



CHANNELS (CHELMSFORD) MANAGEMENT COMPANY

For Residents of Bellway at Channels

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on 6th September 2021 at Beaulieu Community Centre
Minutes

Present: Marie Wakeling (MW) – Senior Property Manager, Remus
Andrew Wright (AW) – Director of CCMC (Acting Chair)
Michael Eve (ME) - Director of CCMC
Kwex Nwachukwu (KN) - Director of CCMC
Cynthia Driver (CD) – Director of CCMC
10 Members of CCMC

Item	
1	<p>Introduction</p> <p>The meeting commenced at 5.40pm. All directors and MW introduced themselves and thanked the members for attending.</p>
2	<p>Directors Update</p> <p>AW explained the last AGM was January 2020 before Covid-19 and this is the first time since we have been able to have the meeting face to face. Channels Chelmsford Management Company is a Limited company and there are rules directors must adhere to, such as face to face AGMs. Since the last AGM, lots of things have been happening which members are aware of including a lot of background work happening behind the scenes.</p> <p>Managing Agents</p> <p>POD were the managing agents from August 2019 to December 2020. However, a decision was made to terminate them as it came to light that they were not doing things as they should have been. They stopped site visits, had bad accounts management and directors were not happy with their performance. The directors met with POD's managing director to get a plan put in place however this did not work, and POD advised it was no longer viable to manage the Bellway phase after they lost management of Site Wide.</p> <p>Directors looked at other agents that were on the shortlist after their last tendering process and decided to take Remus on a temporary measure as a 'step-in' provider. However, as they were pleased with their work, and following approval via an EGM in May 2021, they took them on for another 12months from July 2021. AW confirmed Remus have been doing a good job, communication is good, debt collection is good, and directors have not received any bad feedback from members/residents.</p>



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Grounds Maintenance

This is undertaken by Cliffords Group. Remus went out to tender on this on behalf of directors and as a result of the EGM vote, Cliffords Group were contracted for another 12 months period.

Parking Management

Directors wanted to move this forward however it came to light earlier in the year that the permit scheme was not popular, and they admitted that they could have consulted better on this. The EGM vote was passed, and it was agreed that the situation would be monitored. One might agree that the situation has slightly improved although some cars still park on yellow lines and verges.

Directors have obtained permission from Bellway to install signs however they are waiting for confirmation from Highways as they do not want to cause any issues when they come to adopt the roads. They advised that they should have a response from Highways imminently and then directors will need to confirm locations of the signs to be approved.

We are looking at least another year until the roads are adopted and hopefully this is enough time to get residents into good habits before the signs will be removed when roads are adopted. The signs could potentially be moved to private land after adoption.

Communication

Directors communicate items they feel residents need to know but not everything that goes on behind the scenes as this is not needed. They use the website and Facebook for announcements. However, AW asked that if anyone has any specific issues, they can contact the directors via the correct channels to avoid incorrect facts posted on social media.

Service Charge Accounts

POD have only just supplied the draft 2019-2020 year-end accounts. They should have been received by December 2020. When the draft accounts were received, the directors went through everything and queried most items of expenditure. They were then all amended and agreed apart from 3 items – company secretary fees, accountancy fees and electricity costs. However, in August 2021 we then received the signed accounts by POD, but still with the 3 queries in the report. As the report stands, there is £11 deficit per property; however, it is believed that there should be an underspend. Directors are challenging these and will be taking this to the Ombudsman.

The year end June 2021 accounts are going to be drawn up as soon as possible; this will have 6 months of POD's management and 6 months of Remus management within them. Directors will then look at the 2 years' worth of accounts as a period. No request (if any) for overspent money will be sent until both years have been completed and corrected.



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Company Accounts

These are dormant accounts and signed off.

Site Wide

Currently around 30% of the service charge costs are site wide (SW) costs and homeowners get no input in decisions or transparency in costs and budgets. The SW costs have reduced as their agent got the developers to pick up certain costs such as ecology costs.

The first SW general meeting is in October (07/10) and the existing Management Company has already changed to a Community Interest Company (CIC).

You must sign up to become a member of the CIC and if you wish to stand as director, you will also need to indicate this on the form that all residents will have received. At the meeting, the current directors will choose who they want to appoint to become directors. Once this has happened it will give members more of a say in what happens. RMC directors have been pushing for this to happen for a long time. AW advised that the best option is to attend the meeting in October and ask any queries directly to Hugo (site-wide director).

Key Risks

Key risks directors wished to flag are:

Skate Park - Being asked to fund the skate park that is a public facility. It was originally done as private land and residents are aware they have to pay for maintenance of it, however it is now on Google as a public park. Future costs are largely unknown and could escalate.

