

**CVT HAS POSTED A STATEMENT ABOUT THE EMERSON MEDIATION PROCESS ON ITS WEBSITE. IT CONTAINS MANY MISLEADING OR INACCURATE STATEMENTS. IT IS REPRINTED BELOW WITH FOOTNOTE COMMENTS FROM BOTTON DELEGATES ON 21 JANUARY 2015.**

*« CVT continues to support dialogue: Following the recent intense dialogue between CVT and representatives from Botton, The Grange and Delrow, you may be aware that it now sadly appears the other parties involved have stated they cannot reach agreement on a shared statement*

*It doesn't really matter what this process was called<sup>1</sup> – dialogue, discussion or mediation - the real shame is that the majority<sup>2</sup> of people who took part in the four days of intense talks and the hard work over the festive period really wanted to come away with some shared path and agreed actions.*

*We were very close indeed to such a shared statement towards the end of the dialogue itself<sup>3</sup>. In the end, agreement became dependent upon a number of demands from some but not all of the Botton representatives<sup>4</sup>. Some of these demands were presented very late in the process and could not, given our understanding of them at that time, be supported by CVT. Our request to better understand and to continue to work through the details of the demands with the parties involved to see if there was some way agreement could be reached on at least some of them in some form was not heard<sup>5</sup>. We feel the opportunity to move forward was lost by the imposition of this ultimatum, and we were subsequently informed that dialogue was over<sup>6</sup>.*

*Despite the withdrawal by others, we will continue to try and progress the positives that we brought to the dialogue process, which included:*

- *Temporarily withdrawing our letter encouraging engagement to those Botton co-workers who had refused to co-operate around the required move to employment while a meeting took place with those co-workers affected and some representatives of CVT<sup>7</sup>. This offer of further talks was not taken up<sup>8</sup>.*

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<sup>1</sup> The description does matter. CVT all along refused to use the word “mediation”. They said their reason was “That mediation implies there can be a different outcome, and **there isn't going to be** a different outcome”!

<sup>2</sup> **Everyone**, without exception, from the Three Communities' delegates wanted to reach an agreement.

<sup>3</sup> We were not. It is right that a first draft of an Emerson Declaration had been prepared (by the Communities, not CVT), but the real meat of it had not been fully discussed.

<sup>4</sup> The requests made were **fully supported by all** delegates from the Three Communities.

<sup>5</sup> This is hard to understand—the deadline for finalising the Declaration was extended several times, and **on each occasion CVT failed** to answer the two requests satisfactorily.

<sup>6</sup> CVT knew of the requests, and consistently **failed to address them**, so that, after various deadlines had expired, the final one of New Year's Eve was not allowed to be ignored, and became effective, as **CVT had been told would happen**.

<sup>7</sup> Such a provocative letter **should never have been sent** during a mediation anyway.

<sup>8</sup> It is to be taken up.

- *Asking HMRC (for a second time) for a time extension. We were advised that the charity had been given sufficient time and that if we didn't comply, there was a real risk of fines and legal action.*
- *We were asked if co-workers could sign up to a temporary employment contract to buy more time and this is something we are willing to offer to those who would prefer that option.*
- *Botton manager, Dave Knowles, met with co-worker representatives to look at ways to improve communication and giving a stronger voice<sup>9</sup> to those living in the community; these discussions are presently ongoing.*
- *Offering to arrange a workshop in January with our legal advisors and representatives from the three communities and their advisors, around the HMRC decision and the challenges we face on residential employment issues<sup>10</sup>.*
- *Offering to host a workshop around the Shared Lives model of care, and support to explore the feasibility and desire for such a model as a positive way forward for some villagers and co-workers in Botton in particular<sup>11</sup>.*
- *Offering to organise a workshop on Co-Housing, again to see if this could be something that could be used within some CVT communities in the future as a way of supporting a community environment.*
- *We also agreed to examine how family members could bring their experience and support to each community and how their views could be shared with trustees.*

*We remain committed to the above offers and we will continue to extend and expand upon them, despite our disappointment. We will also seek to engage with others from the communities in question who felt their voices were not listened to or represented by the appointed community representatives, due to the fact that they had differing views and opinions about the futures of their communities.<sup>12</sup> ”*

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<sup>9</sup> The dialogue was to be about more than this. Traditionally, Co-workers have managed the Community. The talks were to see how Co-workers can resume a management role, with CVT paid staff. The discussions should continue.

<sup>10</sup> This is still hoped for, although **CVT are now saying Co-workers may not attend**, and they want to know the names of the people who are to attend “so we can review their acceptability to the charity”!

<sup>11</sup> This is welcome but why only now? Since CVT caused the current crisis with its letter to Co-workers on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2014 ending the shared living model, **it would have had sufficient time** to work out how it could deliver its basic service of providing residential support for the learning disabled-eight months later.

<sup>12</sup> The Three Communities’ delegates have always fully accepted that where the needs of individual villagers can be met by greater independence, then such independence should be encouraged and facilitated. According to CVT’s own documents, only **one in ten villagers seeks greater independence—hardly a mandate for the sweeping changes affecting everyone who has exercised their right to chose the shared-living model of care.**