduced to the UK in 1954. It came to this country from the USA via France. The initial stock car racers drove surplus American cars left over from WWII. The drivers received appearance money and prize money and raced across the country as tracks sprung up in front of very large crowds.
- 13 The sport rapidly evolved as drivers started to race purpose-built cars as the supply of old American cars dried up. The sport also innovated through the establishment of new race classes. Today, BriSCA F1 Stock Cars are the top formula attracting consistently large crowds but in total there are over 40 different formulas falling into 3 basic divisions. These are contact racing (including BriSCA F1), non-contact (such as Hot Rods) and numerous classes of Bangers.
- 14 With a small number of exceptions, almost all stock car drivers are amateurs, from all age groups including several classes for children to drivers in their 60's. In some families there are 3 generations of active drivers.
- 15 There are racetracks in many parts of the UK but it is a fact that tracks that have been lost to development (for retail, industrial, housing and infrastructure) and have not been replaced in equal numbers and as recent and current closures have taken place, there are not other alternative venues or sites to transfer into.
- 16 I believe that the Appellant's material in relation to its Planning Application and this Appeal fails to address the importance of Stock Car Racing at Coventry Stadium.
- 17 Each season around 15 Stock Car events were held at Coventry Stadium, 8 or 9 for BriSCA F1 and a further 7 fixtures for other race classes. On average the BriSCA F1 World Championship Final was held once every 3 years. This is the biggest and most prestigious event on the calendar attracting a very large crowd. The last time it was held at Coventry

it attracted over the largest ever field at a BriSCA F1 event, including many race teams from Mainland Europe as well as top drivers from Australia, New Zealand and the USA.

- 18 Stock Car tracks have suffered the same land tenure problem as Speedway with the result that there are now only 9 BriSCA Stock Car tracks in the United Kingdom with the recent loss of tracks in the West Midlands at Birmingham and Stoke in addition to Coventry with no new venues opening. And as in the case of Speedway, the limited number of remaining tracks, particularly in the West Midlands is a positive and compelling reason to retain Coventry Stadium for motorsport, including Stock Car use.

### **Coventry Stadium**

- 19 Coventry Stadium was constructed specifically for Speedway in 1928. It enjoys a central location in the United Kingdom, well connected with major trunk and, more recently, motorway routes within easy reach of a very large catchment population resident with the West Midlands Metropolitan area. It included;
- (a) a grandstand featuring:
    - o seating for 1800 people
    - o a restaurant accommodating 230 diners
    - o 4 separate bars and 3 food outlets
    - o 4 hospitality boxes and a luxury suite
    - o a raised platform for disabled spectators
    - o all of the above offering clear trackside viewing
  - (b) a large car park
  - (c) banked, concrete terracing around the track (capable of accommodating approximately 6,000 spectators
  - (d) covered terracing along the length of the back straight.
- 20 Having been purpose built, it is perfectly suited for Speedway racing. Apart from a period during the Second World War when it was used as workshops by aircraft companies, Speedway racing was staged for 88 years up to the end of the 2016 season when it was closed.
- 21 The Coventry Bees Speedway team was formed in 1948 and competed in Speedway's league and cup competitions until closure of the Stadium in 2016. In that time some of the greatest riders in the world have ridden for Coventry Bees, including 6 world champions, 8 British Champions and 108 riders from 13 different countries.
- 22 Coventry Stadium was the prestige venue of choice for major national and international Speedway events including; 31 British Speedway Finals, 2 Speedway World Cup Finals and 3 Speedway World Championship Grand Prix.
- 23 As a result Coventry Stadium has long enjoyed a national and international reputation and is known as one of the best Speedway tracks in the world.
- 24 When stock car racing was introduced in 1954. It was perfectly suited for Stock Car racing having;

