

FARRIERS REGISTRATION COUNCIL
DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE FARRIERS REGISTRATION COUNCIL, 14 SWAN COURT,
FORDER WAY, CYGNET PARK, HAMPTON, PETERBOROUGH PE7 8GX

INQUIRY RE:

MR GRAEME MORAN DIPWCF

1. THE CHARGE

1.1 *"That, being registered under the Farriers (Registration) Act 1975 (as amended) ("the Act"):*

On 7 February 2025 at North Shields Magistrates Court you were convicted following a guilty plea, of sending by public communication network an offensive/indecent/obscene/menacing message/matter on 14 July 2024 at Murton:

And that in relation to the above, you received a fine of £1250.

And that in relation to the facts above, whether individually or in any combination, you are guilty of serious misconduct in a professional respect."

Representation

1.2 Ms. Nicole Curtis appeared on behalf of the Council; the Respondent was present and unrepresented.

Admissions

1.3 The Respondent admitted the fact of the Conviction, which the Committee found Proved by reason of his admission. The Committee noted the Certificate of Conviction included in the documents prepared for this hearing.

Background

1.4 The Respondent's conviction arose out of some highly objectionable messages he sent to Mr. A on Sunday morning, 14 July 2024. The messages were sent via Facebook Messenger. There were 21 messages in total. The Respondent also tried to call Mr. A some 11 times. Mr. A did not answer the phone. The messages themselves contained much foul language and were threatening in tone. They included a suggestion that the Respondent knew where Mr. A lived and would go to his house.

1.5 The Respondent and Mr. A may have met briefly at some point many years ago. At some point before 2010 the Respondent had been in a relationship with Ms. B. After that relationship ended, Mr. A began a relationship with Ms. B, which began in about 2010 and ended in about 2018. Following the end of a long-term relationship, the Respondent had resumed his relationship with Ms. B. The messages he sent were during the course of his resumed relationship with Ms. B.

1.6 Mr. A reported the matter and police attended at the Respondent's home to warn him about his behaviour. The Respondent appeared to be intoxicated and sent further offensive messages to Mr. A after this warning. The Respondent was then arrested, at which time he was shouting and in an agitated condition.

2. SUBMISSIONS OF THE PARTIES ON SERIOUS MISCONDUCT IN A PROFESSIONAL RESPECT

2.1 Ms. Curtis submitted that the Respondent's conviction amounted to serious misconduct in a professional respect. She referred the Committee to Paragraph 95 of the *Farrier, Approved Training Farrier & Apprentice Code of Professional Conduct 2024* ("the Code") which provides that:

"[criminal] offences which ... call [a farrier's] integrity into question, endanger the public or bring the profession into disrepute.... may amount to serious misconduct."

2.2 Ms. Curtis also referred to Paragraphs 16 (b) and (c) of the Code which provide that:

- (b) *Farriers must be courteous and professional in communications with members of the public, including when communicating online;*
- (c) *Farriers must not engage in any activity or behaviour that would be likely to bring the profession into disrepute.*

2.3 Ms. Curtis reminded the Committee of those parts of the Code which relate to the use of social media, including in particular, at paragraph 71:

" ...Farriers may put their registration at risk if they demonstrate inappropriate behaviour when using social media including any form of abuse, bullying... harassment, intimidation or offensive language..... Farriers should remember that social media activity outside of work may still reflect on the public perception of the profession".

2.4 Ms. Curtis also referred to the principles set out in *Remedy (UK) Ltd v General Medical Council* [2010] EWHC 1245(Admin), to the effect that disgraceful conduct outside professional practice may be sufficient to bring the profession into disrepute and call for action by a professional regulator. Ms. Curtis emphasised that conduct of the type represented by the Respondent's Conviction was liable to bring the profession into disrepute. Farriers often worked in isolated conditions with young people and there was therefore a particular obligation to demonstrate appropriate standards of behaviour in their private life.

2.5 The Respondent admitted serious misconduct in a professional respect but wished to give evidence in relation to the circumstances underlying his Conviction.

2.6 In his oral evidence the Respondent said that he deeply regretted his behaviour. He said that, as a result of what he was told by Ms. B, he thought that Mr. A, a police officer, was using his position to spy on Ms. B and himself. He said that Ms. B would receive messages when they were out together informing her that Mr. A knew where she was and what she was doing. He became frustrated with this situation. The Respondent said that this was the reason why he sent the messages involved in his Conviction. He added that they were sent when he was coping with some [redacted], and had had too much to drink.

2.7 He told the Committee that he was very ashamed of his behaviour and realised that he should have lodged a complaint about his concerns in relation to Mr. A through official channels. He said that his conduct would never be repeated. His relationship with Ms. B had ended and he

now had a good network of support in terms of family and friends around him. He said that he was drinking less, going out less and was focused on his work as a farrier.

3. DECISION OF THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE ON SERIOUS MISCONDUCT IN A PROFESSIONAL RESPECT

- 3.1 The legal assessor reminded the Committee that serious misconduct in a professional respect was a matter for its judgment and that it would need to consider whether the Respondent's conviction was of such a type as to impact upon his professional situation.
- 3.2 The Committee considered that the Conviction was serious. The underlying circumstances were such as to bring the profession into disrepute. It had regard to the obvious breach of the requirements of the Code in relation to social media use and recognised the responsibility of registered farriers to ensure that their conduct was not such as to raise concerns of the type evident in a criminal Conviction for this kind of behaviour.
- 3.3 Accordingly, the Committee was satisfied that the Respondent's criminal Conviction amounted to serious misconduct in a professional respect.

4 DECISION OF THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE AS TO SANCTION

- 4.1 Ms. Curtis informed the Committee that the Respondent had been admitted to the Register in 1988 and that there was no previous regulatory history.
- 4.2 The Respondent made no further submissions in relation to sanction.
- 4.3 The legal assessor reminded the Committee of the principles to be found in the Indicative Sanctions Guidance and of the need for proportionality.
- 4.4 The Committee first considered aggravating factors. The Respondent's conduct had been reckless. A warning from the police had not brought it to an end.
- 4.5 Mitigating factors were that this episode was isolated in an otherwise long and unblemished career, that it was a spur of the moment decision brought on when the Respondent's outlook was affected by some [redacted] and that the Respondent had accepted full responsibility for his misconduct.
- 4.6 In the Committee's assessment, it was important that the Respondent had expressed genuine remorse and clearly understood that this kind of behaviour must never occur again. The Committee was satisfied that the Respondent appreciated this and had taken steps, through changing his lifestyle and circle of friends, to minimise the risk of any repetition. The Committee considered that the risks of repetition were low.
- 4.7 The Committee also took into account the very supportive testimonial evidence which was submitted on behalf of the Respondent. The testimonials demonstrated the respect in which he was held by their authors.
- 4.8 The Committee did not consider that this was a case in which it would be appropriate to take no further action. The criminal Conviction and the underlying circumstances were too serious for that to be a proportionate outcome.
- 4.9 No useful purpose would be served by postponing sanction.

- 4.10 The Committee considered that a Reprimand was the proportionate sanction in this particular case. In view of the mitigating factors which it had identified the Committee concluded that this case could properly be described as at the lower end of the spectrum of serious misconduct. The Committee did not consider that there was any future risk to the public, and the Respondent had shown insight.
- 4.11 In accordance with the legal advice it had received, the Committee also considered whether a suspension order would be appropriate. It concluded that this would be disproportionate in view of the isolated nature of the misconduct, the specific circumstances which had led to it and the low risk of repetition.
- 4.12 The Committee therefore issues a Reprimand to the Respondent which will appear against his entry on the Register. The Committee does not consider that a formal Warning is necessary in this case in view of the remorse and insight shown by the Respondent.

Disciplinary Committee

21 November 2025