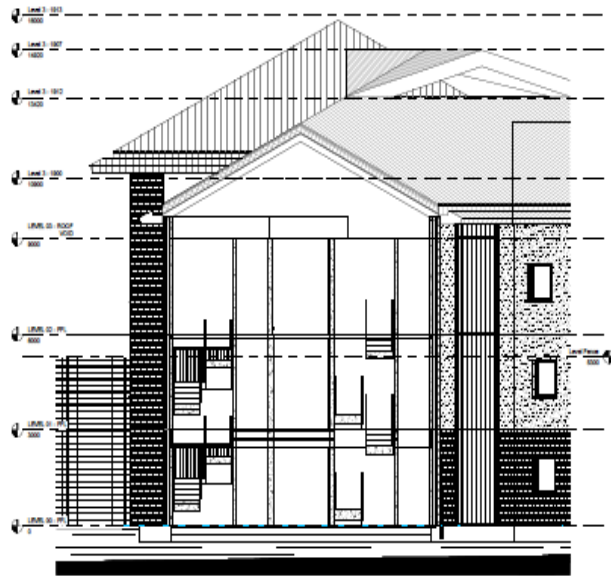


closecampsfield.wordpress.com/ £/p contribution welcome

The Campsfield Monitor

No Campsfield expansion!

Stop all immigration detention! @closecampsfield



Campsfield Expansion: Wrong, Abusive, and Unnecessary – who benefits?

Press release from Campaign to Close Campsfield, 22 October 2014

An application to expand Campsfield House Immigration Removal Centre has now been submitted to Cherwell District Council. The plans would more than double the number of people imprisoned at the Centre from 276 to 566.

Opposition to the plans

Already the plans have attracted substantial opposition. Nicola Blackwood, the MP for Campsfield, and her two principal challengers at the next General Election,

Labour's Sally Copley and the Liberal Democrats' Layla Moran, and the Greens' Larry Sanders, have all opposed any expansion.[i] [ii] [iii] [iv] Oxford East MP Andrew Smith has done likewise. [v] Oxford City Council has existing policy calling for Campsfield to close.[vi] Local residents, community organisations, churches and trade unions have all expressed concerns to the Campaign to Close Campsfield. Over 50 people attended a public meeting against the expansion in Kidlington on 20 October.

Cherwell District Council's role

Cherwell District Council's Planning Committee [which meets on 22 January to decide on the application] will not be able to consider the wider arguments against the

1 TWENTY-ONE YEARS TOO LONG ! CLOSE CAMPSFIELD AND ALL DETENTION CENTRES !

Winter 2014

expansion and must make a decision on planning grounds alone. Local residents and others can contact councillors on the planning committee and make submissions by emailing planning@cherwell-dc.gov.uk with their concerns. Liz Peretz, of the Campaign to Close Campsfield, has said “We believe there are strong planning grounds for turning this application down, and hope Cherwell District Council will do so.”

Immigration detention is wrong

Bill MacKeith of the Campaign to Close Campsfield has said: “It is wrong to imprison people who have not committed a crime. Immigration detention is an administrative convenience for the Home Office not a punishment for a crime – migrants are rounded up not sentenced.”

People detained in Campsfield include those whose asylum claim is still under consideration and people deemed failed asylum seekers but whose case has not been properly heard because of poor translation at interviews, a lack of legal representation and a culture of disbelief at the Home Office. Detainees wanting to go home often wait in detention for months before arrangements for travel documents are made by the HO. Some cannot be returned because they are stateless, travel documents cannot be obtained or there is a nationality dispute. Most have not committed crimes, although some are people who have already served a sentence for a crime and are in effect being punished twice because they are foreign. All are detained indefinitely, without judicial oversight. They lack many of the protections in law that are given to prisoners convicted of an offence.

CAMPSFIELD MONITOR

Immigration detention is abusive

Dr Peter Young, the recently retired director of mental health services at detention centre service provider International Health and Mental Services (IMHS) in Australia recently blew the whistle on the impact of detention, showing that it meets international definitions of torture.[vii] Other reports show that detention of those who have not committed a crime without a release date causes harm to the mental health of detainees.[viii] This is especially the case for those who have experienced trauma, such as torture survivors. The Home Office is not supposed to detain torture survivors, but there is evidence to suggest they routinely refuse applications for the release of torture survivors. There have been 25 violent deaths in detention, over half by suicide. Others have been released shortly before their deaths or have died during removal attempts. Numerous claims have been made against guards and immigration officials for racist and sexual abuse but witnesses are often deported before cases come to court. Immigration detention facilitates abuse but is also abusive in itself.

The expansion is unnecessary

According to the Home Office’s own statistics, while the number of detention places continues to go up, there is a long-term trend in the proportion of detainees being removed – down to 56% in the year ending June 2014.[ix] In the last year there was an increase in the number of immigration detainees granted temporary admission or release from 34% to 36%.[x] Even under the Home Office’s own rules, these people could not be removed and should never have been detained in the first

2 TWENTY-ONE YEARS TOO LONG ! CLOSE CAMPSFIELD AND ALL DETENTION CENTRES !

Winter 2014

place. Asylum seekers and other migrants are being “warehoused” in detention centres to justify the costs of the private security firms running them. If the Home Office released unreturnable migrants earlier, the equivalent of three detention centres could be shut without reducing the number of people removed from the country.[xi] The Campaign to Close Campsfield believes the human costs of detention are more significant than the financial costs, but people should know that detention of unreturnable migrants costs the taxpayer £75 million per year.[xii] The true cost of detention is unknown as Home Office figures do not include legal costs, compensation, or escort costs.

