

GREYHOUND WELFARE & INTEGRITY COMMISSION

DISCIPLINARY ACTION DECISION

Date of decision:	21 October 2021
Decision-makers:	Chief Inspector, David OShannessy, Senior Steward, Dean Degan & Acting Senior Legal Officer, Alice Stafford
Name of relevant person:	Mr Robert Whitelaw
Date:	1 June 2021
Rule no.:	Rule 86(f)(iii)
Charge:	(1) On 30 March 2021 Mr Whitelaw made a Facebook post concerning a member of the Controlling Body including contemptuous, unseemly, improper, insulting or offensive language.
Disciplinary action taken:	4-month suspension, with 3 months conditionally suspended for a period of 12 months.

DECISION:

1. At all relevant times, Mr Whitelaw was a registered greyhound Public Trainer.
2. On 1 June 2021 the Facebook profile page of the user 'Steve Messup' displayed a post referring to GWIC Chief Executive Officer, Steve Griffin. This post stated:
*"In the world of looney tunes isn't it apt that the go to man for old Stevie Messup is this bloke – Griffin
But the big fella has enough issues of his own lately
And I'm not talking about his potential diabetes due to the excessive weight"*
3. A comment made by the user 'Robert Whitelaw' when replying to comment made by the user 'Steve Messup'. The comment made by the user 'Robert Whitelaw' read:
"Let's not forget this bloke worked in Bairds Office when the Ban was put in place! No doubt it's square up time on us! Nepotism is a (sic) alive and well with this GRUB looking to give his Son A GIG with GWIC".
4. On review of the evidence in this matter, the Commission charged Mr Whitelaw with a breach of Rule 86(f)(iv) of the Rules. This rule reads:

Rule 86

A person (including an official) shall be guilty of an offence if the person-

...

- (f) engages in, publishes or causes to be published, broadcasts or causes to be broadcast, the use of any contemptuous, unseemly, improper, insulting

or offensive language, conduct or behaviour in any manner or form towards, or in relation to-

...

(iii) the Controlling Body, or a member of the controlling Body...

5. Mr Whitelaw did not respond to the charge brought against him, and the matter was determined in the absence of any engagement from him.
6. The Commission found the charge proven and took the following disciplinary action against Mr Whitelaw:

To suspend the registration of Mr Whitelaw for a period of 4 months, with 3 months of that suspension suspended for a period of 12 months on the condition that he does not breach Rule 86(f)(iii) or any like Rules in that time frame.

7. In taking this disciplinary action, the Commission considered all evidence and submissions, including:
 - The objective seriousness Mr Whitelaw's conduct;
 - The length of time Mr Whitelaw held a trainer registration in the greyhound racing industry, being since 1988, approximately 33 years;
 - The lack of any relevant prior history by Mr Whitelaw;
 - The lack of response to the charge brought against Mr Whitelaw.

.....End.....