

## Annual general meeting

The annual general meeting was held on Thursday 19 November at the Trident Business Centre because the church hall normally used was closed.

Two Directors and three other shareholders attended. There were two proxy nominations to the Chairman with voting instructions and one personal with discretion on voting. One proxy was invalid as by law they must be sent to the Managing Agent 48 hours before the meeting.

More information and the documents for the meeting are available on the website at [www.stbentooting.co.uk/agm](http://www.stbentooting.co.uk/agm).

- The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
- The Directors explained that a refund had been received for previous over-estimates of [electricity] use after a meter fault and how this was reflected in the figures. The report and accounts were approved.
- The breakdown of costs for house owners and flat owners was presented. The decision last year to defer the next periodic maintenance by a year to 2020 has reduced average quarterly service charges for 2-bed flats by £25 and 1-bed flats by £17.
- The periodic maintenance and flat wall crack repairs are covered elsewhere in this Newsletter. Other significant work carried out in the year includes roof repairs, tree surgery and repairs to parking spaces.
- The Directors explained the reason for the suggestion to increase the threshold above which work is tendered, unchanged for many years. It is increasingly difficult to get sufficient competition as losing bidders and poor companies drop out. The drive to obtain value for money will continue. The proposal to increase the threshold was approved and a new value of £2,000 was agreed.
- Mr Ravi Joshi and Mr Kevin Herrmann are willing to continue serving as Directors. There were no objections, so they will continue. There were no other volunteers.

- The Directors explained the issues around fitting LED strip lamps outside flat doors as previously decided. Specific work is required to avoid damage to the lamps. Most tenders were so expensive that all value of fitting the lamps to save electricity would be lost, while a cheap tender not done correctly risked causing damage greater than the value of the work, wasting owners' money.
- The Directors are prepared to do this work themselves, but it will take several days, so suggested some recompense for their time. Because the Directors would benefit from this, they did not make a recommendation, vote or cast discretionary proxy votes as it would be a conflict of interest. The work, method and risks were discussed in detail. The Directors agreed to check the Estate liability insurance to confirm no liability would be left with the Company.
- The proposal for the Directors to do the work was approved and the payment set at £300 each. They aim to do the work in the first half of 2016. Meanwhile, the cleaning firm is ordering old lamps monthly to avoid wastage.
- The proposal from the 2014 AGM to use private waste contractors was found neither to be permitted nor affordable. The Council ignored the residents petition to allow more suitable wheelie bins. Waste remains a problem. It was agreed to send a strongly worded letter to residents specifically on waste and to include a resident's photograph in this Newsletter (this has not been received). Rendall and Rittner now visits on Monday when possible to try to identify the source of dumped rubbish and take action.
- There are still problems with mice despite all the action taken on this. It will only be successful if owners and residents also take action inside flats, where there is food. The measures necessary were discussed.
- There was no other business.

### → **Happy Christmas**

The Directors and Managing Agent wish all owners and residents a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year. Details of Council waste and tree collections over the period will be published on the St Benedicts website.





## Newsletter – December 2015

### → Parking controls

Now the periodic work has been completed so parking areas are clear of obstructions and have been repaired where required, normal parking controls apply again. If these are broken, drivers are liable to be charged a £100 penalty.

Vehicles must park wholly within the numbered space matching the permit displayed and must not overhang or obstruct other bays or access.



### Periodic maintenance

Periodic repairs, re-decoration and less urgent repairs to the cracks in flat block walls are complete. The Directors inspected work when they felt inspections by the surveyor were not adequate. The builder carried out remedial work necessary in October and November.

As is usual, 5% of the contract value will be retained for 6 months in case any more defects become apparent in that time.

Wall cracks found in 2010 and subsequent investigations have now been repaired according to the structural engineer recommendations. Work on three minor cracks at roof level is not to specification and the builder has agreed that they would be repair these for 5 years rather than the usual 6 months if issues arise and we will keep part of the retention for 5 years to cover this.

Some further cracking has been found in 31-45 Church Lane and 105-135 St Benedicts Close. This will be referred to the structural engineer to advise if additional repair is required.

### → Window rebates

Rebates for decoration costs saved where flats have uPVC windows have been applied to the service charge accounts due on 1 January 2016. These are £57 for 1-bed and £85 for 2-bed flats.

### → Items in communal areas

Residents of flats may not store items in communal areas because of the fire risk and the obstruction of emergency exits. Any items found will be removed without notice and a note left.

### → Rendall and Rittner Online

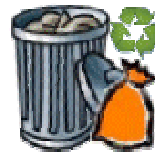
<http://www.rendallandrittneronline.co.uk/Account/LogOn>

This service from the Managing Agent now covers St Benedicts, so owners can pay service charges and receive messages online.

To register, email [registration@rendallandrittner.co.uk](mailto:registration@rendallandrittner.co.uk)

All other Estate information and services remain on the St Benedicts website:

<http://www.stbentooting.co.uk/>



### Waste and recycling

Problems continue with residents and their contractors dumping waste on the Estate. As agreed at the AGM, a separate letter will be sent to all owners and residents. In the meantime:

- Waste must be put in refuse sacks (not plastic carrier bags) in bins with lids to prevent access by pests like foxes and rats. You are responsible for buying bins, and should get ones with handles that lock the lid.
- Recycling (and no other waste) must be put in Council recycling sacks and put out on Sunday evening for collection on Monday.
- You must arrange and pay for Council collection of large items like furniture and household appliances. Your contractors must remove and dispose of building waste.

**Dumping waste is a criminal offence and anyone caught doing this will be charged for the cost of commercial disposal and reported to the police.** This cost will be much higher than the residential charges levied by the Council.

### → Report waste dumping

If you see anyone dumping waste, please report this to the Managing Agent so that action can be taken. They will not reveal who told them.

### → Snow and ice

If snow falls or is forecast or it is icy, grit / salt will be put in St Benedicts Close (by the bin), Abbey Drive and Limetree Walk for residents to use.