Who would benefit from the expansion?

Detainees would be harmed by the expansion. Expanding the number of places in Campsfield would cost the taxpayer millions without doing what it set out to do. The only benefits would be to MITIE, the company that runs Campsfield, and its shareholders. When MITIE took over the Campsfield contract in 2012 it was the first time they had handled a major security contract. Despite presiding over multiple hunger strikes, deaths in detention and a fire for which they and their insurers were deemed financially responsible,[xiii] they were subsequently awarded the contract for the larger Harmondsworth and Colnbrook detention centres.[xiv] Since then they have presided over a major pest infestation at Harmondsworth.[xv] They run Campsfield on the cheap by paying the very detainees locked up there £1 an hour to do vital tasks.[xvi] These wheeler-

CAMPSFIELD MONITOR

dealers are the only beneficiaries of the plans to expand Campsfield.

[i] Nicola Blackwood MP has said “This proposal makes no sense for Kidlington or for our immigration system. We should be looking for alternatives to detention rather than expanding our detention programme and Campsfield House in particular has already struggled to manage with its existing numbers resulting in a series of serious incidents... I am quite clear that doubling the size of Campsfield would be wrong for Kidlington and wrong for detainees.” (Source: online petition here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/campsfield>)

[ii] Sally Copley has said “It’s clearly wrong to detain at all people who are not criminals but instead are fleeing conflict, let alone indefinitely. The Home Office have not made a satisfactory case for why they want to extend Campsfield House, and it’s a shame the District Council are only allowed to consider this on planning grounds, as there are strong humanitarian reasons for rejecting it.”(Source: quote given to Campaign to Close Campsfield.)

[iii] Layla Moran has said “We should be aiming to close the centre, not expand it... if the moral grounds for not expanding weren’t enough, in the UK the number of people being deported in the UK is in fact declining. Expanding Campsfield now makes no sense in this climate. Given that we are deporting fewer people we need to be aiming to detain fewer too. (Source: The Vulnerable Deserve To Be Treated With Compassion, Oxford Mail, 11/9/14, http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/11465021.The_vulnerable_deserve_to_be_treated_with_compassion/?ref=ms)

[iv] Larry Sanders has said “the detention of asylum seekers... is costly, traumatic, inhumane and totally unnecessary. It would be perverse to squander large sums of money on the expansion of Campsfield and additional millions of pounds every year on maintaining it while we are said to lack the money to provide decent housing, and even adequate food, to hundreds of thousands of people.” (Source: quote given to the Campaign to Close Campsfield.)

[v] Andrew Smith MP has said “I’m against the plans to expand Campsfield House, which are contrary to government claims that detention is a last resort. The Home Office should await the outcome of the current Parliamentary Inquiry into alternatives to detention and a time limit on detention. They should also listen to the

Winter 2014

views of local people.” (Source: quote given to Campaign to Close Campsfield.)

[vi] Oxford City Council’s policy on Campsfield, which has been renewed each time it has come up for renewal, can be found here: <http://mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk/CeListDocuments.aspx?CommitteeId=0&MeetingId=670&DF=17%2f09%2f2004&Ver=2>

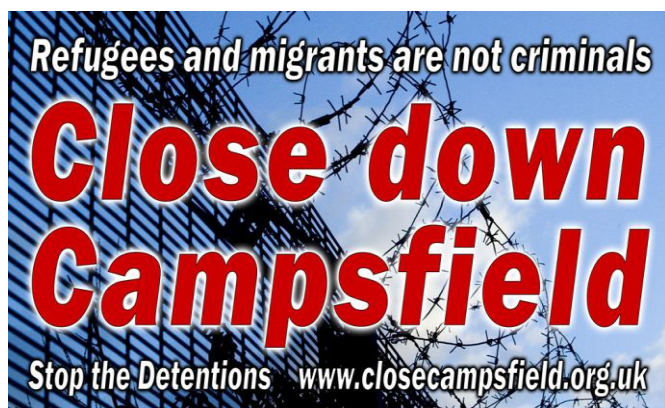
[vii] See: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/05/-sp-australias-detention-regime-sets-out-to-make-asylum-seekers-suffer-says-chief-immigration-psychiatrist>

[viii] See, for example: Ali McGinley and Adeline Trude (2012), *Positive Duty of Care? The Mental Health Crisis in Immigration Detention*. Briefing paper by the Mental Health in Immigration Detention Project, Association of Visitors to immigration Detainees and Bail for Immigration Detainees, <http://www.aviddetention.org.uk/images/positive%20duty%20of%20care%20final.pdf>

Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group (2012), *A Prison of the Mind: The Mental Health Implications of Detention in Brook House Immigration Removal Centre* <http://www.gdwg.org.uk/downloads/gdwg-prisoninthemind.pdf>

Pourgourides, C., Sashidharan, S. & Bracken, P., (1996) *A Second Exile: The Mental Health Implications of Detention of Asylum Seekers in the United Kingdom*, Birmingham: Northern Birmingham Mental Health Trust.

[ix] According to the Quarterly Immigration Statistics, April-June 2014, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-april-to-june-2014/immigration-statistics-april-to-june-2014#detention-1>



CAMPSFIELD MONITOR

Oxford University students and academics send letter to David Cameron



Helena Kennedy and Jo Hynes of Oxford University Amnesty International group, at the launch of the letter on 15 November

15 November 2014

Dear Prime Minister

As current and former senior members of Oxford University, we wish to express our concern over your government’s policy of detaining immigrants.

