



AGM July 2022

Company Accounts for 2021/2022 Financial Year & Trust Accounts for 2021/2022

Chairperson's Report

Dear Residents,

It is a privilege for me as chair of the CMO Board to present to you this year's chairman's report. Before I go on, I would like to welcome all new Chilmington Green Residents to our community. The CMO Board is looking to build positive and active relationships with all our residents and we look forward to doing just that over the coming 12 months.

With over 210 homes now occupied, our community is about 420 people strong. Working with you presents a great opportunity to do things differently and shape a community that will meet your aspirations and that together, we can build long into the future.

This report, however, is about looking back and sharing with you activity in the 2021/22 financial year. If we cast our minds back to April 2021, the world was at the early stages of emerging from the pandemic and many restrictions were still in place, limiting all our lives and our capacity to socialise. For an embryonic community organisation, this presented many challenges. Our ambition was to meet our residents and work to build relationships with those who call Chilmington Green home.

We had taken the prudent decision to not take on the **community cabin** in March 2020 to safeguard the CMO's finances. However in spring last year, we could see the need to deliver a residents' meeting place was fast approaching. Hodson Developments made contact to discuss the handover in December 2021 and we remain in discussions with the intention that the handover of the cabin to the CMO will complete as soon as possible.

We asked residents how they felt about the CMO taking on the cabin with the health and safety restrictions being proposed, and in particular the limiting factor of no pedestrian access during the construction of the dwellings on the Avenue, leading up to the Cabin. Residents voted overwhelmingly to NOT take on the cabin given these circumstances. The CMO shared the results with the Local Planning Authority and Hodson Developments. We are currently awaiting a meeting with the LPA and HD to discuss the next steps and the resolution of the remaining planning obligations that HD must discharge.

Last year we continued with our programme of **community engagement**, including resident surgeries with a mix of virtual, physical and household/group sessions. These have been well received and have had a growing attendance over the year. They will continue to be a regular feature in the CMO calendar. Please do not feel you have to wait for a surgery to contact the team if you have a query though. We are always happy to talk.

In September, we held a 'Getting To Know You' event with Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council. We spent a day meeting residents at the Brisley site and The Hamlet. We aim to repeat similar events this year.



We also had the first resident sounding board in January. The second one will focus on the Placemaking Sprint and will be delivered by Emergency Exit Arts and Locality. Residents will be invited to come along and have a say.

Many residents have had a challenging start to living at Chilmington Green and we don't underestimate the impact that this has had on you, our residents. The team has been helping where it can to resolve issues but most do not lie within the remit of the CMO to solve. This fact means that whilst we are happy to listen, we often need to signpost you to those who are responsible, including the developers and Local Planning Authority.

There remain some residents with protracted legal challenges, some of which relate to the CMO but these are not of the CMO's making. The team are working hard to help resolve these and asks for your patience and co-operation whilst we do this. These matters take time and with several parties involved can take longer than any of us would like, sometimes generating anger and frustration. There is a genuine offer from the CMO to meet to discuss individual concerns and to find a way through together. Please do reach out to us.

In December 2021 we welcomed Tom Hodson and Peter Reed onto the Board from Hodson Developments. We also saw Jon Rose who represented Chelmden Ltd unfortunately leave. Jon's expertise in finance was integral to the setting up of the early financial systems and management of funding in the first couple of years. He also chaired the Finance and Risk Committee, committing an extraordinary amount of time to support the team. I would like to record in this report the Board's appreciation and gratitude for the work that Jon carried out on behalf of all of us.

In March 2022 the Board approved the appointment of Steve Bartlett, a Hamlet Resident, as our **first Resident Director**. Steve brings with him many of the skills that Jon had as well as his expertise in marketing and communications and charitable governance. A perfect fit to complement the Board! We very much look forward to working with Steve.

All board members have a responsibility to work with residents and listen to concerns, but living in the development will give Steve a unique perspective which will be valuable to the Board.

As our primary school opened on site in November, it was clear from our last AGM that pedestrian access was a challenge for most residents. We represented your views and were delighted when Ashford BC and Kent County Council committed funding to **improve the footpath** from The Lakes to Mock Lane and from Chilmington Green Lane to Mock Lane. This has made a huge difference to residents living in those areas. The CMO is now lobbying for the completion of the footpath up Mock Lane to improve safety for those using this road to safely walk to school.

