



The programme from the very first meeting at Brandon in September 1929. Top right: Opening night and Mayor Fred Lee and Mayoress Mrs Lewis perform the opening ceremony. Bottom right: 'Sprouts' Elder and Jack Parker line up in a meeting between Coventry and Southampton in 1930



Above right: Jack Parker who became Coventry Bees Captain before World War II, and above left: Mayor of Rugby (at the time), along with Former World Speedway Champion Peter Collins, unveiling a plaque in 2014. Speedway was drawing in huge crowds - Brandon was the place to be!



The first meeting after the war was staged in May 1948 against Hanley. Above right: The 1948 Bees team and bottom right, Mr Charles Ochiltree (centre) became the promoter.



### BRANDON STADIUM A POTTED HISTORY

Brandon Stadium has been the home of the world famous Coventry Bees for 89 years. It all began on 29th September 1928, when more than 3,000 people turned out for the first ever meeting, promoted by Motordromes of London and officially opened by Mayor of Coventry Fred Lee and Mayoress Mrs Lewis. Winner of the meeting and undoubtedly star of the show was Birmingham born Jack Parker, pictured in the background, riding a BSA machine.

The following year saw the emergence of a Coventry team, led by Parker, who moved from his native Birmingham to Rugby, where he lived for most of his life, running a garage business which many years later became Nightingales Motorcycles, and remains there to this day.

Parker died in 1990 aged 84 but in 2014, a plaque was unveiled by Mayor Tony Gillias and former world speedway champion Peter Collins to commemorate Jack's contribution to speedway and to the town.

In the early 30's the sport attracted big crowds to Brandon but during the second world war was, it requisitioned as a storage depot with the large hangers which symbolise the stadium, being used to store aircraft parts

The stadium reopened in 1948, with a new promoter - London based Charles Ochiltree.

Charles Ochiltree will be a name that forever lives in the memory of the speedway fraternity as

he became the most revered promoter in the sport. With wife Linda, and later, son Martin, the Ochiltree family ran Coventry speedway for more than 50 years. Charles Ochiltree died in 1998.

Success on the track was matched on the terraces and in 1949, 27,000 people packed Brandon to watch the first ever staging of the Brandonopolis, won inevitably by the maestro, Jack Parker. Star riders in the 50's included Bob Fletcher, plus emerging stars like Australian Les Hewitt, Vic Emms and local riders Derrick Tailby and Johnny Reason. Like Jack Parker, Johnny Reason was a local businessman and his haulage business J&J Reason still operates in Brinklow to this day.

Coventry were drawing the biggest crowds of anywhere in the country and with speedway racing a huge success at Brandon, in the mid 50's, another sport was introduced to the stadium - Stock Car Racing.

On 30th June 1954 to be precise, the first ever stock car meeting was staged at Brandon and was won by Percy 'Hellcat' Brine, who's car, No 27 can be seen in one of the pictures from this historic meeting.

Brandon was the place to be and fans of all ages flocked to the stadium in huge numbers. In the late 1950's a young Yorkshireman by the name of Nigel Boocock signed for the Bees. The significance of that, was that he was to become a rider who many regard as the Bees' greatest ever rider and someone who remained with the club and thrilled the fans for 18 years. He was known as 'Little Boy Blue' because of his distinctive blue leathers. Nigel Boocock emigrated to Australia when he retired and died in 2015. Several months later, his family arranged to bring Nigel's ashes back to England and an emotional service was held at



The programme from the first ever Stock Car meeting in 1954 and above right, a picture from that first meeting. Look at the crowd!



Coventry Bees' legend and greatest ever servant, Nigel Boocock



In 1968, phase one of the new grandstand was completed and all the top meetings in the country were being staged at Brandon, in front of huge crowds



Nigel Boocock's ashes were carried round for one last lap of the track, before being buried under the track on the start line in January 2016. It was an emotional day!



