

## **Joint Statement by representatives of Botton, Delrow and The Grange Camphill Communities.**

It is with great regret that delegates from Botton, Delrow and The Grange Communities who attended the mediated discussions with CVT representatives at Emerson College 8-11 December have to announce that the dialogue begun on that occasion has come to a halt.

The mediated talks were arranged through the assistance of Marjatta van Boeschoten, General Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society of Great Britain, and were led by Dr Fritz Glasl, an eminent conflict resolution expert with 47 years' experience in many different spheres

At Emerson College the parties agreed to work together over a period of months to resolve a number of issues. A draft joint statement of intent was produced. Subsequent discussions have been protracted and difficult, but we felt that we had established some common ground.

It was acknowledged that Botton's particular situation - with Co-workers under great pressure to accept employed status and otherwise in danger of losing their homes - required reassurance from CVT in the form of confidence-building measures.

The talks broke down on New Year's Eve, because of CVT's failure to satisfy two prerequisites for the process to continue:

- a suspension of changes on the ground, principally affecting co-workers' employment status and shared living arrangements;
- the introduction of interim co-operative management arrangements involving co-workers at Botton.

This stumbling block highlights an issue that lies at the heart of the three communities' dispute with CVT: to attract people with the necessary qualities and commitment to settle and make their lives there, the communities must be able to offer them a substantial role in how they are run. The same principle applies throughout industry and elsewhere: real commitment stems from a sense of responsibility for the success of a common enterprise, and a real stake in its future.

The way these three communities are run and developed must be determined by their distinctive features and requirements, in accordance with CVT's founding principles. CVT must acknowledge this and act on it: the quality of life enjoyed by the people the charity supports depends on it.

CVT has said on a number of occasions recently that its efforts to reach agreement with the three communities' delegates have been hampered by its need to reassure many members of the charity and relatives of residents who

fear this process will somehow jeopardise compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

The three communities' delegates wish to reaffirm yet again that nothing they have proposed seeks to circumvent or contravene any such requirements. They remain absolutely committed to safeguarding the wellbeing and security of their vulnerable residents in every way. This commitment was explicitly stated in the framework for our discussions with CVT.

The delegates have made an earnest and diligent commitment to the talks with CVT. They did so in the hope and expectation that their willingness to work collaboratively with the charity, despite all the accumulated rancour and mistrust, would elicit in return a real display of flexibility on CVT's part. This has not been forthcoming. Though our dialogue with CVT representatives seemed positive at times, it became apparent that they lacked either the mandate or the will to negotiate and to compromise on any matters of importance, despite their acknowledgement of the state of crisis affecting the charity.

In her letter to all parties in the discussions and to the wider Camphill movement, Marjatta van Boeschoten stressed that a successful outcome would depend on "a leap of faith, courage, a willingness to compromise, honesty, imagination and steadfastness." We believe that CVT has failed to demonstrate these qualities in a practical, problem-solving way that takes account of our communities' profound attachment to the core Camphill principles of Karl König and Rudolf Steiner.

We believe the opportunity still exists for CVT to take the initiative to rescue the useful work that has been done in recent weeks, if it is willing properly to acknowledge our genuine concerns and our genuine wish to help to resolve the problems that now confront us all.

Wednesday, 7 January 2015