



**Commonweal Housing  
Annual Review 2009/10**

# Moving Forward – Achieving Change



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# Chair's Message



Commonweal Housing is all about achieving change – that is the title of this annual review and is at the heart of the future business strategy agreed by Trustees earlier this year.

Not just change for those people directly helped by our projects but as a learning and campaigning organisation devising better ways to tackle social injustice and working to secure policy and operational change so that more people can benefit and change their lives as our role model projects are replicated by others .

This review covers an exciting 12 months for Commonweal from June 2009. We have seen the first replication of one of our models; we have continued to grow our property portfolio making more homes available to our role model projects; we have had our first independent expert evaluation report on one of our projects and, last but not least have taken the step of employing our first full-time Chief Executive and establishing a new office for the charity.

These achievements are covered in more detail elsewhere in this report. In introducing it I wish to focus on how we performed against the three targets we set in last year's Annual Review. Commonweal seeks to operate in a manner which is open and honest, we pride ourselves on doing what we say we will do. To this end I am pleased to report the following progress against the goals set out in last year's review:

## **Goal #1 To commence the replication of the Re-Unite Project**

In autumn 2009 Commonweal Housing, together with our Re-Unite founding partners Housing for Women, signed the first replication agreement with the Asha Women's Centre in Worcester for the delivery of Re-Unite Worcester. The Asha Centre will provide the specialist support services to women from the county returning there after release from prison along with their children, reunited via the project. They are working with Nexus Housing who are providing up to 10 family homes initially that, subject to progress made by households, can become permanent homes.

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Having services offered via a one stop centre together with the hoped for permanent homes offers an interesting variation for areas of lower housing stress compared to the core model developed via the original Re-Unite South London. The smaller number of potential clients will also affect the way the project works.

We continue to work closely with both the Asha Centre and Nexus Housing to support them in their efforts and ensure all learning and positive innovations are captured, to identify how best to meet the needs of mothers leaving custody, their children and society more generally. Our aim is to enhance the offer the Re-Unite model can make to policy makers and decision makers particularly in the criminal justice system

## **Goal #2 Thoroughly establish the Chrysalis Project with St. Mungo's**

Having finalised the signed agreement with St. Mungo's in July 2009 the last 12 months have seen us slowly building up the property portfolio – Commonwealth delivering against a very tight set of property specifications not just size and quality of accommodation but also geographically to maximise the opportunities for the women going through the project. Although hampered by continued down turn in the housing market and the shortage of suitable properties for much of the year, as we write this review we are nearing the completion of this buying programme.

Notwithstanding delays in purchasing all the properties we have still operated 5 flats over the last year which have directly helped 5 women, who can begin to gain the confidence and skills to move on to safe and stable independent homes. The availability of the flats also acts as a great incentive to the dozens of other women being supported through the earlier hostel accommodation stage provided by St Mungo's.

The system of monitoring and recording both process and achievements has been established and regular review meetings are being held with St. Mungo's. Securing the role model principles and challenging the learning is the next crucial stage for this project – aided by the independent expert evaluators appointed to report back on this project.

## **Goal #3 To expand the management of Commonwealth to facilitate its next stage of growth**

In January our first Chief Executive, Ashley Horsey, joined Commonwealth. His experience and track record in establishing new initiatives and delivering change in the housing sector made him an excellent choice for the charity and we were delighted Ashley has joined us as we set about taking Commonwealth Housing to the next level.

The recent recruitment of a full-time PA / Project Officer has also necessitated establishing a new office for the organisation. In March 2010 Commonwealth moved in to new offices in Blackfriars Road, SE1. This new base is convenient for our existing projects and partners, and is also well located for new contacts in the heart of a thriving third sector community south of the river.

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In addition to staff, Commonweal has also reviewed its wider Governance and advisor base over the last year and will be appointing new Trustees over the coming year to complement the skills already in place. Additionally, a new informal Chief Executive's Advisory Panel has been established with help and generous support from senior figures across the academic, housing and voluntary sectors. These friends of Commonweal are helping to supplement our in house expertise by allowing us to mine their skills, knowledge, ideas and experience to help further develop and take forward the aims of the charity.