All the International meetings were staged at Brandon in front of capacity crowds

Brandon Stadium where a cask containing his ashes was buried under the start line.

In 1960, the F1 World Stock Car Championship was staged at Brandon for the first time and in 1971, the British Speedway Final was staged there for the first time too.

Many of the world's top speedway riders wore the famous fighting bee race jacket, including World Champions Jack Young, Ole Olsen, Hans Nielsen, Greg Hancock and Billy Hamill.

And all of the top speedway meetings were being staged at Brandon - British Finals, Overseas Finals, the 'Brandonopolis', International Test Matches and both British and World Stock Car Championships.

The Coventry Bees won the British League Championship in 1968, 1978, 1979, 1987 and 1988 as well numerous other team competitions.

In 2002, the stadium was sold to Avtar Sandhu. During the Winter of 2003/4, Mr Sandhu spent more than £1m refurbishing the stadium to bring it back to it's former glory and after lean years on the track, he invested heavily on new riders too. In came riders like Chris 'Bomber' Harris, Scott Nicholls, Hans Andersen, Rory Schlein, and Russian Emil Sayfutdinov.

The results followed and after a 17 year spell without a Championship, in 2005 the Bees became Champions once more. Two years later, the Bees made a clean sweep of all domestic team competitions by winning the famous 'Treble' of League Championship, Knockout Cup and Craven Shield. The in 2010, against all the odds, they captured the title again in the two legged play-off final against Poole.

Stock Cars continued to thrive too, with Coventry drawing the highest number of cars competing and by far the biggest crowds anywhere in the country, averaging more than 4000 a meeting.

During the Winter of 2010/11, Mr Sandhu, along the Peterborough promotion, had a bitter dispute with speedway's governing body. It was eventually resolved but in the interest of the sport, Mr Sandhu sold his speedway promoting rights to Mick Horton.

In 2013 the stadium was sold but both speedway and stock car racing continued at the stadium until October 2016.

The final speedway meeting at the stadium was the prestigious Elite League Riders Championship in October 2016.

The final Stock Car meeting at the stadium was the Stock Car World Championship Final. It attracted 11,500 fans, young and old, to cheer for their favourite drivers.



Champions in 2005, 'Treble' Winners in 2007 (top left), Champions in 2010 (bottom left) and the crowds were packing Brandon



Brandon had become the home of the British Final, Overseas Final and all the other big meetings



Stock Car racing continued to pull in and thrill big crowds throughout their years since it began in 1954



Top left: Avtar Sandhu with Promoter Colin Pratt. Other pictures show the refurbished hospitality areas and restaurant

- 2052 Speedway Meetings staged at Brandon
  - 150 Pre-War
  - 1902 Post War
  - 31 British Finals
  - 33 Brandonopolis
  - 2 World Cup Finals
  - 3 World Championship Grand Prix
  - 21 International Meetings
- 508 Stock Car Meetings staged at Brandon (F1)
  - 12 British Stock Car Championship Finals
  - 21 World Stock Car Championship Finals



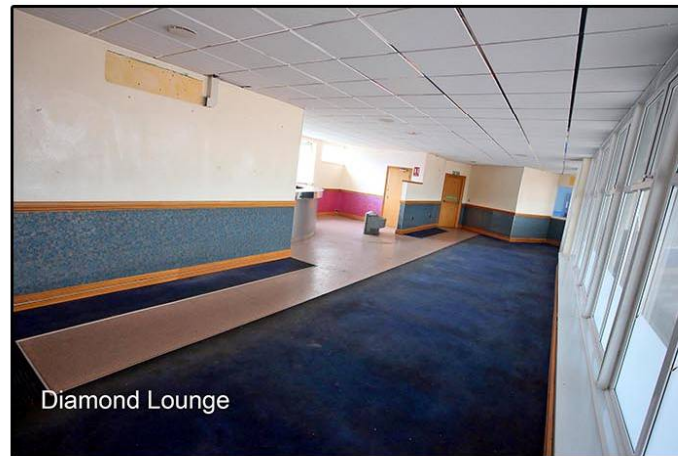
Top left: New Bees promoter Mick Horton with Colin Pratt and Alun Rossiter. Top right: The final speedway meeting, the Elite League Riders Championship and above, the final Stock Car meeting in 2016



