

Fears that Tynan sacking could put new Limerick track on hold

By John O'Shaughnessy

FEARS are growing that Limerick's proposed 14m euro state-of-the-art greyhound stadium on the Ennis Road could be put on hold as a result of the shock exit of Bord na gCon's CEO Aidan Tynan, last weekend. Eamonn Cronin, chairman of the influential Limerick and Clare Greyhound Owners and Breeders Association, told the Limerick Post that while their members did not wish to comment on the issues or personalities involved in the abrupt departure of Mr Tynan, they were concerned that

his leaving could impact on the starting date for the new stadium. Mr Cronin said: "Aidan took over as CEO of Bord na gCon just over 12 months ago and we found him to be very progressive in his outlook. He helped to speed up plans for the Ennis Road site and we were all very positive about the future. However, the danger now is that this controversy will overtake everything else and it could be some time before a new CEO is put in place".

Mr Cronin said that

all connected with the greyhound industry in the Mid West were saddened by the dispute.

"It couldn't have come at a worse time. Neither is the adverse publicity good for the industry. This was something we could have done without. We in the LCGOBA have put a huge volume of work into pursuing a new stadium for Limerick and it would be a terrible pity if the proposed opening in 2007 were to be put back".

The 14-acre site, which is close to the Two Mile Inn Hotel, was purchased by Bord na gCon last

year.

It is understood that plans for the site are being drawn up.

The Markets Field, which first opened to greyhound racing in 1932, has outlived its usefulness and plans to redevelop the venue were scrapped in favour of moving to a virgin site.

Residents in the Garryowen area have welcomed the move.

Mr Tynan, a native of Galway and whose family have a strong connection with the greyhound industry, was sacked following a bitter row with the chairman of the body over the use of banned drugs for doping dogs.



A recent presentation night at the Market's Field. Built in 1932, the stadium is now very much dated



The question now is, will Limerick's new track, to be built to the same high standards as Cork's Curraheen Park, be delayed? Pictured is the dining area at Curraheen track where it is necessary to book tables for race nights well in advance

Last week, Tynan complained to Sports Minister John O'Donoghue that the board chairman Paschal Taggart had ensured that the findings of drug abuse were not published - contrary to established policy.

However, Mr Tynan was fired last Thursday by the board. One of the trainers involved, Paul Hennessy from county Kilkenny, has admitted that EPO was administered to his dog 'Barefoot Jenny' last summer.

But he insisted that he did not want the matter hidden from the public.

Mr Taggart said the board decision to remove Mr Tynan was

unanimous. He rejected any allegations of bullying and said he was the most open chairman in the history of the State.

In his letter to Mr O'Donoghue on January 18, Mr Tynan recalled that last year, the board's laboratory certified two separate urine samples as positive for Erythropoietin, also known as EPO, which he described as a 'dangerous and illegal prohibited substance' used for blood doping.

Mr Tynan wrote that the findings posed a very serious challenge to the board in ensuring the highest levels of integrity in the industry.

Mr Tynan, who prior

to his appointment with Bord na gCon was employed in the agri business in Dubai, said both the trainers involved admitted that EPO had been administered to the greyhounds when the cases were processed through the board's Control Committee, chaired by Mr Taggart.

Fines and money forfeitures were imposed.

But then Mr Tynan accused Mr Taggart of ensuring that the fines were not published contrary to the committee's policy in

cases when banned drugs are involved or when the industry is brought into disrepute.

Mr Tynan said his own views were disregarded when he recommended to the chairman that the publication policy be adhered to and that suppressing the findings would be more damaging to the industry in the long run.

He was also worried about future funding for what he said was a 'unique and indigenous Irish industry'.

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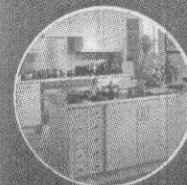
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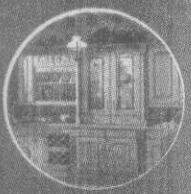
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