



Minutes of General Meeting

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of St Benedicts (Tooting) Management Company Limited held on Thursday 14th November 2019 at 7.00pm in St Nicholas Church Hall, Church Lane, Tooting, London SW17 9PP.

Attendees and Proxy nominations

- Kevin Herrmann, Director and property owning shareholder, who chaired the meeting.
- Ravi Joshi, Director and property owning shareholder.
- 8 other property owning shareholders representing 5 properties (with 5 votes).
- Angela Petts, Senior Property Manager, Rendall and Rittner Ltd (not able to vote).
- There were 2 Proxy nominations to the chairman with instructions on voting and 2 to Mr Herrmann in a personal capacity with discretion on voting. There was one Proxy nomination to a person who attended the meeting with a companion (with 1 vote).
- There were apologies from one property owning shareholder and from Ms Yasmin Spence, Assistant Property Manager, Rendall and Rittner Ltd.

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The chairman opened the meeting at 7.00 pm and welcomed those present. The Directors and Property Manager introduced themselves.

1. To receive and approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 15th November 2018.

There were no comments and the resolution was passed by 12 votes to nil.

2. To receive and adopt the Report of the Directors and the Accounts for the year ended 30th June 2019.

It was explained that the Company Financial Statements for approval contain little information and expenditure is set out in the Service Charge Statement for information. The Directors compare this to the budget each year to ensure that only the money required is collected.

There was an issue with electricity overpayment due to a faulty meter that has been recorded as a pre-payment in the Statement. In this financial year, there has been a further overpayment. The Directors are seeking repayment of both sums and have issued a service level agreement failure notice to Rendall and Rittner, which is responsible although the issue lies with the sub-contractor it uses to administer electricity supplies.

There were no other comments and the resolution was approved by 12 votes to nil.

3. To report on contracts for services and maintenance.

The Directors provided a report for information on work in the year with explanations. This had been included in Newsletters, which inform owners what is happening. Work included:

- Following Council replacement of street lights with LED types, the Estate street lights were replaced with similar ones.



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- Failed electrical lamps were changed but now Estate security lights are being replaced in these phases with LED fittings which should last many years. The light level in lumens is similar but the white light appears brighter because of the eye's different response to this compared to yellow-orange light. Experience from the first phase is being used to adjust the lighting in further phases with bulkhead lights to reduce glare and use fewer lights while light levels have been increased above a normal level in areas prone to youths hanging around and what appears to be drug dealing and taking to act as a deterrent. Overall the new security lights will use 60% less electricity for better lighting.
- The oak trees on Rectory Lane had dead wood removed last year and the protected Indian bean tree that died was replaced as required while the lime trees in Limetree Walk will receive attention this year, due next week.
- Estate fences were repaired where necessary but in some places do not need replacement when they fail. The metal security gates were maintained.
- Security cameras requested at the last AGM were installed.
- Sewer lining was carried out at 17-27 Carlisle Way where there was cracking and repairs have been carried out near 21-26 Abbey Drive by Thames Water and by our contractor, part funded by an insurance claim for root damage. The contractor then completed the survey past repaired sections, discovering that further repairs are required, which we are investigating to determine responsibility.
- Flat block roof repairs were carried out. During those near the cupola on 1-71 St Benedicts Close, further damage was found to the supporting beams. This will be investigated and repaired during the periodic maintenance in 2020, when other roofs will be inspected for damage and repaired if necessary. The surveyor had advised against lifting interlocking tiles for routine checking as this was likely to cause damage, so it is important for residents to report leaks.
- Routine maintenance to flat block doors, latches and closers was carried out.
- Flat block cracked glass was replaced while further cracked panes posing no risk would be replaced during periodic maintenance when decoration was being carried out.
- Following the fire safety officer visit last year, fire hydrant signs missing since the Estate was built are being fitted, flat fire safety notices have been put on every floor for ease of reference, allowing general signs on noticeboards to be updated and flat block doors have now been fitted with address signs to make blocks easier to find. After this safety work, the requested signs advising correct use of recycling areas were put up but, as expected, have proved entirely ineffective.
- An order has been placed to repair uneven paving but the contractor has delayed this work.
- Mousemesh grilles for flat block airbricks to deter pest entry have been obtained for those blocks which voted to pay for this and will be fitted by the contractor after paving work for safety.
- Following the survey of flat block television reception, work will be tendered to upgrade installations where the survey identified issues after Freeview transmitter changes. Priority needs to be given to preparing for periodic maintenance, so aerial work may now slip into early next year.



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Owners at the meeting raised other maintenance issues:

- Two new owners raised the issue of rubbish, particularly in the central area of St Benedicts Close used for recycling. Various suggestions were made and the Directors explained why most of them had been discounted, particularly Council limitations on bin types and needing recycling loose in plastic bags. There had been regular communication but this seems to encourage more dumping, so is counter-productive. A suggestion was made to enclose the area between the two adjacent bin stores for recycling and to deter dumping. It was agreed to investigate this promising suggestion after periodic work and an architect present volunteered to produce a sketch, which was gratefully accepted. Costs could be brought back to the next AGM for approval including a similar solution for Limetree Walk.
- Work to flatten parking spaces affected by tree roots remains outstanding. The Directors apologised and explained the selected cheapest handyman contractor had withdrawn from this work. Another quote is judged expensive and competitive tendering is required because of the cost, which will be carried out as soon as possible after other urgent priorities.

There was no vote as this item was for information.

