

**CORAL<sup>®</sup>**  
**ROMFORD GREYHOUND STADIUM**

# **OWNERS' REP MEETING MINUTES**

**Saturday 25th January 2025**



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# OWNERS' REP MEETING

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**Attendee:**

Karen McMillan - Stadia Manager  
Mark Arkell - Racing Manager  
Jess Day - Communications Manager & Notetaker  
Kelly Searle - David Mullins' Rep  
Penny Burr - Paul Burr's Rep  
Andy Dangerfield - Katie O'Flaherty's Rep  
Jason Richardson - Bernie Doyle's Rep  
Alan Massey - Martyn Wiley's Rep  
Justin Brooke - Marlene Westwood's Rep  
Toby Bolt - Gemma Evans' Rep  
Dean Tennant - Paul Young's Rep

**Apologies:**

Glenn Harrison - Jason Bloomfield's Rep  
Paul Johnson - Gemma Evans' Rep  
Lee Aylward - John Simpson's Rep

**Mark opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.**

**Paul Young Kennel:**

**1. How many trainers are expected to move from Crayford to Romford?**

*There will be three trainers moving across, however we cannot officially name them yet as we are still awaiting one trainer to sign their contract. You can probably work it out from the trial sheet!*

**2. How many extra dogs are expected from this?**

*There will be roughly 60 extra dogs, we cannot give exact numbers.*

**3. How many trials will the new dogs need?**

*They will require a minimum of two three dog trials - The same as everyone else.*

**4. How will the lower grade dogs from Crayford affect grading times here?**

*We will have to see. We were impressed with their first trials, but won't know anything for certain until they're graded on.*

**5. As Crayford had a more varied programme than Romford can we expect changes? I assume the reintroduction of hurdles although good seems unlikely. What about one off races/competitions over 750m?**



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*We won't be having hurdles again as they have gone to Star Pelaw. We would love to have more 750m races, stayers races in general really! Would also like to have the Guys & Dolls competition, we had it for one year back in 2020 and we enjoyed it here.*

**6. The injury rate currently seems very high. In cold weather is the abandonment of a meeting solely based on the state of the track or is the effect of dogs considered?**

*All factors are considered. We have abandoned one Saturday AM meeting recently. It was decided an inspection would be done at 7:15am and we then made the early decision to call it off before trainers started travelling. The track team had been working for 1 1/2 hours after the Friday PM meeting when we finished in -6° so great work from them on that front. Regarding injuries being very high at the moment - They aren't, figures have been good. Would also like to add we are in contact with the trainers multiple times a day and not one of them has expressed any concerns.*

**7. Is it possible to display the bookmakers' odds on the central screen before races?**

*It wouldn't be as simple as it seems to do this. Also the bookmakers are their own business so we would only put the tote betting figures on the big screen.*

**8. Why do some dogs receive a double upgrade while other only get a single upgrade even with faster times?**

*At present there are difficult grading conditions. The more greyhounds we have on the strength the easier it is for us to grade. The opens are struggling at the moment and we have two trainers leaving us. We do have conditions we try and stick to but the demand for six dog races makes things more difficult with the current strength so some of it does come down to filling cards.*

**9. The grading system really needs to be re-evaluated, it currently seems inadequate.**

*As previously stated, more greyhounds on the card will help us massively even things out. A lot of the time we are filling cards and we are always short of wide runners! We are also using a lot of our top grade dogs in opens.*

**10. Please can you explain why the consistency of the surface seems to vary between the two straights? Specifically, it appears to be much deeper from the 575 traps to the bend compared to from the 400m traps to the bend. It's like the dogs are running on two different tracks.**



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*One is exposed to the elements more than the other. Nothing was reported by Dr Christian Spring during our STRI report - It's the best report we've had and he said it was the best report in the country which is something to be very proud of!*

**11. Do you think five dog races might become less common with all the dogs moving over from Crayford?**

*The simple answer is they have to become less common. We are monitored on this so hopefully with an influx of new dogs this will improve as there is a demand for six dog races. 2024 saw 55% of our races featuring 6 dogs, that's 45% to play with.*

**Katie O'Flaherty Kennel:**

**1. Could trials be shown live via a link on Thursdays?**

*We would need 5000 views to be able to make it live which is unrealistic and therefore not cost effective, so unfortunately there are no plans to put this into effect at the moment.*

**2. Will the dogs coming from Crayford effect how many runs our dogs are getting monthly (ie if they are currently getting 3-4 could this drop to 1-2)?**

