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The Trustees
Camphill Village Trust Ltd

Dear Trustee

BOTTON VILLAGE AND BREACHES OF TRUST

I am a parent of a daughter who has lived at Botton for ten years. I have been in correspondence for some while with Felicity Chadwick-Histed (my letters also addressed to Huw John), but their replies contain many bland, PR style phrases with smooth words intended to placate. What the words cannot do is satisfactorily answer the basic question of why the Charity is pursuing a course so at odds with its origins, its legal documentation and its philosophy?

My faith in human nature is such that I cannot believe that each and every one of you trustees can all conceivably be of the same mind in this. The Charity is a Camphill charity, but essential tenets of Camphillers are not just ignored, but reversed, leaving me to ask of Ms Chadwick-Histed and the Senior Management Team at least, why are *these* people involved in *this* Charity?

You will not want to be overburdened with yet more paper, so I shall try to be brief, but I am more than willing to enlarge upon any aspect, discuss generally, and listen, by phone or email if you wish.

1. CORE DOCUMENT.

1.1 The starting point has to be the Memorandum and Articles of Association. The Objects for which the Charity exists are stated, in essence, thus:

“...to...provide care to...people with a disability...in accordance with the principles of Dr Rudolf Steiner(as summarised in the Appendix to this Memorandum), particularly... by the establishment and maintenance of communities in the form of villages...in which beneficiaries live and/or work...*in community with persons providing support.*” (My italics)

The Appendix referred to includes these provisions:

“...rigidity in the matter of control should be avoided and the closest liaison should be maintained between all those responsible for the Administration of the Charity and its community or communities in their everyday life...

Community members are bound together by will and personal commitment, not by legal constructs, meaning, for beneficiaries, any form of compulsion and for Co-workers the rights and obligations of contract.”

1.2 The Powers of the Charity Trustees include the following:

“ Powers. To promote its objects but not for any other purpose the Charity may:-

4.1 support its beneficiaries in relation to their needs, including through the establishment and operation of community businesses in which *beneficiaries and their Co-workers are engaged* and/or by which they are supported;

4.2 *provide to ...beneficiaries the benefits of private family life in all its aspects* and suitable healthcare, medical treatment and personal support, including (without limitation), through anthroposophical, social, philosophical, spiritual and religious practices following Steiner Principles;”

4.10...seek to influence public opinion and make representations to and seek to influence governmental and other institutions regarding the development and implementation of appropriate public policies...”

2. BREACHES OF CORE DOCUMENT.

2.1 The Objects are being breached thus:

2.1.1 Control is now rigid. The management pre Huw John accorded with the Camphill approach, but probably needed some updating and guidance, which should have been introduced consensually in the Camphill way, to achieve modern day regulatory compliance. You have now imposed an entirely dictatorial and uncaring management style, not fitted for any business, let alone a charity, and especially a charity with, I believe, Christian principles, e.g.

--Co-workers evicted without proper treatment, respect, care for their well-being as humans and colleagues

--Co-workers directed as to whom they may/may not speak with.

2.1.2 There is no close liaison. Liaison requires communication, it is a given that this needs to be open (unless safeguarding genuinely requires otherwise), but always it must be honest.

There has been dishonesty and/or secrecy in the following examples:

2.1.2.1 in information concerning the imperatives for seeking to impose an employment model

2.1.2.2 in Huw John (and others?) wanting for many years really to end the Co-worker model

2.1.2.3 in information provided regarding the cost of retaining Co-workers

2.1.2.4 in, tragically, information given to villagers, e.g. that as a result of the new procedures, nevertheless nothing would change—when, for our daughter, at least, she will not continue to have her Co-worker house-mother living in the same place as her; her house-mother will not be available in the family context-as she has been (and has been the case for the last ten years in different houses), but will be “cared for” by low-paid, shift system care staff.

2.1.3 Community members have been told that they must seek a contract of employment (not guaranteed to be forthcoming), or leave. This is at direct odds with the Object referred to at my para 1.1 above. You, frankly, do not have the right, power or authority to do this according to your Charity’s own documents.

2.1.4 when Co-workers leave and are replaced by shift-system, live-out, care staff then the Object requiring that beneficiaries “live in community with persons providing support” is also breached.

2.2 Powers.

2.2.1 Power 4.1. I am concerned that the opportunities for life-enhancing work are threatened as they rely on the presence of talented and able Co-workers.

2.2.2 Power 4.2. Coming as high as it does in the list of powers, it is a clear expectation that villagers will continue to enjoy “the benefits of private family life”.

See paras 2.1.2.4 and 2.1.4 above.

3. COSTS.

I accept, of course, that there is pressure on the public purse. Perversely I see that (a) the Charity is employing more and more administrative staff and (b) the costs of employing shift-system care workers are far higher, head for head, than Co-workers. I raised this with Huw John openly during the 2012 AGM and he (a) failed to accept my premise and, (b) astoundingly said that he did not know what the Co-worker costs were!

Complaints now by Huw John that the Charity is needing to raise more money are bound to be true when expenditure is increasing in this way, coupled with a reduced income as I understand that there is still a self-imposed ban on accepting new villagers.

4. COERCION.

4.1 I accept that some Co-workers have agreed to become employees. I would assert:

4.1.1. Some will have freely made an informed decision in this respect

4.1.2. Some will not have considered the points about employment in the context of Steiner's/Koenig's philosophy, nor the Objects of the Charity

4.1.3. I know that at least one of the Gerald Group of Co-working families was, quite literally, distraught (on more than one occasion I saw them in tears), at the time of the appalling treatment of the Adamses and the Abels. The family in question had uprooted themselves to move to the UK, and were entirely dependent (like all Co-workers) on the Charity for their livelihood, accommodation, support and the care of their children. Having seen all of that security ripped away from other families, they felt extremely frightened and vulnerable. Against this background it is not surprising, but entirely understandable that they responded to the Charity's bullying by capitulation. That is why bullies win.

The small child in the playground who hands over his pocket money to the big lad who threatens to thump him has not actually become the bully's best friend! CVT in this was the bully, in a carefully planned, orchestrated and implemented series of moves. That is appalling.

4.2 Co-workers in the traditional sense are some of the most wonderful, remarkable and selfless people I have ever met. Huw John, in a conversation with a parent shortly after his appointment, is reported to me to have said that he found the "piety" of the Co-workers to be "curdling"! If he felt so badly about Co-workers why did he put himself forward as CEO of this Charity? They give up worldly riches to pursue a life in community to care for and live with some of the most disadvantaged in society. Unwaged, they can make no provision for nest-eggs, let alone retirement. They relied on the honesty of the Charity to honour the arrangement, which it is obliged to do. When my daughter lived with Nick and Paule Poole, I saw for myself how hard they both worked—true hard graft in all aspects of Botton life and workshops, altruistically for the benefit of others. You are now threatening to make them homeless! Truly, I can barely believe it.

5. APPEAL.

I opened this letter saying that I could not believe that you could all be of the same (dishonourable) mind in this. I have been on many charity committees, and worked as a trustee, though none of them was as big as CVT. I know that trustees are generally well-meaning, interested people with genuine motives.

May I therefore ask you to ponder:

5.1. Did you carefully read and consider the Objects and Powers of the Charity before you put yourself forward as a trustee?

5.2. Do you, truly, have a sufficient understanding of the principles of Steiner, of Koenig, of Camphill, of Anthroposophy?

5.3. Are you fully aware of what is really being done in your name, on behalf of this once wonderful, pioneering charity?

5.4. If you were me, would you not also be disappointed by the changed living arrangements for my daughter, and very, very worried about her future well-being?

To be sure that you have received this letter, would you, if nothing else, please sign and return the enclosed acknowledgement, for which I enclose an SAE.

Yours sincerely

Andrew J Faulkes