

Newsletter – June 2011



Budget and Service Charges

This newsletter is being sent out with the budget for 2011-12 and the notices for service charges due on 1 July 2011 to minimise postage costs. Please pay the service charges by the due date.

The budget differs slightly from previous years as the flats maintenance reserve has been split into 12 separate reserves, one for each block, as set out in the leasehold legal agreements. This is necessary now because two blocks require some repair work that owners in those blocks are liable to pay for but not other owners. See the article with an update on maintenance.

Most other **service charges are being reduced** by between 2% and 5%. The letter with the budget has more information.



Accounting and Audit Work

As requested at the Annual General Meeting, we ran a competitive tender for the reduced, statutory minimum audit work plus statements of costs and reserve accounts. The current audit firm, PB Associates, and three others recommended by Rendall and Rittner were invited to tender.

Unfortunately, the three other firms did not respond satisfactorily. Two declined to provide tenders on the terms that we specified, seemingly only being interested in work with no professional control of quality or costs. The other required changes that would have prevented you from comparing costs with previous years, as we had committed would be possible.

Therefore, we re-appointed PB Associates, whose work has been satisfactory, and negotiated with them to reduce their fees for the reduced amount of work required.

The quote this year is £2,750 + VAT, around 20% less than the budget last year despite increased VAT.



Rubbish and Recycling

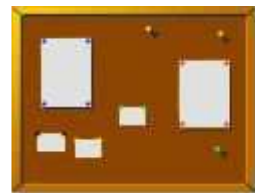
Wandsworth Council recently opened new recycling facilities and can now **recycle more types of plastic**. As well as plastic bottles (without lids) and tetrapaks, **you should now also recycle plastic food trays, tubs and pots (after rinsing clean)**. Plastic bags, film and cups still cannot be recycled. The Council will update its orange bags and we will update our notices.

Ms Jacqui Kelly kindly volunteered at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to look at the issue of rubbish and recycling. She spoke to Wandsworth Council twice and then spent time investigating what other councils do and talking to private refuse contractors and bin suppliers.

Jacqui has now reported back that she has been unable to find any new options acceptable to Wandsworth Council, which refuses to change its position as our Estate is private.

This leaves the Directors still unable to take action on this long-standing problem, where owners disagree greatly, unless someone can come up with a new suggestion acceptable to the Council and the majority of property owners.

We have had concrete laid in the recycling area in St Benedicts Close, which turned to mud over the winter. This was done at a fraction of the cost of the enclosures rejected at the AGM.



Recycled Notice Boards

When tidying the clock tower, we found some larger notice boards that had been there for years, originally bought by the Neighbourhood Watch scheme. They did not cost us anything.

As an economical way of providing better notice boards, we asked a contractor to install these when already on site. Unfortunately, there are not quite enough for all blocks.

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Maintenance Update

Over the next quarter, investigation of the defects found in two blocks in St Benedicts Close during the periodic redecoration will take place. This will require cherry picker access or scaffolding and some building work.

On 6 July 2011, CET Safehouse will excavate and repair the drain damaged by tree roots behind 31-36 Abbey Drive, paid by our insurer.

We have written to the individual owners in the blocks concerned and will keep them updated.



Grit / Salt Bin

As requested at the Annual General Meeting, we have provided a bin with grit / salt for use in snowy and icy conditions. It is in the middle of the Estate in St Benedicts Close, by the orange posts and recycling area, where it is accessible and least likely to be vandalised or raided.

It will be padlocked until snow falls or is forecast. When the gardeners are on site, they will spread the grit / salt and, if conditions are bad, they will leave loose bags in other roads where needed. At other times, residents may spread the grit / salt themselves. You will need your own shovel.



New Cleaning Contractor

The Directors and Managing Agent have spot-checked the flat common areas more than once since the new contractor, Mara Services, took over cleaning on 28 February 2011.

Work has been to a very good standard, better than ever before and much better than the last contractor. We would still welcome your feedback to the Managing Agent.

St Benedicts History – Part 1 of 5

St Joseph's Roman Catholic College

St Joseph's Teaching Brotherhood bought the site containing the original manor house, Hill House, reputedly once the home of Daniel Defoe, although it appears to have been built after he died. They built the College, which opened as a Roman Catholic school in 1887. The upkeep proved too expensive and the school moved to Beulah Hill in 1895.

Tooting Home for the Aged and Infirm



The Wandsworth Board of Guardians bought the site in 1897 to provide extra workhouse accommodation. It cost £40,000 and another £30,000 was spent on alterations to the 3-storey building, which was renamed the Tooting Home for the Aged and Infirm. Hill House became the Nurses' Home.

The ground floor contained the Committee Room and various administrative offices, as well as apartments for the Matron and the Master. There were also two large wards, each containing 42 beds, several smaller wards, some with only seven beds, and a few single rooms used for nursing accommodation. More wards were located on the first floor, where there were also day rooms for patients to spend recreation time. Each of the wards was named after one of the Wandsworth Guardians.

By 1901 the Home housed 605 inmates. In 1903 eight temporary single-storey buildings were erected at the northeast of the site to house a further 102 males and 102 females. These buildings were arranged either side of a central linking corridor, which ran parallel to Church Lane.

By way of reference, the London Tramways horse-drawn tram was extended from Clapham to Tooting in 1890 then electrified in 1902.