- (a) a large competitor parking area, particularly important for accommodating stock car transporters (where up to 150 competitors could be accommodated)
  - (b) an ideally shaped shale track considered to be amongst the best for Speedway racing and the ‘Wembley’ of the Stock Car Racing world.
- 25 Coventry Stadium became the prestige venue of choice for major stock car events including 21 World Stock Car Championship Finals and 12 British Finals.
- 26 As a result Coventry stadium was a highly regarded venue for Stock Car racing in the United Kingdom and overseas.
- 27 Throughout the period up to the end of 2016 Coventry Stadium was well attended and a viable motorsport venue.
- 28 It is my understanding and belief that Coventry Stadium was not sold to its current owner because it was not viable as a motorsport venue. It was sold by the previous owner (Mr Avtar Sandhu) as a requirement by his bank, RBS, to recover loans the bank had given relating to the then owner’s other businesses, in respect of which loans the property was given as security (see CD10.18 appendix 21).
- 29 I understand that Coventry Stadium was acquired by Brandon Estates Limited (company number 116507), a company incorporated in Jersey on 29 August 2014 whose registered office is at 35-37 New Street, St Helier, Jersey, JE2 3RA. Its directors are experienced property developers and I think it right to conclude that it was bought for redevelopment.

### **Save Coventry Speedway and Stox Campaign Group’s Objective**

- 30 SCS and I believe that motorsport can recommence on the appeal site relatively simply and inexpensively. Major work would not be required to restore Speedway and Stock Car racing.
- 31 Whilst access to the site to conduct a proper survey has not been possible, assuming for present purposes that condition of the Grandstand is unsafe, it can be cordoned off (by the erection of robust boarding) leaving the track, pits and other spectator areas (the terracing around the track) available for use. Mobile catering, toilet facilities and temporary, mobile lighting can be put in place for each event. Repairs to, or a relaying of, the surface of the track can be carried out at relatively modest cost. I refer to this further below when considering viability.

### **Current Condition and Events Since 2016**

- 32 I believe that Coventry Stadium was one of the best motorsport venues in the United Kingdom. It met all regulatory requirements, was fully operational and fit for purpose for national and international Speedway and Stock Car meetings and had completed a full season of racing for both sports in 2016, the final meeting having been on 5 November 2016.
- 33 Following its acquisition the Appellant failed to take adequate measures to protect the Stadium from hostile intruders and vandalism. As a result the Stadium was subject to

numerous cases of vandalism and fire. From information obtained from a Freedom of Information Act request, I believe that Warwickshire Police were called out and required to attend the Stadium on 15 occasions in the first 6 months of 2020 (see appendix, p.1). I am advised that there have been 8 major fires between 8 January 2018 and 13 May 2022.

- 34 In the light of the current owner's failures, Rugby Borough Council served a Community Protection Notice dated 27 September 2017 in an attempt to ensure that the Stadium was properly and adequately secured and the risk to life and limb caused by the security failures remedied and resolved.
- 35 The current owner did not take the steps required by the Community Protection Notice. Rugby Borough Council issued a summons on the basis of the Appellant's alleged breaches. At its request Jeff Davis, the SCS Chairman gave evidence for Rugby Borough Council and on 16 November 2022 the current owner Brandon Estates Limited was found guilty of two breaches of the Community Protection Notice, fined £10,000 (£5,000 for each breach) and ordered to pay the Council's prosecution costs of £54,000 (see appendix p. 2).
- 36 I am aware that better security measures have been put in place since the Appellant's conviction.

**Issue : Whether it is financially viable to reinstate the speedway stadium**

- 37 SCS and I believe that it would be both viable and realistic to restart both speedway and stock car racing at the appeal site. Motorsport can be recommenced on the appeal site relatively simply and inexpensively. Mr. Ford (prospective speedway promoter) and Warren Hunter (potential purchaser of the appeal site) provide substantive evidence to confirm this is a realistic opportunity.
- 38 Major work will not be required to restore Speedway and Stock Car racing. Motorsport can be restored without use of the Grandstand. The track, safety features and pits can be restored inexpensively. There is terraced standing for approximately 6,000 spectators.
- 39 Whilst access to the site to conduct a proper survey has not been possible, assuming for present purposes that condition of the Grandstand is unsafe, it can be cordoned off (by the erection of robust boarding) leaving the track, pits and other spectator areas (the terracing around the track) available for use. Mobile catering, toilet facilities and temporary, mobile lighting can be put in place for each event. Repairs to, or a relaying of, the surface of the track can be carried out at relatively modest cost. I refer to this further below when considering viability.
- 40 I have spoken to the Speedway promoter Matt Ford who has confirmed his view that Speedway is viable on this basis.
- 41 I have also spoken to Phil Morris of British Speedway Promoters Limited, Speedway's National Governing Body. He has confirmed that, subject to its health and safety

assessment, Speedway could be restored to Coventry Stadium without use of the Grandstand.