Hospitality Box



Hospitality Box



Diamond Lounge

### EXTRACTS FROM REPRESENTATIONS MADE BY BRANDON ESTATES

The Stadium is dilapidated as a consequence of damage to the premises which has been caused by the leasee prior to the 31st December 2016. These actions are considered to be in breach of the provision of the lease (now expired) and of criminal consent.

Speedway Stadiums around the country are not to the standard of modern football stadiums. Many of them, like Brandon, were built before the second world war. Brandon was considered as one of the best speedway stadiums in the country.

Stadiums are required to satisfy the Sports Ground Acts and General Safety Legislation, which included electrical certificates, fire certificates and emergency procedures. In 2016, Brandon Stadium was issued with all the necessary certificates.

It is true that the previous leasee removed various assets prior to vacating the stadium on 31st December 2016. These assets included floodlights, track fence, grandstand seating and furniture etc. This is all well documented. Removal of these assets would have invalidated the safety certificates.

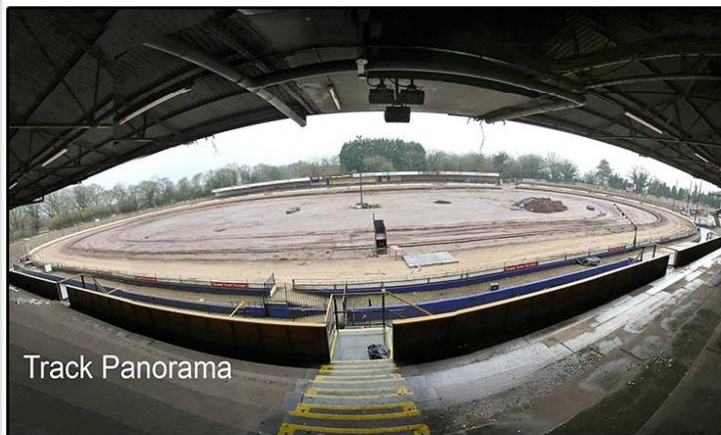
However, the previous leasee was prepared to reinstate all those assets and satisfy all safety legislative requirements at his own cost, if Brandon Estates agreed to allow the Speedway Promoter and Stock Car Promoter to continue to operate at the stadium.

These pictures were taken on 31st December 2016. This is the day the previous leasee vacated the stadium before handing over the keys to Brandon Estates.

Whilst they clearly show the floodlights, grandstand seats, track fence etc had been removed, the stadium, as can be seen in the photographs, was left in a clean and tidy state.

When a protest was staged at the stadium in early March, supporters were allowed into the stadium and nothing had significantly changed - it was still as it was left on 31st December.

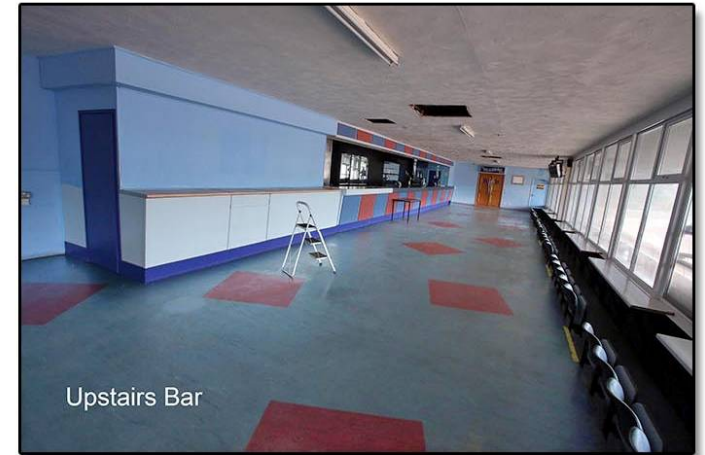
**So their contention the stadium was dilapidated is clearly incorrect**



