

WHAT IS BOTTON?

For nearly 60 years, Botton Village has provided a sustainable way of living with adults with a learning disability in a community where all work according to their abilities, supported where necessary by the vocational volunteer families known as co-workers with whom they live in shared "family" homes. This Camphill community was founded on the principles of Rudolf Steiner and has offered happy confident homes very different from the current private or local authority providers. It helps that it is at the head of a beautiful dale in the North York Moors and over the years has established its organic farms, bakery, creamery, wood-workshop and other places where villagers contribute as they can.

WHY IS IT NOW THREATENED?

Together with the Camphill Village Trust (CVT), Botton co-workers were making tremendous efforts to adapt to the requirements of current social care legislation. Although this has been successful and co-workers thought they were working with CVT, its Chair and Chief Executive told them on 13 May 2014 that all co-workers had to leave the village community in the coming months, except for a few that could stay on as employed staff. However, employees would need to live apart from the disabled or outside the village. A thriving community, where people with and without disabilities have been living and working together happily is being destroyed and restructured to become a managed provider of housing and support for the disabled. CVT said they needed to do this for tax reasons, which is, particularly in respect of Botton, heavily contested by other legal and tax advice.

PLEASE HELP BOTTON NOW!

- Find out more at www.actionforbotton.org
- Pledge your support for Botton on our website
- Give a donation on our website to help with legal costs
- Are you a legal professional and prepared to support co-workers? Please get in touch with us
- Write to Botton's MP Robert Goodwill, The Street, 12 Lower Clark Street, Scarborough, YO12 7PW
- Write to The Camphill Village Trust, The Kingfisher Offices, 9 Saville Street, Malton, YO17 7LL
- You can raise a concern about the current CVT leadership at www.charitycommission.gov.uk
- Help us with your ideas, your professional expertise or as a campaigner on the ground
- Tell your friends and family and other people what is happening in Botton village

You can contact us at:

action@actionforbotton.org or

Action for Botton, The Vicarage, Danby, YO21 2NQ

actionforbotton.org

ACTION FOR BOTTON

BOTTON VILLAGE NEEDS YOUR HELP!

This beautiful and caring community of volunteer families and learning disabled people is being destroyed by the very body that should be fostering and supporting it.

actionforbotton.org

HOW CAN THEY DO THIS?

We now know that a small group of officials at the top of CVT has taken extraordinary steps to control the charity and its membership. In 2012 they managed to alter the charity constitution by threatening every member with expulsion if they voted against a key proposal, as a consequence of which the board now has 8 independent trustees mainly with an industry background with only 1 left to represent the Camphill co-workers and their values. They have also been barring people from becoming new members if they were even related to co-workers or simply expressed support for the Camphill principles of community living.

Having silenced and disempowered the vocational co-workers in their own charity, CVT bosses are now in the process of eliminating them altogether. Many co-workers now feel very vulnerable and some are being singled out by their management, a strategy that has been observed previously and in other CVT villages. These and more controversial activities of the current CVT leadership have now caused deep fear and mistrust in their communities.

WHY IS THAT SO BAD?

Essential to Camphill communities are the long-term co-workers, those families who share their lives and homes, work with and support people in need, as a vocational commitment, out of love. Life-sharing and voluntary commitment clearly was what Karl König had in mind when he founded the Camphill Village Trust in October 1954.

“We are convinced that we could not do our work in the same manner if we were employees and received a salary, because we know that work that is paid loses its social value.”

To help them realise this vision the Macmillan family offered König and CVT their Botton Hall and surrounding farms in the Danby Dale in 1955.

Three core principles have created the successful, enduring and stable body of Camphill. They are: voluntary commitment, shared living and meaningful work. They are the heart, liver and lungs of Camphill. The beauty and purpose, recognised by so many who have come into contact with Camphill, lie within these three interwoven and interdependent values. Voluntary vocational commitment is and remains the heart of Camphill. When the heart fails then the whole body fails. The sad reality is that Karl König, the man who founded the Camphill Village Trust, would no doubt be rejected if he asked to become a member today.

SURELY THE CO-WORKERS SHOULD BE WORKING WITH CVT?

There was no attempt by CVT to have a meaningful discussion with the co-workers, nor with the supported adults, their relatives, or others directly involved. However, a recent consultation process commissioned by CVT told them that the people supported and their families were overwhelmingly in favour of the vocational co-worker and life sharing model. The co-workers, despite their shock at the bombshell dropped on 13 May, have pleaded with CVT to stop their intended course and start working with those actually at Botton to find a better solution. This has not happened and CVT refuse to disclose documents on which their decision is based.

One is left asking why CVT is dismantling this much loved community based on volunteer life sharing. What is clear is that they intend to ignore that this plan runs against the principles under which the charity was established and by which they should feel themselves bound. In the current climate, most co-workers feel besieged and intimidated by the way CVT uses control and ultimata. It is only after the failure of every attempt to engage CVT that this public appeal is launched. Without your positive and immediate help and support the Botton many know and love and which has been a beacon of sharing and caring in this world will no longer exist.