- 42 I have also spoken to Warren Hunter who has confirmed his belief that motorsport could be restored without use of the Grandstand and that he has the means to fund acquisition and motorsport restoration.
- 43 The recent letter sent by West Midlands Mayor, Andy Street (see appendix p. 3) to the Inspectorate confirms his support for the restoration of motorsport at Coventry Stadium. He also refers to the potential to provide support through the identification of gap funding in the event of a shortfall.
- 44 Having read the Appellant's material I believe that its case is based on a fundamental misapprehension. Motorsport; Speedway and Stock Car racing can resume at Coventry Stadium at relatively modest cost. The track and hard standing for spectators is in position. Portable toilet and catering facilities can be hired. Use of the Grandstand is not required to enable motorsport to resume and Coventry Stadium.
- 45 It will be necessary to protect the Grandstand with boards to ensure protection of those attending. A quotation of £6,088 (£5,073 plus £1,014 VAT) for the cost of materials has been received (see appendix p. 5).
- 46 I refer to the example of Oxford Speedway where Speedway racing has been restored after 15 years following the refusal of its current owner's development application by the Local Planning Authority.
- 47 A limited amount of work was required to put the track and spectator facilities into a serviceable and race worthy condition. I have been informed that the overall cost of reinstatement of Oxford Stadium was £1.5 million, the main cost items having been; £300,000 for rewiring which includes CCTV and the cost for the Frank Bruno Academy on site, £13,000 for the pits and £4,000 to make good the spectator terracing. These figures have been provided by David Lestrade, the Oxford Stadium Manager.
- 48 The Appellant puts forward various figures for the cost of reinstating the Stadium. One suggestion is by reference to the newly constructed National Speedway Stadium in Manchester (£7 million). Another is the suggestion that it would cost £15 million to repair the Grandstand and the Appellant puts these figures forward in an attempt to suggest that it would not be possible to restore the Stadium. For the reasons outlined above I believe these suggestions to be misconceived.
- 49 Having been denied access to conduct a survey we do not know the condition of the Stadium or the cost of repair of the Grandstand. The initial plan will be to secure the Grandstand with boarding, restore the track, rider safety facilities, pits and spectator [standing] areas to allow motorsport to resume. In time we will survey the Grandstand with a view to its restoration. This may be through profit from trading receipts. We may seek a contribution to the cost of restoration from the Heritage Lottery Fund, or similar. We may also seek support and possible gap funding from Andy Street, the West Midlands Mayor who wrote to the Planning Inspectorate on 17 August 2023.

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- 50 I estimate the capital cost of reinstating Speedway and Stock Car racing at Coventry Stadium as follows. The figures referred to are realistic estimates available.
- 51 The Grandstand has been extensively damaged as a result of fires and vandalism and its structural integrity is unknown. This estimate assumes that the Grandstand will be cordoned off by solid wooden boarding after all loose materials such as unsafe asbestos has been removed.
- 52 Reinstatement of speedway racing and stock car racing would be on the basis of spectators being restricted to the terracing on the first and second bends, the 'back straight' terracing and the third and fourth bends. The capacity of the stadium is 12,000. I believe the arrangements proposed would enable up to approximately 6,000 people to attend motorsport meetings.
- 53 Estimated costs have been guided by information from the Oxford Stadium Manager David Lestrade based on the reinstatement costs of Oxford Stadium in 2021, from information provided by Keith Chapman, the owner of the Adrain Flux Arena, Kings Lynn and Steven Rees who recently reopened Odsal Stadium, Bradford for Stock Car racing.
- 54 It assumes that the electricity sub-station on site has been damaged beyond repair. It is proposed to install a 100 amp, three phase supply for essential services such as an office, amenity / safety lighting, supplies to temporary WC's hand wash and shower facilities and fridges and freezers, track safety lights etc.
- 55 In addition, a 200KVA generator and coupling would enable the site to go 'off grid' and power the whole stadium, including LED track floodlights. It would also have sufficient capacity to power the grandstand if it was reinstated / replaced at a later date. Kings Lynn Stadium is powered by such a generator.
- 56 As far as I am aware the pits, changing room / showers and medical room are able to be reinstated.
- 57 In accordance with their wish to see motorsport return to Coventry Stadium offers of financial and other support have already been received from a number of individuals and businesses.
- 58 The estimated breakdown is as follows;

