

What Happened with the Blake Cottage Appeal

CHAPTER XVIII AND CONCLUSION



FOR NINE MONTHS after Blake's Cottage was purchased, the Blake Cottage Trust didn't give any information to the public whatsoever. There were – and that is indeed the case now – no publicly available records of their decision-making. They weren't revealing either any concrete project. While the Cottage kept on deteriorating, its roof near collapsing, and apparently with a cracked wall, there was only silence from the BCT. At some point they opened a webpage, that for quite a while looked itself like a vacant site, with only the image from Blake's *Europe*, mentioned in a former chapter, that I had chosen for the Blake Society's webpage section dedicated to our campaign. There was also a text in which Mr Tim Heath, the Chairman of the BCT and the Blake Society, was stealing the ideas and language from documents I had created for the appeal.

Their "Visions" section has been expanded since, with a few changes from time to time, and it's been recently updated (I am writing this in April 2017), coinciding with the time I've been publishing the chapters of this testimony.

Around September 2016, a whole year after the acquisition of the Cottage, they finally started to reveal what they were planning to do, and as of today those plans can still be read in that section. Outrageously, their "initial intent" wasn't to carry out the urgent repairs the Cottage was, and is, in such need of, to then proceed to shape the creative centre we had promised to create, but (I quote): **"to remove the later extensions to the Cottage and bring it back to a state that William and Catherine Blake would have recognised when they lived and worked their [sic] between 1800 and 1803. In the liberated space we hope to build a new multifunctional building that will be an architectural jewel in its own right and will draw people to the village of Felpham just to see it."**

Apart from the contradiction (William and Catherine Blake would have hardly recognised a "new multifunctional building" in their garden), this was very alarming news. Not only did the BCT have the obligation to use whatever money they obtained now, first and foremost, to repair the fabric of the building. They didn't have any reason to demolish the 20th Century annexe (I understand it is also a listed building), which we had considered would be a useful part for the creative residence, and they had no right whatsoever to disfigure the grounds with a "multifunctional building" that would destroy the atmosphere of intimacy and dwarf the Cottage itself. To do that in the garden where, according to Blake, the spirit of Milton descended on him was a terrible idea that contradicted everything we had conceived, and the originality of the project that people had supported.

A great deal of our work during the appeal was dedicated to imagine a function for the Cottage that was different from the concept of "the literary house" with its adjoining visitor centre. I have said in previous chapters how the premises would be used mainly as a centre for creation, open for visitors a few days a week, and to host small events. Through the network of the members of the large consortium we had envisaged, the work that guest artists, authors and thinkers created in the Cottage would reach the world outside through exhibitions, talks, lectures, concerts, etc. in a vast array of venues. We didn't want anything to disturb that plan and, as stated in this testimony as well, the actual visitor centre linked to Blake's Cottage was to be built in Bognor Regis. Also, the visitor centre was the idea and the venture of the Big Blake Project, and it was, and is, them who should be

running it and getting the credit for it. Of course, this means that their original project for it should be honoured, yet they've never been consulted by the Blake Cottage Trust. The current plans for the visitor centre mean therefore the stealing of the Big Blake Project's work, as explained in chapter IV.

Many people in Felpham, among them author Beryl Kingston, who has been campaigning tirelessly as well to stop the Blake Cottage Trust from allowing the Cottage to fall into ruin, were outraged by the revelation of these plans. On reading the BCT's statements in their webpage and their blog, there is no doubt that the visitor centre has become their priority, as they have stated that the money they are raising now is to appoint an architect and start working on this new building. The Blake Cottage Trust has ignored the local objections completely.

Throughout this chapter we will touch on the several problematic aspects of the BCT's plans.

One worrying thing is how, in absence of a concrete project, Mr Heath has been using the Blake Cottage Trust's webpage to make grandiose statements, copying-pasting some Blake quotes, that bear no substance, such as: **"Our world turns on the inequality in commerce and spins on war. Yet William Blake saw that the mind-forged manacles are everywhere and war is energy enslaved. In offering an alternative axis to our globe, an axis of creativity and wonder, we hope the planet will begin to turn more justly. For everything that lives is holy."** Recently he has talked as well about how the artists that stay in the Cottage will be remembered in *a thousand years'* time... He has extrapolated our ideal of creating a place that could contribute in a humble measure to our hopes for a better world into the very axis that is, apparently, going to save the planet from injustice and will create geniuses that will be remembered in a time when perhaps there won't even be any more human life in that planet.

I point at this language not only because we should be wary of people with delusions of grandeur who can invoke justice while engaged in lying, bullying and stealing people's work, but because this empty parlance is the stuffing that stands in lieu of a proper, concrete project that the Blake Cottage Trust *has the duty* to present to the public and to the many donors to this appeal.

In his grandiloquence, Mr Heath, after quoting from Gilchrist's *Life of William Blake*, called for a long while those of us raising legitimate concerns about the Cottage "detractors" getting in the way of his visions of holiness – while he classified the Blake Cottage Trustees as *angels*:

Another time, on a summer's morning, he sees the haymakers at work, and amongst them, angelic figures walking. This was a recurring vision in Blake's life, and in the fields around the village of Felpham he would have seen the haymakers at work each summer. Blake's windows looked out over open fields that ran gently down to the sea.

The Vision for the Cottage is the vision of those angels. The detractors are the haymakers, who throw up the chaff that blinds our eyes to what is truly important.

The above is a screenshot of a text that remained in the Blake Cottage Trust's website for ages. I've just realised that it has suddenly disappeared.

I HAVE MENTIONED BEFORE how, even as he's being exposed for his lack of scruples, Mr Heath continues stealing my work and playing games. When the BCT deigned at last to put some information for the public in their webpage, Mr Heath, as stated above, was stealing the language and ideas from one of the vision statement documents I created for the appeal and from what I said at our launch in Parliament, where I talked about the Cottage's door being one open not so much to draw people in, but to let out into the world the works of art that would be created there. What Mr Heath wrote was:

The Cottage will never cater for large numbers of people – the Cottage is just too small. But more fundamental than size is our aspiration not to be measured by the numbers who come in through the front door, though these are important, but rather by the measure of what comes out of that door – a stream of creativity, prophecy and imagination.

It is in the BCT's webpage even now, and in an update document of October 2016. Apart from it being a twisted game, in his insistence on teasing Mr Heath incurs into further contradictions. It is precisely because that was our original vision for the Cottage that the idea of a Blakean hotel and a visitor centre on the Cottage's grounds is so incongruous.