We believe that this policy is contrary to the spirit of democracy, the Human Rights Act, and the United Nations Convention on Refugees. Immigrants should not be detained for administrative reasons alone.

We certainly do not find it acceptable that they should be detained without trial, without time limit, without proper judicial oversight and with little chance of bail, and thus treated worse than criminals; we

4 TWENTY-ONE YEARS TOO LONG ! CLOSE CAMPSFIELD AND ALL DETENTION CENTRES !

Winter 2014

understand that some have been detained for many months, even years, before being released or deported.

We believe that the manner in which the decisions are made to detain some people and not others appears to be arbitrary, and that it flouts the normal rules of evidence and conventions of civilised behaviour. Immigration officials are, in effect, acting as a law unto themselves.

We are concerned at what we consider is a dangerous undermining of democratic principles and the rule of law, and we fear that, if persisted with, it could open the way to further abuses.

Furthermore, we are greatly concerned about the government's plans to transform Campsfield House Immigration Removal Centre into a 580-bed mega-centre, making it one of the largest detention centres in Europe. Not only does the UK not need to be expanding its detention estate, but Campsfield House, which was opened over 20 years ago as a small, 180-bed centre, is an inappropriate site for such major expansion. Instead we call for a reversal of this proposed expansion.

We note the case, recently highlighted by the Chief Inspector of Prisons, of Canadian Alois Dvorzac (84), who died, handcuffed, in hospital soon after being moved from Harmondsworth detention centre where he was held despite suffering from dementia, a heart problem and diabetes[i]; and that of Isa Muazu an asylum seeker forcibly removed to Nigeria by special charter flight at a cost of over £100,000 despite his lengthy hunger strike and being judged by doctors to be too sick to be detained or deported.[ii]

CAMPSFIELD MONITOR

Above all, we are concerned at the fate of the detainees themselves, and we appeal for their early release.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Roger Ainsworth
Master of St Catherine's College
Professor Alan Bowman
Principal of Brasenose College
Professor Richard Cawardine
President of Corpus Christi College
Will Hutton
Principal of Hertford College
Baroness Helena Kennedy QC
Principal of Mansfield College
Dame Hermione Lee
President of Wolfson College
The Very Reverend Christopher Lewis
Dean of Christ Church
Lord Ken Macdonald QC
Warden of Wadham College
Dr. Alice Prochaska
Principal of Somerville College
Professor Jocelyn Alexander
Department of International Development
Professor Bridget Anderson
Professor of Migration and Citizenship & Deputy Director of COMPAS
Professor Frank Arntzenius
Professor of Philosophy
Dr. Oliver Bakewell
Co-Director of the International Migration Institute
Professor Marcus Banks
Professor of Visual Anthropology
Dr. Mette Louise Berg
Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology
Dr Brenda Boardman, MBE, FEI
Emeritus Fellow, Environmental Change Institute
Professor John Broome
Emeritus White's Professor of Moral Philosophy
Dr. Daniel Butt
Department of Politics and International Relations
Dr. Lucy Carpenter MBE
Emeritus Fellow of Nuffield College
Professor Stephen Castles
International Migration Institute
Dr. Elaine Chase
Department of Social Policy and Intervention
Professor Robin Cohen
Emeritus Professor and Former Director of the International Migration Institute
Professor Martin Conway
Professor of Contemporary European History
Professor Amanda Cooper-Sarkar
Fellow of St. Hilda's College
Dr Cathryn Costello
Associate Professor in International Human Rights and Refugee Law

Winter 2014

Professor Roger Crisp
Professor of Moral Philosophy
Dr. Patricia Daley
School of Geography and the Environment
Professor Danny Dorling
School of Geography and the Environment
Dr. Elizaabeth Ewart
Fellow of Linacre College
Professor Doyne Farmer
Mathematical Institute
Dr. Elena Fiddian- Qasmiyeh
Research Fellow at the Refugee Studies Centre
Professor Michael Freeden
Emeritus Professor of Politics
Dr Jane Garnett
Fellow in History
Dr. Matthew J. Gibney
Department of International Development
Jo Hamilton
Environmental Change Institute
Dr Barbara E. Harrell-Bond OBE
Emerita Professor and Founding Director of the Refugee Studies Centre, 1982-1996
Dr. Alana Harris
Fellow of Linacre College
Professor Stephen Harrison
Professor of Latin Literature
Professor Barbara Harriss- White
Emeritus Professor of Development Studies
Dr. Sudhir Hazareesingh
Department of Politics and International Relations
Professor Anthony Heath CBE
Emeritus Professor of Sociology
Professor Andrew Hurrell
Professor of International Relations
Dr Will Jones
Refugee Studies Centre
Professor Alan Knight
Emeritus Professor at the Latin America Centre
Dr Anthony Lemon
Emeritus Fellow, Mansfield College
Dr. Giulia Liberatore
Centre of Migration, Policy and Society
Professor Paul Lodge
Associate Professor of Philosophy
Dr. Sabina Lovibond
Emeritus Fellow of Worcester College
Dr. Fiona McConnell
School of Geography and the Environment
Dr Dana Mills
Hertford College
Professor John Nightingale
Fellow of History
Professor Michael Noble
Emeritus Professor of Social Policy
Professor Avner Offer
Emeritus Professor of Economic History
Bernard O' Donoghue
Emeritus Fellow, Wadham College
Heather O'Donoghue
Fellow of Linacre College

