

REVIEW

2012-13

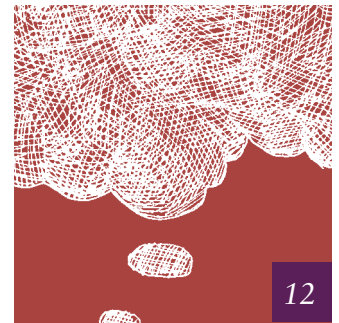
Moving On

Changing lives



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“Thames Reach sees the Peer Landlord model as an opportunity to provide a creative and affordable housing solution for our service users.

Monica Geraghty, *Employment Academy Development Manager Thames Reach*

This year's highlights

2012

June

- > Parliamentary launch of St Mungo's Re-Building Shattered Lives campaign featuring the Chrysalis project
- > First woman housed by Re-Unite in the north of England; Re-Unite Humberside support mother and two children into private rented accommodation
- > Appointment of haysmacintyre as new external auditors

July

- > Working with Geoff Kendrick, Executive Director at Nomura International plc, on the cost benefit analysis of the Peer Landlord project – voluntary engagement arranged via the charity Pro-Bono Economics

August

- > Media coverage for the Peer Landlord and Miscarriages of Justice projects

September

- > Commonweal and Housing for Women jointly submit evidence to the Justice Select Committee highlighting Re-Unite for the inquiry in to women in the criminal justice system
- > Publication of the final Chrysalis project evaluation report from Prof. Roger Matthews and Helen Easton – a positive review calling for the principles behind the model to be replicated
- > First direct property purchase by Commonweal – three-bed house in Tottenham Hale handed over to Catch 22 for the Peer Landlord project

October

- > 3rd Annual Re-Unite Replication Network conference held in London. Attended by over 30 delegates including representatives from all seven Re-Unite projects plus guests from Wales and the north east interested in delivering the scheme, along with senior representatives from NOMS and the MoJ
- > Further press coverage for Re-Unite in Inside Housing Magazine

November

- > Re-Unite Gloucestershire receives two year project funding from the J P Getty Junior Charitable Trust
- > Commonweal Trustees and members of the Advisory Panel joined by Re-Unite service users and staff at 3rd Annual Strategic Away Day

December

- > Approval by Trustees and publication of new three-year Business Strategy 2013-15

2013

January

- > Signing of new Project Agreement with the Royal Courts of Justice Advice Bureau for delivery of the Miscarriages of Justice Accommodation Support project

February

- > Launch of revised and updated Re-Unite website www.re-unite.org.uk
- > Re-Unite South London successfully house their 40th service user

- > A partnership between Re-Unite Gloucestershire and Stonham Housing commences with a woman being housed

March

- > Completion of £1.5M social investment deal with Bridges Ventures, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Trust for London
- > First example of partnership working between Re-Unite projects in different areas: Re-Unite Birmingham support a woman in HMP Drake Hall and then Re-Unite Greater Manchester support her on release
- > Appointment of Get the Data Ltd as evaluators for the Miscarriages of Justice Accommodation Support project

April

- > Draw down of first social investment funds as a three-bed Peer Landlord house in Sydenham south east London is handed over to Thames Reach
- > Parliamentary lunch hosted by Fiona Mactaggart to promote the Chrysalis project and to kick start ideas for replication
- > The Re-Unite programme welcomes its 70th service user – a woman being held in HMP Newhall and due for release in July

May

- > Further replication of Re-Unite progresses in the north east with Cyrenians, based in Newcastle
- > The Nelson Trust and the ISIS women's centre – our partner in Re-Unite Gloucestershire – are commissioned to conduct research and development work for a new women's centre in Swindon

How we moved forward this year

From Chair **Fiona Mactaggart MP**



Our theme this year is moving on.

Many people housed in our properties and supported by our project partners have moved forward with their lives.

Commonweal itself is moving on: existing projects have been replicated, adapted and expanded. We are starting a new project addressing the housing needs of victims of miscarriages of justice, and we have expanded our funding base through social investment. Re-Unite, our flagship project, has continued to develop. Our Re-Unite Development Manager, Jane Glover, has helped to increase collaboration between a network of partners across the country to help women leaving prison. There has been a further positive evaluation by Prof. Loraine Gelsthorpe and Jane Dominey from Cambridge University. The next challenge will be deciding how we move on. The future status and structure for Re-Unite will be a focus of our work in the coming year.

The positive evaluation of Chrysalis by Prof. Roger Matthews and Helen Easton in 2012 suggests that replication of what we have learnt in that project is likely to be as much about principles and approaches as it is about a specific housing model. We initiated discussions in London and elsewhere about the future, putting Commonweal at the heart of developments around how to support women seeking to exit a history of prostitution.

Our Peer Landlord project has been running for just over a year and has been boosted with the input of new social investment funding to grow the property portfolio. Government expects more people in housing need to share homes with others outside

their family, and the project has provided a timely test bed for ways to help people move on from homelessness or chaotic housing to independence.

As I write we are awaiting completion of the first purchase for the new Miscarriages of Justice Accommodation Support project with the Citizens Advice Bureau. This aims to develop a pathway of support for people who have experienced wrongful imprisonment.

Our ambition is to develop a range of projects. That will take time. New projects need to grow and be independently evaluated before we can confidently promote replication or other learning. We try to develop sustainable ways of delivering projects: the social investment for the Peer Landlord project provides a model, which might in future fund replication.

This year Trustees concluded that Commonweal is fundamentally an action learning charity. We are grateful that our main benefactor, Grove End Housing, understands that even failure of a project provides an opportunity to learn. If we keep learning from what we do we will not only benefit current residents in our projects but also develop better ways, through housing, to enable people experiencing injustice to move on to a better future.