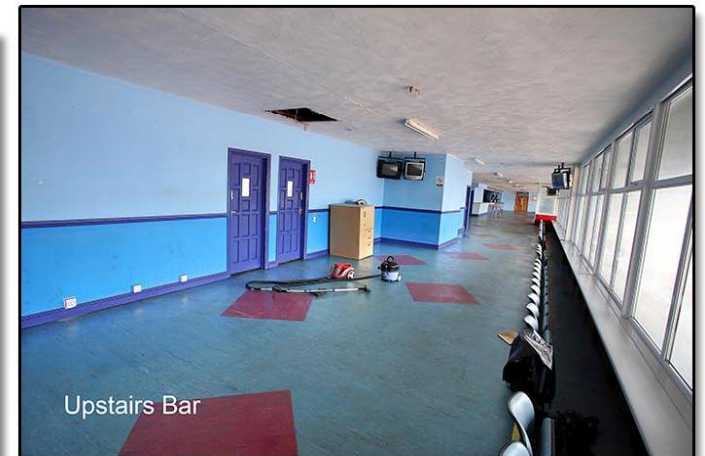
Track Panorama



Track Shop



Upstairs Bar



Upstairs Bar



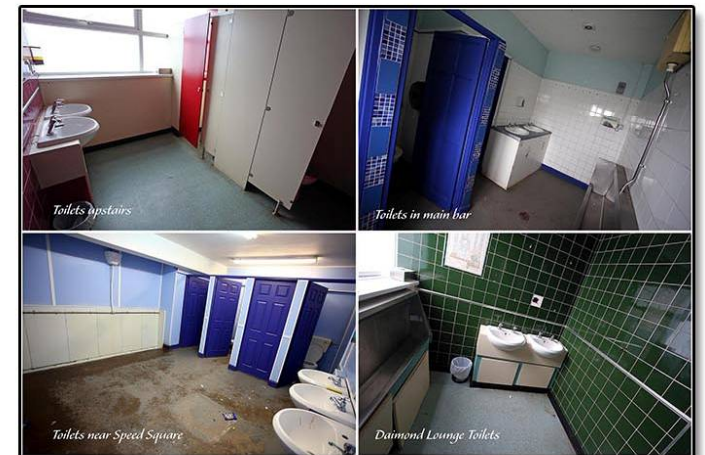
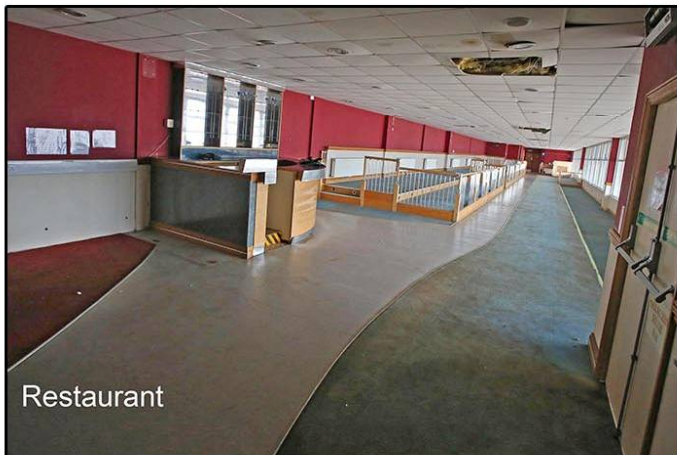
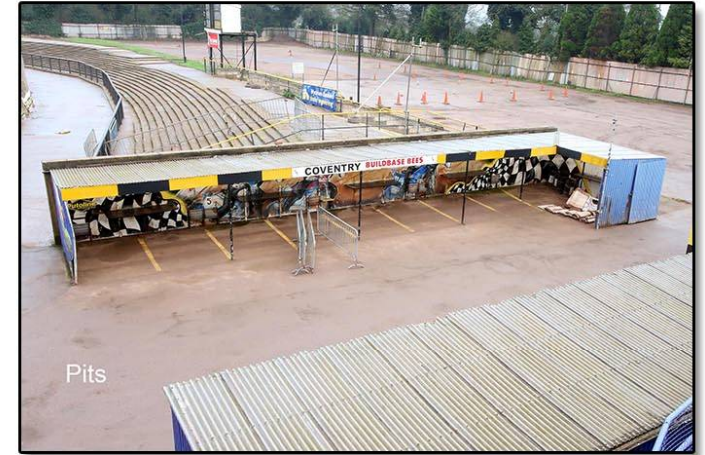
Brandon Estates claim the removal of assets was of 'criminal intent'.  
 Investigations by Warwickshire Police concluded there was 'No case to answer'.  
 Brandon Estates subsequently claimed they were considering a civil case against the previous leasee. A civil case has not been pursued.

