



Action for Botton
The Vicarage
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2nd July 2014

The Trustees
Camphill Village Trust

Dear Trustee of Camphill Village Trust,

I hope you will forgive us writing to you personally but we do feel that the issues at stake are sufficiently important.

Action for Botton is a group of well-informed professionals and experts who have become increasingly concerned at the apparent conflicts arising over the future of Botton. We have written to your Chair in the hope that some way forward can be found which will involve all working together rather than have friction between the Charity and many living at Botton. We feel that there is a worsening situation with individuals and groups (committed to working together according to Rudolf Steiner principles) increasingly at loggerheads with the Charity and the risk of disputes both in the courts and through the press. Such an outcome would be a disaster for all concerned with no winners but a lot of losers most particularly those whom the Charity should be supporting.

What seems to us to be at the base of these difficulties is a lack of understanding by each group of where the other is coming from and what they see as the important issues. We have been told by Mr Fearnley, a person very well versed in the anthroposophical principles which underlie CVT and the Camphill Communities, that he has been rejected as a potential trustee because those interviewing saw "differences in the perspective" and this is clearly right. The problem is that the Charity now appears welded to a particular viewpoint and approach and is prepared to railroad through changes no matter what so many others think, apparently taking the view that the differing perspectives are irreconcilable.

We hope they are not. In an effort to bridge the gaps, we are writing to suggest that you personally visit Botton, stay in one of the houses, meet with the co-workers and other villagers. This visit, to work, needs to be free of any management control or attempt by us or others to persuade you to change your view. What we are proposing is a chance for you to absorb what is so special about Botton before changes are enforced. We hope that you would come away understanding why so many are determined that the remarkable ethos there is maintained and that that would lead to genuine dialogue between the Trustees, members and those actually on the ground.

We have written also to the co-workers who have indicated that they would happily welcome you into their homes for this purpose. We must stress however that this is urgent. Time is running out for conciliation and working together. If you accept this invitation then we believe you will be taking a real step in the direction of a unified positive future. If you refuse then regretfully it will reinforce the impression of the co-workers and others that the Trustees do not even want to understand what is happening and are dominated by management advice that has led to the present unhappiness, discord and friction.

This then is our challenge to you. It is meant to look for a middle road we can walk together but that will only be achieved by your commitment. Please do not be part of the forcing through of changes without coming to understand what those changes will mean in real terms to all involved and particularly for those CVT management refer to as “beneficiaries” but who are simply known at Botton as villagers as they a genuine part of the community not just individuals being provided with a paid for service.

With thanks for taking the time to read this letter. If you wish to take up this offer please let us know by email to the above address giving a contact telephone number and we will arrange for a co-worker to telephone to extend a personal invitation. We know that you will find yourself made very welcome.

Yours sincerely,

Neil Davidson, Chairman, Action for Botton