You can read more about this lack of seriousness in addressing people's concerns, and the manipulation of the text mentioned above, in my blog post "Games" of 26 August 2016: <https://blakecottage.com/2016/08/26/games/> .

What was going behind scenes then was ugly, and quite distant from any notion of holiness. We knew, for instance, that the disrepair of the Cottage was severe and there were pictures taken by a local photographer that showed the extent of it. However, they couldn't be made public because the BCT was intimidating this person. A veil of secrecy around the Cottage was swiftly spreading, the local authorities started to become unapproachable for those of us raising concerns, and it was soon clear that Mr Heath's invoked principles of politics and power had been set in motion.



After having at long last put some information in their website, the Blake Cottage Trust started to make statements to the press as well. Their main goal was still to create the visitor centre in the premises, and still to privilege "paying guests" above the original project of making of the Cottage a space for creation: artists would be welcome in the Cottage only "while it was not being occupied by paying guests." However, the order in which the Blake Cottage Trust presents their priorities and the actual description of their plans **has kept on changing since the Cottage was acquired, and always following any public statement by those of us who are objecting to their plans.**

For a detailed account of how these plans have been whimsically changing all this time, I encourage the reader to look at my blog post of 16 December 2016, "The Project for Blake's Cottage": <https://blakecottage.com/2016/12/16/the-project-for-blakes-cottage/> .

The BCT's prioritizing their scheme of renting out rooms, which was prominent in their statements to the press around the summer, reserving only a marginal space for the original project, worried me a lot, and I was contacting the press as well.

It seemed as if the Big Blake Project, Mrs Beryl Kingston and I were not the only ones having difficulties with Mr Heath's way of dealing with matters of responsibility. At some point in 2016 Mr Heath's brothers got in touch with Mrs Kingston and me, manifesting their own concerns about the handling of the Cottage appeal. They said that they were struck by the similarities in Mr Heath's intractable and high handed behaviour in dealing with Blake's Cottage and that with them as fellow executors of their late mother's estate, and stated that not answering inconvenient emails, making decisions without proper consultation and using deliberately vague and obtuse language were themes common to his dealings with them both. They also raised concerns that Mr Heath, acting as their mentally incapable mother's attorney, had lent the Blake Cottage Trust £19,250 of her money on very advantageous terms to the BCT (a matter that is still not detailed in the BCT's accounts as a loan from her). Their communications corroborated our experience of being dealing with a person that was not prone to be accountable or to engage in open communication.

Another worrying matter was that the Blake Cottage Trust had been making official claims to be working with 12 volunteers:

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Data for financial year ending *31 October 2015*

The Blake Cottage Trust

Overview Financials Documents People Operations

3
Trustees

12
Volunteers

Trustee board	
Trustee	Other trusteeships
Tim Heath (Chair)	The Blake Society At St. James's
Michael Phillips	None on record
Peter Johns	None on record

In view of the secrecy prevailing in their way of working and the problems we had faced during the appeal in 2014, when Ms Paige Morgan was forced in by the Chair for a brief but disastrous interference, and the way it had been implied that the door would remain open for Mr Heath’s imposition of staff in the Cottage for his own private reasons described in previous chapters, I found this information alarming. I still demand that the BCT discloses who those 12 volunteers are, what they are doing, and that they disclose the necessary information so that the public is satisfied that these persons have an impeccable record of probity and accountability.



Throughout the summer of 2016, journalist Richard Brooks, from *The Sunday Times*, made an extensive research on the problems surrounding the Cottage. He interviewed many people who were unhappy about what was going on. He of course interviewed Mr Heath as well, whom he found difficult. The article, published on 4 September, is reproduced in the blog section in this webpage: <https://blakecottage.com/2016/09/04/article-about-blakes-cottage-in-the-sunday-times/> .

It was a thorough and informative piece, but it was frustrating that some important issues weren’t mentioned. Mr Brooks himself considered it was “a bit soft” on Mr Heath, and told me that the latter had contacted *The Sunday Times’* managing editor to “try to arm twist him”. Through my contact with the press, it has become clear to me that Mr Heath has been wielding his powerful firm of lawyers, Bircham Dyson Bell (who handle Tony Blair’s fortune), to try to intimidate people.

I suspect that calling newspapers’ editors wasn’t his only attempt at intimidation: three days before the appearance of the article in *The Sunday Times*, I received a disturbing email. It was, supposedly, a “manuscript”: a deranged document that was being sent to me with copy to some people I don’t know, to some poetry publishers, and to Waterstones Piccadilly. I was organizing a poetry event that would take place in that venue (where the Blake Society also hosts some talks) the following week, and it had been publicly announced.

The email was distressing not only because of its content, but because of who was sending it. It was someone who calls himself a “friend” of the Blake Society, though through my years as a Trustee he was never a member and was subscribed only to our newsletter. He used to send us via post material that I found very disturbing. Mr Heath knew very well just how disturbing I found it. Because this person was not a Blake Society member and we had never exchanged correspondence in any way, it was odd that he had my email address, odd that he was sending that email with copy to a venue where I would be holding an event in a few days’ time, and just three days before the publication of the article on the Cottage in one of Britain’s major newspapers.

I contacted immediately the relevant authorities. They tried to get in touch with that person to clarify what his intention was in sending me such distressing material, but just a few days after sending it, that email address wasn’t working anymore. I have no evidence that this was orchestrated by Mr Heath. It might be the most implausible of coincidences. But I don’t think it was, and I want to stress here that I am protecting myself against any form of intimidation.



HE WHO HAS SUFFER'D YOU TO IMPOSE ON HIM KNOWS YOU

One thing that Mr Heath has been very keen on doing throughout the past year has been to play table tennis with whatever objections to his and the Blake Cottage Trust's actions appear in the press, in Mrs Beryl Kingston's blog, and in particular in my webpage: we say something, and the next day the contents of the BCT's webpage will have changed accordingly, with no qualms whatsoever about incurring in flagrant contradictions. It's impossible to keep up with him or take screenshots of every single incongruity. It is an idle, twisted game that I have reported here in the past.

He did this of course as soon as Mr Brooks' article was published in *The Sunday Times*, the very same day actually, as I explained in a blog post of 5 September, "The Blake Cottage Trust keeps on lying": <https://blakecottage.com/2016/09/05/the-blake-cottage-trust-keeps-on-lying/>.