CAMPSFIELD MONITOR

Professor Judith Pallot
School of Geography and the Environment
Scot Peterson
Bingham Research Fellow in Constitutional Studies
Dr. Georg Picot
Department of Social Policy and Intervention
Dr Theron Pummer
Plumer Junior Research Fellow in Philosophy
Professor Ritchie Robertson
FBA Taylor Professor of German
Professor Lyndal Roper
Regius Professor of History
Dr. Diego Sánchez- Ancochea
Associate Professor in the Political Economy of Latin America
Professor Subir Sarkar
Fellow of Linacre College
Teresa Smith
Former head of department of the Department of Social Policy and Intervention
Dr. Amy Styring
School of Archaeology
Professor Adam Swift
Emeritus Fellow of Balliol College
Sarah Walker
Centre of Migration, Policy and Society
Gavin Williams
Emeritus Fellow at St Peter's College
Professor Martin Williams
Professor of Engineering Science
Professor Roger Zetter
Emeritus Professor in Refugee Studies

[i]

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/10574035/Dementia-patient-84-died-in-handcuffs.html>

[ii]

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/nov/30/theresa-may-hunger-striker-ifa-muaza-asylum-uk>



Farid Pardiaz

Farid Pardiaz, 25, from Afghanistan was sentenced on 1 April 2014 by Judge Mowat in Oxford Crown Court to 32

6 TWENTY-ONE YEARS TOO LONG ! CLOSE CAMPSFIELD AND ALL DETENTION CENTRES !

Winter 2014

months in prison after pleading guilty to committing simple arson at Campsfield detention centre on 18 October 2013. See the account on pp. 11-12 below.

Letter from 21 Oxford bodies to government ministers, 10.11.14

Dear Minister,

The government has announced plans to transform Campsfield House Immigration Removal Centre into a 566-bed mega-centre, making it one of the largest detention centres in Europe. We, as local organisations, many of which work with migrants and refugees, are worried about this proposal. Our immigration detention system is unjust and inhumane, for individuals detained as well as their families, and has high financial costs for the country. Not only does the UK not need to be further expanding its detention estate, but Campsfield House, which was opened over 20 years ago as a small, 200 bed centre, is an inappropriate site for major expansion.

There is considerable evidence showing that immigration detention has adverse, long-term impacts on people's mental health. Part of the harm is the uncertainty of the process. The UK is unique in Europe for detaining people without a time limit, not due to a conviction, but simply for administrative purposes. The lack of a time frame and other aspects of our detention system have been criticised by a range of national and international bodies. Indeed, our own courts have repeatedly found that a person's detention has reached the high threshold amounting to inhuman and degrading treatment.

CAMPSFIELD MONITOR

Detention is not the answer to concerns about migration, which are in any case controversial. An extra 800 detention bed spaces have already been created in the UK this year, bringing the total to over 5,000. We have more detention spaces than we have ever had and yet removals are at an all-time low. Detention is extremely expensive, with millions of pounds wasted detaining people who are ultimately released. Rather than pump in more money, we should investigate alternatives to detention, which would be better for both migrants and the taxpayer.

Locking people up indefinitely wastes lives, is unjust and is contrary to British values.

Asylum Welcome

The Bail Observation Project

Dr Barbara E. Harrell-Bond OBE

Campaign to Close Campsfield

City of Sanctuary

Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha Oxford

Headington Quaker Meeting

Medical Justice

Network of Oxfordshire Women for Peace and Justice

Oxford and District Labour Party

Oxford and District Trades Union Council

Oxford City Amnesty International

Oxford Migrant Solidarity

Oxford Quaker Meeting

Oxford Ruskin College branch, University and College Union

Oxfordshire Green Party

Oxford South Asia Forum

Oxford University Amnesty International

Oxford West and Abingdon Liberal Democrats

Refugee Resource

Sea Green Singers

7 TWENTY-ONE YEARS TOO LONG ! CLOSE CAMPSFIELD AND ALL DETENTION CENTRES !

Winter 2014

Three more people die in UK detention centres

As the trial proceeds at the Old Bailey in London of three G4S guards for the murder of Jimmy Mubenga on board of a British Airways flight at Heathrow, remember that three people have died in immigration detention centres in the UK this year

First to die was Jamaican †Christine Case (40), on 30 March, in Yarl's Wood. Then, †Bruno Dos Santos, a stateless man in his 20s, on 4 June, in The Verne, barely weeks after the new centre opened on Portland Bill in Dorset. And on 7 September, †Rubel Ahmed (26), a Bangladeshi, died in Morton Hall in Lincolnshire.

On this occasion, the following blog was posted on the TwitterTour of detention centres run by the Detention Forum to coincide with the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Use of Immigration Detention.

'The death was used as an excuse for unrest'

(remark attributed to Morton Hall guard)

In September 2014 a man died in Morton Hall Immigration Removal Centre. His name was Rubel Ahmed, he came from Bangladesh and he was 26 years old.

Death at a young age always comes as a shock. It is a tragedy for family and friends. When that death occurs in unexplained circumstances in a state institution it should also be a matter of public interest and concern.

