

Joint Statement sent to all Council Members by the three former directors

The email below was sent by the three former directors who had resigned at an emergency Board meeting held on 3rd February 2021 which they had called to try and obtain information they had not been made available to them by a clique of Club officers (chairman, vice chairman and treasurer) so it could be discussed and where necessary any resulting action put to a vote. When it was proposed that the Club should issue a formal dismissal letter and a formal warning letter to members of staff it was put to a vote. It was only approved by the Club Chairman using his casting vote. The resignations of the three directors followed promptly at that meeting. A fourth director (Peter Cook), who had voted against the issue of the dismissal letters, decided to remain on the Board and fight on.

From: lorrainent@btinternet.com
Sent: **27 February 2021 09:23**
To: lorrainent@btinternet.com
Cc: 'Dave Tynan'; colin.withers@btinternet.com
Subject: Ex Directors letter to all CRBs

28th February 2021.

Dear CRB Chairmen and fellow Committee Members,

Following recent communications concerning serious events in the MGCC culminating with the dismissal of Ineke Sherman, and the apparent refusal of the Club to release any details or facts due to unknown "confidentiality reasons", we the undersigned would like to reach out to the membership of the MG Car Club through the CRBs to provide clarity to the events which led to our immediate resignations from the Executive Committee (Board) on 03/02/21.

At the EC meeting of 15/12/20 it was brought to our attention that Ineke Sherman had transgressed Government Covid-19 guidelines for self-isolation after visiting a foreign country (the Netherlands) by entering Kimber House on 03/12/20 and 04/12/20. Furthermore Colin Grant was complicit by not reporting this transgression. We were told that the Officers, GM and the external HR Dept were working together to investigate the events. This meeting was adjourned and continued on 17/12/20 where we raised concerns with the Chairman over the process and in particular the impartiality of the external HR Dept and the fact they were instructed by the GM and not the Board.

At the next EC meeting on 21/01/21 we were informed that investigations had been delayed by Ineke and Colin Grant being on stress related sick leave, but were nearly complete.

On the 29/01/21 we were made aware that the Chairman had called Ineke to tell her that she was going to be dismissed the following week, but the Club would be willing to accept her resignation to avoid any negatives on her work record. This had alarm bells ringing for the 3 of us as we had not been informed of this action, and furthermore it seemed to contravene the Club rules;

R9.0 STAFF EMPLOYMENT

R9.1 All Staff appointments, changes in duties, terms and conditions, or dismissal, are the responsibility of the Executive Committee. [AA 55 & 74].

The Executive Committee may by agreement delegate some of these powers [AA 75].

We then asked the Chairman to convene an emergency EC meeting where we could be fully briefed on the affair. This was then set for 03/02/21. At this meeting we were told that the Officers through the guidance of the external HR Dept had concluded their investigations and the recommendation was that Ineke had committed a serious breach of Government Covid guidelines for self-isolation and should be dismissed immediately. There was little to debate on the actual events that had occurred in early December, but we questioned if this was the right punishment for the offence, and pointed out that there were many mitigating factors that had not been taken into account;

- Ineke was highly stressed at the time due to her mother's illness and then death. Subsequently Ineke had to take stress related medication and sick leave.
- She only entered Kimber House with the best intentions of helping shift the Xmas orders of regalia.
- Ineke showed no signs of Covid, and was self-isolating purely because of her foreign travel not because she had tested positive or had been told to under 'track and trace'.
- She was not a 'key worker' and interacting with high risk individuals. If that was the case then her transgressions could be viewed as far more serious.

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- Government guidelines in 12/2020 allowed exceptions for compassionate and bereavement reasons. This had not been taken into account.
- Her previous exemplary disciplinary record was given no consideration.
- Likewise her enthusiasm for the Club and work ethic in building the regalia business was ignored.

The view of the three of us was that the transgression was serious, but merited a written warning at most, and did not justify dismissal. The Chairman put the motion to a vote which was split 4 v 4 with Peter Cook voting with the 3 of us against dismissal. The Chairman used his casting vote to declare that dismissal would be the course of action. Upon this decision, and the obvious intransigent attitude of 4 Directors, the 3 of us were clear that we would not be complicit with such a draconian decision and tendered our resignations with immediate effect. The decision to dismiss Ineke was definitely not an action by 'the Marque of Friendship'.

In summary, the 3 of us feel that the decision to dismiss Ineke was simply wrong, and a lesser punishment was warranted. In addition, we were deeply concerned that we were not kept fully informed of the investigation and its findings by the Officers, and finally we also felt the role played by the external HR Dept was very questionable and possibly not objective and unbiased.

Signed:

Lorraine Noble-Thompson

Dave Tynan

Colin Withers

Sent with full approval of the above co signatories.