Also, on the day the article was published, the BCT's blog became more specific about their search for an architect to create the visitor centre, and made mention of the sum of £50,000 they were hoping to raise for the commission. They claimed that the appointed architect would be formally announced that month, but this hasn't happened yet.

On 8 September Mrs Kingston wrote on her blog to challenge those plans. She's been doing that regularly ever since, so if the reader wants to follow that thread, her blog can be accessed here: <https://berylkingstonblog.wordpress.com/>.

ONE OF THE THINGS that Mr Heath did on the wake of the *Sunday Times*' article was to call those who were challenging him (namely the Big Blake Project, Mrs Kingston and myself) unscrupulous in the BCT's webpage's Q&A section, as we can see in the screenshot below:

Q: I have heard from unscrupulous sources that the Trust was set up in secret?

A: No, not at all. The ten elected trustees of the Blake Society were kept fully informed of the process of forming the charity and its registration with the Charity Commission. The progress is recorded in the official Minutes.

In my blog, I warned them that to call us unscrupulous was slander, so by 10 September they had removed the accusation from their webpage:

Q: Who set up the Blake Cottage Trust?

A: The law firm of Bircham Dyson Bell, who are the leading specialists in charitable law.

Q: Who paid the lawyers' fees to set up the Trust?

A: The Heritage Lottery Fund generously gave a grant to set up the Trust.

Q: I have heard that the Trust was set up in secret?

A: No, not at all. The ten elected trustees of the Blake Society were kept fully informed of the process of forming the charity and its registration with the Charity Commission. The progress is recorded in the official Minutes.

What they didn't change, however, was a serious lie: Mr Heath talks about "**ten** elected Trustees of the Blake Society" during the Cottage appeal, thus cutting me out: **we were eleven**. He also makes a disingenuous claim in regard to the setting up of the Blake Cottage Trust. One of the things I have made public in this webpage and in statements to the press is that Mr Heath set up the BCT entirely on his own, hiding away from his co-campaigners and from the Blake Society Committee, with his lawyers standing in for him.

Here he was trying to wriggle himself out of the accusation through sophistry, stating that it was the lawyers who set up the Trust, not him. Indeed, it was his lawyers, instructed by him. His

lawyers clearly wouldn't take such an initiative on their own if not instructed by their client. I don't know if Mr Heath believes that such a see-through manipulation of truth can hold, but in any case the whole Q&A section in the Blake Cottage Trust's webpage is a frivolous exercise that doesn't address with any seriousness the legitimate concerns that we have been raising.

Mr Heath's mind games can be rather elaborate. I have talked about how I exposed him for having stolen the ideas and language of documents that I created for the appeal in his Trust's website, even while through that Trust he's been stealing the fruits of my work. That I've mentioned the matter doesn't stop him from using the cited text in his webpage, other documents or statements to the press, but after I exposed him he decided to use it for mockery as well. (The reader may remember from previous chapters in this testimony how I had pleaded with Mr Heath to honour the truth and beauty we'd been seeking through work on the Cottage project, principles that I allude in the "Home" section of this webpage as well):

Q: The Cottage is tiny. How will you cope?

A: The success of the project will not be measured by the number of people who come through the door, but rather by what comes out of our door – creativity, imagination, truth and beauty.

Q: I mean, how will you cope? Will there be toilets?

A: We are researching 18th Century facilities so that tourists might experience verisimilitude.

I find this kind of parody alarming from the Chair of an organism that is supposed to be responsible for a public project and who is at the moment under scrutiny because of rather serious allegations of unscrupulous practice.



IN ANY CASE, speaking out has proved to be not entirely futile. After the article in *The Sunday Times* and other pieces in the local press, and after my statements in this webpage, the Blake Cottage Trust saw itself forced to clean up its act a bit, and in October 2016 published in its webpage a document with an "update" on their project.

As I stated in my blog post in a link above, this was the first time (a year and a half after the acquisition of the Cottage) that they deigned to talk about anything resembling our original plan for the Cottage (the project supported by the public), though their priority kept on being the visitor centre. At least, though, the Cottage was no longer the "blank canvas" for anyone to "project" on it whatever was their fancy that Mr Heath had claimed it to be at the 2016 AGM. Interestingly as well, they now avoided any mention of their scheme of renting out rooms to paying guests that I had objected to so clearly.

Good. But of course we need from people who have been lying to the public so extensively for so long some guarantee that they mean what they say. First of all, we need the guarantee of accountability of a proper, legitimate and inclusive Trust. Then we need to see a concrete, detailed and professional working project and business plan, backed by all the relevant documentation.

THE VISITOR CENTRE AND FINANCE

On 29 October 2016 the BCT posted more information about their plans for the visitor centre as their means to finance the running of Blake's Cottage, and made further statements to the local press.



The answer to this economic challenge is to be found in a 'visitors centre' which could be funded successfully from a capital appeal and once built would give a broad economic grounding to the project – a versatile architecture for seminars, a gallery, a shop, a library, a cafe, an office for the director and accommodation for visitors to stay.

A Visitors Centre with a visionary architecture will draw people to the Cottage, to Blake and his Printing Press, and to the arts of the imagination. All these elements will give the Cottage an economic engine and an international fame – and most importantly for Blake, an independence.

No one will forget that Blake was accused of Sediton here in Sussex, so the Cottage needs an independent voice. The Cottage could then call upon local residents to give their time as volunteers for a nobler cause. Together here in Felpham we can create an economics of vision, a lighthouse to the world that will continue Blake's pursuit of vision, truth and justice – a Blakeonomics.

The flamboyant language lacking in concrete information was there again: **“A Visitors Centre with a visionary architecture will draw people to the Cottage, to Blake and his Printing Press, and to the arts of the imagination. All these elements will give the Cottage an economic engine and an international fame – and most importantly for Blake, an independence.”**

Their mention of the desired independence came with a warning, and not few contradictions: **“No one will forget that Blake was accused of Sediton here in Sussex, so the Cottage needs an independent voice. The Cottage could then call upon local residents to give their time as volunteers for a nobler cause. Together here in Felpham we can create an economics of vision, a lighthouse to the world that will continue Blake's pursuit of vision, truth and justice – a Blakeonomics.”**

While saying what they think the local people in Felpham, who has been unambiguously opposing their plans, want to hear (i.e. “working together”), followed by quite a crude invocation of “vision, truth and justice” and even more farfetched images of grandeur (i.e., the Cottage will be “a lighthouse to the world”), they invite the noble villagers to work for them for free for a “nobler cause” (nobler in comparison to what, by the way?), while the BCT keeps its independence to make money and do what it wishes with Blake's Cottage and actively protecting themselves if need be from those villagers ready to accuse them.

