

HALL GREEN DOOMED TO CLOSURE

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Hall Green - contributed 491 races in the period studied - Pic Steve Nash

Hall Green Stadium looks set for closure following the decision of BAGS to remove the tracks two weekly fixtures and transfer them sister track Perry Barr writes Floyd Amphlett. A statement released today reads:

Following consultation with the GRA, BAGS today announced that fixtures from Hall Green will transfer to Perry Barr starting next month (June). Hall G Monday morning BAGS fixture will move over to sister track Perry Barr, commencing Monday June 5th, and the Wednesday morning fixture will be taken by Perry Barr from Wednesday June 21st.

The loss of both BAGS fixtures is believed to be connected with a series of alleged gambles at the stadium combined with an ongoing doping inquiry concerning trainer Richard Whelan – who has since relinquished his licence. Furthermore, BAGS were almost certainly nervous as to the long term integrity of the York Road track given its uncertain future. Planning permission has already been granted for housing development and it appears that leaseholder GRA Ltd has been unable to secure an extension to its short term lease. The racing strength has certainly weakened as a result of the uncertainty.

The Star understands that the GRA CEO Clive Feltham had asked to hold onto at least one of the BAGS fixtures until later in the year. That was rejected and the closure now seems imminent. It seems highly unlikely that the company will want a repeat of the 'slow expensive death' of Wimbledon, though there seems no reason that the bulk of the dwindling kennel strength cannot transfer across the city via a series of inter-races to allow rapid qualification.

Feltham said: "I am not able to comment on the future of the stadium until we have held meetings with the stadium staff and trainers."

Hall Green would have been due to celebrate its 90th birthday in August