

Brief report of the meeting:

CK called a meeting for yesterday, comprising WISA, Roger Casale, Merton Council, Wimbledon Civic Forum and the Club.

The meeting was to announce the findings of his investigation into the possibility of WFC using the Greyhound Stadium site for a football stadium.

The results of the study were:

The Greyhound Racing Association is happy with its current stadium and is not interested in moving.

Should WFC wish to use the site, it would mean purchasing the land at fair value, demolishing the current stadium and building a new stadium suitable for football and greyhound racing. The GRA would not contribute to the costs of this, as they do not feel it would add any value to their business.

The total cost of obtaining a stadium in this way is likely to be in the region of £55m - £60m. This is prohibitively expensive and commercial finance could not be arranged.

Further, there are insurmountable operational difficulties in sharing a stadium.

Dogs race Tuesday, Friday and Saturday. The GRA have a deal with Sky to show a number of these meetings on those days. This would rule out our playing any live games on Friday under the new ON Digital television deal.

Saturdays would pose a real problem as well. Having to clear the stadium by 6PM for the greyhound meeting would be a major logistical difficulty as well as an impediment to selling corporate hospitality. It would mean executive box holders and other corporate guests leaving immediately after the game finished, to allow time for cleaning the areas before 6.

Effectively we could not play any home cup ties on Saturdays, in case extra-time were needed.

These are examples of the logistical / operational difficulties, not an exhaustive list. These problems are insurmountable at the current time with the current TV deals for dog racing and Nationwide football.

CK has said that, in view of the above and the fact that the GS is the only site in Merton suitable for a football stadium, WFC will not be returning to Merton.

CK is prepared to explain the above to a meeting of fans, which WISA will be arranging as a matter of urgency.

CK said that it is now back to the drawing board on the question of a site, and that he will now widen the search as previously suggested to areas outside Merton.

WISA comments:

WISA needs to decide, on the basis of the above and of any further information which can be gained, whether we accept the ruling out of Merton as a possibility. Obviously this is not a decision which we can take lightly.

If there are any specific questions on the above, please email them to me at chair@wisa.org.uk and I will pass them on to CK and get a response which will be published here.

Kris Stewart, WISA Chair, 20/06/2001