Item	Comments	cost	source
Habitable portable building for office / security base		£ 25,000	Steve Rees
Make good perimeter fencing		£ 2,000	Steve Rees
Clear the site of loose material / asbestos and dispose of waste	To be support by Richard Clews of Clews Recycling and Northeast Demolition	£ 10,000	Steve Rees
Cordon off the grandstand with heavy duty boarding		£ 8,500	Quote

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Replace the Armco Barrier, Safety Fence and Air Fence	To be sponsored by West Midlands Golf Club	£ 100,000	Steve Rees
Repair dog track retaining walls		£ 2,000	Estimate
Restore surface of race track		£ 20,000	Steve Rees
Purchase track grading equipment	Blade & 'magic wheel'. Tractor & JCB to be sponsored by Steve Smith	£ 15,000	Steve Rees
Restore terracing on 3 sides of stadium	Based on Oxford Stadium cost	£ 5,000	Steve Rees
Build new referees box		£ 8,000	Steve Rees
Restore changing rooms and showers		£ 10,000	Steve Rees
Restore medical room		£ 5,000	Steve Rees
Restore speedway pits		£ 5,000	Steve Rees
New race starting mechanism		£ 2,000	Steve Rees
Reinstate back straight toilets and catering outlet		£ 20,000	Steve Rees
Reinstate electrical supply, cabling, new LED floodlights, track warning lights	Based on Oxford Stadium costs	£ 300,000	David Lestrade
Install generator and coupling	To be sponsored John Whalley	£ 78,000	Keith Chapman
	Based on Keith Chapman advice		
PA/speakers?		£ 10,000	Estimate
Reinstate water supply		£ 15,000	Estimate
Contingency @15%		£ 96,075	
Total		£ 736,575	

59 On the basis of the above our estimate to reinstate racing in the short term, without use of the Grandstand is a total cost of approximately £736,575 of which approximately £148,000 is to be sponsored.

### **Viability**

60 The Appellant concedes that it cannot assess viability.

61 The objective of the Save Coventry Speedway & Stox Campaign Group (SCS) is to resist the Appellant's attempt to develop the Stadium and restore motorsport.

62 I am advised and believe that the test of viability should be as at the date of acquisition by the current owner and that as a result viability should be assessed without reference to the cost of repairing the damage caused. In any event, recommencement of racing, with the grandstand boarded up, would in my view be financially viable in the short to medium term, whilst plans and finance are put in place for the repair or replacement (as necessary) of the grandstand.

63 The widely used trading arrangement would be for Speedway and Stock Car events to be run as separate businesses with separate management to ensure that they are operated by specialists with relevant experience. It is possible that either of the trading businesses could own the Stadium. For practical purposes I believe that it will be helpful think of this as three separate businesses.

