

WHO NOW CONTROLS THE CANNABIS TRADES ASSOCIATION:

AN ASSOCIATION FOR THE MANY OR THE FEW?

1. It was with interest that on the evening of 13th June 2020 we discovered (from the **Business Cann** website) that, what we at **The Canna Consultants** had thought was on the cards for many months, had actually come to pass. The headline read **““Disagreement” sees Europe’s largest trade association lose its Chairman”**.
2. The story reported that following a disagreement between the Mike Harlington (Chairman) and Tom Whettem (Compliance Director of the CTA and owner/controller of British Cannabis, Canabidol and Access CBD), the former was no-longer in the post that he had held for four years.
3. Tom Whettem’s Linked-In page carries the following comment under his authorship:

*“It is with deep regret that **we** [emphasis added] are forced to make this statement. However, following inaccurate and damaging allegations about ACCESS CBD products and the false accusations that they are an isolate base, made in the public domain by former Chairman of the Cannabis Trades Association, Mike Harlington.*

The CTA makes the following statement:

“The views held by Harlington are currently not those of the board of the CTA. The board has taken immediate action with regards to this matter in the interest of its members and their products.”

4. It is unclear to us whether the “we” in the first part of the entry refers to the CTA or Tom Whettem and his companies - one presumes that it is he and his companies because the CTA are specifically referred to in the second part, but not in the first.
5. We find the reference in the second part of the extract somewhat surprising in its reference to the need of the board to protect the *“interest of its members...”*. One presumes that it should actually read in the singular because it would appear that the interest being protected is that of ACCESS CBD rather than the wider membership in general.

WHO ARE THE BOARD?

6. According to the CTA's website on 15th June 2020, the "Board" and their respective CBD commercial affiliations are:
 - a. Tom Whettem, Compliance Director (British Cannabis, Canabidol & Access CBD);
 - b. Simon Dusher (CBD Life);
 - c. Sian Phillips (Fiddlers Elbow Grease);
 - d. Jas Nottay (Loveburgh & HPP);
 - e. Phil Culbertson (Love CBD);
 - f. Tony Fowler; and,
 - g. Christopher Lamber-Dowell, Financial Director.

WHAT OF THE ARTICLE 4 CHALLENGE TO NOVEL FOOD CLASSIFICATION?

7. We are aware that the Membership of the CTA have been repeatedly approached for contributions to fund the now fabled Article 4 Challenge, but nothing has yet materialised – neither a return of funds, nor a challenge nor the distribution of the advice which is said to underpin it has been forthcoming from the board of the CTA, despite what we understand are repeated requests for one or other from members.
8. At The Canna Consultants we do not believe that there is any merit in such a challenge, but the CTA membership have been repeatedly told that there is and one is left to wonder what will happen to it, given the publicised commitment of Tom Whettem and his companies to pursue Novel Food applications for the products of his companies.

WHAT OF TRUST CANNA?

9. Trust Canna is the championed self-regulatory entity which the CTA put forward as the saviour to credibility within the industry, how will that be affected by the fall out between the now ex-Chairman and the Board, Tom Whettem in particular. We have authored another piece on this topic because the background to Trust Canna Ltd is more convoluted and opaque than one could ever imagine. You will find it [here](#).

THE IMPACT AND POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR MEMBERS

10. Only time will tell whether the CTA is able to continue to exert its claim that it is for "the many" rather than "the few", however, members may well be concerned about the departure of the Chairman and one of the few independent board members without their own private commercial enterprises to protect within the CBD sphere.

Remember what we say: Be Careful Who You Listen to.