4. To report on and discuss the periodic maintenance and redecoration due in 2020.

The Directors described the approach being taken to periodic work and some specific matters:

- Because of the likelihood that flat block roof repairs are required at unknown cost and issues have been discovered requiring wall repairs, costs of external work are particularly uncertain. In previous periodic work, carrying out external work and internal communal area redecoration has led to the internal redecoration being rushed with quality suffering and work extending into builder holiday seasons. It also means that smaller and local firms cannot tender for the work as they are not qualified for external work at height, which reduces competition and may increase costs. The Directors have therefore decided to separate the two lots of work and will either tender and carry out the internal redecoration after the external work in 2020, with separate section 20 notification if applicable, or will defer this to 2021 if more money needs to be collected in to afford it.
- Following flat block wall repairs in 2014-15, the recommended inspection by a structural engineer has been carried out. This found no further issue where previous repairs were carried out. Some further minor brickwork cracking thought to be due to thermal expansion will be repaired in similar way to the previous repairs during the periodic work in 2020. Unfortunately, two blocks have cracking that may be more serious. The insurer has been put on notice and, as soon as it has decided if the Estate surveyor and structural engineer can be used or it appoints its own, further investigations will be carried out. All flats in those blocks will be inspected internally for cracking, with solicitor action taken to obtain access under the lease if not otherwise given, sewer inspections will be carried out where not already done, borehole samples will be taken to check for tree roots, cracks are likely to be monitored for a year to check if movement is continuing and the structural engineer will then recommend repairs required. We hope the cost will be covered by Estate insurance.
- The periodic external work is being specified and the first section 20 consultation has been set to flat owners as required by law. The work will be tendered by the surveyor, we hope to identify a suitable contractor by January or February, then will carry out the second part of the section 20 consultation and plan to carry out the work from late April to July 2020.
- Information will be provided on the Estate website and Rendall and Rittner will write to owners in the two flat blocks particularly affected. The structural engineer report and other material will be available for download with a username and password that can be obtained from Rendall and Rittner on request.

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An owner queried how the work was being financed and if reserves would cover it. The Directors explained that expected costs allowing for inflation were being collected into reserves in the 5 years up to the current year since the previous periodic work, including a level of contingency that previous experience had found to be suitable. Because of the particular uncertainty over costs on this occasion, it could not be guaranteed this would be sufficient but, by separating the work, costs could be spread until more money could be collected by deferring the internal redecoration if necessary.

There was no vote as this item was for guidance.

5. Noting the difficulties with Rendall and Rittner paying small local supplier invoices on time, to authorise the Directors to make such payments using the Estate prepaid credit card, subject to authorisation by another Director.

The Directors explained the issues with Rendall and Rittner processes that deter smaller and local suppliers. To invoice and obtain payment electronically, suppliers have to undertake and maintain several forms of accreditation, which provides protection but is overly burdensome for small firms. The alternative is to post invoices and wait for payment but a significant proportion of such invoices go missing, including those for the Estate's law firm, leading to payment delays which small firms cannot afford. Several approached by the Directors have declined to work on these terms.

The Directors hold a prepaid credit card with a maximum balance of £2,000 that is used to pay for goods such as replacement fittings for maintenance, Mousemesh grilles and, previously for LED lamps used in flat blocks. The Directors felt that using the card to pay suppliers was a sufficiently different use that owner agreement was needed. This is likely to enable more small and local contractors to be considered for work, possibly leading to reduced costs. All expenditure is visible to Rendall and Rittner, through which the card is issued, receipts are required for reimbursement and these are submitted to the accountant and checked each year.

An owner pointed out that the controls would not prevent misuse. The Directors explained that, while this was true, this risk already existed, was not increased by this proposal and any misuse would be detected. The Rendall and Rittner property manager advised that the Directors had obtained significant savings by being able to buy goods on the card, such as buying remaindered LED lamps fitted in flat blocks and obtaining a volume discount on Mousemesh grilles.

The Directors offered owners an indicative vote if they wished the card to be withdrawn but nobody present felt this was necessary.

The chairman explained that he would not cast the discretionary proxy votes given to him as he held the prepaid card so this could be a conflict of interest. The resolution allowing payment to contractors was approved by 10 votes to nil.

6. To deal with the election of Directors.

Mr Ravi Joshi and Mr Kevin Herrmann were willing to continue serving as Directors and there were no objections to this. No other owners present volunteered to act as Directors.

No vote was needed on this item.



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7. To deal with any other business.

Owners at the meeting raised some other matters:

- Although the higher level of lighting in secluded areas of the Estate was welcome, two or three cars have been observed visiting regularly in daylight apparently carrying out drug trades. These had been reported to the police, who had caught and searched those concerned on one occasion but most times they had left before police arrived. It was asked if CCTV could be provided and this was discussed. Our Rendall and Rittner property manager will contact the police local neighbourhood team to request that they install CCTV on the nearby lamppost again as was done temporarily before. An article will be put in a future Newsletter that suspicious activities and possible drug dealing should be reported to the police with a request for temporary reinstatement of CCTV. When time permits, the Directors will investigate obtaining one unit with radio link to a recorder.
- Some owners cannot access quarterly charge statements, which Rendall and Rittner use now wherever possible for environmental reasons, leading to late payments. The property manager will check that the instance reported is flagged for postal statements and see if this can be done permanently rather than each quarter.
- The bolt on the gate for access to the areas behind 31-36 Abbey Drive is faulty and no longer engages with the keep. The Directors confirmed that a contractor had already been instructed to repair this, possibly by remounting the bolt on a wooden panel attached to the gate. The post on which the gate is mounted tends to move so ongoing adjustment is likely to be required.
- Freeview television reception in 21-26 Abbey Drive keeps cutting out, which was reported in the survey. The Directors confirmed this is included in the aerial work to be tendered.

One of those present proposed a vote of thanks to the Directors, which was gratefully accepted.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm.