



Fire safety

Following the recent tragic Grenfell Tower fire, the Management Company took further fire and safety advice. This issue of the Newsletter has an extra page on fire safety.

You have always been required not to reduce the fire safety of anyone else in the flat block.

Following the revised advice, you will not now be permitted to reduce the fire safety within your own flat significantly, as this may affect third parties such as tenants or a purchaser of the flat.

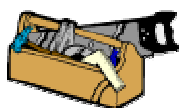


Flat fire emergency plan

The flat fire emergency plan has been updated for greater clarity and has been approved by the Health and Safety consultant.

The notices in each block of flats have been updated and so have the website and Property Guide given to purchasers.

For your own safety, you should ensure you know what to do in the event of a fire.



Flat alterations

All flat alterations require Management Company consent in advance under the lease. If alterations without consent are found that affect fire safety or may impact other residents, the current owner will be required to remedy this at their expense.

Information on alterations can be found at <http://www.stbentooting.co.uk/flats> by clicking the menu link *Alterations*. You can submit alterations queries at <http://www.stbentooting.co.uk/online>.

→ Items in communal areas

Residents of flats may not store anything in the 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. Removed items not claimed will be disposed of.



Flat front doors

After the Health and Safety consultant reported flat front doors that had been replaced, Rendall and Rittner wrote to their owners in January. If owners could not provide safety certification, a safety inspection was arranged in April.

Two replacement doors that meet fire safety requirements were granted consent required by the lease for flat alterations retrospectively.

Four owners were required to fit self-closers, as regulations require, because these are essential to prevent fire and smoke spreading in a fire evacuation if someone does not close a door. **If you have removed or disabled the flat door self-closer, you must rectify this for safety.**

Two owners were required to replace inadequate doors with ones that meet current building and fire safety regulations and will prevent the spread of smoke and fire.

Five residents did not allow door inspection. They are now being required either to provide certification or to replace their doors with ones meeting current regulations and provide evidence of this. They have now missed the opportunity for a safety inspection of the door.

If any owner chooses not to carry out work that is their responsibility to reduce the danger to life by the deadline given, the matter will be referred to the Management Company's solicitor. Under the lease terms, this will be at the owner's expense.

All flat alterations require Management Company consent in advance under the lease. This includes anything affecting fire safety, such as changing or removing doors or the fire protection of the exit hallway.

→ Declaring flat alterations without consent

If you or a previous owner has carried out any flat alterations beyond routine decoration and like-for-like replacement without consent, you should advise these to Rendall and Rittner.

If these could not cause danger or nuisance, retrospective consent will be granted.



Entryphones

The remaining life-expired 30-year old flat entry systems will be replaced this November by Entryphone Co at the same price as last year, which the Directors negotiated to be held.

Residents need to be in so their handsets can be replaced and connected. If tenants cannot be in, owners who are sub-letting must provide access or arrange for their letting agent to do so. Entryphone will try to be flexible but cannot guarantee to be available except as planned.

If access is not provided, the flat will be left without a working handset and the owner will need to arrange directly with Entryphone for it to be fitted later and pay Entryphone for this.



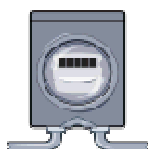
Tree work

Regular 5-yearly tree work was carried out on the bank between Abbey Drive and St Benedicts Close in July, with one tree left to September.

After a gale damaged a small tree in Abbey Drive, this was made safe in June. Other small trees are liable to similar damage, so small trees across the Estate were also cut back for safety, funded from the Estate reserve.

The dying Indian bean tree was felled in early September once Council consent was given.

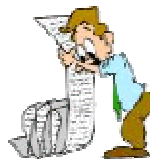
Work was awarded to our regular contractor E Payne after checking prices were reasonable.



Electricity meters

Some electricity suppliers are offering to fit so-called smart meters on the Estate. However, these are the old type which stop submitting readings if you change supplier!

You do **not** have to have one fitted and are advised to wait for an SMETS 2 smart meter, which does operate with different suppliers.



Work this year

The Directors and Managing Agent have carried out and arranged a lot of work for owners and residents this year, as usual:

- The gardening and waste contracts were renegotiated to include all foreseeable supplies to give more control over costs.
- The cleaning contractor was changed as the previous one wanted to increase costs.
- Safety advice was taken after the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy (see other articles).
- Tree work was carried out to a gale-damaged tree in Abbey Drive, to other small trees across the Estate for safety and to fell the dying protected Indian bean tree as well as regular work due on the bank between Abbey Drive and St Benedicts Close.
- 5-yearly landlord electrical testing has been tendered and arranged this autumn.
- Faulty street and security lights were replaced and additional cameras put up. Routine maintenance, electrical and sewer / drain work was arranged as required.
- Significant repairs have been arranged for two flat block roofs and a sewer. Flat block porches and gutters were also repaired.
- Flat block bulkhead lights were rewired and LED lamps were fitted, reducing electricity consumption and maintenance.
- The programme to replace 30-year old flat entryphones is being completed, with the remainder being done this November.
- Inoperative flat letterbox locks were replaced.
- Air brick grilles were fitted to a flat block to reduce pest entry and, as results were uncertain, another flat block will be tested.
- Pest work has been carried out as needed.

→ Annual meeting

As usual, we are looking to hold the St Benedicts Annual General Meeting locally in mid to late November. When the date is set, this will be shown on the website and formal notices will be posted to all shareholders (property owners).



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Flooding in Carlisle Way

During heavy rain in August, the drains at the bottom of Carlisle Way overflowed and flooded several houses. The fire brigade attended to pump out the water after Thames Water failed to take effective action and advised a resident that this was due to a blockage in a main sewer in Rectory Lane for which Thames Water is responsible.

Thames Water is also responsible for the drain in the publicly adopted road which overflowed, while the drains in house parking spaces are the responsibility of the property owners. The gardening contractor clears leaves but house owners (including off-site landlords) must ensure they maintain their drains and repair them if required. The private drains are not thought to be the cause of this flooding and the owner concerned has arranged a CCTV survey.

Several residents called Rendall and Rittner and expected them to 'deal with the situation.' House owners are reminded that they and not the Management Company are responsible for their properties and landlords must make adequate arrangements for tenants in emergencies. This is why they pay much lower charges than flats, as these only cover Estate facilities like the clock tower, the portico, private parts of roads, private street lighting, grounds and trees.

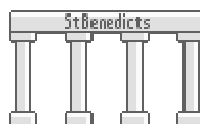
The Management Company can only pay for things it is set up for in the property legal agreements, listed in the budget. The Managing Agent cannot be expected to carry out work outside its contract for which it is not paid.

A reminder on maintenance and services which are the responsibility of others is alongside.

→ Flat safety and security

Do not let strangers into flat blocks even if they give a plausible reason. Following a recent attempted burglary, you are reminded that flat door handles can be opened easily and that you should secure the flat front door with a deadlock.

If a crime is in progress, call the police on 999. If you see anything suspicious, call them on 101.



Responsibility for services

Responsibilities of other parties include:

- House owners are responsible for maintaining and insuring freehold houses and their gardens, parking spaces, drains and sewers up to the boundary or junction with a shared sewer.
- Flat owners are responsible for maintenance, routine repair and decoration of leasehold flats and maintaining associated individual facilities like letter boxes and dustbins.
- Property residents are responsible for insurance of contents.
- Wandsworth Council is responsible for adopted public roads, paths, drains and street lights. Telephone: 020 8871 6000, website: <http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/>.
- Thames Water is responsible since 1st October 2010 for shared sewers and drains and those beyond the property boundary. Telephone: 0800 316 9800, website: <http://www.thameswater.co.uk/>.
- The relevant utility companies are responsible for water pipes to the main stop cocks, electricity cables to the flat blocks, electricity meters, and telephone wires to the first sockets. In the case of water, this is Thames Water, telephone: 0800 714 614, website as above.
- Property owners are responsible for water pipes, electricity cables and telephone wires from those points into individual properties.



Youths causing nuisance

Residents have reported youths congregating on the Estate, going into flat block garden areas and, in some cases, appearing to use drugs.

Unfortunately, the Council required the builder to leave the Estate open with publicly adopted paths across it. These allow anyone right of way legally, so access cannot be prevented.

If you see criminal behaviour including drug taking, call the Police on 101. They may not attend but will log this and may patrol more.