In the autumn, the CMO launched the **CMO Community Grants Fund** using funding from the S106 Early Community Development Fund and Homes England Garden Community Capacity Fund. Working in partnership with Ashford Borough Council to set this up, the CMO has held the first round of bidding and successfully provided funding to some great



projects including a Spring Trail and the Residents' Jubilee event. Thank you to those residents who are members of the grant panel.

In January and February, we saw the final stage of the 'Welcome to Here' project which had to be postponed due to Covid restrictions. Janet Platun, our resident artist, delivered oak gall ink vials to each home at Chilmington Green, sharing the story of the project through a booklet. It was a lovely end to a special project, welcoming residents to our community.

Seeing local resident community groups emerging is heartening and we look forward to working with more and more residents who want to get involved. The **Placemaking Sprint** being delivered in partnership with Ashford Borough Council is in delivery. Emergency Exit Arts and Locality are already meeting residents and community stakeholders to discuss what is important to them, with these discussions helping to shape the rest of the programme to be delivered up until late autumn. We are really excited to see the ideas of residents and to use some of the ideas to shape future community programmes and events.

You will be aware that the CMO has still to take on land from the developers. We had hoped by now, to have both the Cabin and the first pockets of landscaping to manage. The process of the **handover of land for maintenance** requires our managing agents, RMG to liaise with the developers and ensure that the communal estate areas are completed to a high standard. Just in the last few days, we have made significant strides in the handover of land for maintenance from Barratts and Jarvis and hope that we will soon be able to report that RMG will shortly be on site caring for areas in your community. We will share a plan of areas handed over on our website. We understand residents' frustrations over how long this has taken, but hope that you understand that it is not in any of our interests to take on land unless all Planning obligations have been discharged and the landscaping is of sufficient quality.. The developer is responsible for preparing the landscaping and we have a duty to ensure that the handover only happens when the assets are ready to be enjoyed and when there is no potential financial burden to the CMO. We understand that the CMO **billing at the RCD cap** without having land to manage is a sensitive issue, but directors remain resolute that there is good reason to do so to protect the long-term future of the charity. The funds can only be used for the purpose for which they were collected and therefore residents can be assured that their funds are safe and ring-fenced. The board has taken a long-term view that the assets that are proposed to be transferred will need to be maintained and replaced at certain points in the lifecycle of the development and consequently has set a reserves strategy accordingly.

RMG has been working hard for the CMO to advise and support on a range of issues. Their fee covers the administration and audit of the Trust Funds (RCD accounts) including billing. RMG is also leading on the adoption of the Cabin and landscaping. As promised, we consulted with you before renewing this arrangement, and your feedback was considered before we extended the agreement.

Over the next year, we have plans in many directions. Some are detailed below, but we hope others will emerge through the year as we work with you to shape your community;



1. Community cabin handed over and operational
2. Some landscaping areas handed over for management and maintenance
3. Community development and community engagement programmes grow to meet the needs and aspirations of residents
4. Working with our primary school and using the facilities it offers for community events and programmes
5. Working with United Learning and the new secondary school head teacher to integrate this new community and working with them to ensure community access to their sporting and other facilities
6. Continuing to refine our communications channels, building our website and outreach work to ensure we have high-quality two-way communication channels
7. Working closely with Ashford Borough Council as they look to deliver the Discovery Park masterplan and deliver on the significant funding they have secured to support the growth of the South of Ashford Garden Community. Part of this funding is intended to improve existing footpaths on Discovery Park and in Colemans Kitchen Wood, making cross-site pedestrian access easier and of higher quality. We look forward to being part of those discussions.

Finally, the Board's intention is to reappoint Alison Breese (subject to Alison's agreement) who holds the voluntary board director position, at the September board meeting, given it will be the end of her first three-year term.

If you have ideas now or are able to volunteer some time, please contact SallyAnne and her team at hello@cmo.org.uk.

Thank you for taking time to read this report. I look forward to meeting you at Chilmington Green Primary School on 6th July at 6pm and introducing you to partner organisations that are already or are keen to work in our community.

With kind regards,

Ben Lockwood

Chair of the Board