

LeadersSport

Sports Editor: Brian McDonnell - bmcdonnell@limerickleader.ie - 061 214 514

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Colm Kinsella & Alan Owens

THE prospects for senior soccer returning to the historic Market's Field were dealt a blow this week with the Irish Greyhound Board's announcement that it has commenced a public tender process for the sale of the Limerick city site.

The stadium was home to greyhound racing in Limerick from 1932 until its closure in July of this year. Racing will move to the new Limerick Stadium, on the site of the old racecourse at Greenpark, in October.

The 5.35-acre Market's Field site within the city boundary is zoned for a mixture of open space and industrial use. Reportedly, there have been a number of "expressions of interest" in the property.

"Now that we are about to commence a new era for greyhound racing in the city it is the right time to formalise the sale process and move it forward," said Adrian Neilan, CEO of the Irish Greyhound Board.

News of the public tender process came as something of a surprise to Limerick FC CEO Pat O'Sullivan.

In June Mr O'Sullivan said he was 'hopeful' of agreement being reached on a deal that would see Limerick football return to the Market's Field, saying at the time that he was 'negotiating with them (Bord na gCon) and we are getting there with the price'.

However, Mr O'Sullivan said earlier this week that he has not 'taken the subject any further since I made a bid. I made a bid and the bid was equal to the valuation and it wasn't accepted,' Pat O'Sullivan said.

"I did then - through the offices of Kevin Kiely, who made a lot of effort when he was mayor - try and get the government to find a way of making a contribution, in some way or another, towards the purchase of it and nothing came of that. So that is where we stand," O'Sullivan explained.

"I think what we had was a brilliant project for the city. I think that Limerick needs a home for soccer.

"It would have been a municipal stadium and it could have been a brilliant thing for the city and it is disappointing that it didn't happen," the Limerick FC CEO added.

ON THE MARKET

Market's Field - spiritual home of Limerick senior soccer is up for sale



This week the Irish Greyhound Board put the Market's Field out to public tender

Asked if a deal was now unlikely Mr O'Sullivan said: "No. They have my bid on the table all the time and it is still valid and that is where it stands.

"Let's see what happens with that [the tender process]. Maybe they won't get any better offers. But certainly, from what I understand, nobody made any better offer at the

time so I can only what and see what happens now."

Notice of the impending sale of the Market's Field by public tender was included in newspaper advertisements this week.

The former location of Limerick Greyhound Stadium consists of a racetrack, stand and related facilities on a site of circa 4.65 acres, comprising Land Registry freehold title and car parking for approximately 90 vehicles and office facilities fronting onto Mulgrave Street on a site of circa .68 acres, comprising Land Registry leasehold title.

The Market's Field site was first used for sport by the Irish Cycling Association in 1886.

Twenty years later it played host to Munster against the All Blacks in Rugby. It was home to Garryowen Rugby Club for many years, to Limerick FC and it also hosted county hurling finals and other sporting and entertainment events.

Copies of the Tender Information Pack will shortly be available from the Irish Greyhound Board and from Holmes O'Malley Sexton Solicitors.

Left: Limerick FC CEO Pat O'Sullivan

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