Gauge O Guild Ltd.

Report to President J. Kneeshaw following letter of grievance received from member J. Snowdon dated 31st March 2020.

Compiled by Vice Presidents P. Bevan (GOG 3266) and P. Jones (GOG 7351)

1. Mr. Snowdon's ('JS') formal grievance is contained in his letter to the President dated 31st March 2020 (attachment 1) and is subject to the Guild's Disciplinary & Grievance Procedure. Vice Presidents Bevan and Jones were approached to investigate the grievance.
2. The grievance concerns the way in which JS had his 'access, as a member, to the Guild's Forum suspended as a consequence of a unilateral and, as far as can be determined, arbitrary decision without explanation, by the Forum Manager at the time'.
3. Neither Vice President has ever contributed to the Guild Forum, so a common sense approach has been adopted.
4. JS advised that Mr. Ian Kirk ('IK') would be his 'companion', as permitted by the Guild grievance procedure.
5. In normal circumstances the Guild grievance procedure requires the holding of a meeting between the parties concerned. This is currently not possible as a result of the UK lockdown arising from the coronavirus outbreak. Further we were advised that neither JS nor IK had any video conferencing facility. Consequently, our review has relied upon representations made by email from JS and IK (attachments 2 and 3) and enquiries by us of those persons that we considered relevant to the review (responses received attachment 4). This has led to a delay in dealing with the matter as we have also had due regard to the GDPR regulations.
6. JS was banned from the forum with effect from 16th February 2020.
7. In looking at the grievance we have considered whether the Forum moderators/managers acted in accordance with the Forum rules and procedures at the time of JS' ban.
8. As the ban relates to postings in February 2020 the Forum Rules of December 2019, together with the 'Forum Rule Infringement and Rule Breaking Warning and Discipline process' ('Discipline process document') dated 22/1/2020 apply. Both documents are accessible to all members on the Forum.
9. Following JS' post in the thread 'Changes in Guild accounting practice' JS was banned from the Forum for a period of 8 days. Our enquiries show that this action was taken by the Forum manager.
10. From open postings on the Forum, it is established Forum practice that the moderators are responsible for removing posts and issuing formal warnings. Our enquiries of the moderators at the time of the grievance suggest that this procedure was not followed (attachment 4).
11. We have not been able to prove to ourselves that all the procedures laid down in the Forum Rules, the Discipline process and established practice have been complied with and must therefore consider that the incident should not have resulted in a 6

month ban for JS. Our decision must in no way be interpreted as a commentary on the warnings issued in November 2019 and which still stand.

12. We have found the matter confused and confusing and will be sending some suggestions regarding the Forum rules and procedures to the Forum manager.

Conclusion.

We conclude that JS should be re-admitted to the forum.

P. Bevan.
P. Jones.
Vice Presidents.
13th May 2020.

Attachments:

1. JS Grievance letter dated 31st March 2020.
2. JS representation.
3. IK representations.
4. Responses from enquiries to the moderators.