

CM CANNOCK MILL COHOUSING

Annual Report

February 2015—January 2016

Cannock Mill Cohousing Colchester



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Board members at Away Day, January 2016

Chair's report on activity 2015/16

Our vision is becoming reality. Through the inspiration and efforts of many people over many years we are in a strong position to start construction in the current year.

During 2015/2016 we achieved:

- a further 6 households committed, financially and personally, to the project, so that we have 16 out of our 23 units already sold "off plan"
- detailed planning and listed building consent
- development loan offer from the Housing and Communities Agency
- our site cleared of redundant sheds and outbuildings, with necessary tree work and archaeology put in train
- our new, site specific, identity as Cannock Mill Cohousing Colchester Limited
- a stronger public profile both locally and in the wider world.

To reach this stage our board has worked harmoniously through difficult, sometimes unfamiliar and occasionally contentious decisions. All 22 members participate fully, including two via the internet from Colombia. In working towards consensus decisions wherever possible we are establishing the mutually considerate tone and collaborative style of our future cohousing community – though we look forward to shorter and less frequent formal meetings once we have moved in.

Our away day in January reviewed our structures and style of working. We resolved to spread the workload more widely, to make it easier for new members to integrate into our working groups and to hold purely social events more often. Nonetheless we have enjoyed getting to know one another better throughout the year, through informal events such as a bike ride and walk, as well as through social events for prospective members, our regular bring-and-share lunches and our working groups.

We are grateful for the support of our neighbours at Cannock Mill, our local authority officers and members, our local MP, the UK Cohousing Network, the Homes and Communities Agency, the Ecology Building Society and our professional advisers. Special thanks to Sue York and Barbara Simpkins, my predecessors as chair.

Jane Blackburn, CMCC Chair



Cannock Mill following site clearance in preparation for building. March 2016

Group Reports

Finance and Legal

The group has met monthly throughout the year with excellent attendance from members. Expenditure is on-track and a very healthy balance has been maintained. The Cash Flow has been regularly updated and reconciliation of expenditure on professional fees and services has been monitored. Following grant of planning permission the Annual Accounts for 2014/2015 were finalised and submitted to Companies House. Transactions with HMRC are up to date. Income - contributions have been received from all Directors joining since the last AGM.

Finance matters

- Funding partners:
 - a) our bid to HCA has been successful in achieving a development loan offer
 - b) Ecology Building Society is available as a second funding partner.
- A second investment account has been set up with Triodos Bank.
- Xero, our new accounting software is now up and running.
- Following advice from Peter Riches, it was agreed that individual homes should be valued relative to all the other homes in the development. The valuation is subject to possible review in the future at the discretion of the Board.
- It was agreed that limited individual variations to interior design should be financed by the buyer in advance.

Legal matters

- Planning Permission was granted and, on the advice of Wrigleys, the Section 106 Agreement was agreed with Colchester Council.
- Unregistered piece of land - submission has been made to the Land Registry re access and ownership.
- Amendments to site access proposals address the concerns of adjoining owners.
- Service charge/draft leases/exit charges are still under discussion.
- A review of our insurance policy arrangements is currently under discussion.

Other matters considered throughout the year have been Articles of Association for Companies House, Waiting List and Allocations Policy, Associate membership and archaeological investigation.

Jenny Payne, CMCC Treasurer
Chair, Finance and Legal Group

Building

The building group was reformed this year to take forward the build project and allied matters. During the year we have worked on the following:

- Contributing to the risk register
- Recommending that it was time to allocate our future homes
- Reviewing the future use of the Miller's House
- Devising and recommending a policy and procedure to record and agree changes, extras and information requests
- Reviewing the fees and appointments of all consultants
- Reviewing the process for involving members in design matters
- Reviewing the cost plan when it has been updated.

In addition we have worked with Anne Thorne (ATA), where appropriate, on Plan B for the entrance and on meeting the planning conditions including the archaeological survey, the demolition contract and the tree work. Two members of the building group regularly attend the design team meetings as the client representatives.

We are contributing to the list of contractors we may invite to tender and looking forward to being involved in contractor selection.

Sue York

Chair, Building Group



Membership

As predicted in last year's report, the pace of enquiries has quickened since we gained planning permission for our site. The membership group have replied to 52 enquiries in the past year. This has resulted in 17 formal applications (ie returning of the questionnaire), and we have arranged 14 membership meetings for applicants. (Of the three applications which have not yet been followed up, one has been withdrawn, another is postponed due to illness and the third will be followed up shortly). As a result of the meetings which have already taken place, we have been able to take forward 12 applications.

We have recruited five new Directors and one Associate in the last year (though three of these had already begun the recruitment process in the previous year). We now have 22 Directors and one Associate. What has been particularly pleasing is how quickly and seamlessly these new Directors have become active and influential in CMCC business.