Yet this death seemed almost incidental in the media coverage immediately afterwards. A local paper, the Lincolnshire Echo, ran with the headline 'Twelve hour

CAMPSFIELD MONITOR

riot after detainee dies'. It said a national tactical response unit had been called, and a team sent in armed with batons and shields and accompanied by police dogs. Similar stories, focusing on the protest, appeared in many of the national dailies. The focus was on the unrest, not the death, the overall impression was that the men held in detention were dangerous criminals who had to be contained at all costs.

This is one of the many damaging myths purveyed about men and women held in the asylum and immigration system. They are presented as violent people to be feared, foreign bodies who must be removed. These myths take away both their humanity and ours.



How else to explain the way in which the bereaved family heard about the death. They say the news came from his solicitor who had been informed by a fellow detainee. There are wildly contradictory accounts of the cause of Rubel Ahmed's death and his family are asking for an independent inquiry.

This is not the first time that there has been unrest at Morton Hall. In January 2013 The Guardian reported 'Illegal Immigrants riot at removal centre'. The article listed the facilities available – dental and medical services and a 'well stocked library, badminton, soft tennis, basketball and

8 TWENTY-ONE YEARS TOO LONG ! CLOSE CAMPSFIELD AND ALL DETENTION CENTRES !

Winter 2014

volleyball courts'. The implication was that with these amenities there were no grounds for riot. There was no attempt, in the article, to look in such detail at the reasons for the protest. Again there were contradictory accounts of what had happened, with inflammatory media headlines about fighting and injuries. The Independent Monitoring Board said that the incident had been exaggerated.

It is said that truth is the first casualty of war. It is time to stop this implicit media war against vulnerable strangers.

Men and women held in immigration detention live with stress and uncertainty. They do not know how long they will be held. They fear being returned to the conditions from which they have fled. They have little trust in a system where they are stigmatised and their stories disbelieved.

In his farewell speech as outgoing President of the National Council of Independent Monitoring Boards Peter Selby said current immigration policy 'has as its necessary implication the detention of people who have not committed any offence, or who have discharged any penalty set for them'. He suggested this is a policy with 'too many unacceptable consequences to be sustainable'.



9 TWENTY-ONE YEARS TOO LONG ! CLOSE CAMPSFIELD AND ALL DETENTION CENTRES !

CAMPSFIELD MONITOR

From Corporate Watch, 1 September 2014:
Mitie takes over Colnbrook and Harmondsworth

As Mitie becomes the Home Office's largest provider of immigration detention this month, merging Colnbrook and Harmondsworth into a super-size 'Heathrow Immigration Removal Centre', Corporate Watch takes a look at the company's track record at Campsfield House, the only detention centre it has run before.

Already Campsfield has been marred by a major fire, suicide and three mass hunger strikes since Mitie took over in 2011. So how has Mitie won this new contract, and will asylum-seekers be any safer in their hands?



Mitie CEO Ruby McGregor-Smith

Mitie, a FTSE 250 outsourcing company, has now started a Home Office contract, worth potentially a quarter of a billion pounds, to detain more asylum-seekers. Ruby McGregor-Smith CBE, chief executive of Mitie, said she was

Winter 2014

“delighted” to win the contract, and promised: “We will be providing the best environment possible for the people in our care - putting decency, dignity, and safety at the heart of everything we do.” The contract will be run by Mitie's aptly named 'Care and Custody' subsidiary. The company's press release explained that, “Mitie will care for over 900 immigration detainees providing full centre management, including all custody services, welfare, regime and recreational activity. This partnership will see Mitie becoming the largest single private sector provider of immigration detention services to the Home Office, less than three years after entering the market.”

Despite the PR gloss, Corporate Watch has investigated the company's track record during its last three years in the asylum 'market', and found a catalogue of failures in both safety and care. We have also discovered Mitie's ability to win the contract was based largely on cherry picking managers from the previous contractor.

To begin with, we found that Mitie's 'Care and Custody' subsidiary started life as Mitie Parking Services Limited. The company's accounts (pictured below) show the name was changed after only one month of trading, when, in September 2009, its directors curiously decided not to run anything as mundane as car parks any more, but instead to “provide outsourced custody services to government including management of prisons and immigration removal centres”.

This name change coincided with the arrival of a new director at the car park company, Colin Dobell (pictured left). He came to Mitie from the GEO Group, an

CAMPSFIELD MONITOR

American private prison company. Dobell says in his LinkedIn profile that he had “established GEO UK from scratch” in 2005. By the time Dobell moved to Mitie in 2009, GEO had won contracts to run Campsfield and Harmondsworth. Dobell has long been involved in locking up migrants – before GEO, he was commercial director at GSL (now part of G4S) from 2000, which ran Campsfield before both GEO and Mitie got their hands on it.

2011 – year one: a suicide and a mass hunger strike

With Dobell at the helm, Mitie's mysterious car parking company soon convinced the Home Office to let it take over from GEO at Campsfield, winning a 5-year contract worth £27 million in February 2011. But how would Mitie be any different from GEO? In addition to Dobell, Mitie's bid director was Alex Sweeney – who had been GEO's Centre Manager at Campsfield.

Mitie's contract to run Campsfield began on 30 May 2011. Bill MacKeith, a stalwart of the Campaign to Close Campsfield, warned what lay ahead: “Mitie is like other outsourcing companies. They specialise in taking over a service and then squeezing it for profit; finding more ways to exploit staff or cut corners.” Within a week, 23 Iraqi and 14 Afghan detainees went on hunger strike at Campsfield to protest against the government's plans to deport them to Baghdad and Kabul.