This comes from an organisation that has refused to even acknowledge the concerns of Felpham's residents about their plans for an important building that they love in their community; from people who deceived a local organisation: the Big Blake Project, whom they used to work and raise funds on their behalf, only to then steal away their work, and whom they have been insulting ever since, slandering them by calling them “a pressure group”, and mocking in the process the generosity and good will of all the people in the West Sussex area who supported the appeal precisely through the efforts of the BBP.

Finally, this is the way that an illegitimate organism is using to justify its commercial plans, regardless the fact that it was set up in secret by the man chairing it, violating all the campaigners' agreements about what that Trust should be, writing single-handedly its governing documents and even making provisions for pensions for himself and the two accomplices he chose.

The financial plan for the Cottage should have been decided by the large accountable consortium we aimed to create, which would have been already engaged all this while in raising funds for the original project, through a carefully fundraising plan *structured around that project's aims*, a process that I outlined in my “A Vision for Blake's Cottage” document and correspondence included in this testimony, and that has been completely wrecked now by the three persons usurping a legitimate organisation. The illegitimate organism was set up with a donation from the Heritage Lottery Fund obtained from our campaigning together: the Chair, I and, briefly, Mr Eliot *representing the Blake Society*, and the Big Blake Project.

I have to say that the BCT's style in discourse is getting closer and closer to that of classic Latin American dictators.

COLLAPSING ROOF AND TRUTH COLLAPSED

Since its acquisition, as we have stated, Blake's Cottage has kept on deteriorating. For **thirteen months** nothing whatsoever was done to stop the building's decay.

Finally in October 2016 the BCT did something: they installed temporary steel supports to hold up the collapsing thatched roof and broken wooden beams. After months of intimidating the photographer who had taken pictures of the damage, they finally published themselves an image, now with the supports propped in, and made a fuss in the local media about their “care” for the building.



They talked now about seeking funds for the second stage of their project – the restoration of the building – which would cost around £500,000. To assuage the public’s impatience, they lied about the duration of the Cottage appeal: **“It took several years to raise the initial funds to purchase the cottage and we can expect a similar time frame to raise the monies for stage two.”** The funds for the Cottage were in fact raised in less than two years, from around March 2014, when the initial work for the official campaign started, to September 2015, when Mr Heath obtained the large donation on his own: a year and a half. As of today, in April 2017, the Cottage has stood in disrepair for a year and seven months, the only work carried out being some props to stop the roof from collapsing.

Their October statements reinforced their intention to relegate the original purpose of the project to the last: the third stage won’t be the implementation of the residence for artists and authors, but **“the creation of a new visitor centre within the cottage grounds.”**



The end of 2016 saw a vast array of local authorities and press getting more and more nervous about Blake’s Cottage and very reluctant to manifest any clear position. Some would give half-hearted, vague responses with words like “collaboration”, “carefully monitoring”, “a building of historic importance”, “taking seriously the concerns of local people” without taking a stand, and I wonder whether if they are taking the trouble to do their own research regarding the very serious allegations against the BCT being made. I am concerned that Mr Andy Camp, Chair of the Felpham Village Conservation Society, doesn’t respond to my emails anymore. Mrs Beryl Kingston has told me that the FVCS is asking her to stop raising concerns about the Cottage and I would like to know why they are now protecting the Trust that used their name publicly without their consent, as we have seen in previous chapters, and why the local authorities in general are trying to hush things down, in detriment of their public responsibilities.

Around that time Mr Will Harvey from the Big Blake Project, who worked steadfastly on the Cottage appeal for over a year, requested to the Blake Cottage Trust to be allowed to at least visit the Cottage. The response was yet another insult: he was refused and told to wait until an “open day”. I think it is important to note that the Big Blake Project channelled for the appeal the support of all the local people that love Blake, and therefore every insult that they receive from the Blake Society and the Blake Cottage Trust is also an insult to the people of Felpham.

Though access to the Cottage was being denied to the people who worked so hard to make the appeal’s success possible, the doors were wide open to others. In October 2016 members of the British Pilgrimage Society, during their walk to celebrate the anniversary of Parry’s musical setting for

“Jerusalem”, spent Halloween night at Blake’s Cottage. The press mentions among the pilgrims Mr Henry Eliot, a bit grandiloquently, as a “Blake Society luminary”. I found it interesting to see that he was joining a young musician that I had invited to support the appeal and had proposed for our Annual Lecture as well and that both Mr Heath and Mr Eliot had been bent on disparaging, and that Mr Heath tried to avoid mentioning as a supporter of the appeal, as stated before in this testimony. It seemed that those contacts of mine that they had scorned while I was in the Society were becoming useful now. (I also noticed, by the way, that they picked another of the artists in my list of contacts for the appeal to appoint him as judge of the Tithe Grant last year.)

I only hope that the Cottage is structurally sound enough to host reunions such as that of last year’s Halloween.

One thing that alarmed me then was to realize that now the British Pilgrimage Society is raising funds for Blake’s grave on behalf of the Blake Society. The BS is parading round the press notes about the pilgrimage, and I find it gruesome that they are still bent on using other people’s good name and good will to boost their reputation and get money. I have written to the BPS to warn them of the risks of raising money on behalf of the Blake Society and referred them to what happened to the Big Blake Project and to the whole of the Cottage appeal. They have ignored me and I understand: no one wants to hear bad news, no one wants to get involved and ultimately, no one wants to know. After all, it is cool to be invited to Blake’s Cottage!

I am just sad to see how many people do not want to know, how easy it is, as a society, to turn a blind eye to the most outrageously unscrupulous practices, ignoring that turning a blind eye and not wanting to know means condoning.



All this time, Mrs Beryl Kingston kept indefatigably calling Mr Heath and the Blake Cottage Trust to task. On 15 December, she handed over to Mr Heath a petition with 500 signatures, requiring immediate action to work on the restoration of Blake’s Cottage. Her petition has basically been ignored, and the Cottage remains in the same state of disrepair.

Then on January of 2017 she met up with Peter Johns, one of the Blake Cottage Trustees, to see if her petition had had any influence in the BCT’s plans. I don’t know what happened exactly in that conversation because I wasn’t there. What Mrs Kingston refers in her blog is that, apparently, Mr Johns seemed to think he had tricked her into believing everything was OK with the Cottage and even expected her to say so in her blog. She certainly didn’t. Instead, she referred how the BCT still considered a priority to invest £50,000 in appointing an architect to build the visitor centre. She sent a link with her blog post to the Blake Society Trustees, to the Big Blake Project and to me.