Currently we have eight people (three couples and two singles) actively engaged in the joining process. Our available stock of homes consists of three 3-bedroom houses, three 1-bedroom flats and one 2-bedroom flat. All of the two bedroom houses have been allocated to existing directors.

We hope the work of the membership group will conclude this year, once the remaining properties have been allocated. There will be important tasks remaining: we need to ensure the development of an active waiting list reflecting the popularity of our community and the value for money that it represents.

I would like to thank everyone who has participated in our recruitment process.

Rosie Fooks
Chair, Membership Group

Ever After

The Ever After group met after the Board meetings at Cannock Mill in July, August and September 2015. The Ever After group is intended to be a 'think-tank' for imagining how our community will function once we move into our new homes and to formulate plans that need to be in place before we move in. Terms of reference were agreed and an outline action plan for small groups to form to concentrate on aspects of the following:

- Common house
- Grounds and workshops
- Travel
- Estate charges
- Community life

Among the items discussed have been the terms of the lease agreement, the travel plan and the beginnings of a pet policy.

It is expected that Board members will have more time to work on the 'Ever After' plan once building has commenced on site.

Sara Scott
Chair, Ever After Group



Visitors looking at plans during Open Day, May 2015

Communications

2015 has seen some enormous steps towards the realisation of our project aided by some good publicity and successful events.

Early in the year, a Guardian article by Esther Addley (Feb 2015) led to a number of new contacts and some valuable interest, including from BBC R4, World at One and from Radio Essex. A number of new members came from this national and regional exposure.

At the end of May we held a successful Open Day at Cannock Mill, entertaining over 60 visitors. An exhibition of the scheme and the wider principles of cohousing was displayed on the top floor of the mill and numerous leaflets were handed out.

The granting of full planning permission by Colchester Borough Council in July 2015 finally allowed us to adopt our new name. After a process of consultation with the whole Board we changed our name to Cannock Mill Cohousing Colchester (CMCC) (from London and Countryside Cohousing (LoCo)) and agreed a new logo to go with the new company name. This was coupled with a relaunch of our website.

The May Open Day was followed up by a much smaller event in October, aimed more specifically at local stake holders. Our recently elected MP, Will Quince, came to this and showed a lot of interest in the detail of the scheme.

In November, a group of CMCC members attended the National UKCN conference in Birmingham and our small information stand provided a useful outlet to publicise our group and network with interested parties.

Over the course of the year the small but elite band with the necessary social media and computing skills have kept expanding the CMCC twitter profile and our Facebook presence has been revitalised. Our internal systems have been greatly refined with the introduction of the CMCC Intranet and a logical system of storing and accessing the enormous volume of CMCC records and related policy documentation. Our newsletter continues to keep an expanding group of neighbours, friends and interested followers up to date.

The Communications group has maintained close links with Membership as our key aim continues to be the attracting of potential members to join CMCC.

The next challenge for the Communications group is to make all our systems as 'user friendly' as possible, both internally and externally, so that we can fill the last few vacant homes, and can then concentrate on progress towards the construction phase, and what follows after that.

Andrew Thorne
Chair, Communications group

Professional Advisers

Solicitors:

Wrigleys Solicitors LLP 19 Cookridge St, Leeds LS2 3AG

Design Team:

Architect: Anne Thorne Architects LLP, iINDUSTRY, Adelaide Wharf, 21 Whiston Street, London E2 8EX.

Landscape Design: Studio Engleback, 245 Upper Grosvenor Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2EJ

Quantity Surveyor: Peter W Gittins & Associates, Riverbank House, One Putney Ridge Approach, London SW6 3JD

Services Engineer: Alan Clarke, The Woodlands, Woodland Close, Whitecroft, Lydney GL15 4PL

Structural Engineer and CDM coordinator: Ellis & Moore, Sovereign House 1 Albert Place, Finchley, London N3 1QB

Bankers:

The Co-operative Bank Limited, PO Box 250, Skelmersdale, WN86WT

Triodos Bank NV, Deanery Road, Bristol BS1 5AS

Tax Advisers:

MHA MacIntyre Hudson, New Bridge Street House, 30 – 34 New Bridge Street, London EC4V 6BJ

Valuers:

Morley Riches & Ablewhite LLP, 4 Newcomen Way, Colchester CO4 9RA

CMCC Directors

(at CMCC AGM 16 April 2016)

Joanne Mary Alston
Ian Blackburn
Jane Marion Blackburn (Chair)
Rosemary Anne Fooks
Philip Alexander McGeevor
Jennifer Susan Payne
Linda Denise Redlich
Margaret Jean Stark Robertson
Susan Roche
Lesley Madeleine Scordellis
Sara Rosamund Scott
Barbara Simpkins
Michael Victor Slavin
Anthea Stone
Monica Marianne Strauss
Andrew John Thorne
Anne Thorne (Project Architect)
Eve Tibber
Peter Harris Tibber
Stuart Ronald Welham
David Alan York
Susan Elizabeth York

Associate Director

Matthew Turner



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