

22nd January 2015

Dear Families,

We are sorry to have to write to you in this way, but the situation in Botton is escalating sharply and rapidly as CVT counts down towards its deadline of abolishing Co-working by the end of March.

A LEAKED CVT PLAN FOR BOTTON:

We are attaching to this letter an internal CVT document that has been sent to Action for Botton by an anonymous source. It is a detailed plan dated Christmas Eve (during the mediation efforts) and has been compiled by the newly appointed “project manager” with input from Botton’s new management and care & support groups, which exclude all Co-workers.

You will see that the plan carefully outlines the charity’s strategy to seize control of Botton, and evict almost 40 Co-workers and their families. This requires the removal of all Villagers (referred to as pws – people we support, the latest dehumanising term used for your family members) from houses shared with Co-workers ‘likely to have an adverse impact on the morale and wellbeing of other residents’ (i.e. those in disagreement with the CVT strategy).

Over the last fortnight, we have written twice to the charity to request confirmation that they have no intention to effect such a plan. To date, we have received no such assurance. Indeed, there are indications that the early stages of the plan are already being implemented (e.g. changing the locks to secure vacant properties in the village away from Co-workers. The properties were already secure and well looked after by neighbouring Co-workers, so charity money is being wasted on new locks).

We would strongly urge you to read this document, as it paints a disturbing picture of the charity’s plans for Botton. In particular, we draw your attention to the following:

- Dozens of residents are being ear-marked for moves to new properties. The ‘consultations’ referred to appear to be a mere formality. In reality, our residents are to have little or no real choice about their living arrangements. They have tenancy agreements, which can be terminated.
- There would appear to be very little consideration of the potential psychological implications of these moves on a group of very vulnerable people - some of the households due to be broken up have been together for decades.
- The new ‘consolidated’ houses will have large numbers of residents (8-12) placed together in situations in which there are no live-in house co-ordinators. This will affect those residents remaining in these houses, as well as those moving in. Rotating care staff and young guest volunteers will be expected to manage these new and potentially volatile situations.
- The plan states that almost 40 vocational volunteers and 15 children will then be placed ‘at risk of homelessness’. They will also forfeit any leaving money, should they not display the ‘goodwill’ immediately to comply with their impending eviction. The charity will, however, facilitate, ‘surgeries.... with Housing Advice workers from Scarborough Council’.

Relatives with family members in the houses affected (but where names have been blanked out) can enquire whether their relative is mentioned by replying to: volunteers@bottonvillage.org

Clearly, this document was never intended for public distribution. In sharp contrast to CVT’s carefully crafted public image, it lays bare the management’s strategic aims in their entirety.

We are looking at a secret plan that will have profound consequences for the lives of dozens of people (vulnerable adults, Co-workers and their children). The residents are to be moved around the village without any reference to their individual needs or wishes, but simply to allow the charity

to evict the Co-workers. Not only does this entail the dismemberment of whole house communities, but it represents the destruction of an entire way of life. It strikes at the heart of an individual's sense of biography, identity and meaning in life.

We believe that any objective observer will understand that this raises profound human rights issues.

It is all the more extraordinary that such a plan should be devised by a charity that is in receipt of millions of pounds annually from donors who believe they are giving to communities rooted in humane and Christian values. It is a charity that repeatedly professes to place 'the beneficiaries at the heart of all we do'. It is a charity claiming to be committed to Camphill's founding ideals.

We very much hope that you will share our sense of outrage at these revelations. Please join us in expressing this as loudly and as publicly as we can. We are confident that the general public will understand that a gross injustice is taking place.

Yours

Botton Village Camphill Co-workers

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Should you wish your family members' rights to be protected, the following lawyer is well informed of the situation, and eager to take on more clients in Botton on a legal aid basis:
Jonathan Leach
Watson Ramsbottom Solicitors, *13 Blackburn Road, Accrington, Lancashire, BB5 1HF*
Direct Dial: 01254 350126 **E-mail:** Jonathan.Leach@watsonramsbottom.com
- Write to North Yorkshire Social services to ask if they were aware of this plan, and what view they may take on it (you may wish to ask how they can reconcile it with the choice and control agenda):
Anne Marie Lubanski
Assistant Director, Adults' Social Care
North Yorkshire County Council
County Hall
Northallerton
North Yorkshire DL7 8AD
- Write to CVT's Board of Trustees expressing your opinion:
Felicity Chadwick-Histed
Chair of Trustees
The Camphill Village Trust
The Kingfisher Offices
9 Saville Street
Malton
North Yorkshire YO17 7LL

If you do write, please send us a copy of any letters you send. Thank you.