Mr Johns, despite the fact that the Blake Cottage Trust has been continually insulting and trampling on everybody who worked for the Cottage appeal, suddenly felt very affronted. He therefore responded with an email that he sent to all of us, parroting the words “saving the Cottage for the nation” from a campaign that he never knew anything about and for which, of course, he didn’t do any work at all:

Dear Beryl,

My wife and I met with you on Sunday at your request. My wife's recollection is that at the end of our two-hour meeting after we had taken you home we left on very friendly terms, you agreed with me that the cottage was now structurally sound that the most urgent problem was to raise the money to move to the next stage and that you would write something I could put onto the Cottage website.

I now see from this blog you have taken me for a fool, you have distorted and deliberately misinterpreted my answers to your questions that were given to you in a spirit of honesty and friendship and to what purpose? I thought we both wanted the cottage saved for the nation, something that the so

called "Triumvirate" are working hard to achieve. Isn't this what you want too?

Peter Johns

I found his email distasteful, and told him so:

Dear Mr Johns,

You must have sent this email to me by mistake, since the Blake Cottage Trust has never once acknowledged my wish to communicate with you all and to meet face to face so that we could clarify the sorry situation around the Cottage, so why should you want to communicate with me now?

If you ever send an email to me I expect it to be answering to the very concrete questions I have been asking of the Blake Cottage Trust, which is certainly not "saving the Cottage for the nation" but appropriating it illegitimately. In particular I would be very grateful to see a consistent and truthful financial report.

There are, indeed, reasons for sorrow, to which all of you in the BCT have contributed to from its foundation, and I am looking forward to the end of that.

Your discussions with other people are no concern of mine.

Mr Will Harvey, from the Big Blake Project, answered too,

Peter,

Perhaps you need to work on your communication skills. Both Tim and yourself are very good at fobbing people off and ignoring them when it suits but I'm afraid that will no longer do.

Again, when is the supposed 'Open Day'? I spent a year of my time unpaid helping your campaign, the least you can do is allow me to see the fruit of my efforts.

Of course, Mr Johns didn't respond to us.

In my email to Mr Johns I mentioned the need of a consistent and truthful financial report. That was, and still is, because the Blake Cottage Trust's and the Blake Society's financial reports regarding Blake's Cottage are muddled to a very worrying degree. To see what I mean, please refer to my blog post of 18 September regarding these financial inconsistencies: <https://blakecottage.com/2016/09/18/inconsistencies-in-blake-cottage-trusts-financial-report/>.

YET ANOTHER INFAMOUS AGM

On January 2017 I received an email from Mr Antony Vinall, the Blake Society's Secretary, since my payment to renew my membership had been accidentally duplicated by Paypal. He wrote:

We've received two Paypal payments to renew your membership of the Society. In view of your comments on social media and to the press about the Society and its Trustees, they must surely be unintentional. Unless you inform me to the contrary within 7 days, I'll arrange for them to be refunded and your membership cancelled.

This was my answer:

I have only sent one payment to renew membership to the Society, so one of them must surely be a mistake. I'd be very grateful if you refund it as soon as possible.

The Blake Society as it stands now certainly does not deserve to receive a single pound from anybody, but given the efforts you have made to silence me, I want to make sure that as a Blake Society member I can dispute all the lies that you keep on feeding to your membership and to the public, to dispute your minutes to the latest AGM, that bear such a shameful contempt for truth, and mention the way in which the Blake

Society broke its constitution at the latest AGM to the extent that for a year, in fact, the Society has been working without a proper elected Committee, as there was no voting.

I did care for the work of the Blake Society very much indeed, as you well know and you have all repeatedly acknowledged, and far more than any of you now in the Committee, who show such contempt for its members and for the very public that has supported you and that you have the obligation to serve. I do have respect for those people, and I have a right to tell the truth, however much that may surprise you.

So now they knew that I would be at the AGM again, and what for. I posted in my blog yet another call for honesty prior to that event: <https://blakecottage.com/2017/01/14/to-change-the-world/>. I sent the link to Mr Garrido, the Treasurer of the Blake Society, as well.

He replied:

Thank you very much for your recent email a few days ago with a link to your blog where you discuss Blake Society matters as well as Cottage trust issues.

I have read your blog with interest and I'm glad I read it before the AGM.

Today Beryl also sent us a link to an update on her blog in preparation for the AGM.

It's important to have dialogue and to know other people's input towards these issues. Dialogue helps us find the facts, the truth and the way forward for solutions and it's also important to share ideas, ideals and visions.

This was my answer:

Many thanks for your email, that I truly appreciate.

I am very happy to read that you agree on the need for dialogue, though I must say I am mystified as to why you haven't encouraged for that to happen with the Blake Society Committee.

I have been trying to have a dialogue with all of you for over two years now, and all I got from my efforts was, first, to witness the Committee's appalling inaction and leaving the Committee nearly broken in body and spirit. Then, since I left the BS I repeatedly asked both the BS and the BCT for the opportunity to get together and talk, to precisely have a dialogue, like human beings do. All such calls were not even acknowledged.

No doubt dialogue helps us "find the facts, the truth and the way forward for solutions". All that: dialogue, clear facts, truth and a way forward has been lacking in this sad affair, and the BS has determinedly closed the door to all dialogue, both to me and to the other people that have been harmed by Tim's actions.

No doubt also that it is "important to share ideas, ideals and visions". That's what the whole Cottage project was about, and what Tim forgot, believing that the Cottage is his alone and creating his own illegitimate organism that excludes everybody else, including those who contributed some of the project's strongest ideas, ideals and visions in the first place. Tim's and his Trust's behaviour has been all about exclusion, and about not sharing anything at all.

I would like to remind you that all along the campaign I insisted, precisely, on sharing, and that I entreated those in the Committee who had had some involvement with the Cottage project, however brief or however flawed, precisely to share their ideas, ideals and visions, openly, transparently, so that we could all work together. Those calls were responded with silence, secrecy and bullying, so how do you think the sharing can happen with a Committee such as that of the Blake Society?

I ask you seriously, because I am really curious to hear your answer.

I entreat you, Luis, to become part of that dialogue that you seem to be wishing for as well, and not to collude with other people's lies, and their dishonesty.

