

4 March 2015

Dear friends and neighbours of Botton Village -

From the other end of England I write as Chair of The Mount Camphill Community, on behalf of our trustees, co-workers, staff and Association members, to send our warm support for the efforts of so many people in defence of Botton Village. We have been dismayed and appalled by the way in which the Botton community, along with others under the control of the Camphill Village Trust, have been attacked in the most ruthless and inhuman way, by a management regime and a board of trustees who clearly understand and appreciate nothing of the unique ethos and values of the Camphill Movement, and are determined to dismantle and reduce what has been a highly successful and deeply appreciated caring community, to a conventional provider of commoditised services. If they are allowed to succeed, community will be replaced by institution, equality by hierarchy, brother- and sisterhood by contract, collaboration by command and control.

The justifications given by the CVT executive and trustees for this path of destruction have all been proven to be false: The Mount community, among others outside CVT, continues to demonstrate the viability and legality of vocational, non-employed co-worker status, fully compliant with HMRC agreements which have been confirmed as unchanged by the highest level in the Treasury. We are all – trustees, co-workers and employed colleagues who work together in full collaboration – committed to sustaining this approach which brings so many benefits to the vulnerable people in our care. These benefits are repeatedly confirmed by our resident students, their families, the commissioning authorities and the regulators who inspect and scrutinise our life and work.

Repeated attempts at dialogue and negotiation with the CVT regime have met with a relentless refusal to deviate from their disastrous course of action, culminating in the recent eviction orders to co-workers. We find it scarcely credible that an organisation which claims to uphold human dignity can act in such ways, and with deep sadness have had to accept that the only remaining hope lies in legal action, to challenge the deep injustices and falsehoods which are being perpetrated. We therefore fully support the fund-raising appeal for this purpose and urge you all to do the same as far as you are able.

We stand with the threatened Botton community in full solidarity at this time of dire need.

Warm greetings,

*Steve Briault*

Chair of Trustees