**So their claim that removal of assets was of 'criminal intent' is also incorrect**

The use of Brandon Stadium for the purposes of speedway is not a viable use of the site

Brandon Estates claim using the stadium for speedway is not viable. We agree!! They make no reference to Stock Car Racing!

**If Speedway AND Stock Car Racing was staged at Brandon, the Stadium IS viable, just as it has been since 1954**





Brandon Estates have been responsible for the stadium since 1st January 2017. Pictures on another display board show how the stadium looked the day before they were handed the keys.

In recent months, gypsies have settled on the site on three separate occasions and caused a lot of damage inside the stadium. It has been badly vandalised. Gypsies don't normally do that sort of thing. They steal anything of value, they leave an awful mess. But they don't normally vandalise sites they visit.

The Save Coventry Speedway Campaign Group would not for one moment accuse Brandon Estates of orchestrating this.

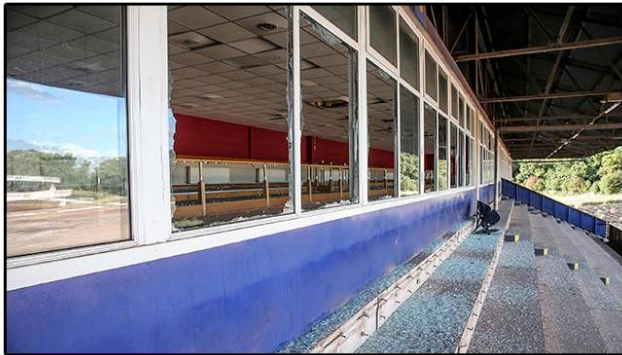
What we would say however, is that their failure to secure the perimeter of the site has allowed gypsies to gain entry.

Further more, their failure to secure doorways, gates and turnstiles, has enabled gypsies (and others) to get into the stadium itself.

Pictures clearly show doors left open. They show the main gate into the car park without even a padlock on.

One could understand Brandon Estates could have been caught out with the first incursion of gypsies. But they should have redoubled their efforts to secure the site when they left, in a bid to prevent further incursions.





But Brandon Estates didn't improve security.

It was left to local residents to take measures to try and prevent further incursions. these desperate measures included filling barrels full of concrete and placing them by the gates into the car park. The residents even welded the two gates together in an attempt to secure the site, whilst Brandon Estates did very little.

Eventually, Rugby Council served a Warning Notice on Brandon Estates. It was issued on 15th September and required them to:  
 'Remove all waste and dispose of in the correct manner and leave the land in a clean condition and secure it to prevent unauthorised entry'.  
 They had seven days to do it.

Pictures here show their pathetic attempts to secure the stadium. When the deadline passed, rubbish was still strewn all around the site and their attempts to secure even the main car park gate was laughable.

Openings into the stadium were covered with steel, with screw heads clearly showing (and easily removable), gates were 'secured' with small, flimsy padlocks.

Rugby Council, not satisfied with their efforts, then served a second notice on the owners.

This was served on 26th September and gave Brandon Estates until 9th October to respond.





This notice was a 'Community Protection Notice' served under the 'Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014'.

They cleaned up the rubbish left by the gypsies.

They put a padlock on the main car park gate!!

They dumped lorry loads of earth in front of the two main car park gates.

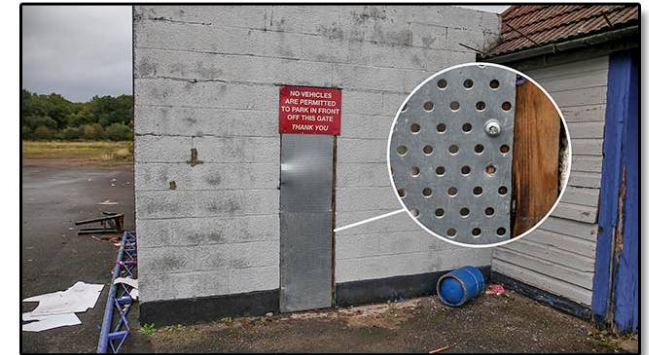
This was the cheapest, most unsightly and least effective option, likely to encourage fly tipping.

Rugby Council have advised Brandon Estates they are not satisfied with their efforts. Brandon Estates have 21 days to appeal.

Meanwhile, their representatives will be consulting with the residents who have been so inconvenienced by all of this, no doubt trying to convince them the redevelopment of the stadium is in their interests.

Save Coventry Speedway conducted a survey of local residents, knocking on almost 100 doors to ask them their views.

An overwhelming 93% said they wanted the stadium to remain and do not want it redeveloped.



## WHO ARE BRANDON ESTATES?

The company now referred to as Brandon Estates was originally incorporated at Companies House as 'Investin Brandon' in January 2014 (Picture A)

Three officers (Directors) were listed. The first of those three is shown in Picture B.

Drill down a little to 'Persons with significant control' and the name John Downer is shown as having Ownership of shares more than 25% but less than 50% (Picture C)

Similarly, a host of other companies are filed with the same correspondence address at Forshaw Heath, Solihull, for example Countrywide Homes (Picture D) and again, though not listed as a Director, John Downer is shown as the 'Person with significant control' (Picture E). In this example his Shares Ownership is 75% or more.

John Downer is shown in 'Company Check' (Picture F) as being a Director of just one company - Investin. It also shows he has resigned from 32 Directorships whilst being shown as the 'Person with significant control' in many of them.

Pictures 'G' and 'H' show the website for Investin PLC and boasts a huge portfolio of past and current developments throughout the UK and beyond.

John Downer originates from Solihull and now lives in Monaco.

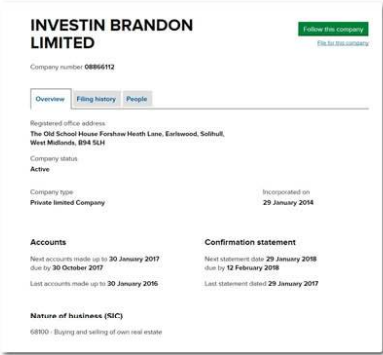
Brandon Estates is now registered in Jersey.

Two years ago, Framptons, representing Brandon Estates, presented a scheme shown below left, to produce 250 houses in two phases. It was displayed at Binley Woods Village Hall.

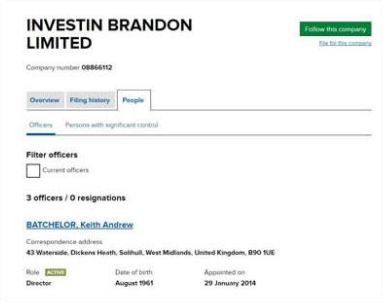
The plan has now been revised to build 137 houses, as shown below right, with 'green spaces, ponds, play areas etc'. It looks and sounds idyllic! But IF they get planning permission, we believe the whole site will lose it's current Green Belt status. Who knows how many houses will eventually be built. In their representations, they have previously used the terms 'Several hundred houses', 'Up to 300 houses' and now they are presenting a plan for 137!!

Their representations state the following points in arguing redevelopment of the site should be included in Rugby Town Plan:

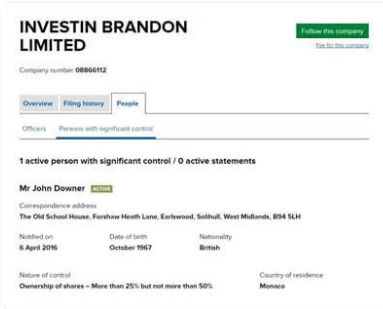
- There are exceptional circumstances
- It is in the public interest
- It is a Brownfield Site
- It is well related to existing development
- It is previously developed land
- It is Vacant, Dilapidated and will become Derelict
- It is not Viable for Speedway
- It is not of high Environmental Value
- The Plan is 'Unsound'
- It should replace the Sherwood Farm Development with Brandon for up to 300 homes



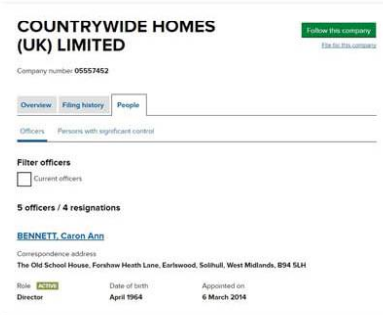
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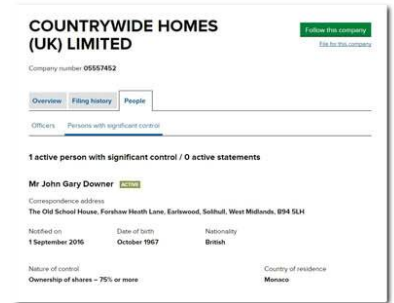
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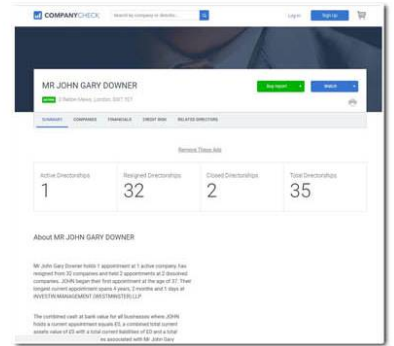
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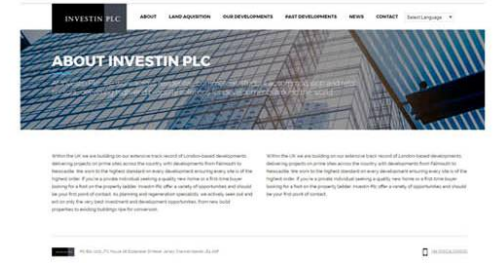
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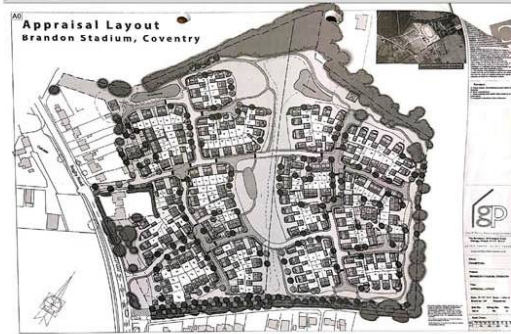
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G