Then, in August 2011, Ianos Dragutan, a 35-year old Moldovan man, hanged himself in a shower cubicle at Campsfield. Liz Peretz, from the Campaign to Close Campsfield, said “This young man's

Winter 2014

suicide must immediately raise serious questions about health and safety inside Campsfield, especially the adequacy of health and welfare provision.” She was unequivocal: “Questions need to be asked of both MITIE, the company who won the contract to run the centres earlier this year, and the UKBA [UK Border Agency], who drew up their contract.” Mitie's centre manager, Paul Morrison (pictured right), said “procedures had been reviewed following the death”. Morrison, a former infantryman and prison service manager, is tipped to run Mitie's new centres at Colnbrook and Harmondsworth.

2012 – year two: another mass hunger-strike

A year after Mitie began running Campsfield, another group of detainees decided that their only means of redress was to go on a mass hunger strike. This time, it was 13 men from the Darfur region of Sudan, including at least one “confirmed torture survivor with visible wounds”, according to Bob Hughes, who visited them in Campsfield. Whilst demanding asylum, the hunger strikers also “complained of their treatment inside the centre, saying that they came here asking for refuge, and instead have been locked up and badly treated.” One of the Darfuri men, who had been detained for two months, had a gunshot wound to the leg, causing chronic pain and walking difficulties. After two weeks of their hunger strike, the men were separated and moved to other detention centres where they continued their hunger strike for several more weeks, as a campaign by supporters on the outside grew. Some of the men were released during the hunger strike.

CAMPSFIELD MONITOR

2013 – year three: a major fire

After two and half year running Campsfield, Mitie could have been expected to have got a grip on the situation. However, late at night on 18 October 2013, due to a lack of safety provisions, a major blaze engulfed the centre. The lives of more than 200 detainees were put in danger, and Mitie's public reputation was on the line.

The fire occurred when Farid Pardiaz, a 25-year-old detainee from Afghanistan, tried to kill himself by setting fire to bedding in his cell. He survived, but the flames spread to the roof and gutted the main accommodation block. It transpired that there were no sprinklers installed, despite repeated advice from the fire brigade, and despite the fact that Mitie claims to specialise in fire safety. The damage ran to nearly a million pounds, but Mitie refused to comment on whether the company, or the taxpayer, would foot the bill. A parliamentary question eventually disclosed that Mitie would pay up, but still claimed the company had followed all the necessary fire safety regulations.

150 detainees were evacuated from the centre on the night of the fire, and the facility ran at reduced capacity for the next few months. There was only one eye witness testimony given by a detainee on the night of the fire. He claimed Mitie were more concerned with making sure no one had escaped than checking people were not left locked inside.

His claims were broadcast by local and national media. But once the fire was extinguished, the outspoken detainee was pulled from his room at 4am by officers dressed in full riot gear. They dragged him

Winter 2014

down the corridor (stamping on him as they went) and put him in a segregation unit, where the detainee claims he was beaten up with “one guard trying to choke him for 15 minutes”.

Corporate Watch has seen a letter sent to the detainee by the Home Office Professional Standards Unit that investigated his allegations. It claims “the CCTV camera only covered the outside of the cell” in which much of the alleged assault occurred, which makes it hard to corroborate the detainee's claims.

However, even with these limitations, the report says the “footage shows the officers were inside the cell for nine minutes” using “Control and Restraint techniques”. The investigation concluded that “the reason they spent nine minutes in the Segregation Unit cell” was because the detainee “struggled so much”, to the extent that “the officers had to change over because they had become exhausted” from trying to “control” him.

The 'investigation' omits mention of how many officers entered the Segregation Unit. The detainee put the figure at eight, which surely begs the question of what else they were doing besides 'controlling' the detainee, and rather supports his allegations of a violent assault. He was then left in the cell for four hours, before being moved to the high-security Colnbrook detention centre.

2014: Mitie rises from the ashes, but detainees still go hungry

The New Year saw a resolution from Mitie and the Home Office to finally listen to the fire brigade and install sprinklers at Campsfield. But it would not receive planning permission until late April,

CAMPSFIELD MONITOR

meaning migrants continued to be detained in a building that was manifestly unsafe. This did not prevent Home Office officials from deciding to increase the capacity of Campsfield from 260 to 510 beds [correction, 23.11.14: 276, 566], according to Bill MacKeith. And, on top, the Home Office awarded Mitie the new contract for Harmondsworth and Colnbrook.

Against this backdrop of stunning 'success' for Mitie, Farid Pardiya, the desperate young man who started the Campsfield fire, was sentenced at Oxford Crown Court to 32 months in prison after pleading guilty to committing arson. Judge Mowat acknowledged that his reasons for doing so stemmed in part at least from the way his asylum claim was being treated: “Mr Pardiya appeared to have had mixed motives for setting light to bedding in his room, from which fire spread into the roof space of Blue Block at the centre. He had wished both to kill himself and also to show the authorities how strongly he felt that he should not be returned to Afghanistan, where he feared for his life.”

The judge, “accepted that Mr Pardiya had not meant to cause the damage and losses estimated by outgoing centre manager Paul Morrison of Mitie, which runs the centre, as mounting to over £900,000, but she nevertheless had to take the high cost into account in deciding the sentence.”