- 64 There will be three separate businesses; Speedway promotion, Stock Car promotion and Stadium operation. My estimate of income is as follows.
- 65 The Speedway promotion will pay a fair rent for its use of the Stadium on race days. I believe that a fair rent for each event at current rates is £3,000 plus VAT.
- 66 Given the wish of Warren Hunter to acquire the Stadium I have assumed that the Stadium owner will also be the Stock Car promoter. On that basis and from previous attendance figures I estimate that the total annual receipts will be approximately £540,000 (Stock Car event ticket sales, Speedway rent and food and drink sales) and that the annual running costs and expenses will be approximately £275,000 (competitor costs, utilities, council tax, maintenance, insurance, wages). This does not include the significant food and drink sales from the Grandstand's facilities
- 67 This would copy the way the Stadium was operated before its acquisition by the Appellant. I believe that motorsport would be a profitable land use as it was in the past.
- 68 On the basis of these documents and what has been said to me by Coventry Stadium's previous owner I believe that use of Coventry Stadium for motorsport was commercially viable.
- 69 I have spoken to a number of different people who have expressed their interest in restoring motorsport.
- 70 In terms of land ownership I have spoken to Warren Hunter who has expressed an interest in acquiring Coventry Stadium to restore motorsport and preserve it for the future. Mr Hunter has informed me that he contacted the current owner to enquire about acquiring the Stadium before he was aware of the Campaign Group's work and objectives. [Mr Hunter's letter is at p. 6 of the appendix.
- 71 I have also discussed the possibility of acquisition of Coventry Stadium with John Whalley His letter is at p. 8 of the appendix. Both Mr Hunter and Mr Whalley have confirmed that they would consider a joint venture or consortium for the acquisition and Stadium management.
- 72 Matt Ford has expressed his willingness to operate the Speedway business. For 24 years Mr Ford has been the promoter of Poole Speedway which has been the most successful team in the country. His son now undertakes the day to day work managing Poole Speedway. Mr Ford would be the first choice promoter for Speedway at the Coventry Stadium.
- 73 As part of a phased restoration and enhancement, additional community uses and other events would add to the sustainability of the stadium in the longer run.
- 74 I conclude that the restoration of racing at Coventry Stadium is realistic, deliverable and a viable sustainable proposition. This is a conclusion that should be afforded substantial weight.

**Issue: Whether there is an identified need for the alternative sports provision proposed**

- 75 I understand that Rugby Borough Council will focus on this issue.
- 76 While there is a case for additional provision of the type proposed by the appellant to be made in the Borough, that need does not arise locally to the appeal site and, indeed, to do so could adversely affect the viability of alternative existing provision nearby in Wolston. In addition, SCS is not convinced that the viability of the alternative has itself been proven. I also note that KPP encourage early provision of the pitch to prevent provision being made elsewhere (see para 6.4 of CD3.1).
- 77 SCS has already made representations on KPP's report (dated December 2020). We are aware of a further version of this dated July 2023. Our representations stand.
- 78 I conclude that there is no need for the identified alternative sports provision to be made on the appeal site. If this is indeed the case, then the appeal proposal should, in turn, fail.

**Issue: Whether the benefits of the alternative sports provision outweigh the loss of the former speedway use**

- 79 Coventry Stadium was unique in the Rugby and Coventry area. Its closure has resulted in the loss of both sports to the area and the loss of a facility of national and international events for both speedway and stock car racing. These losses have had a significant, continuing adverse effect on both sports. It is also the case that Coventry Stadium, apart from being an important sports stadium, was also the most significant tourist asset in the Borough, attracting people and expenditure into the local economy. The stadium employed a small number of full-time jobs and significantly more part-time roles on event days.
- 80 The Appellant make no reference to the impacts.
- 81 Speedway and Stock Car Racing might be regarded as minority sports, certainly in comparison to say football, but that means that the planning system, and those who operate within it, should be wise to the need for such provision to be carefully safeguarded. Sport and recreation are central to the health and well-being of our society and activities of all types should be encouraged and protected. The decision of the Planning Committee to refuse the planning application, which was the first time elected Members got to consider the proposals formally, nine years after the proposals were first mooted, reflects and responds to these wider considerations.

**Conclusion**

- 82 To conclude, the benefits of the alternative, which appears to have been devised in an attempt to overcome objections to the loss of the sports stadium in no way outweighs that loss. This matter should also be afforded substantial and indeed over-riding weight.

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83 I request the Planning Inspector to dismiss the Appeal.

