

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I have worked within the development of Camphill communities and with multidisciplinary teams in the public sector developing services for people with special needs in the wider community.

I travelled from Malta to attend an interview for the position of Assistant Manager at Camphill St Albans on 20/10/2014. I was not offered the position however I had interviews in two other Camphill communities and was offered both positions one of which was at a higher level of management than the post at St Albans. I am saying this to make it clear that this email is not written out of any feeling of personal loss or resentment but I would hope that the people reading this email can see that what happened in my interview reflects a much wider context for how CVT is perceived to be managed and how it is being directed into the future.

My objective, in writing this email, is to enable transparency as the manner in which my interview was conducted raised some very serious and fundamental concerns regarding the lack of knowledge, experience or ability portrayed on behalf of St Albans management to oversee and implement Camphill's founding philosophy on which the CVT's constitution is based.

Prior to my interview I was asked to fill out a MacIntyre Personality Questionnaire on line. On arrival for the interview the results were given to me to read in the reception area. I was also given three questions/scenarios to answer regarding the position. I waited for 45 minutes past the arranged time for the interview to begin.

I was interviewed by two managers, one of whom was a manager of another Camphill community. When I was brought into the interview room I was told that the profile was not used for the interview but was asked if I thought it was accurate.

Towards the end of the interview both managers, before they asked the last question, behaved as if their last question was some kind of a joke. When I asked what was so amusing I was told that I should wait for the question and that 'for sure I would have an answer'. This was followed by what seemed like an "in joke" with sneering and laughing. The question was "How would you implement the ethos of Camphill or anthroposophy if you were employed as assistant manager".

In order to answer this question I asked what knowledge the managers had and what training, induction or otherwise existed in the organization regarding the Camphill ethos. Both managers stated that they had no training in the fundamentals of anthroposophy and that there was no induction for staff members and no training within the organization regarding the ethos.

Mr Weames proudly stated he would not employ any member of staff for the sole purpose of implementing the philosophy of the organization as this would not be right for his budget. He said that he tried on one occasion to read a book by Rudolf Steiner and could not understand it even though he was involved with a group of people who were studying it.

In my view this raises many questions for the trustees, members and beneficiaries of the organization and families.

* Have the beneficiaries and members been consulted regarding the lack of ability and will of the organization to implement the fundamental principles of their constitution?

* Are the trustees, members and beneficiaries aware that the management consider the ethos of their constitution to be something to joke about and make little of?

I applied for a job as assistant manager in Camphill St Albans and I found that not only did the organisation not uphold the philosophy but instead belittled it.

The beneficiaries and members of Camphill St Albans have a right, through their constitution, to know that the staff have some training and competency in implementing and demonstrating their understanding of the fundamental philosophy of the organization. Mr Weames has been in his management position for 4 years and in that time it appears that the CVT, which has been in existence for 70 years, has had the fundamental constitutional ethos eradicated by removing staff members who have experience and training in the ethos.

It appears to me that the trustees have been grossly negligent in their ability to actively protect and support the very essence of the constitution of the organization and failed to monitor the changes which occurred within their management structure. Or, the question may be asked, were the trustees actively aware of and directing these changes without consulting the beneficiaries and their families? Is there documentation/transparency of a consultation process with beneficiaries and members and families? If there is no evidence of a consultation process which included the beneficiaries then control of the existing quality of their service was taken away without their consent. This goes against the current legislation of the "Care And Reform Act".

I flew from Malta for my interview at some expense to be greeted by an organisation which I thought reflected the ethos of Camphill only to find that this name was simply used as something to be laughed about.

My intention in writing this letter is to highlight and bring transparency of what I consider to be important information to the beneficiaries and their

parents as I feel they should be able to make an informed decision regarding where they live and the quality of support they receive. They have a right to a supported process of consultation with people who have experience and knowledge of the implementation of the principals of Camphill.

Mr Weames' unprofessional conduct and lack of regard for the ethos of the organisation is very concerning, however the lack of action on behalf of the trustees is grossly negligent. What organisation would take the authority to systematically remove every member of staff who had experience and training in implementing it's philosophy and then expect that this should be accepted? It seems to me that this action completely goes against the rights of the beneficiaries and members.

If my interview is a general example of the professional level of management within CVT then clearly there is no regard for the ethos of Camphill. Any individual called for such an interview with Camphill with experience in or having anthroposophical training will most likely not be given priority. Personally I would not accept any position offered under the present management practice of the CVT as it is in breach of it's own constitution and the rights of it's beneficiaries.

Yours faithfully,

Maureen Duffy