As Chair of the Board I wish to record my thanks to my fellow Trustees for all their hard work and support over the last year. I also wish to thank Malcolm Beckett as he steps down from his role in advising the Board over recent years – his insight and experience especially when seeking solutions to the affordability of housing, have been greatly appreciated as well as his passion and concern for the groups helped by Commonweal.

Similarly I thank Robert Nadler for his time as an advisor to the Board and welcome him to his new role as a Trustee.

Finally I must record our great thanks to David Peek who invented Commonweal and who has led the operational development of Commonweal from inception to the recent handover to our full-time Chief Executive. David's rigour, consummate professionalism, eye for detail and huge passion to challenge social injustice have been instrumental in Commonweal achieving the success we have to date and setting us up for the future. His input I know has been greatly appreciated by our many partners as well as by the Trustees. Having supported Ashley over his initial period with Commonweal, David is now set to leave us – he can be justifiably proud of what he has achieved and the change he has delivered.

*Fiona Mactaggart MP  
June 2010*



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# Chief Executive's comments



This year the Trustees of Commonweal have endorsed a renewed vision for the charity:

***'To deliver tangible results and the replication of learning from Commonweal Housing supported projects'***

It is clear - Commonweal Housing is all about tangible results and learning from our projects. As one organization, Commonweal does not have the resources or capacity to fully address all the various and deep set social injustices we encounter. What we can do is try to identify and develop excellent, practical solutions to some of these injustices and deliver tangible improvements to people's lives.

We can then question ourselves and others to see whether this really is an excellent solution and a practical role model that could have far wider importance. And if we are convinced that it is, then we enter the next phase of our activity - campaigning.

Through promoting our findings and encouraging genuine replication of learning we aim to achieve real leverage from our investment to enable others to hit the ground running. Helping secure the policy or operational changes that may be at the heart of really tackling some of the social injustices we are dealing with.

This is a hugely exciting time for Commonweal as we move into this campaigning mode on the back of the positive evaluation of the pilot phase of Re-Unite. To do this effectively we require support from others and therefore building strong and productive partnerships with organizations and individuals is also at the heart of what we do.

I am grateful to all my colleagues inside and outside Commonweal that have supported me in my new role. The organization is rightly proud of what it has achieved over the last year and is well placed with the help of others to deliver the Trustee's vision in to the future.

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## Our Goals for 2010/11 are:

- 1 Maximise the benefits of the Re-Unite evaluation for achieving change
- 2 Embed the role model principles within the successful operation of Chrysalis
- 3 Continue to build wider relationships with others to deliver the organization's vision
- 4 Develop and commence our next project meeting the Trustees' strategic target of ensuring it is:
  - Filling a gap in existing provision
  - Challenging a social injustice
  - Providing a housing solution
  - Helping to achieve a balanced portfolio of projects

*Ashley Horsey  
June 2010*



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# Review of Current projects

## Re-Unite



***“I was so desperate. If Re-Unite hadn’t helped me I don’t know what I would have done. I was really worried on a daily basis. I dread to think what would have happened. But the thought of being in a hostel with the children was too much; I think it would have been devastating for them. They would have suffered.”***

*Vicky – a former tenant of Re-Unite*

In February 2010 we received the final evaluation report on the initial pilot phase of this 10 year project. The evaluation was undertaken by two of the leading academics in the field of women and the criminal justice system, Dr Loraine Gelsthorpe and Dr Gilly Sharpe from the Institute of Criminology at Cambridge University. This evaluation gave positive backing to the principles behind the Re-Unite model and supported its continuation. It also highlighted a number of areas that could be improved – recommendations that Commonweal and our partners were keen to hear. The ethos behind Commonweal is about finding and testing new solutions and capturing the learning, positive and negative, to make it as easy as possible for others going forward to replicate and, where appropriate, improve on our early role model schemes.

As the project has evolved and women and their families are moving on to permanent homes the real benefit of the project is starting to become even clearer. Vicky is just one of the women who have been helped and her sentiments have been echoed by others.

The last 12 months also saw the restructuring of the Re-unite South London partnership with Housing for Women (H4W) in line with one of the evaluation’s recommendations. This has seen H4W take on the role of support service provider to the women as well as their previous housing management role. This followed the departure of Women in Prison after the initial pilot phase.