It would be great as a starting point to acknowledge that thus far, you have not pressed the Charity you serve for a true dialogue hard enough. I know it's hard, when a Committee is so dysfunctional as that of the BS and the Chair is so difficult, but still, as a Trustee, it is your responsibility.

I of course received no response.

ON 20 JANUARY THE AGM TOOK PLACE. It was a disgraceful affair. The Trustees certainly put up a show of unashamed lying. I was harassed by Mr Vinall, then bullied my him and Mr Heath, who shouted me down. The report of what happened can be found in my blog post of 22 January, titled "A Time of Bullies": <https://blakecottage.com/2017/01/22/a-time-of-bullies/>.

After the AGM, sick and tired of the Blake Society's governance travesty, I wrote to Mr Garrido, asking him to please reimburse me my subscription:

Dear Luis,

As you may well know, and was made very clear to Antony, I renewed my membership to the Blake Society so that I could challenge the minutes of last year's AGM, that are riddled with falsehood.

After the sad spectacle the Committee gave last night of precisely the opposite of the dialogue you were invoking in a recent email, I have really had enough of the farce, so I'd be most grateful if you refunded my subscription as soon as possible.

I expect to remain in the newsletter list.

Thank you for having acknowledged the importance of my role in the Cottage appeal. It is sincerely appreciated.

As for the rest of what happened last night, my thoughts will appear on my next blog post and will be expressed also to the relevant authorities.

With kind regards,

Adriana

Mr Garrido, the man who had told me that Mr Heath was a "dictator" and all Blake Society Trustees had no choice but doing as he said, or leaving; the one who had told me that Mr Heath, who had studied law, was cunning enough to do unethical things that weren't strictly illegal, answered:

Dear Adriana

I've just refunded your subscription.

Remember Christ's advice regarding taking your neighbour to Court.

None of us is perfect but no laws have been broken, your accusations are too much and they would never stand up in court in any case and what is more they lack legal substance. To the best of my knowledge no laws were broken. If you spend your life pointing the finger at others you could miss a lot from living your own life and you could be using that energy towards something constructive for society and for your own self. You have achieved so much in life and ought to be very proud of yourself for that, but now there is no need to go on resenting the past forever. You have to move on for your own good.

with best regards

Luis

I probably shouldn't have bothered to respond to this pathetic email, let alone ask once again for all of us to sit together and talk, but I did:

Thank you for the refunding.

You have no moral authority to preach to me.

You know far too well that this is not about "resenting the past". And you know I am telling the truth.

You once told me yourself on the phone that Tim did things that seemed right legally yet were unethical. You seem to be invoking the same principle now.

You have all had many chances to sort this out, in an open dialogue, where everybody was treated with the respect due to all human beings. How dare you bring Christ's name into this? A public project has been harmed here. People have been harmed. Far too many things and people have been trampled on.

You say that "to the best of your knowledge" no laws were broken. The problem is that the knowledge you all had in the BS about the Cottage was too little, and you didn't want to know more.

One thing is rather clear though: you all have been either lying or colluding with lies, one way or another. You all know that I am telling the truth.

Your pious words bear no substance, Luis. I only wonder how can you sleep at night.

Why not do the right thing, what I and others have been asking of you all along? To sit all of us involved together, sort out our conflicts in a manner that is fair for all, and look ahead? Why didn't you ever even acknowledge my requests for such a meeting? It is possible even now, people have sat down for a dialogue in far graver conflicts. Yet none of you in the BS or BCT is deigning to even consider it, you have avoided it for over two years. How on earth can you believe that you can treat others with such contempt and expect no consequences?

I received no answer. What happened instead was that the Blake Society published in its webpage a clumsy and manipulative copy and paste document with extracts of their minutes, trying to fool the public into believing that the Cottage appeal was never a Blake Society Project (this testimony, and chapter II in particular, has dealt extensively with that ridiculous claim); they also published a "timeline" of the Cottage project that was also riddled with lies. I asked them for honesty yet again in my blog, with a post titled "last call", a call for dialogue and truth, on 26 January: <https://blakecottage.com/2017/01/26/last-call/> .

A TESTIMONY

No one in the Blake Society or the Blake Cottage Trust responded to that last call. That's when I decided to write this testimony, the first chapters of which were published on 2 February 2017. Those chapters deal in detail with the spurious documents published by the Blake Society mentioned above. No one can say that the BS or BCT have not been given a chance for dialogue and for setting things right!

What the Blake Society did next, quite impenitent, was to publish in their webpage the minutes of the AGM, again riddled with lies. I talk about that in my blog post of 16 February (<https://blakecottage.com/2017/02/16/fictitious-minutes-piling-up-chapter-iii-of-my-testimony/>), after which they made the minutes surreptitiously disappear. Apart from removing the minutes, they published a supposed "financial report", trying to invalidate my concerns about their muddled finances. But my concerns are not invalidated, this document is still inaccurate, still shows little regard to truth, and the Cottage appeal's donors, the public and those of us raising the alarm still need an impeccable financial report from both the BS and the BCT, with no overlapping of information, that responds in detail to every single concern I've raised, and in which every single pound is accounted for. This too I have reported in my blog, in a post of 4 April: <https://blakecottage.com/2017/04/04/and-the-lies-continue/> . A document going in detail through their new financial report can be found in the Documents section in this page or clicking this link:

<https://blakecottage.files.wordpress.com/2017/04/inconsistencies-in-cottages-finances-april-20171.pdf> .

This testimony, though I know it's very long, has become necessary if anyone wants to understand what really happened with the wretched Cottage appeal, and what is happening even now. It has also become a necessary statement to stand up for myself, because I have now been able to confirm how I am being slandered by the Blake Society's Trustees. Mr Garrido's email copied above was certainly a hint. He talks about "resenting the past", and the story goes, according to what they are telling to other people and as stated in a previous chapter, that I am "a woman scorned", taking all this trouble to redress the harm done to our project, to establish truth and alert the public about the corruption behind a public project with half a million pounds involved, because Mr Heath rejected my attentions and I'm bitter. There is no way to respond to such crude remarks without stooping down to the same level. I have respect for my own life, past and present, and I won't do that, but I will insist in pointing at the shameful sexism that such kind of slandering represents, and this testimony is also a way of standing up for all those people of whatever gender who are fed up with living in a society that continues indulging this particularly nasty green light for bullying against women.

SO WHAT ABOUT THE COTTAGE PROJECT?