Our challenge is to know why an initiative succeeds or fails and then to share that knowledge so that ways of meeting housing needs for people who can be overlooked become widespread.

I thank all my fellow Trustees, our voluntary Advisory Panel Members, our project partners and the staff team for their continued support and efforts over the last year. ■

Learning from what we do

From Chef Executive **Ashley Horsey**



It is always nice when something you have worked towards comes to fruition. For me the highlight of the last year was the completion of our social investment deal. Our new investment partners, Bridges Ventures, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Trust for London, are all experienced investment and grant making bodies, for them to recognise and embrace both the aims of our work and the specifics of our attractive social investment deal was a great boost.

My challenge now is to capture all the learning from that experience, improve it and then do more of it over the coming months and years – building further Commonweal's ability to provide the bricks and mortar needed by partners to help develop new projects and find replicable solutions to yet more manifestations of social injustice.

On a personal level I wish to thank my colleagues Jane Glover and especially Amy Doyle who joined me this year as my PA / Project Officer; her support generally and specifically her stewardship on the Chrysalis replication has been of great value already.

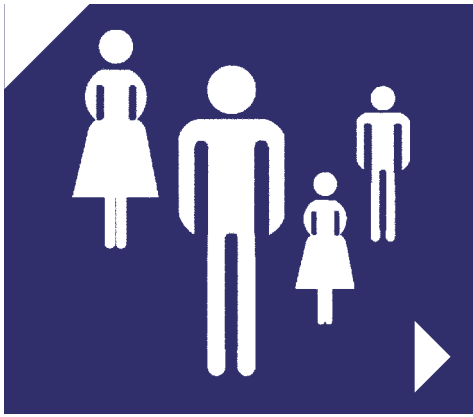
I also wish to record my thanks to Amy's predecessor, Minee Pande, who left in the autumn to go travelling around the world.

As our latest Miscarriages of Justice project takes off we welcome Jack Cattell, Alan Mackie and colleagues from Get the Data Ltd as our latest evaluation partners.

Our Chair has already noted the shift towards describing Commonweal as an action learning charity. Previously we had said action research... Is there really such a big difference? Big difference probably not but significant, yes. Research can imply an end in itself: action learning, we feel, for Commonweal at least, means constantly learning from all that we do, never stopping and as much as possible always sharing for others to benefit from. Sharing, creating access to and maximising the benefits of our learning among others... that is what this charity seeks to do. ■

Targets for 2013/14

1. Identifying a sustainable future for Re-Unite to allow Commonweal to step back from front line support from 2015.
2. Achieving replication of learning for projects using the principles of the Chrysalis model.
3. Continuing to raise awareness and keeping the Peer Landlord approach at the heart of discussions around shared housing models.
4. To have identified our next project for delivery in 2014/15 and to secure further social investment funding in support of this.



Wise counsel and bold leadership

The last 12 months has seen a refreshing of the Commonweal Advisory Board, which meets periodically over a working lunch to discuss ideas, usually with an expert project partner on hand.

Diverse expertise helps the Chief Executive to shape innovative projects, providing a sounding board for new ideas and expert guidance before proposals go to Trustees.

The new recruits include Neil O'Connor, a Senior Director at CLG, Liz Clarkson, outgoing Chief Executive at Housing for Women, Helen Easton, Senior Researcher at London South Bank University, along with Heather Petch, housing consultant and former Director at HACT, the housing association charitable trust.

Keith Jenkins, Senior Partner at Winkworth Sherwood Solicitors and Commonweal Advisory Panel member since 2010, said: "Commonweal is an interesting charity wanting to try new things. Joining the Advisory Panel is an opportunity to sit down and discuss off the wall ideas and solutions with a group of really interesting people... what's not to like?"

Commonweal continues to benefit from the experience and wise counsel of leading experts across the fields of housing, law, research, charities and government.

Growing the network of support for women leaving prison

Re-Unite has grown its network of support from three boroughs of South London to six regions across the UK, helping women exiting prison into housing where they can take care of their children.

Anawim women's centre is providing rapid access to housing in several parts of Birmingham through a formal partnership with housing association Midland Heart.

In Gloucestershire, ISIS women's centre is trialling a partnership with Stonham housing, which has made four discrete two-bedroom flats available for women in Gloucester.

The Together Women Project, based in Yorkshire, is drawing on informal relationships with a range of private rented and social housing providers, so that suitable homes can be found across the county.

Expanding into the north east, Re-Unite is partnering with the charity Cyrenians, which is bringing 50 empty properties into use from across Tyne and Wear, Northumberland and County Durham with the Empty Homes Community Grants Programme. It is hoped that some properties will provide family homes for women on the Re-Unite programme.



Navigating a changing criminal justice landscape

The Ministry of Justice is in the process of radically reforming the criminal justice system, particularly rehabilitation, and the landscape of services is consequently changing. In many areas women's centres are closing, to be replaced by virtual 'hubs' that will offer support to women on a payment by results basis.

These changes naturally represent some challenges and some opportunities for the Re-Unite programme and Commonweal is staying abreast of developments.

Commonweal's key aim is that the new commissioning bodies should require all those organisations who win the criminal justice contracts to offer the Re-Unite programme to women who are mothers.

Commonweal will also be partnering with organisations willing and able to adapt to meet the changing landscape. It is committed to supporting the women's centres, which have, and continue to play, an inspirational role in delivering a successful Re-Unite programme.

A wide range of interests

Housing solutions to social injustice is a huge canvas for Commonweal to explore and one that makes our role so exciting and varied. However, as a small charity with limited financial and staff resources we can't do everything. Every year we look at and investigate a wide range of different areas where there are evident injustices and where housing is potentially part of the overall solution. But not all will become Commonweal projects.

Here is a selection of a few potential project areas we are currently exploring.



Making good use of empty homes

Empty homes and disused former commercial properties are a greatly wasted resource for social change. A movement among individuals, groups and organisations has seen efforts to bring properties back into use to provide much needed housing.

Commonweal is currently looking to support the movement, through using its financial resources; possibly leveraging in further social investment or supporting sweat equity and trying to expand on some existing initiatives.

Homesteading and community led self-help housing offers interesting models that might make ideal Commonweal projects. They offer the opportunity to test new ideas, and to capture and share learning to promote progress in new directions.

Living independently after head trauma

Commonweal is working with Attend, the national volunteering charity, on a possible new project, to support people with an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) along the road to a more independent way of life.

Often people who have an ABI, including those who have suffered strokes or a traumatic head injury, need to rely on their parents and siblings for accommodation and support. In some cases, this holds people back in their journey to rebuild a more independent life, as more formal social care arrangements often need to be made when elderly parents die.

The project might look to develop a transitional housing model for people who have an ABI. David Wood OBE, Chief Executive of Attend, said: "There are often no options for many ABI clients other than returning to parents or other family care. Important as this is, it may not be a long-term option and in some cases can lead to a smothering with love where individuals are held back on the progress they may need to make.

"Working with Commonweal is a fantastic opportunity that is helping us to consider and shape possible solutions."

Asylum seekers in limbo

Commonweal is looking at new solutions to injustices resulting from the UK's asylum system, which deny people the right to public funds whilst they consider appealing a rejected claim to asylum.

When people are declined the right to asylum in the UK, they are presented the opportunity to appeal. In this transitional period, asylum seekers are denied the right to public funds, often left destitute, without access to housing, benefits or the ability to work, as they plan or await a course of action.

Commonweal's primary concern is that if an asylum seeker is

temporarily in the UK and is not being immediately removed from the country, enforcing destitution is a gross injustice.

Commonweal and a range of organisations including the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) and Hope Housing Project in Birmingham, are looking at the options for delivering a sustainable model that can provide the short-term transitional housing needed by individuals. Such a model should enable people to consider their options without suffering as a consequence.



Closing the door on street prostitution

Following the positive review of the Chrysalis three-year pilot project, Commonweal is gearing up to replicate the model across the UK to support women trying to exit prostitution

Women exiting a life of street based prostitution already face huge pressures – stigma, negative former associates, drug and substance misuse, physical and mental health issues. Those who take the decision, and make those difficult steps, may find themselves, if they are lucky, in a supportive hostel or supported housing project like that run in south London by St. Mungo's.

However, the huge investments of time, money, personal effort and heartache, for service providers and most importantly the women themselves, can for far too many come to nought. As they move on from the hostel, the support falls away and they revert back to former behaviours, acquaintances and the personal demons they had previously been moving on from.

Commonweal's Chrysalis project, delivered in partnership with St. Mungo's and Lambeth Council, seeks to address this by providing a structured three stage housing pathway for women seeking to exit street based prostitution. With clients frequently seeking to escape abusive relationships, drug misuse and poor physical and mental health, the impact of the stage 3 self contained transitional flats provided by Commonweal, has been positively evaluated. They provide a vital stepping stone from high support hostel to sustainable independent living. In the stage 3 flats tenants are responsible for managing the properties, paying bills, paying rent, cleaning, getting on with their neighbours.

The three year pilot project (2009-2012) including up to 20 women, tested whether having this type of accommodation available after a fully supported

hostel removes the disincentive to progression by providing a known place to move on to. Also, does living in this environment, which is part of a continued exiting and recovery pathway, bring added benefit to the women progressing to fully independent, stable lives? The independent evaluation undertaken by leading experts Prof. Roger Matthews from the University of Kent and Helen Easton, Senior Researcher at London South Bank University, published in October 2012, suggested that this hypothesis is proven.

Helen Easton, says: "The project is effective - none of the women have left the project prematurely despite histories of abandoning and being excluded from tenancies and support services.

"Perhaps the most innovative and convincing aspect of the project is the possibility for replication in different areas as the model adopted involves a partnership between support services, housing provider and the local authority".

“The Chrysalis project provides women leaving prostitution realistic, high quality accommodation and support, which generates hope and motivation and helps women to create their own personal conditions and strategies, which support them to remain motivated.

**Helen Easton, Senior Researcher London
South Bank University**

The Chrysalis project is a unique and innovative response to the very particular needs of women exiting street prostitution.

Taking the specific recommendations in the evaluation, Commonweal and partners are now seeking to:

- Share this learning
- Encourage others to replicate the key approaches of the model, namely a structured housing pathway along with key work provision and psychotherapeutic support within the framework of an evidence based exiting model
- Raise the awareness of the specific needs of those with a history of prostitution which are too often ignored, repressed or not addressed by many mainstream women's services
- Support the growing recognition that prostitution should be seen as a manifestation of violence against women and girls. Models and approaches

to help women exit need to be included in such strategies by local authorities and Police and Crime Commissioners.

Fiona Mactaggart MP, Chair of Commonweal, this year hosted a round table meeting in Parliament with stakeholders from across London to move this agenda forward. Detailed discussions are already in hand with both service providers and local authorities from across the Capital seeking to identify how they can ingrain elements of the Chrysalis approach in their areas. Outside London Commonweal is linking up with others such as Cyrenians in Newcastle. Our challenge is to embed this encouraging start into sustained replication and roll-out over the next 12 months, both in London and areas outside where the headline issues may vary – there being less street based prostitution – but where the underlining approach can still help. ■



LAURA'S STORY:

I entered the first stage of the Chrysalis project and started getting proper support regarding misuse of drugs and sex work, although, at the time I was more into robbing the punters. I then started to settle down, and by that I mean calming down on drugs, stopping sex working, and stopping robbing punters.

It all started when I took some drugs at a time when I was very vulnerable, and I became dependant. I didn't choose that nor the dark side that came with it, which only seemed to get darker and darker. Now I'm pleased to say I can see the light.

Through the Chrysalis project I was able to access and engage in lots of programmes that supported me to learn to reduce my dependencies. Activities like the theatre workshop held at the first stage, which gave me a way of letting out a lot of anger I suppose, and about learning to express myself even more. I started swimming again, with one of the activity workers, and went on trips and got involved in all kinds of activities. My major one being cooking. I went on to further education and now I'm a fully qualified chef!

I now work as a chef. I get to cook all sorts of meals and I'm gaining great experience.

After a hard day's work I can go back to my Commonweal flat and enjoy my space. I just got a new chair that my mum in law gave me – a big wicker chair... It's lovely! I'm looking forward to sorting out my sitting room with a lick of paint in the next couple of weeks. Having the serenity, space, and peace of mind to just live – that's what the Chrysalis project has done for me.

**Names have been changed*

The positive cost of independence

After another year of action, the Peer Landlord model has broken into the social investment market receiving a financial boost from three social investors, seeking to generate social as well as financial returns

Over the past year, around 25 people have benefitted from the Peer Landlord supportive shared housing model. In the coming years Commonweal will be able to extend support to many more thanks to a £1.5m injection of capital investment from three leading social investors, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Trust for London and Bridges Ventures. The funding boost will enable six more houses to be acquired almost doubling the number of single homeless people that can be housed at any one time.

As welfare benefit reforms hit home, including restrictions on housing benefit support to those under 35, the continuing shortage of new affordable housing combined with difficulties for first time buyers in accessing mortgage finance, mean it is near impossible for many on benefits or a low income to find a home. Even the costs associated with alternatives including traditional hostels and supported housing programmes can present obstacles to individuals looking for housing.

Commonweal has successfully brought the year to a close with its social investment model in place, setting in motion a ground-breaking residential property backed model, which provides an attractive rate of return to investors whilst also delivering significant and measurable social impact in terms of the outcomes from the project itself. As a result we have been able to maximise the benefit of the ongoing financial support from our principle benefactor Grove End Housing to leverage additional funding.

Delivering the Peer Landlord model has been made possible with the support of our partners Catch 22 and Thames Reach, and evaluation partners Dr Anwen Jones and colleagues from the Centre for Housing Policy (CHP) University of York. As the evaluation period progresses we are learning how best to adapt the model for our clients and growing our understanding of the most effective means of supporting them to build more independent lives.

Commonweal's hypothesis is that with appropriate support and training, our mutually supportive Peers and tenants can offer stable and sustainable tenancies and a positive letting option for private landlords. It is also clear that the informal peer management can reduce the management costs frequently associated with traditional housing association or supported housing reducing the need for subsidy. ■

Typical Rents Per Week

Hostels:	£491.41
Supported Housing:	£116.60
Single occupancy private rented sector tenancy:	£188.68
Shared private rented sector properties including service charge:	£95.00
Peer Landlord typical rent including service charge:	£86.10

Source: Thames Reach – May 2013

“This is not grant funding and we do expect a financial return; less perhaps than could be achieved with more mainstream investments, but a vital part nevertheless of the package.

Caroline Tulloch, Investment Manager Bridges Ventures Manager Thames Reach

The Peer Landlord approach

Peer Landlord accommodation challenges the notion that private rented shared housing is unattractive. It provides people at risk of becoming homeless with good quality, affordable private accommodation, supported by a Peer Landlord. Clients can learn from each other, understand budgeting and better prepare for independent living, while holding down a job. Peer Landlords are being trained in key areas such as housing management and maintenance awareness as well as financial literacy and money management. Only once clients already known to and supported by our partners have demonstrated some progression will they become eligible for this option. As part of the eligibility for this programme, they must 'prepare to share' – to anticipate the sorts of situations and challenges they will face, and agree in advance the strategies for dealing with them. It provides a formal agreement for sharers and gives the right to seek help and mediation if either sharer is unhappy with how things are going.



SEAN'S STORY:

I became a Peer Landlord in March 2012, supporting a three-bedroom shared property in Lewisham. I had a job before this and lived in shared accommodation with friends. But, I was made redundant. I lost my home and spent several weeks sleeping rough before approaching Thames Reach's London Street Rescue Service for support.

They referred me to the Employment and Resettlement team as a candidate for the role of Peer Landlord. I was chosen for the role, I moved in, did the shopping and began setting up the house for myself and the other two tenants.

Along with the other tenants I created a friendly communal environment, ensured the upkeep of the property and made reports on maintenance, alerting Thames Reach to any health and safety concerns. I have facilitated visits to the house by Thames Reach and external agencies and am willing to talk to others about the project.

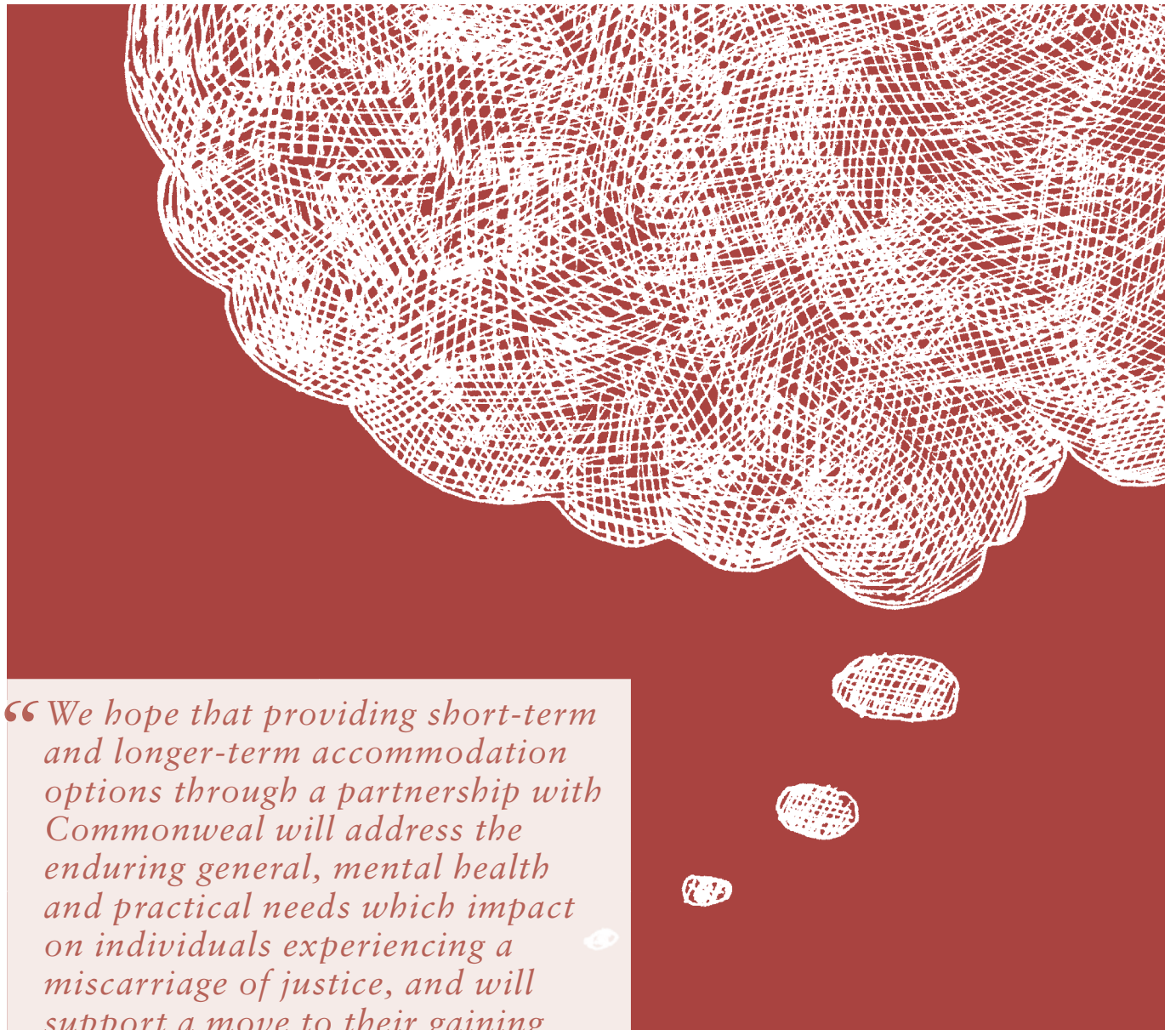
Since losing my job, I have found it hard to find work and have had some periods of unemployment and trouble paying rent due to problems with benefit claims. But it has helped greatly to learn how important it is to communicate with Thames Reach, to request information and advice or to contact other support services to help me resolve issues I am struggling with.

**Names have been changed*



When justice is unjust and freedom is tough to take

Ex-offenders get access to rehabilitation and support to help them build a new life after prison. But it's a different story if you've been wrongly convicted and then had your conviction overturned. Twenty-two such people every year are declared innocent by the criminal justice system – and then dumped back into society and told to get on with their lives. Commonweal believes this must change, and has been working with the Miscarriages of Justice Support Service on a solution.



“ We hope that providing short-term and longer-term accommodation options through a partnership with Commonweal will address the enduring general, mental health and practical needs which impact on individuals experiencing a miscarriage of justice, and will support a move to their gaining confidence and independence.

Alison Lamb, Chief Executive RCJAB

Justice should be a good thing. But it doesn't always work out like that if you've been wrongly convicted of a crime. As if the conviction itself wasn't enough to destroy any human being, the journey to freedom once the conviction has been overturned can be just as soul destroying.

Research shows that, since 1997, 324 people have had their convictions quashed out of 461 who have made it to the Court of Appeal. The problem is that freedom brings a whole new set of challenges for the individuals involved. If they had been guilty, a range of support services would kick in at this point. But those who are newly judged to be innocent – because they are innocent – must forego the rehabilitation, resettlement and support services available to ex-offenders.

For Commonweal, such a situation is something akin to red rag to a bull. When we discovered that this gap in the criminal justice system existed, we were moved to take on the challenge. The answer, we believe, is actually quite simple: build a resettlement pathway for victims of miscarriages of justice, so that they can take those steps to freedom on firm ground.

Working with the specialist Miscarriages of Justice Support Service run by the Royal Courts of Justice Citizens Advice Bureau (RCJAB), Commonweal's latest project provides this pathway into accommodation, designed to look after both the short-term and longer-term needs of people wrongly convicted by the state.

The majority of the individuals with access to the project are men. All have been wrongly held in prison on serious offences for several years. On release, as victims of miscarriages of justice, they were referred to the RCJAB. Most will likely be without financial support, and may have lost other assets held in the community during their time in prison.

As friendships and family ties are subject to intense strain in the event of criminal convictions, maintaining personal relationships can also become difficult. For some, the experience of imprisonment induces enduring changes to their personality, which makes re-establishing relationships with family and friends a major challenge. For others, the experience has been so severe that they develop symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, which can make life after imprisonment a nightmare.

“Because they are innocent, those who have been wrongly convicted must forego the rehabilitation, resettlement and support services available to ex-offenders.”

Our economic climate has compounded the issues faced by people facing unjust convictions. Alison Lamb, Chief Executive of the RCJAB, says: “Welfare reforms, which have introduced a housing benefit cap and ‘bedroom’ tax and the increasing market rents are exacerbating the problems experienced by our clients who when leaving the Court of Appeal often do not have housing. Providing housing options that recognise their needs is vital.”

It is important to recognise that readjustment to life outside of prison involves diverse challenges and progresses in stages, which present different needs. For example, whilst for many people access to decent accommodation is a very important part of the recovery, some people have a tendency to feel unsettled or unsafe in their own accommodation and will seek to move to try and alleviate these feelings. ▶



So Commonweal's solution will provide both short-term (stage 1) and longer-term (stage 2) housing. The first stage accommodation will be available at the point of crisis – either at release or later when, all too often, relationships and other housing options fall apart. After this period of stabilisation, if a longer-term option is appropriate, Commonweal will work with the clients to acquire bespoke housing in an area of their choice across London and the wider south-east.

The greater stability and certainty, we believe, will enable the other support services – such as mental health or counselling support – to gain greater traction and so speed up the road to recovery. This will help clients equip themselves better to face the challenges of everyday life.

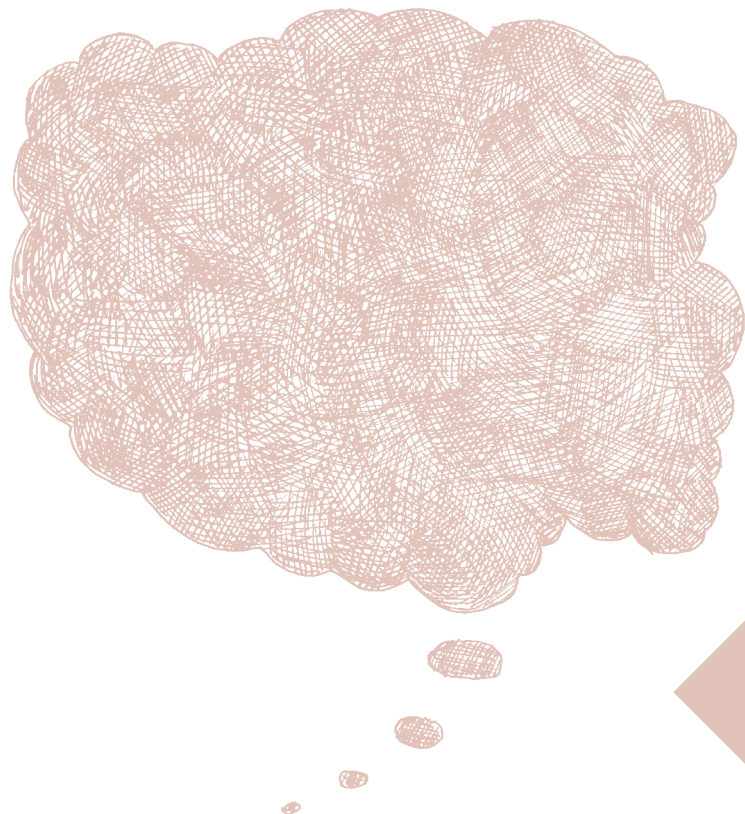
Ultimately, we hope that clients will be able to buy the homes from Commonweal if and when they receive any compensation award.

For people incorrectly convicted of crimes, sucked into the criminal justice system and spat out on the other side, the challenges are many, and the options for support are virtually non-existent. But we know that our approach can make a difference.

“Whilst for many people access to decent accommodation is a very important part of the recovery, some people have a tendency to feel unsettled or unsafe in their own accommodation and will seek to move to try and alleviate those feelings.”

We are now evaluating the project with researchers, and working to refine the solution with leading experts such as Dr. Adrian Grounds, research fellow at Cambridge University's Institute of Criminology.

We aim to demonstrate that the benefits of a funded, structured accommodation and support process are many. They lead to a smoother transition out of prison and they cut down the heavy reliance on national health and other care services. Most fundamentally, they go some way to offering a meaningful way forward for the scores of individuals who have been wronged by the state and must somehow find a way to build a new life. ■





Filling gaps in housing provision...

By Commonweal Trustee **Steve Douglas**

When I was approached with the invitation to consider joining the Board of Trustees of Commonweal, in truth, I knew little about them. As a charity they had not made a great song and dance about who they were.

I have known Ashley Horsey for a number of years and was aware of the work of other Trustees on the board. I was intrigued to find out more, and it soon became clear that Commonweal were an organisation very quietly going about the business of creating social change.

My career has played out in the social housing sector, working mainly in housing associations, and as a regulator when I was Chief Executive of the Housing Corporation. I now run a leading social housing consultancy with colleagues, Altair Limited. During this time I have been a board member of many different housing associations. As time went on I increasingly began to look to do something that went beyond housing.

The process of testing and learning from new projects, new models and new ideas was something I found fascinating about Commonweal's work. I was drawn to its principle of using charitable resources to do something new, with a very clear remit of developing models that can work

in the 'real world' where homes don't come for free!

I discovered that Commonweal was not about simply meeting housing needs as per the expertise of bodies such as housing associations, local authorities and private house builders. It had carved out a niche for itself, seeking to fill gaps and provide opportunities for front line service providers – including charities and housing associations – to try something new without a fear of failure but with a genuine desire to learn.

The process of testing and learning from new projects, new models and new ideas was something I found fascinating about Commonweal's work.

I am particularly excited at the way Commonweal actively seeks to understand different areas and find out where housing can play a part in improving people's lives and life chances. They understand where their support is needed and at the same time recognise that their services might be less appropriate in circumstances where a lack of accommodation is the only issue at hand.

The focus on evaluation and learning is another key factor that attracted me to the charity. I have been able to use my experience and knowledge to develop an understanding of how the mainstream housing sector might be able to take proven models forward.

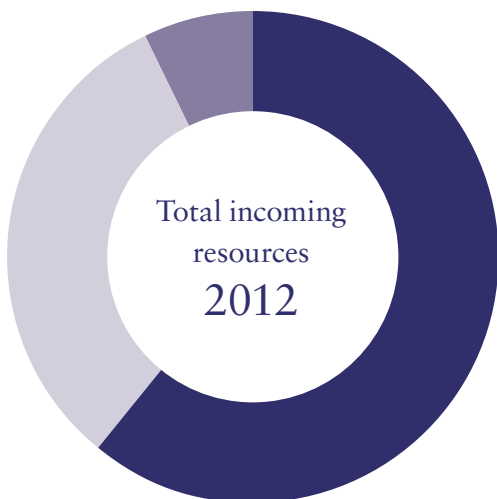
Something that has become increasingly apparent over the past year is the positive relationship and sense of mutual openness that Commonweal has with project partners. Positive feedback is often the result of a shared sense of working towards solutions, which differs from the traditional funder – recipient relationship. In addition, the relatively small number of projects means that Trustees can get a real feel for what project partners are doing.

I hope that what I bring to board meetings is a sense of the real world obstacles that might prevent the models discussed working in practice, and that I help shape the questions Commonweal needs to ask when developing and evaluating projects. Lastly, with my knowledge of the housing sector and acute awareness of how important a home is to a person's life, I am confident that Commonweal can and should perhaps make a bit more of a song and dance about the work they do – I think it is worth shouting about! ■

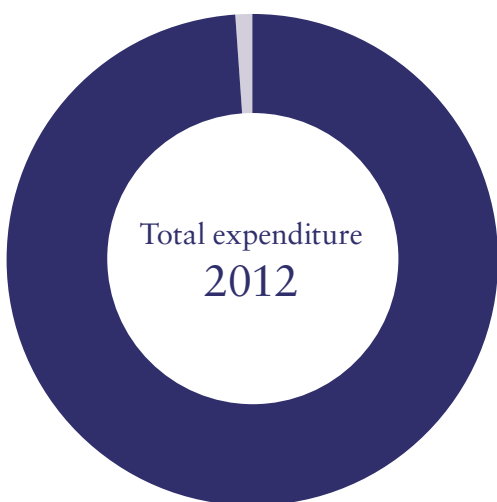


Commonweal in numbers

Income and expenditure

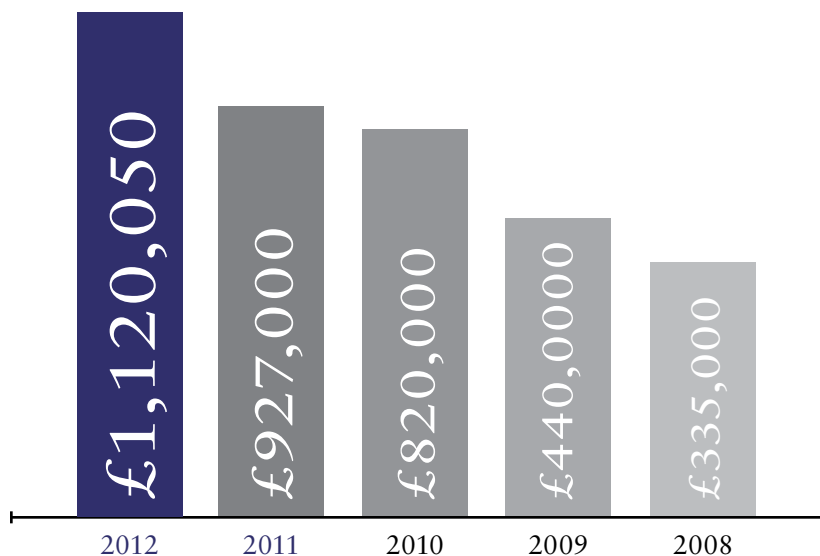


Voluntary income	61%
Donated assets	32%
Rental income	7%

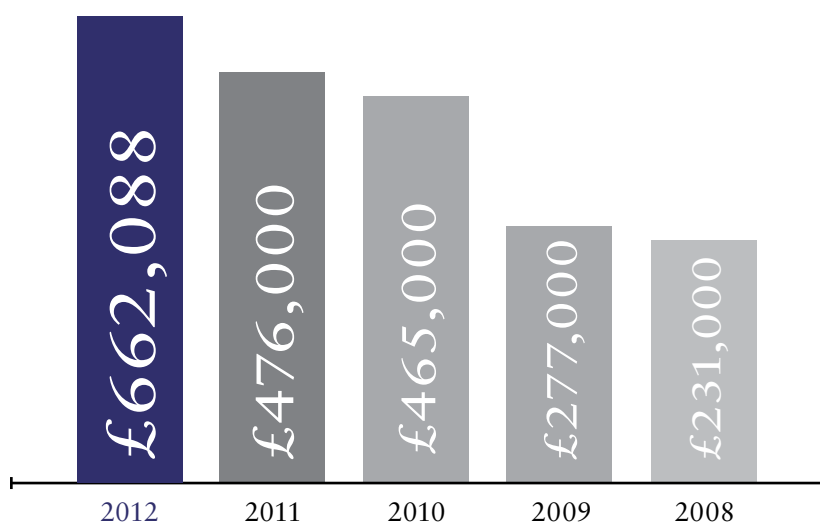


Charitable activities	99%
Governance	1%

Incoming resources 2008–201



Total expenditure 2008–2012



Full details of Commonweal's financial statements are available at www.commonwealhousing.org.uk

Balance sheet

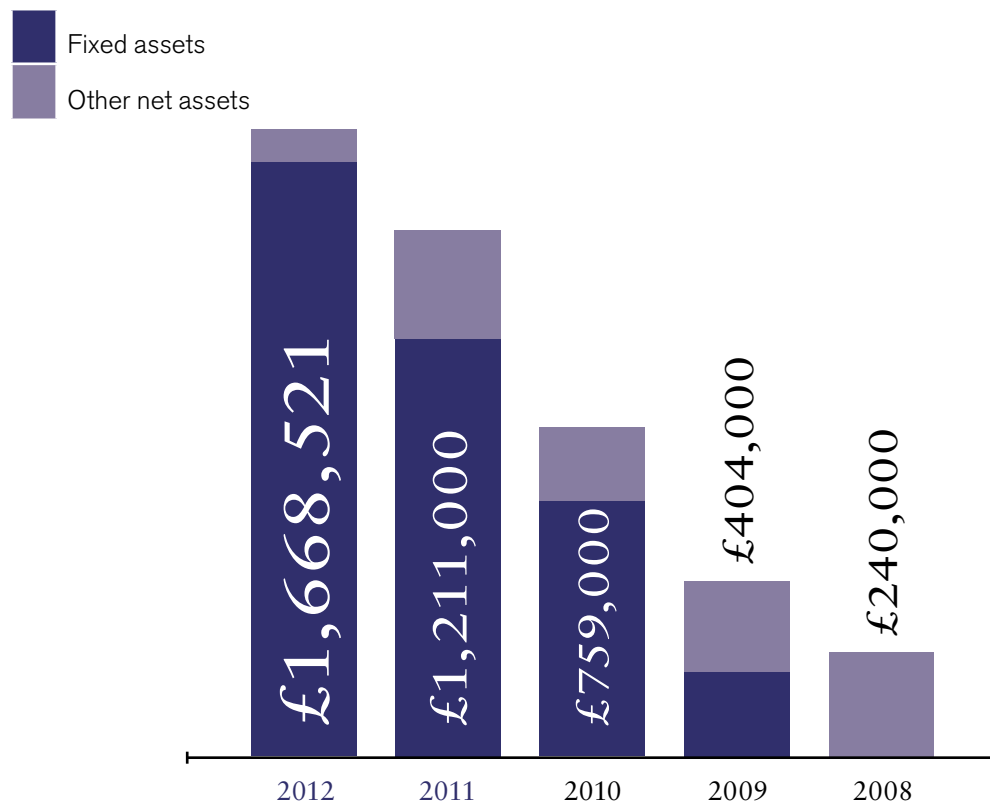


Fixed assets	95%
Other net assets	5%



Restricted	5%
Designated Property Fund	78%
Designated Replication Fund	9%
General Fund	8%

Net assets 2008–2012



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.

Company registration number: 5319765

Charity registration number: 1113331

Principal address: Unit 207, The Blackfriars Foundry,
156 Blackfriars Road,
London SE1 8EN

Registered office: 2 Babmaes Street
London SW1Y 6HD

Directors and Trustees: Fiona Mactaggart MP (Chair)
Sir John Mactaggart Bt
Gary Medazoumian FCA
Jane Slowey CBE
Laurence Newman
Robert Nadler
Steven Douglas
(from March 2012)

Secretary: Gary Medazoumian FCA

Bankers: Barclays Bank plc, 7th Floor, 180
Oxford Street, London BX3 2BB

Solicitors: Bates Wells & Braithwaite,
2-6 Cannon Street, London EC4M 6YH
Bircham Dyson Bell, 50 Broadway,
London SW1H 0BL

Auditors: haysmacintyre
Fairfax House
15 Fulwood Place
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Registered in England: Number 5319765. Registered Charity: Number 1113331

Thanks and funding acknowledgments

Commonweal Housing remain extremely grateful for the ongoing capital support and core funding it receives from Grove End Housing Limited

Commonweal also thanks its project partners Housing for Women, St. Mungo's, Anawim and Midland Heart, the Nelson Trust, Together Women (Y&H), Threshold, Thames Reach, Catch 22, Broadway /Real Lettings and the RCJ Advice Bureau for helping us deliver our role model projects and for their continuing support and positive contributions.

Members of the Chief Executive's Advisory Panel over the year including Jeremy Swain, Joyce Mosley, Keith Jenkins, Andy Gale, Elizabeth Balgobin, Kate Dodsworth and Lynne Duval, Elizabeth Clarkson, Neil O'Connor and Heather Petch.

Particular thanks to Lisa Greensill and Melanie Shad who stepped down from their Advisory Panel role over the course of the year.

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:

- Lankelly Chase Foundation
- The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
- Wakefield and Tetley Trust
- The Bromley Trust
- Charles Hayward Foundation
- Henry Smith Charity
- Beatrice Laing Trust
- Tudor Trust

We also acknowledge the generosity of haysmacintyre in sponsoring our new folder and for their support in hosting the Re-Unite Conference and finally to Bircham Dyson Bell for hosting the Trustee's Away Day.