In late 2009, as a further development of the input Commonweal is able to provide to the projects we support, we also took on the revenue fundraising responsibility for the continuation of Re-Unite South London. Already we have been successful in securing funds from a number of grant giving trusts – whose support were gratefully acknowledged.

As the projects now fully beds in the continuation of the detailed monitoring of service delivery and the positive outcomes achieved by the women and the children on the scheme is being maintained and enhanced. We are also aiding wider learning by agreeing to provide quantitative data to the Institute of Criminology for the next 5 years.

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The start of replication for the project and the signing of the replication agreement in 2009 with the Asha Centre in Worcester marked another key milestone for Commonweal. Assisting Worcester and securing further replication and policy change is a key target for Re-Unite over the next 12 months.

## Key findings from the evaluation

- 1** Service users and their children benefited from the provision of housing and support.
- 2** The properties and residential areas were well chosen. The assessment criteria for the selection of service users were clear.
- 3** The personal support was highly valued.
- 4** The children interviewed were extremely positive about Re-Unite.
- 5** Most of the children had to change schools when their mother relocated to the Re-Unite project.
- 6** In terms of re-offending, there were no reconvictions.
- 7** The study makes a powerful business case for the Re-Unite project.
- 8** Several other spending areas where savings can be claimed for the Re-Unite project are identified.

***“The process evaluation of this demonstration project has been extremely valuable. It provides an important basis for the replication of the idea of a housing and support package for women and their children in other areas. We concluded that the project as an idea is feasible, but we also pointed to the need for a number of organisational, implementation and delivery changes, while holding true to the original idea of providing appropriate housing and support. We note that these have been taken on board.”***

*Dr Loraine Gelsthorpe  
Institute of Criminology Cambridge University*

Both the full evaluation report and a Summary document are available to download via the Commonweal Housing website: [www.commonwealhousing.org.uk](http://www.commonwealhousing.org.uk)

***“The Re-Unite project is a very good idea; I think it is really important for women who have been offending to get this support when they come out of prison.”***

*Probation Officer*

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## The Chrysalis project



***“Tenant responding positively to living independently in the community. Rebuilding links with family members and local services.”***

*St. Mungo’s Chrysalis Tenant’s Progress Report  
January 2010*

Over the last 12 months, The Chrysalis project, our partnership with St Mungo’s, providing secure and stable 3rd stage self-contained accommodation for former sex workers has got in to full swing as we have built up the property portfolio.

A number of women have already moved through the programme, with St. Mungo’s reporting that the prospect of the self-contained flats provided by Commonweal within the ongoing supportive Chrysalis programme has offered a major incentive to a number of women who were ready to move on from the second stage hostel but for whom the leap straight to fully independent living might have been too much.

The close project partnership relationship with St Mungo’s means we are able to jointly find solutions to some of the issues that have arisen such as unexpectedly high utility bills and financial demands upon tenants that without the support of the Chrysalis project may have lead to a return to former damaging lifestyles.

***“I had been homeless for 4 months when I moved in. There were other women in the hostel, some who were a lot older and I was shocked at their behaviour and lifestyle. It made me think that I don’t want to be like them in ten years time. I stopped smoking crack as soon as I moved in. I felt disgusted by myself and knew I had to change and this was the first place I felt I could have support and the people do care and it’s not just a job to them.”***

*Keisha – a tenant of the Chrysalis project*

The focus on security and location both within the blocks and within the borough have been of great importance to make every effort to enable the participants on the programme to move on with their lives.

Any innovative project of this nature will never be incident free, however the prior planning and forethought of emergency plans and procedures meant that when called upon, St. Mungo’s has ensured that the Chrysalis project was able to act swiftly when the safety of one of the tenants was put at great imminent risk following a chance encounter with a former associate.

As partners, and seeking to adhere to Commonweal’s own stated ethos of being ‘An innovative, rigorous, learning and campaigning organisation’, Commonweal and St. Mungo’s have reviewed such incidences to ensure that learning is captured. This in turn is then fed back into the policies and procedures being recorded as part of the role model status and future replication that we are aiming for with this project.

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## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

### For the year ended 31 December 2009

	2009 £	2008 £
<b>Incoming resources</b>		
Voluntary income	200,000	300,000
Donated assets	190,000	-
Rental income	50,230	34,656
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>440,230</b>	<b>334,656</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>		
Direct charitable expenditure	258,592	225,828
Cost of generating voluntary income	12,655	-
Governance costs	5,036	5,072
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<b>276,283</b>	<b>230,900</b>
<b>Net incoming resources for the year</b>	<b>163,947</b>	<b>103,756</b>
Fund balances at 1 January	240,480	136,724
<b>Fund balances at 31 December</b>	<b>404,427</b>	<b>240,480</b>

## BALANCE SHEET

### As at 31 December 2009

	2009 £	2008 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>		
Tangible assets and unlisted investment	194,127	-
<b>Current assets</b>		
Debtors	136,452	228,199
Cash at bank	92,300	27,446
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>422,880</b>	<b>255,645</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>		
Creditors: amounts due within one year	(18,453)	(15,165)
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>404,427</b>	<b>240,480</b>
<b>Income funds</b>		
Unrestricted funds	404,427	240,480
<b>Total Charity funds</b>	<b>404,427</b>	<b>240,480</b>

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## Trustees' Report and Accounts

The summarised accounts on the previous page have been extracted from the audited financial statements of Commonweal Housing Limited for the year ended 31 December 2009 which were approved by the Board of Trustees on 8 March 2010. These summarised accounts may not contain sufficient information to allow a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. For further information the full annual financial statements, including the unqualified report of the Auditors, should be consulted.

A copy of the full audited financial statements has been submitted to the Registrar of Companies and the Charity Commission and can be obtained from the Charity's registered office at:

Grove End Gardens, 33 Grove End Road, London, NW8 9LN.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees

*G S Medazoumian FCA  
7th June 2010*

## Report of the Auditors to the Trustees of Commonweal Housing Limited

We have examined the summarised accounts set out on the previous page.

### **Respective Responsibilities of the Trustees and the Auditors**

You are responsible as Trustees for the preparation of the summarised accounts. We have agreed to report to you our opinion on the summarised accounts' consistency with the full financial statements, on which we reported to you on 8 March 2010.

### **Basis of opinion**

We have carried out the procedures we consider necessary to ascertain whether the summarised accounts are consistent with the full financial statements from which they have been prepared.

### **Opinion**

In our opinion, the summarised accounts are consistent with the full financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2009.

*H. W. Fisher & Company  
Registered Auditor  
Acre House, 11-15 William Road,  
London NW1 3ER  
7th June 2010*

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# Legal and administrative details

Commonweal Housing Limited is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association. The directors of the charity are its Trustees for the purposes of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the Board of Trustees.

<b>Company registration number:</b>	5319765
<b>Charity registration number:</b>	1113331
<b>Principal address:</b>	Unit 207, The Blackfriars Foundry, 156 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8EN
<b>Registered office:</b>	Grove End Gardens, 33 Grove End Road, London, NW8 9LN
<b>Directors and Trustees:</b>	Fiona Mactaggart MP (Chair) Sir John Mactaggart Bt. Gary Medazoumian FCA Mrs Jane Slowey CBE
<b>Secretary:</b>	Gary Medazoumian FCA
<b>Bankers:</b>	Barclays Bank plc, 7th Floor, 180 Oxford Street, London BX3 2BB
<b>Solicitors:</b>	Bates Wells & Braithwaite, 2-6 Cannon Street, London EC4M 6YH  Kidd Rapinet, 14 & 15 Craven Street, London WC2N 5AD
<b>Auditors:</b>	H.W. Fisher & Company, Acre House, 11/15 William Road, London NW1 3ER

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# Thanks and funding acknowledgments

Commonweal Housing gratefully acknowledges the ongoing support and core funding it receives from Grove End Housing Association.

Commonweal also thanks its project partners Housing for Women, St. Mungo's, the Asha Centre and Nexus Housing for helping us deliver our role model projects and for their continuing support and positive contributions.

In addition, we specifically record our thanks to the Trustees and administrators of the following organisations that have provided generous project funding in support of Re-Unite South London:

The Draper's Company

The Goldsmith's Company

The Mercer's Company

Lankelly Chase Foundation

The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust

The Wates Foundation

Wakefield and Tetley Trust

Garfield Weston Foundation



Carbon Smart status certifies the practical actions we have taken to actively reduce our environmental impact