THE COTTAGE APPEAL set out to make of William Blake's Cottage a discreet (because of the building's dimensions) but serious residence for authors and artists. It would be open to the public a few days a week, and would host small cultural events of Blakean interest, some of them related to the work created there by the resident artists. It would be linked to a Centre of Imagination – the visitor centre – in Bognor, mainly ran by the Big Blake Project, which would have space for larger events and exhibitions. The long term plan was to fundraise to acquire the building on 17 South Molton Street in London where William Blake lived as well. We have seen in this testimony, and in particular in my "A Vision for Blake's Cottage" document, the scope of the original project, which included a House of Refuge for persecuted writers. We aimed at inviting genuine artists and authors, British and international, engaged in creation and thought that would give continuity to the dissenting tradition Blake came from.

To create something like this demanded professional work of the highest standards, and the union of people and organizations with different areas of expertise, as Mr Heath himself claimed in emails reproduced in earlier chapters in this testimony. The members of the consortium in charge, it goes without saying, would have an immaculate record of integrity and accountability. We had invited to be part of this consortium renowned scholars and publishers, the Tate Gallery, English PEN, the University of Chichester. We were trying to establish links with the National Trust. We had considered inviting the Barenboim-Said Foundation, the International Cities of Refuge Network, the Poetry Archive, and before Mr Heath appropriated the project, we were thinking of who else we could invite that could meet those high standards: we were bent on opening the doors of the Cottage by creating a consortium as inclusive as possible. This is the kind of thing we had in mind, and the new ideas I had to propose to the Blake Cottage Trust even after I left the appeal ran along those lines: to invite to the consortium, for example, Ai Weiwei's studio, the Dark Mountain Project, or the *Residencia de estudiantes* in Madrid.

The work created in the Cottage would go out into the world, widely shared with the public in the UK and abroad through the extensive network created by the members of the consortium.

We conceived, and promised, a serious, professional and noble project, and for it to succeed, the consortium would have had to start working towards that goal *from the moment the Cottage was acquired*, and using the force of the project itself as a major incentive for the fundraising required to reach the next stages: the restoration of the Cottage and the implementation of the project.

Instead of this, we have a Trust of three men who have stolen the support and money raised to establish themselves as illegitimate rulers of a building of historic importance that they are allowing

to decay, chaired by the artificer of a move so cunning I am convinced it amounts to fraud, and who assert their authority through lying, secrecy, and bullying. Their plan is to destroy the atmosphere of intimacy and quiet of the Cottage by building on its grounds a visitor centre. And for what?

If we look at the Q&A section in the Blake Cottage Trust's webpage, we see this:

Q: Will the Cottage be a place for writers & artists?

A: Yes, we hope it will be a place where all those who struggle to imagine a better world might find refuge, respite and inspiration.

Q: Will the Cottage be a gallery?

A: William Blake held a solo exhibition just once in his lifetime – it was in his older brother's house, who had inherited it from their parents, and the paintings were exhibited in the main room on the first floor, probably their parents' bedroom, the very room where William Blake was born. So, yes, every home should be a gallery, and every room a place of creation and procreation – Blake's Cottage especially so.

Q: Will I be able to sleep in the Cottage?

A: William Blake was a visionary – he dreamed dreams and saw visions. So to fully appreciate the visionary secrets of the Cottage, you will indeed be able ask to wake in Blake's bedroom.

Q: So, is the Cottage to be a hotel?

A: No.

Q: Will the Cottage be a B&B?

A: No.

Q: Will it be a Dream-Catcher?

A: A Dream-Catcher ... now that's a more interesting description !

Mr Heath, who stole the project and has incurred into cronyism by forcing into it a female friend of his who believes that works of art (Blake's included) are "too static", has spent his time since the Cottage was purchased talking about people sleeping in Blake's bed, inhaling Blake, creating and procreating, the Cottage as a dream-catcher... what on earth is he talking about, and how can such nebulous language stand for a serious project?

He has made very worrying statements. One of them refers to his life-long ambition of acquiring the building in South Molton Street in London: **“ . . . Our hope is to join these two houses together through an axis of creativity that will link the city to the sea, the urban to the rural, and the past to the future. In joining the two locations artists and writers will be able to research Blake's life in London, reflect and create during periods of respite in the Cottage, and then have the opportunity to present their work either in Felpham or at the heart of one of the world's great capital cities.”**

The ambitious original programme that I have detailed above has become instead a kind of inbred experiment, in which some artists chosen by God knows whom will be moving around their work between the Cottage in Felpham and South Molton Street, two buildings that would be under the sole control of Mr Heath. It sounds like a poor, suffocating prospect. The lack of any meaningful structure for that programme is alarming as well. He declares: **“[. . .] invited guests can stay and sleep in the Cottage over a short weekend or a longer week.”**

Now who are these invited guests? He's stopped talking about paying guests so he must be referring to the artists. Only that it doesn't make sense. The plan was to offer a space for them to get their projects off the ground, and to do serious work. You don't achieve that in a week, let alone a

weekend, do you? This sounds much more like holidays. Therefore, there is actually no real difference between the idea of paying guests and artists having a short break: the plan is still to create a kind of “Blakean hotel” where people can “inhale Blake” and “sleep in Blake’s bed”, financed by a visitor centre that will have disrupted the quiet atmosphere of the premises forever.

Is this *really* what we went through so much work and trouble for? Is this really what half a million pounds was raised for?

Then we have the issue of authority. Who, in the absence of a proper and accountable Trust, is going to choose these holidaying artists? With what authority? In the official documents that record the setting up of the Blake Cottage Trust, Mr Heath describes himself an artist. Though he’s a very talented man in various ways, an artist he’s certainly not. I don’t understand anymore if this is a matter of wilful lying or delusion, but I still fail to see who are going to constitute the appropriate panel to select, and with which criteria, the people spending some days in the building we worked so hard for: the three men who stole a public project?

It doesn’t seem to have been worth the trouble.



It seems in fact a bit sinister. We have a man who has proved to be thoroughly dishonest, and with no coherent project at all, who has been continuously lying to the public for over three years, striving to acquire full control over the two only standing buildings where William Blake lived. We don’t know what for. He doesn’t seem to have any clear idea himself. The only clear thing is the power he feels those buildings (let’s not forget that he rents rooms in South Molton Street) confer to him. And whatever power he has, he has abused.

Are we going to allow him to do this? Are we going to give him money to do it? Are public institutions going to protect him to do as he wishes, while he remains accountable to no one?