*Hopefully the amount of runs a greyhound is getting won't be affected. Per month runs are usually dictated by seed rather than the amount of greyhounds on the strength. As previously mentioned, the 55% of six dog races last year has to improve this year. Also, we are planning on an intertrack next week with the Crayford trainers.*

**Martyn Wiley Kennel:**

**1. Why are dogs retiring at an earlier age?**

*In 2024 we had one 200th race, five 150th races and fifty-nine 100+ races. In 2023, we had twenty-eight 100+ races and in 2022 twenty-five 100+ races. With that being said, the answer is they are not retiring at an earlier age.*

**2. Without contact with other dogs, are greyhounds retiring at an earlier age because they are being put under pressure by being in too high of a grade early in their careers?**

*As previously stated, we know the greyhounds are statistically not retiring at an earlier age. We have grading rules that we follow and try to make grading as consistent as possible with those brackets in place.*





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**Paul Burr Kennel:**

**1. Would it be possible to have more prize money for 2nd place? If you've led a race and got picked up on the line it would be nice to have a little more even if it's just £5.**

*Whilst we agree this is a good suggestion, unfortunately it is not in the 2025 budget. That's roughly £60 a meeting and we race 6 times a week so will add up quickly. We can, however, suggest it for 2026.*

**David Mullins Kennel:**

**1. How do you select a grade for a dog at Romford once it has trialed in? Is there an allocated time allowance for each grade?**

*Yes, we have time slots we work to. A novice pup is usually a grade less to give it more of a chance.*

**2. Do you think it's time to look at regrading all the dogs across the card? If the grading time is still 25.60 how can dogs who do 25+ times and run in the lowest grades have any chance of being competitive, let alone win when there are barely any races being won in 25 something. A11 is the lowest grade on offer and it is regularly being won in 24.90 or quicker.**

*We will look at grading times and grades once we know what we are getting from the Crayford trainers. We've been toying with the idea of A12's and S6's but as said, need to see what the Crayford dogs can do first.*

**3. If you do regrade the card will all dogs have to retrial?**

*No, they wouldn't have to retrial.*

**4. How do you decide what dogs get double upgrades and which ones only get one?**

*We have guidelines for this to follow. Some of the things we take into consideration are distance, how much they've improved time-wise. We do also make allowances for trouble in behind.*

**5. Are there any assurances that Entain won't do to Romford what they have done to Crayford?**

*We cannot answer on behalf of the company, we know as much as you do in that respect. We can only hope not and carry on as normal!*



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**Gemma Evans Kennel:**

**1. When is the trial for open race seeds to be rails, rails to middle, middle, middle to wide and wide?**

*1st February is the plan! It's a good idea though, one that will benefit us as we have been asking the question for years.*

**2. Are there any plans to run more 6 and 8 bend graded races?**

*We would love to have them, but it's down to the trainers more so than us! We have our regular Saturday evening races where we grade them over 575m.*

**3. Track staff behind traps when the hare's running can be seen talking and waving arms. Can they be quiet until the hare's gone past? It's seen on screen all the time and could distract the dogs.**

*We will pick up on this and have a conversation with them.*

**4. When doing the draws for open racing the six pieces of paper get stuck together when going into the tombola. Can they be folded in half in future so they are all mixed up?**

*We have been folding them recently and will continue to do so, but don't want them to become too time consuming for us.*

**5. Open races and graded draws need to be recorded from the first round to the final for transparency.**

*The first round of a competition is always sent to the GBGB to draw and we do film every final trap draw as well as semi finals for Cat 1's and Cat 2's.*

**6. There hasn't been an Owners' Quarterly update online since March 2024 and has the £30 owners' monthly draw been stopped?**

*Apologies this was put on the sidelines for a while however an Owners' Quarterly Update will be online in February 2025 with the winner for January 2025. Every month's winning owner will now be announced alongside the Dog and Bitch of the Month and these will also be featured in the Quarterly Updates.*

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

**1. Why don't you cover the track anymore?**

*The covers sweat the track and cause condensation, we have found opening it all up is better. Unless the sheets are thermal they won't work for us and thermal sheets are very expensive! We have used covers previously and found we lost more meetings. It's all about the moisture content in the sand.*



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We will aim to do more sweepstakes this year to give the graders more of a chance at better money. Also a quick note to say the bond money will be going up this year to £210!

**Thank you all for attending!**