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**Coventry Stadium, Rugby Road, Coventry, CV8 3GJ**

**Demolition of existing buildings and outline application (with matters of access, layout, scale and appearance included) for residential development (Use Class C3) including means of access into the site from Rugby Road, provision of open space and associated infrastructure and provision of sports pitch, erection of pavilion and formation of associated car park.**

Appendix DC1

## FOI 203-2020

Year	Month	Incident Description	Total
<b>2017</b>			<b>6</b>
	APRIL	SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES	1
	JUNE	TRESPASS	1
	JULY	TRESPASS	1
	SEPTEMBER	ASB	1
		DAMAGE	1
		TRESPASS	1
<b>2018</b>			<b>11</b>
	JANUARY	ASB	2
		LOST/FOUND	1
		SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES	1
		TRESPASS	1
	FEBRUARY	SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES	1
	MARCH	CONCERN FOR SAFETY	1
	APRIL	CONCERN FOR SAFETY	1
	MAY	CONCERN FOR SAFETY	1
	JUNE	SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES	2
<b>2019</b>			<b>2</b>
	MAY	CONCERN FOR SAFETY	1
	JUNE	SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES	1
<b>2020</b>			<b>15</b>
	FEBRUARY	SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES	1
	MARCH	SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES	1
	APRIL	ASB	1
		SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES	1
	MAY	ROAD	1
		SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES	2
	JUNE	ASB	2
		SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES	5
		TRESPASS	1
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>34</b>

# Brandon Estates fined £10,000 for breaching Community Protection Notice

**THE owner of Coventry Stadium, former home of the Coventry Bees speedway team, has been fined £10,000 after a district judge found the firm guilty of breaching a Community Protection Notice (CPN).**

District Judge David Wain also ordered Jersey-based Brandon Estates Limited to pay Rugby Borough Council's £54,000 costs at the end of a three-day trial at Birmingham Magistrates Court.

Officers from the council's environmental health and community safety team served the CPN on the company in September 2017 after the stadium site in Brandon was broken into on a number of occasions and became home to unauthorised traveller encampments.

The CPN required Brandon Estates to improve security to stop unauthorised access to the site and carry out regular inspections to check the site remained secure.

But despite the CPN, the site was repeatedly broken into, with further unauthorised traveller encampments and a number of fires at stadium buildings.

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service, which attended the fires, witnessed people leaving buildings on the site and found evidence of people sleeping inside buildings.

Following advice from Warwickshire Police, the company carried out work in February 2018 to secure vehicle access points to the site, including digging ditches and erecting hoarding.

But in May 2018, council community wardens attended the stadium after a resident raised concerns and discovered buildings on the site were insecure and evidence of people sleeping in buildings.

When Brandon Estates' solicitor was informed, the solicitor replied in an email: "We, nor our client, need reminding of the requirements of the Community Protection Notice, as amended by agreement."

In a further email, the solicitor insisted inspections of the site had found no evidence of people sleeping rough and the buildings were secure.

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service were called to further fires at stadium buildings in October 2018 and February 2019 - both started deliberately.

And in April 2019, video footage was found on YouTube of an unknown person entering the stadium and stating he had been able to "just walk in."

The video showed people entering a number of buildings on the site and, when officers studied the footage, it was determined the film had been shot between February 2018 and February 2019.

At the trial at Birmingham Magistrates Court, Brandon Estates pleaded not guilty to two counts of breaching the CPN - one between April and September 2019 and another between May and September 2021.

The court was told buildings on the site contained asbestos, which posed a significant risk to people accessing the site and, in the event of fire, the wider community.

The court also heard security at the site was a serious concern for Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service, which feared a major fire at the stadium and the risk to firefighters attending the site.

Security experts gave evidence on behalf of the council and Brandon Estates. Both agreed the stadium site was difficult to secure, but CCTV cameras, security dogs and metal shutters were all cited as measures which could have helped keep buildings secure.

Paul Easter, the security expert giving evidence on behalf of the defence, said all three measures relied on support from the police in order to be effective - support, he suggested, which was only available when security breaches were considered to be serious.

Jon Burgwin, a representative of Brandon Estates, told the court the options of CCTV cameras and security dogs had been dismissed by the company on the grounds of cost, while he cast doubt on the effectiveness of metal shutters.

