

Circuit gets green light for late licence

Norfolk's premier racing circuit has been waved the chequered flag to go ahead with hosting live music, parties, fairgrounds and an ice rink, despite strong opposition from local residents. Snetterton race track, near Attleborough, will now be able to offer a 24/7 drinking and entrance policy as part of its plan to offer more off-course events.

But residents from the surrounding area have fears about the noise level of late-night parties and impact that extended drinking hours will have on public safety.

Almost 50 letters of objection were received by Breckland council opposing the scheme, with many more arriving after the deadline for consultation had passed.

When the proposals by Motorsport Vision went before the licensing committee yesterday, carloads of concerned residents from Quidenham, Eccles, Kenninghall, Old Buckenham and East Harling turned up to council

By ROBYN GREENACRE

offices in protest at the scheme.

During the meeting, 10 people spoke against the extension of the premises licence, including Sister Teresa Keswick, who said: "The noise level has been getting continually louder for a long time. In the last decade it's got a lot worse. This licence will only increase the noise. I dread to think what it will be like in another 10 years. Things need to be nipped in the bud now."

Another resident from Quidenham said: "Cars leaving the track drive considerably faster than on the way in, and with easier access to alcohol, an accident will only be a matter of time." But Jamie Hopper, general manager of Snetterton race circuit, tried to allay fears by saying the blanket licence would mean the company was under extra scrutiny.

He said: "It's easier for us to try and get the whole licence now rather than paying large fees to come back and

make alterations.

"We don't plan on being open having wild parties all the time. It's about being able to give someone who has travelled all night to arrive at 3am some food and a coffee."

And after almost two hours of deliberation, councillors gave the application the green light, while residents looked on in dismay. The decision means the premises licence for Tyrell's restaurant and bar will cover its pit-lane suites and seven marquee areas within the racing compound, and the circuit will be able to host a wide range of events from plays, films and indoor sporting events to karaoke, outdoor music events, funfairs and an ice rink.

Chairman Ian Sherwood said: "We have been at pains to make a decision to allow the applicant as much freedom as possible, while also protecting local residents from noise disturbance.

"We believe the conditions imposed will deal with the problems raised."