A member of the Campaign to Close Campsfield, who attended the sentencing, reported that “No mention was made by [the] judge in sentencing or by defence of the fact that Mr Pardiya had been refused a request to see a doctor in the days running up to the fire, when, as a psychiatric report stated, Mr Pardiya was experiencing a depressive episode. Nor was it mentioned

12 TWENTY-ONE YEARS TOO LONG ! CLOSE CAMPSFIELD AND ALL DETENTION CENTRES !

Winter 2014

that very little damage at all would have been caused if the Home Office had carried out the recommendations of the Oxon Fire Service and fitted sprinklers in the centre”.

Not surprisingly, the detainees continue to resist, and in May 2014 another mass hunger-strike was launched, in tandem with fellow inmates at Colnbrook and Harmondsworth. One of the Campsfield detainees told the media, “Our demand is quite simple. We want our freedom. We want our life with dignity. We do not want to be treated in an inhumane way. So that's why we're demanding for the closure of all detention centres for immigrants in the UK.” He also called out the “security industry giants” for being behind these detention centres.

When this hunger strike started, supporters gathered outside Campsfield. Acting Centre Manager Andrew Simpson (pictured right) came out to keep an eye on them. He is an ex-navy seaman, who served on HMS Antelope when it was bombed during the Falklands/Malvinas war. It is fortunate the protests inside did not escalate, because unbeknown to the detainees, Simpson had also spent over twenty years in the Prison Service, where he specialised in riot control. He was Deputy Head of the Prison Service's Control and Restraint (C&R) National Training Centre. Here he rose to be “Head of a national special operations...providing a specialist response to incidents involving Hostage rescue, riot/public order control and rescue/intervention at height.” His expertise ensured he became “Tactical Advisor to Ministers and Senior Managers” where he apparently implemented “the successful resolution of politically sensitive Prison related

CAMPSFIELD MONITOR

incidents”, according to his LinkedIn profile. Simpson worked at Campsfield for Mitie from April 2012 to July 2014 (but now works for a bus company in Doncaster). Simpson claims responsibility for developing “new strategies and innovations to promote business transformation and growth” which he evidenced by “the awarding of the Heathrow IRC contract in 2014” which he says will be “the largest IRC in Europe”. He also takes credit for having “Project Managed the successful completion of a major refurbishment of the centre and the installation of a Fire suppression system during 2013 and 2014”, but makes no mention of his company failing to install the sprinklers before it was too late

Mitie has clearly built its business in detention centres by recruiting ex-GEO staff and prison service managers. Although this may have helped them win contracts, buying this 'expertise' did not stop a series of failures at Campsfield: three mass hunger-strikes, a suicide and a catastrophic fire. How can the Home Office expect a different outcome with this same company now in charge of the much larger and more challenging Colnbrook and Harmondsworth centres? With this track record already at Campsfield, perhaps Mitie should give car parks another chance.

The Campaign to Close Campsfield

The campaign was established in 1993 in opposition to the detention centre of that name opened near Oxford that year. Its aims are:

- ‘Stop immigration detentions and imprisonment;

13 TWENTY-ONE YEARS TOO LONG ! CLOSE CAMPSFIELD AND ALL DETENTION CENTRES !

Winter 2014

- Close Campsfield, other detention centres, and prison detention wings;
- Stop racist deportations;
- Repeal immigration laws which reinforce racism.'

Put simply, the rationale for the campaign is that it is wrong to lock up people who have not been convicted of a crime (or who have completed a prison sentence following conviction for a crime).

The problem is compounded by the lack of time limit and proper judicial oversight. Current law that provides for the administrative detention of migrants. So, on the narrow basis of opposition to arbitrary detention of migrants, a primary aim is Repeal of the 1971 Immigration Act Section 11.1 and Schedule II, which provide for detention of migrants.

Since 1993 the campaign has played a leading role in the movement against immigration detention. It has:

- organised monthly demonstrations at Campsfield and monthly campaign meetings in Oxford;
- worked closely with detainees protesting at their detention;
- worked closely with local trade union, student and human rights organisations

Supported anti-detention campaigning in other parts of the UK

- worked nationally with other bodies and helped set up the Barbed Wire Britain anti detention network and more recently the Detention Forum

- helped establish the Campsfield Nine, Yarl's Wood 13 and Hamondsworth Four defence campaigns in the show trials of protesting detainees

- published the bulletin *Campsfield Monitor*

- organised a conference on immigration detention in Europe attended in 2000 by

14 TWENTY-ONE YEARS TOO LONG ! CLOSE CAMPSFIELD AND ALL DETENTION CENTRES !

CAMPSFIELD MONITOR

- over 120 people from over 20 countries;
- helped establish the Migreurop network and initiate the European Days of Action against detention and deportation, and supported actions and meetings for migrants rights in other countries, NoBorders camps etc.
- submitted evidence about the harmful effects and injustice of immigration detention to national and international parliamentary, European, and human rights bodies/organizations.

Financial support is from individuals and small affiliation fees. Grants have assisted publication of this report and the organisation of the European conference in 2000.

Come join the campaign (see back page).

Bail Observation Project

Initiated by the Campaign, this has organized and published two reports of observations of some 330 hearings (mostly by videolink) of hearings where detainees apply for release on bail: *Immigration Bail Hearings: A Travesty of Justice?* (2011) and *Still a Travesty: Justice in Immigration Bail Hearings* (2013). The third stage of the project is to encourage others to take up observing bail hearings. Some eight law schools in England and Scotland are engaged in bail observation projects as a result. It is hope some of the findings will be published.