However, on delivering his guilty verdict last Wednesday (16 November), District Judge Wain said while he accepted it was unreasonable to expect the company to install CCTV or pay for security dogs to guard the site, the failure to secure main access points with metal shutters breached the CPN, which stated all buildings and structures on the site "must be suitably and sufficiently secured to resist attempts at access by unauthorised persons."

During the trial, the court was told the estimated cost of installing metal shutters was £15,000.

Brandon Estates was fined £5,000 for each breach of the CPN and was ordered to pay the council's £54,000 costs and a £190 victim surcharge.

Speaking after the trial, Cllr Derek Poole, Rugby Borough Council portfolio holder for regulation and safety, welcomed the district judge's verdict.

"From the beginning, the council has sought to work positively with Brandon Estates to ensure the security of the Coventry Stadium site," Cllr Poole said.

"Our sole motivation has always been to protect the public, both in terms of the safety of people trying to gain unauthorised access to the site and the safety of the wider Brandon community in the event of a major incident, such as a fire.

"While it has taken the council considerable time and resources to pursue this successful prosecution, both the verdict and the awarding of costs vindicate our determination to hold Brandon Estates accountable to the terms of the Community Protection Notice."

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Ms Helen Hockenhull  
Inspector  
Planning Inspectorate  
Room 3, O/P Temple Quay House  
2 The Square  
Temple Quay  
Bristol  
BS1 6PN

17 August 2023

Dear Ms Hockenhull

**Re: APP/E3715/W/23/3322013**

I am writing in my capacity as Mayor of the West Midlands concerning the above appeal for Planning Application R18/0186 for residential development on the site of the Coventry Stadium in Binley Woods. Whilst this falls under the jurisdiction of Rugby Borough Council, a significant number of West Midlands residents are impacted by this proposal.

Having recently met with Coventry Speedway representatives and understood the broad support for the sport across Coventry, Birmingham and Wolverhampton in recent months, I strongly urge the Planning Inspectorate to uphold Rugby Borough Council's Planning Committee's decision to reject this application.

It is plainly obvious to me that there is a significant sporting heritage at the Coventry Stadium, given its national profile in hosting BriSCA Formula One stock car racing, which reaches far beyond its locality. Additionally, for over 20 years the site was used as a rider training school, which safely trained thousands of motorcyclists within the stadium.

You will also know that the site sits within designated greenbelt land. Although the site may constitute previously developed land, whether in whole or part, the site is not allocated for residential development in Rugby's Local Plan, and Rugby has been building homes well ahead of the national average in the sites which have been designated for residential development.

I have increasingly been engaging with speedway supporters in my role as Mayor and regularly hear from members of the public about their strong desire to see motorsports return to the stadium. I would also note that Brandon Estates have been subject to enforcement action by Rugby Borough Council for failing to adequately secure the site.

**Andy Street CBE**  
**Mayor of the West Midlands**

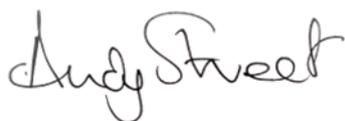
16 Summer Lane, Birmingham, B19 3SD

This has, in part, enabled a number of fires at the premises which caused significant damage.

Given its importance in Binley Woods and the wider role the sport and stadium has in the region, I would be open to exploring how the West Midlands Combined Authority can use its funding streams to support the regeneration of the site, subject to the business case and our requirement of being the funder of last resort. In addition, I would be happy to instruct my team to work closely with the speedway club to assist them in any way we can.