H





## SAVE COVENTRY SPEEDWAY GROUP WHO ARE WE?

CHRIS ANDERSON	Director Whale Tankers and Bomber Harris Manager
COLIN BATE	Marketing Consultant & former Unipart director
DAVE CARTER	Consultant Town Planner
JOHN CLARKE	Retired Buildbase Director
JEFF DAVIES	Retired BMW Exec & Club Photographer
PAUL HINES	Director Progress Windows & Stock Car Driver
NIGEL HARRHY	Director West Midland Golf Club & Stock Car Driver
PAUL TAYLOR	Retired Legal Secretary
STEVE JONES	Nuneaton Supporters Club representative
PETE LAWRENCE	Started original Save Coventry Speedway Facebook group
SHAUN REYNOLDS	Journalist with Observer newspaper group
WAYNE ROBERTS	Voice of Speedway on Coventry & Warwickshire Radio
DAVE ROWE	Journalist and Television & Radio broadcaster

- We are ordinary people with a passion for either speedway or stock car racing.
- We will fight every step of the way and represent thousands of fans of both sports and we believe, the vast majority of local residents
- We have no vested interests and simply want to see a return of the two family sports for generations to come.

## SAVE COVENTRY SPEEDWAY GROUP OUR REPRESENTATIONS

Rugby Council submitted their Local Plan to the Government in June 2017. The process requires a Public Examination to take place. This Public Examination enables people / organisations to 'object' to the plan through 'representations'. Brandon Estates have submitted representations and will argue the redevelopment of the stadium should be included. Save Coventry Speedway have submitted representations too. A summary of our representations are shown below:

- RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANCE AND HERITAGE OF COVENTRY STADIUM
- PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE FACILITIES
- THERE IS SCOPE TO IMPROVE VIABILITY WITHIN THE GREEN BELT STATUS
- PREVENT REDEVELOPMENT UNTIL A REPLACEMENT FACILITY IS IN PLACE
- PARTIAL REDEVELOPMENT SHOULD RETAIN MOTORSPORTS
- CONSIDER THE SITE AS A CONSERVATION AREA

## PROPERTY DEVELOPERS

Property developers are gamblers.

They buy pieces of land and draw up plans to build houses (and other buildings). They progress them through the planning process. Many of them are approved.

When plans are approved, they make a handsome profit. There is nothing wrong with that, we acknowledge the country needs to build more houses.

However, in the case of Brandon, they bought the stadium in 2013. It was a viable, operational sports stadium at the time, as it had been for 89 years.

It was an outrageous piece of speculative buying. They will be trying to convince the Inspector at the Public Examination they should be allowed to knock it down and build houses on the site.

That is why they are trying to claim the stadium is dilapidated and is not viable. Other display boards show this is not the case.

To allow it, would imply property developers could do exactly the same to any other sporting venue in the country.

It should not be allowed.

## CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

- Brandon Estates bought a functioning, viable sports stadium in an outrageous, speculative bid to demolish it and redevelop it for profit
- Their offer to allow speedway to continue was for one year, with a further two being dependent on redevelopment of the stadium being included in the Local Plan
- Their offer only extended to Speedway and did not include Stock Car Racing
- Schemes put forward by Brandon Estates have referred to 'Several hundred' houses, 'Up to 300 houses', '250' houses and their latest scheme is for 137 houses. It is designed to appease local residents - the very residents we believe they have treated with contempt in recent months
- In our opinion, Brandon Estates did not make sufficient efforts to secure the stadium
- Representing Speedway and Stock Car fans, as well as the vast majority of local residents, we will continue to fight the redevelopment of the stadium through the Local Plan Public Examination and any subsequent speculative planning application
- Brandon Estates depend on resistance waning over time. We, Save Coventry Speedway campaign group, will not be 'going away' - we will continue to fight it all the way
- Brandon Estates should not be allowed to destroy the Stadium and its heritage