Service charge Debts – Historically POD did not chase and DJC did very little to recover outstanding debt. Aged debtors have reduced by over half this year as Remus are actively debt chasing. Some properties debts have already been sent to solicitors, however there is still over £30,000 of Service Charge (SC) debts still outstanding. The last year and half we were holding SW service charges, however now we are having to pay this we need residents to pay their SC on time to ensure we have cash flow to pay contractors etc.

Bellway Defect Works

Bellway have appointed a new contractor to undertake the defect works on highways. They have a long list of works to undertake which should be starting very soon.



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3	<p>Election Of Directors</p> <p>No forms were received prior to the meeting. Directors advised if anyone at the meeting would like to put themselves forward as a director, this would be permissible and be appreciated.</p> <p>ME has decided to stand down as director – he was thanked for his work over the last year to date.</p> <p>The 3 remaining directors encouraged other residents to put themselves forward; as the more directors there are, the better to help with making decisions etc.</p> <p>Kayode Akinwande advised he would be happy to stand and there were no objections.</p> <p>There were no objections to the current directors staying on board.</p>
4	<p>Future Projects</p> <p>Amazon Lockers – KN asked Amazon about this, but they were not interested. There is however an Amazon locker at the Shell garage at the entrance to the development.</p> <p>Electric Car Points – KN has also looked briefly into this, and it was suggested if we could possibly get a bulk discount for residents having them installed on driveways or visitor bays for residents-only use. Members seemed keen to have these installed and KN will continue to investigate this further and then a vote will be undertaken on it at a future meeting.</p> <p>Defibrillator – Although not RMC responsible business, AW advised there was a Parish Council meeting on 7th September to discuss the grant application that he had submitted (albeit not in his role as RMC director) and he is hoping the council will fund this. Looking to put it in the car park near the skate park (as advised by the Community Heartbeat Trust) as then no one is more than 400 meters away from it. If accepted, there will be a process and procedure in place to use it and people will be asked to be trained on how to use it and check it.</p> <p>CCTV – Members advised the constant use and selling of drugs is on-going on the estate, and police will not go through everyone's ring doorbells. However, it was agreed that there is no point looking into this further until residents want it to be put in place. This will be discussed further and put to vote on the next residents meeting.</p>
5	<p>AOB (General Discussion)</p> <p>It was discussed that the letter from SW mentioned about having all management companies under one and rolled into the SW CIC. However, the letter implied that this should be done soon, but this is not appropriate whilst current directors are on board at CIC. It might make sense in the future, but we need to get residents into the CIC first and get a hand on the future costs for SW before thinking about doing this. Unsure if this will go to vote at the October meeting.</p>



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Ptarmigan have worked with the Channels landowners to sell their land and have also created a management company and act as managing agent for that company. The proposal is that their management agent business will take over management of all phases and SW. This is a similar setup to the Beaulieu Land Trust, but directors turned that down when tendering for a new agent due to the potential loss of residents control.

Community Garden – Carol advised that the Swale at the rear of the development on Fairway Drive (adjacent to the Bridleway) had the weeds removed, however as there are some grant funds left, she would like permission to put some soil down so it can have plants that can be enjoyed all year round as well as in the community garden. She posted some letters to those who overlook the areas but has had no adverse feedback/objections so far. As this is paid for by the grant with no extra costs to residents (grounds maintenance contractors will not need to undertake any extra work), the directors confirmed that there are no issues in doing this. It was advised that residents have been very generous with donations and thanked them.

Litter Picking – It has been recognised that McDonalds staff are doing litter picking up Channels Drive from McDonalds. Directors did raise the litter issue with McDonalds previously.

Nursery Land – It is believed this has been purchased by Seymore House. Legalities are nearly completed, and they will then need to put in detailed planning.

Highways – the TRO is in for the yellow lines along the bus route and the outcome of the consultation is awaited. It includes speed bumps, however this needs to be looked into as speed bumps are not ideal for buses or some cars.

Royal Mail Post box – Member advised there will be a post-box coming outside Costa Coffee at Beaulieu although the timescale is as yet not confirmed.

Housing Association (HA) Flats – member and directors spoke to a representative of the HA that was at the AGM to advise of the issues and concerns they have with some of the HA tenants in the block of flats, such as drug dealing, the smell of drugs and littering. Previously it has been reported to the police and raids have been carried out, however the tenants are not being evicted from the properties even though it is a potential breach of their tenancy agreement. HA advised that they are looking to do an action day with the police on site. Members advised that they want a single point of contact, and they can collate all evidence together to send in one go to that person. HA will look into getting this sorted to work with the directors.

AW thanked everyone for attending and formally closed the meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm