



Newsletter – March 2019



Air brick grilles

Owners have now voted whether to put metal grilles over air bricks, which trials suggested may reduce pest entry. The results are:

- 5 blocks voted in favour: 21-26 (5-1), 31-36 (3-1) Abbey Drive and 18-28 (3-0), 73-103 (5-3), 105-135 (4-0) St Benedicts Close.
- 2 blocks voted against: 17-27 Carlisle Way (no votes) and 31-45 Church Lane (2-3).
- 2-24 Limetree Walk and 1-71 St Benedicts Close already have grilles fitted in the pilots, while other blocks do not have air vents.

Grilles will be fitted to the 5 blocks that voted for this in coming months and their four quarterly service charges in 2019-20 will be increased to cover the cost, as previously advised.



Flat water leaks

Water leaks in flats continue and many also damage the flat below. This results in distress to those affected through no fault of their own and higher insurance premiums for all flat owners.

Flat leases require owners to maintain their properties in a good state of repair and obtain consent in advance for any alterations.

Owners of flats with leaks into other properties are now required to carry out a full plumbing inspection at their cost and address any issues reported, to reduce the risk of recurrence, as owners confirmed at the 2018 General Meeting.



Tree work

Tree work is now carried out on a regular schedule over five years to spread the work and cost. In the autumn, the lime trees in Limetree Walk will be pruned back to the previous points so their size remains suitable close to flat blocks.

Because the cost this year is the highest of the five year cycle, no work will be carried out to other trees this year unless an emergency.

→ Parking permits

Replacement lilac parking permits valid to February 2021 have been delivered to residents. Please place these in vehicles immediately so they are clearly visible and discard the expired green permits. Permit holders are still available online at <http://www.stbentooting.co.uk/holder>.



Maintenance

Maintenance carried out over the last quarter included repairing a flat block door, other closers, latches and handles and a cracked sewer at 17-27 Carlisle Way, investigating a similar sewer issue at 21-26 Abbey Drive and replacing a broken porch tile causing a leak. Work is reported monthly on the Estate website.



LED lights

Several contractors failed for months to quote for replacing the street light heads in St Benedicts Close, which needs a hoist. We have now finally managed to obtain two or three quotes. The two failed lights will shortly be replaced along with the other two, while a hoist is available. The new LED units will be similar to the Council ones.

When street lights fail in Abbey Drive, they will also be replaced with similar LED units.

Failed strip lights outside flats are being replaced with LED ones. The cost exceeds the electricity saving, so most will only be replaced during the planned electrical upgrade in the 2020s.

→ Solicitor fees

The Management Company's solicitor has reviewed its fees, unchanged for several years. Extending a flat lease to 999 years to preserve the value of your property still costs £500 + VAT.

Letters to owners who ignore Managing Agent correspondence repeatedly or if we need to seek compliance with the property lease / agreement now cost £70-£150 + VAT. Under the lease / agreement, this is recoverable from the property and is added to the service charge account.