I very much hope that the appeal will be dismissed.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Street". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Andy Street**  
**Mayor of the West Midlands**

cc. Paul Robinson, Chief Executive, Planning Inspectorate  
Mark Pawsey MP, Member of Parliament for Rugby

**Andy Street CBE**  
**Mayor of the West Midlands**

16 Summer Lane, Birmingham, B19 3SD

# QUOTATION



Our Ref: QBE01269/1/ANDREW BURSELL (10)  
 Your Ref: JOHN CLARKE  
 Effective Date: 21Aug23  
 Issue Date: 21Aug23  
 Page: 1  
 A/C: J8873 Email: john.rclarke@icloud.com

www.huwsgray.co.uk

COVENTRY BRANCH  
 Email: coventry@HuwsGray.co.uk  
 Tel: 02476668000

**Customer**

**Delivery**

JOHN CLARKE  
 18A SHILTON LANE

BEDWORTH  
 CV12 9JL  
 Tel: 07713084231

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60	SAWN UC4 GREEN TREATED INCISED POST 100 x 100mm. 3000mm FSC	1146.29 Per 100	687.77
100	GRS CARLTON/CPI HIGH PERFORMANCE CONCRETE 20kg 4 ON PLASTIC BAG 40NMCO/10 digger hire for 1 week approx including delivery and collection	5.95 Each	595.00
2	FASTENMASTER TL250K04 TIMBERLOK TIMBER SCREW HEX HEAD 100mm BOX OF 250	85.60 Each	171.20
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	Overall total from line 1.....		5073.98
		VAT	1014.80
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**From:** Warren Hunter  
**Sent:** 21 March 2017 11:25  
**To:** 'deborah.clamp@investinplc.com' <deborah.clamp@investinplc.com>  
**Cc:** 'Antony Harrison (harrisonath@aol.com)' <harrisonath@aol.com>  
**Subject:** Brandon Stadium

Dear Deborah,

I hope you are well?

I'm am contacting you regarding your earlier conversation with Antony Harrison and our interest in the purchase of Brandon Stadium. Below I have noted my personal and business background and our financial standing since 2014.

I have also listed some questions in order to get a better understanding of the property.

**Business Background:-** I am the Managing Director of 'Huntapac', a family run business established in 1942. We grow, pack and distribute vegetables and salads to a large number of the major retailers in the country, we have grown to be one of the largest employers in the west of Lancashire with an annual turnover of £43 million which is due to grow by a further £8 million next year due to additional business we have won with Co-Op, Nisa and Waitrose. My son Will, Operations Director is also heavily involved in the business races in the BRISCA Formula 1's, hence our link to Brandon stadium. If you need any further information on Huntapac I have pasted a link to our website <http://www.huntapac.co.uk/>

**Financial Information:-** As mentioned above we have had a static turnover of around £40-£43 million for 4/5 years now, with profits at a strong level for industry standards. If you need any further detail on our financial standings I would be more than happy to pass your contact information onto our Finance Director for further detailing. For initial reading I have attached a copy of our 2015 & 2016 filed audits.

If you need anything else please don't hesitate to contact me, I have listed some questions below if you wouldn't mind coming back to me in due course:

- *Is Brandon Stadium for sale or lease?*
- *Is there a sports recreation clause on Brandon Stadium?*
- *Is there any current lease on Brandon Stadium*
- *Is there any current license?*
- *Is there any key information we should be aware of?*
- *Is there any restrictions on Brandon Stadium?*

I hope this email finds you well and following further conversations I think it would make sense to meet up to discuss the possible purchase further. Speak soon,

Kind Regards.

Warren Hunter

Managing Director

Huntapac Produce Ltd.  
293 Blackgate Lane,  
Tarleton, Holmes,  
Preston. PR4 6JJ.

Mob: 07980798244  
Tel: 01772 280611

Web: [www.huntapac.co.uk](http://www.huntapac.co.uk)



*UK Veg Grower of the Year 2015*



Jeff Davies &lt;jeffdavies170@gmail.com&gt;

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**Our conversation**

1 message

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**John Whalley** <JohnW@nwd.co.uk>  
To: Jeff Davies <jeffdavies170@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 9, 2023 at 4:04 PM

Hi Jeff

Just following on from our conversation , I'm happy for you to discuss with Warren the possibility of forming a consortium to buy the stadium and my involvement in some way if he so desired .

Furthermore , attached is a copy of my companies recent audited accounts which you can use to pull out the turnover and balance sheet numbers if you so wish .

Best Wishes ( and good luck ! )

John

Sent from Outlook for iOS

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 **Nationwide Holdings - YE 31.03.23.pdf**  
1304K