

**ROYAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS**

**V**

**MR PETER GEORGE HANLON MRCVS**

**DECISION**

1. Mr Peter Hanlon appeared before the Disciplinary Committee on the 13<sup>th</sup> September 2007 to answer the following charge:

“That being registered in the Register of Veterinary Surgeons:

On 8<sup>th</sup> December 2006 at the Cambridge Crown Court he was convicted upon his own confession upon indictment of causing death by careless driving whilst under the influence of drink or drugs, and that on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2007 he was sentenced to 30 months imprisonment and disqualified from driving for 4 years. Extended driving test to be taken.

And that it is alleged that this conviction renders you unfit to practise veterinary surgery.”

2. Mr Hanlon admitted the conviction and that it rendered him unfit to practise veterinary surgery. The facts giving rise to the conviction and the mitigation put before the Committee are set out in the Committee’s decision of 13<sup>th</sup> September 2007. The Committee postponed judgment for a period not exceeding 2 years subject to undertakings from Mr Hanlon that (1) he abstained from the use of alcohol (2) he submitted a full medical report to the Chairman of the Committee at quarterly intervals, the first report being submitted on or before 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008, and (3) he submitted a copy of his CPD record card to the Chairman of the Committee at 6 monthly intervals, the first card to be submitted on or before 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008. The Committee concluded that by postponing judgment for 2 years subject to undertakings it could properly maintain public confidence in the profession by taking measures to monitor Mr Hanlon’s abstinence from alcohol and continued practice as a veterinary surgeon.
3. The Committee is required to consider the appropriate direction under Rule 18 to protect the welfare of animals, maintain public confidence in the profession and declare and uphold proper standards of conduct. The Committee was directed by the Legal Assessor that it should first consider whether it wished to exercise its power again to postpone judgment for a

further period not exceeding two years, and that in the event that it decided not to do so, to go on to consider the sanctions in Rule 18.4 starting with no further action. The Committee was directed that it is only if it determines that it is not sufficient to protect the welfare of animals and serve the public interest to impose a sanction at a lower level that it should go on to consider the next level.

4. The Committee has given detailed consideration to the written and oral submissions from Mr Hanlon and has taken account of the advice of the Legal Assessor before reaching its decision. The Committee is satisfied that Mr Hanlon has complied with the undertakings he gave to it following the hearing on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2007 in full. The Committee accepts Mr Hanlon's oral evidence, supported by the medical evidence, that he has abstained from drinking alcohol since the day after the accident in February 2006. The Committee does not consider that a further period of monitoring is required. It has concluded that it is not necessary to postpone judgment for a further period not exceeding two years. The Committee has gone on to consider the sanction to be imposed which should be proportionate to the conviction and should weigh the public interest with the interests of Mr Hanlon.
5. At the last hearing the Committee fully accepted Mr Hanlon's remorse for the death of Mr Barber and respect for his family which he has re-iterated in oral evidence before the Committee today. Mr Hanlon was sentenced to a term of imprisonment of 30 months. He was released from prison in April 2008 and remained on licence until July 2009. It recognizes that Mr Hanlon has addressed his abuse of alcohol successfully. He has complied with the undertakings he gave to the Committee and his record of CPD is exemplary. The Committee has been particularly impressed by the reports from his employers concerning his competence as a veterinary surgeon. However, the Committee considers that it would not uphold public confidence in the standards of the profession to take no further action, because of the seriousness of the offence. The Committee has therefore concluded that Mr Hanlon should be warned as to his future conduct. As this case has demonstrated, and as Mr Hanlon himself has fully recognized, abuse of alcohol can lead to far reaching consequences in personal and professional lives and the lives of others.

**DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE**  
**17<sup>th</sup> September 2009**