<https://closecampsfield.wordpress.com/bail-observation-project/>

BID (Bail for Immigration Detainees)

The Oxford office of Bail for Immigration Detainees closed in the autumn after many years work in the town. The national office

Winter 2014

remains open. 'Bail for Immigration Detainees is an independent charity that exists to challenge immigration detention in the UK. We work with asylum seekers and migrants, in removal centres and prisons, to secure their release from detention.' (from the national website:

<http://www.biduk.org/>

UK Detention Forum

The Detention Forum is a loose network of over 30 NGOs who are working on immigration detention issues. We are working together to build a momentum to question the legitimacy of immigration detention which has become such a normal part of the British immigration system. We are now a membership-based network, a collective of organisations who want to work together to challenge immigration detention. Members of the Campsfield campaign are active in the Forum and two are joint convenors of working groups (on indefinite detention and on judicial oversight). The Forum has published a briefing on arguments against expansion of detention and is running a campaign to get people country-wide to write to the government opposing the expansion of Campsfield or other centres. The Forum was instrumental in the setting up of the current all-party Parliamentary Inquiry into the Use Of immigration Detention (detentioninquiry.com/)

[detentionforum@wordpress.com](http://detentionforum.wordpress.com)

Migreurop

In 2002, human rights organisations gathered at the European Social Forum in Florence decided to act as a network to document and denounce the growing development of immigration detention centres across Europe. Ten years later, 43 NGOs from 16 countries in Europe, Africa and the Middle East have joined Migreurop, a membership which reflects the reality of 'Fortress Europe': border control, detention, deportation and the

CAMPSFIELD MONITOR

externalisation of this policy to third countries to contain migrants away from the Europe Union. A map in Migreurop's *Atlas on Migration* (English edition, New Internationalist) shows the intensification of detention in a variety of detention sites: closed reception centres for asylum-seekers, police stations, immigration detention centres, pre-departure accommodation centres. Campsfield campaigners attended Migreurop's Paris meeting on 'Migrant detention in Europe and beyond' in December 2013 and one was elected to the Administrative Council of Migreurop. In October he attended the commemorative events held in Lampedusa on the anniversary of the drowning of 366 migrants off that island close to Tunisia.

<http://www.migreurop.org/?lang=en>

Corporate Watch

Corporate Watch is a small independent not-for-profit research and publishing group which undertakes research on the social and environmental impact of large corporations, particularly multinationals. They have a particularly strong thread on immigration detention:

<http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/?lid=21&query=detention>

Right To Remain (formerly National Coalition of Anti Deportation Campaigns)

'The NCADC supports community campaigns for justice in the immigration and asylum systems. We support people fighting for their right to remain, and wider campaigns for migration rights.' Their in-person, blog, Twitter and Facebook activity gives accessible and up to date information and help for campaigners and individuals fighting against deportation. Their excellent *Campaigning Toolkit: An aid to understanding the asylum and immigration systems, and campaigning for the right to stay* is online and in hard copy.

<http://righttoremain.org.uk/>

15 TWENTY-ONE YEARS TOO LONG ! CLOSE CAMPSFIELD AND ALL DETENTION CENTRES !

Winter 2014

Asylum Welcome

Supports refugees, asylum seekers, immigration detainees in. 01865 722082
office@asylum-welcome.org

Freedom From Torture

(formerly Medical Foundation). Cares for survivors of torture. Oxford supporters group: halcyon.leonard@ntlworld.com or 01865 452783. (www.torturecare.org.uk)

Medical Justice

Trains local doctors to give independent medical advice to detainees. Arranges for medico legal reports, campaigns for improved health care. mjoxford@yahoo.co.uk All referrals for medical reports: med@medicaljustice.org.uk

Open Door

Weekly drop-in 11-4 Thursdays for refugees and asylum seekers, hot meal, games, signposting advice, East Oxford Community Centre. Contact: opendoor@yahoo.co.uk

Oxford Migrant Solidarity

Supportive group showing solidarity with and visiting people in detention in Oxford. Communicating despite the fences. Contact: oms@riseup.net

Amnesty International Oxford University group

This group organised the letter to the Prime Minister signed by 60 academics (see article above).

<http://ouamnestyinternational.wordpress.com/>

Refugee Resource

Counselling and therapeutic activities, employment advice, mentoring and coaching. Old Music Hall, 106-8 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JE. Tel. 01865 403 280 / 0845 458 0055. www.refugeeresource.org/
info@refugeeresource.org

CAMPSFIELD MONITOR

Trade unions

Oxford Trades Council and some local branches support the campaign. To contact a TU branch, ask the secretary of Oxford & District Trades Union Council oxfordtuc@aim.com, or tel. 01865 558145.

Visit a detainee! Contact the Campaign or Oxford Migrant Solidarity or Asylum Welcome (see above)

Campaign to Close Campsfield

Closecampsfield.wordpress.com

closecampsfield@riseup.net

01865 558145 / 01993 703 994

Demonstrate: last Saturday of the month at noon.

Meetings: first Tuesday, 7.30, Oxford Town Hall

Email list: To join, send an email to closecampsfield-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Twitter: [@closecampsfield](https://twitter.com/closecampsfield)

Facebook: Close Campsfield Campaign



16 TWENTY-ONE YEARS TOO LONG ! CLOSE CAMPSFIELD AND ALL DETENTION CENTRES !

Winter 2014

CAMPSFIELD MONITOR

17 TWENTY-ONE YEARS TOO LONG ! CLOSE CAMPSFIELD AND ALL DETENTION CENTRES !