



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01758

Name of petitioner

Gill Docherty on behalf of Scotland Against Greyhound Exploitation

Petition title

End greyhound racing In Scotland

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to put an end to greyhound racing in Scotland.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

We have contacted many MSPs throughout Scotland to ask them to raise Parliamentary Questions about this issue in the Scottish Parliament. We have had face to face meetings with a number of MSPs, including both of those whose constituencies include a greyhound racing track. Following our contact, MSP Claire Haughey has demanded a meeting with the regulatory body the GBGB, and Shawfield Stadium management to discuss the unacceptable number of positive drug tests and general welfare standards. We are awaiting an update on the outcome of this meeting. Green Party MSP Mark Ruskell posed a number of questions to the Parliament regarding the welfare of racing greyhounds in this country. MSP Ross Greer assured us that he will be making the case for the plight of racing greyhounds in Scotland when a new animal welfare bill is introduced in Scotland in 2020.

Whilst a number of responses from MSPs centre on reform regarding greyhound welfare, we feel that this falls short of the action necessary to truly protect greyhounds, and that an outright ban in our country is what is required.

Petition background information

Greyhound racing is legal in just 8 countries in the world in 2019. Only two remain now in our country, namely Shawfield Stadium in Rutherglen and Thornton Greyhound Stadium in Kirkcaldy (this is a flapping course – i.e. unlicensed).

In August 2019 the remaining licensed track in Glasgow reduced its activity to a single night of racing per week through lack of dogs to make up a race card on a second night. Thornton aims to race twice weekly, but again often reports that a race night will not proceed due to lack of dogs. Evidently racing greyhound numbers are at their lowest in Scotland, therefore a ban at this time would place the smallest possible

burden on rescue organisations to ensure that if implemented in a phased manner, all dogs currently racing in the country currently can be rehomed responsibly. We feel that the time is now for the Scottish government to put legislation in place that would make greyhound racing illegal in Scotland. This would see the closure of the last two greyhound tracks in Scotland and prevent the opening of any further tracks.

Ultimately, we need legislative change to ban racing in our country, to tackle the high number of injuries, deaths and positive drug tests seen in this industry, and to reflect the lack of public support for this unsavoury use of animals for human entertainment and gambling profit.

The regulatory body for greyhound racing the Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB) has been required to publish their injury and death statistics annually since 2017. In 2018 the GBGB introduced a "Greyhound Commitment", aiming to improve welfare and reduce injuries. Despite this, according to the GBGB's own Injury/Retirement data for 2018, across the UK just short of 5000 dogs were injured, an increase on the previous year. The figures also state that over 2000 dogs died or been killed in the racing industry in 2017 and 2018.

The GBGB have also reported nine positive drug tests in dogs at Shawfield in Glasgow in 2018 alone, as reported in various issues of their own Greyhound Calendar publication. Information published by the GBGB demonstrates that there have continued to be positive drug tests with Class A drugs into 2019. These drug tests showed dogs were drugged with cocaine and methamphetamine amongst other drugs. In reality the rates of drugging are likely much higher as only around 3% of dog runs are tested.

There were once over 20 licensed tracks in Scotland and now only one remains (Shawfield). We have now been protesting outside Shawfield Stadium in Rutherglen for the last two years and more recently have held demonstrations at Thornton Greyhound track in Fife.

There is a declining support and appetite for this exploitative use of dogs for entertainment. Changing animal welfare legislation is key to ensure the closure of the last greyhound tracks in the country, but also to ensure that no further tracks could be opened in future.

Scotland has an opportunity to lead the way by banning the racing of greyhounds in the name of entertainment.

Unique web address

<https://www.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/endgreyhoundracinginscotland>

Related information for petition

Please visit Scotland Against Greyhound Exploitation (SAGE) page on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to learn more about our campaign, why this is such an important issue and why this cruel so-called sport needs to end in Scotland.

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

YES

How many signatures have you collected so far?

0

Closing date for collecting signatures online

23 / 10 / 2019

Comments to stimulate online discussion

- Why should greyhounds be regarded differently to beloved household pets?
- Should we accept high rates of injury and death of an animal purely for our entertainment and titillation?
- How should a ban be best enforced?
- What timescale should this take place over?