

This was sent as an email on 22.12.22. It went to each member of the EC. I can not now print out the actual email as the email file has since become corrupted, but the following is the exact text sent. No reply was ever received, though no email error messages occurred.

Dear Tracey,

I realise that you are only acting as intermediary with the EC, so do not take my remarks personally. For this reason, and to save time I am copying this direct to the 'full Executive Committee'.

Whilst I note that the EC "do not plan to reverse the decision or discuss it further", I think they should do both, as the EC's action is both illegal under BN's own rules, and wholly unfair. I have been a member of CCBN/BN for 43 years, contributing in many ways over the years, including time on the EC as Treasurer, and I wish to continue to be an ordinary member.

Let us be clear; you say that "...Therefore your membership has not been renewed...", but it already had been renewed before you made this decision. You will see from the attached bank statement that BN debited my 2023 membership renewal subscription on 15th December 2022. This established a contract for membership for 2023 between BN and me, which is subject to BN's rules, as well as the normal law of Contract. Under BN's rules, if BN wishes to terminate someone's membership there is laid down procedure for doing so, involving notification, representation etc., none of which was followed. I suspect that correct procedure was deliberately ignored because it includes the right of reply to any allegations made, and this whole issue is really about Mark Bass' wish to gag me.

The reason given for wishing to terminate my membership is "...the resource needed to monitor and moderate your use of the forum is no longer operationally sustainable....". I see there is no accusation of any wrongdoing on my part, only that BN doesn't have sufficient resources. However, I am unaware that any other members have been terminated for this reason, so why am I being treated differently, please? It is entirely BN's decision (Mark Bass' in practice) to operate the prior moderation of my use of the BN Forum, not mine. In fact I have asked for this practice to be stopped several times. Should not BN seek a fairer solution? I would suggest that if BN does not have the resources, it stops the unnecessary prior-moderating of my use of the forum, and treats me like everyone else. If I should then step outside Forum Guidelines the usual sanctions can apply, including loss of access to the Forum. However, termination of membership is not appropriate when it is BN's own decision to operate a regime it cannot resource. It is Mark Bass' choice to operate the prior moderation regime, and to do it personally. I have had confirmation from several of the other moderators that they do not moderate my posts. Mark himself has confirmed that he does this personally. It is clear that none of the other moderators would wish to upset Mark's campaign of 'no-platforming' me, so they avoid the issue. I have asked several times in the last 4 years to be treated the same as anyone else, but Mark will not even discuss it, or let anyone else provide any independent oversight on it. I have concluded therefore that this latest bizarre

decision, with its self-condemnatory reasoning is probably the result of Mark Bass making some sort of ‘back-me-or-sack-me’ ultimatum with the EC, in order to get his way without running the risk of any factual or independent input to the decision. This whole matter has been accepted by the EC on Mark’s unsupported word. I have never been consulted [see later *], and the way it has been executed is designed to avoid any objectivity in the judgment. This does not reflect well on the fairness of “the full Executive Committee”, who seem to value expediency and an easy way out, over BN’s own rules and any notion of natural justice. Mark controls the information, and therefore the opinion, and the EC let him. Anyone interested in fairness would want to hear the other side of the story, but you made this decision without ever even asking.

Prior moderation of my Forum posts was initially imposed to stop me from disagreeing with anything Peter or Christine Wright (‘the BN Legal Team’) said. I had disagreed with them (with evidence) on several occasions on matters of fact and opinion, but their petulant responses, including threats to resign, had convinced Mark that they needed protecting. I met with Mark in Sheffield soon after he was co-opted on to the EC to discuss the situation. At that meeting I agreed not to interact with the Wrights (for the sake of peace) and Mark agreed to lift the prior moderation condition. He broke his promise and never lifted the restriction. Since then he has been slowly ‘gaslighting’ me, using his power as President and controller of the moderators to do so. There are three areas in which he has done this:

Firstly Mark refuses to publish or answer any questions asking for clarification of issues which might reflect badly on BN or him. This includes times when he has misled the membership (e.g. on the acquisition/ownership terms of Sunfolk; the 2022/23 rise in subscriptions...etc.) He refuses to publish even legitimate questions, let alone provide answers.

Secondly Mark refuses to publish posts from me which do not agree with his wider view of the world generally. In this he is adopting a ‘cancel culture’ in which he refuses to justify or argue a view; but rather silences any kind of disagreement.

Thirdly (and increasingly lately) he has deleted uncontroversial, often trivial items and I can only imagine this is simply a way of trying to goad me. He rarely gives reasons for deletions, even when asked repeatedly. On the few occasions when he has given a ‘reason’, they do not relate to what has actually been said. This process has been going on, with increasing severity, for four years now. I have asked for an informal discussion/solution on a number of occasions, but Mark has remained intransigent. I warned him several times that his behaviour was leaving me no option but to bring a formal complaint against him, and his only actions have been to try to undermine that complaint process rather than come to a sensible informal solution.

* Soon after I warned Mark that I would bring a formal complaint against him I was approached by Gary Kennedy, via the BN Personal Messaging system. I attach that correspondence, which is self-explanatory. You will see that I chose not to engage with him on his terms, as he had clearly been put up to it and had no knowledge of what he wanted to

talk to me about. I offered to have talks with him, if he could be clear about the issues, but he never got back to me. This does not class as realistic consultation, but rather a transparent attempt to head-off my complaint about Mark's abuse of position.

Part of the strategy of manipulating of the atmosphere was a Forum post by the Chairman, just a day or so after receiving my complaint, praising the work of the moderators. It was responded to in minutes by Mark Bass in a self-laudatory piece pointing out that the moderators are all under his command. I was of course not permitted to respond. If ever there was a statement of pre-judgment this was it.

The EC, in trying to expel me from membership immediately following a complaint about the President, are allowing themselves to be persuaded to pre-judge and take sides in a complaint, without ever hearing the evidence or arguments. Doing so makes it practically impossible for my complaint to be heard objectively. The atmosphere has been poisoned. The only place where anyone objective could now be found to judge on the evidence in an unbiased way would be from outside BN; and it would need to be someone who had no connection with any of the people involved. You say that my expulsion and the complaint are separate issues, but in practice they are not. They are about the same thing, and my expulsion is just a tactic to try to subvert the process of fairness and justice. A whitewash process will help no one. This matter should weigh heavily on the individual consciences of those involved, if they have any fairness in them. You say that the decision was taken by "the full executive committee", and no doubt you will adopt the usual, cowardly, tactic of invoking collective responsibility to remain anonymous as individuals.

No doubt hackles will have been raised by my plain speaking, but believe me when I say I am not trying to upset anyone, or to damage BN. I am simply trying to resolve the vendetta which seems to be being waged against me. I have been silenced for 4 years for no good reason. Even the 'reason' given for expelling me does not allege any wrong-doing. At base it is really all about Mark Bass' personal antipathy towards me. I am convinced that much of this has been made worse by Mark's refusal to meet and discuss this in person, as internet interaction often leads to unnecessary escalation of tensions. This could still be put right and peace could reign if only the EC would enter into a proper, honest, discussion with me over this extraordinary decision; preferably in person. I do not want Mark Bass to go, only to act as a President should, and be fair and even handed towards all members. Please reconsider, both as individuals and as a Committee, it would be worth the effort and leave BN a better place.

I expect you will all be instructed not to respond to this communication, but I am happy to correspond or meet with any of you, confidentially, if you feel it would help clarify or resolve this matter. My telephone number is 01386 300933.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Duncan Heenan

BN Member 30001020