THROUGHOUT THIS TESTIMONY the reader has had many opportunities to see that I don’t negate Mr Tim Heath’s true merits. He has shared his knowledge of Blake with many people for decades, and to do so has given generously both of that knowledge and of his time. I appreciate it, I am grateful and I think many other people are rightfully grateful as well. He, like many of us, loves the work of William Blake, and his own exegesis of that work is often inspired, the fruit of a remarkable intellect and a sophisticated sensitivity.

But Mr Heath doesn’t own William Blake. And, of course, he is not William Blake – an artist and a man who died nearly two hundred years ago and who’d perhaps be rather alarmed at how many people have grabbed him to project on him and his work their own obsessions.

I realize now that I never had a shared idea with Mr Heath of what the dissenting imagination is. Through his actions during the Cottage appeal and its aftermath, he seems to believe that dissent means tricking others so that they give you money and support to do whatever you want, however distant that might be from what they believed they were supporting. Here’s when his speaking in riddles comes handy. He seems to believe that by being vague and furtive he can get away with whatever he wants, and call that “dissent”. He doesn’t seem to understand that corruption is in fact a rather conventional feature in human society.

I have mentioned before how Mr Heath plays games and likes teasing us with contradictions. Even now he seems to be waiting for us to unravel the truth about the Charities he runs that he’s woven in the Blake Cottage Trust’s webpage:

Q: Why is there a small but vocal minority opposing the Cottage?

A: William Blake evokes great passion and he inspires opposition in equal measure to exuberance. Enthusiasm for Blake has always been the site of fierce disagreement as well as joyous celebration and discovery. The Blake community continues this tradition. He was a man who believed that the origin of the world's problems lies in institutions, and he famously refused to join any organisation during his lifetime. To re-phrase the famous Groucho witticism, no true Blakean would ever join a Blake society.

THE CHARITY COMMISSION

COMMUNICATION WITH the Charity Commission has been a slow affair. I fear that budget cuts and bureaucracy have got in the way of a speedy resolution. However, they are still investigating, and I have been constantly updating them about new developments in this case. Other relevant authorities have been informed as well about my concerns regarding the handling of the Blake's Cottage appeal. They are keeping an eye on both the Blake Society and the Blake Cottage Trust, and nudging as well the Charity Commission to carry out their investigations.

One thing worth mentioning here is that the Charity Commission has made it clear that it would be helpful if more Blake Society members, and Trustees, made their concerns known to them. As we have seen, nothing can be expected from the Trustees, but I am confident that should the Blake Society members – particularly those who supported the Cottage appeal – know what has been going on in the past few years, many of them would be very worried.

I cannot contact them because I cannot make use of the Blake Society database, since I'm no longer a Trustee. I have only written to those BS members that I had been in touch with already for other reasons beyond my duties as Secretary, or those few that I knew had an email address of public domain. That represents just a handful of people. Therefore, if anyone reading this shares my concerns, it would be extremely useful if you too contacted the Charity Commission.

WHY TRUTH MATTERS

During the long, harrowing process of coming to terms with the destruction of the Blake Cottage appeal, I have reflected long about why it matters to tell the truth when faced with the abuse of power. After all, it hardly ever makes those responsible for the abuse change their ways. The truth hardly ever gets heard. It tends to get lost among myriads of other claims for justice, since abuse of power takes place in ways big, small and then atrocious every single day all over the world.

It is one of the things that humans do, or at least some of them. One lesson learnt in my experience through this ordeal is that this is one of the harsh realities of life; that it doesn't help to become paralyzed asking "How can people behave like this? How can people lie like this? How *can* they?". Some people can, and do. Things are as they are, and just being horrified by them changes nothing.

I COME FROM A COUNTRY where countless people have been telling the truth for decades, about things infinitely more atrocious, infinitely more unspeakable than the corruption surrounding a little thatched roof cottage in West Sussex. Over there, it's massacres, forced-disappearances, dispossession, murder of journalists, all of which have their source in greed, thirst for power and full-blown corruption.

People in my country are telling the truth about massacres that took place fifty years ago and about those taking place now; they are telling the truth about tens of thousands of people disappeared who have been missing for fifty years, of five days, and they have seen no justice, and the disappeared are still gone. So why bother to tell the truth about anything at all?

Well, for starters, I think it's important to identify the mechanisms of abuse of power, however small or colossal it may be, and understand that they're always the same. The sources are greed, ambition, hatred or delusion, sometimes a mix of it all, and the abuse can only happen because of the collusion of others, who may be acting for the same reasons or out of fear, cowardice, their own self-interest or cynicism.

In the process, they engage in the negation of the people they have wronged. They snatch away their humanity. If there is no one to tell the truth, then they get away with the annihilation of that humanity, of the stories of real human beings who didn't deserve what has been done to them.

Telling the truth restores that humanity. Sometimes it can bring about justice and help put right what is wrong. Sometimes it doesn't. But even when it fails in that respect, truth matters simply because it honours our humanity. Every time someone tells the truth, we're all less alone, less impotent, less helpless in the jaws of things as they are: telling the truth is an essential act of human solidarity.

NO ONE HAS BEEN MURDERED in the Blake Cottage affair, but the trust, generosity and good will of over seven hundred concrete human beings has been betrayed, and that's quite a lot of people; some concrete persons – like Mrs Rachel Searle, her colleagues in the Big Blake Project, and I – have been harmed. I can tell from my own experience that the harm has been severe. And quite a lot of filth has been thrown at one of the most remarkable poets and artists that the world has seen in the past two hundred and fifty years.

Sure, we all made mistakes in this very convoluted story. I for one apologize to the public for having put my trust in people who didn't deserve it; for having encouraged others to support our campaign, realizing too late that Mr Heath and the Blake Society were not to be trusted. The Blake Society and Blake Cottage Trustees have shown the worst that they are made of in a situation of great pressure. I'm sure that this has been a bitter experience for us all, and no less for Mr Tim Heath himself. Who knows, he may have started sliding into the corruption without fully grasping what he was doing or where it was leading him. Perhaps he doesn't know how to stop now?

It is always possible to stop. Mr Heath and the Charities he runs can still apologize for what they have done and become accountable for their actions. A legitimate, inclusive and accountable Blake Cottage Trust can still be created out of the lessons learnt from this mess. That would mean that, through the strength of our experience, we can still restore to Blake's Cottage something that held great value as well for William Blake: its innocence.

