



Periodic maintenance

Priority external work should be finishing as this Newsletter is due. This was mainly repairs that could not wait to avoid further deterioration, including flat block brick and wood repairs, soffit vents and replacing clock tower rotten wood.

Property owners supported proposals from the Directors at the 2020 AGM to spread out work to save cost (see separate article). Restrictions permitting, external flats windows, oriels (bays) and eaves will be re-decorated in 2021 after a tender and section 20 process early in the year.

The Directors are investigating if ground-level flat block porches can be re-decorated separately by a painter rather than the building firm needed for work at height to reduce cost. Owners agreed to defer flat block communal area re-decoration.

Up to date information is being provided throughout the work on the Estate website at <https://www.stbentooting.co.uk/periodic>.



Flat water leaks

New policies from 1st July, endorsed at the AGM, have applied to six leaks so far, mostly from below-standard plumbing, like an unsecured shower pump, push-fit pipes and failed seals.

As an owner (without a leak) commented at the AGM, owners should get plumbing inspected and repair issues, as this is now cheaper than a leak!



Communal electric work

It is planned to upgrade communal electrics and lights to the latest standards in a pilot block then test if lights can switch on just when someone is nearby instead of all night to cut use and cost.

→ 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.

→ Parking permits

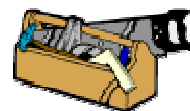
New parking permits will be delivered to residents on the Estate by the end of February 2021, when current permits expire. You may display a new permit as soon as it is received and discard the old ones. **If you do not receive new permits by 28th February, contact the managing agent, Rendall and Rittner.**



Fibre broadband

Openreach, part of British Telecom, has laid fibre cables to the Estate now. When safe because of Covid-19, we will arrange for them to carry out a survey to see how ultrafast broadband can be offered with fibre to the home / premises.

Cables must not damage pathways and must run in the service ducts without flat blocks so as not to damage to the fire resistance of the buildings.



Maintenance

Work is updated monthly on the Estate website at <https://www.stbentooting.co.uk/maintenance>.

The handyman will repair loose flat vent pipes in lofts investigated during the periodic work, level uneven paving near three flat entrances, secure a loose step and repair a fire door.

Two owners have reported drain flies in their flats. Those in the kitchen most often breed in the sink U-bend and can be cleared with bleach down the drain and overflow.

One advised that his plumber found flies in the bathroom were due to a failed seal where the toilet empties into the sewer pipe, which can be checked under the cistern behind the toilet.

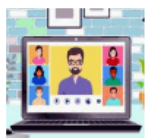
Repair work by the insurer's contractors has been authorised to start at 21-26 Abbey Drive.

→ Holiday waste collection

Wandsworth Council waste collections are expected as usual on Mondays 28th December and 4th January. Christmas trees must be put out for collection for shredding by 11th January, when collection is expected, not any later.



Newsletter – December 2020



Annual meeting

The Annual General Meeting was held online on 19th November under temporary company laws because of Covid-19 restrictions, as a meeting in person would not have been lawful.

The 2 Directors, 9 other shareholding owners of 12 who had voted and the Rendall and Rittner property managers took part. The chairman cast 5 proxy votes as instructed, 1 with discretion and 1 in a personal capacity. The chairman explained how the meeting would be conducted online.

Documents for the meeting including draft minutes are available on the Estate website at <https://www.stbentooting.co.uk/agm>.

The following matters were considered:

- Minutes of the 2019 meeting and accounts for 2019-20 were approved. The Directors explained why house owners are affected by increased insurance costs, as they and flat owners pay 4% of costs, while only flat owners pay 96%, based on the last valuation.
- The special resolution to change the Articles of Association to allow electronic meetings was passed by the necessary 75% majority. Companies House has been informed. This will allow future online meetings if needed.
- Owners agreed that the period between Estate periodic work, such as to the clock tower, would be extended from 4 to 5 years by default, the period between flats external work to 5 years and the period between flats internal communal area work to 7 years, as the surveyor suggested. This confirmed the budget basis used by the Directors, needed to avoid extra charge increases. Owners also agreed that the Directors may adjust the date of internal work to spread costs, allowing electrical work earlier if it would save money.
- The Directors answered questions to explain the detailed financial position on decoration rebates for replaced windows. These could not be paid anyway until the money had been collected, in around 3 years. The Directors did not make a recommendation on this, as it was a matter for owners to decide. Owners voted 9 votes to 3 to end rebates with 9 abstentions, so these will no longer be paid.

- Owners discussed updated plumbing and leaks policies. The Directors answered several questions. There was agreement that an even higher excess for water leak claims and lower premiums would be preferable but the insurer had refused this when asked. The Directors will seek this again next year.
- The main argument against the policies was based on fairness for owners of flats that leaked. However, this did not address the reasons given by the Directors in the meeting papers, nor the fairness for over 90% of owners without leaks consequently paying more. Rendall and Rittner is not authorised to provide legal services, which only solicitors can provide by law. The Directors agreed to provide a short plumbing standards guide as well as the website and leaks document, at <https://www.stbentooting.co.uk/plumbing>.
- Owners voted overwhelmingly, by 19 votes to 1, to endorse the updated policies. Owners should check, maintain and bring their plumbing up to standard (see article on this).
- Owners endorsed the tree plan so any proposal for felling will require full justification to best practice standards and consultation.
- The Directors reported briefly on contracts for services, routine maintenance, the periodic external work and other steps taken during the Covid-19 pandemic. Drain flies were discussed (see article on Maintenance).
- The Directors proposed a pilot communal electrical upgrade (see separate article).
- Mr Ravi Joshi and Mr Kevin Herrmann were willing to continue serving as Directors, there were no objections and no other volunteers.
- Under other business, the Directors confirmed a wide group of contractors was considered for periodic work and would welcome suggestions. The Directors provided an update on last year's discussion on waste. Another offer of help was accepted.
- Owners thanked the Directors and Managing Agent for their work, gratefully received.

→ Christmas and New Year

The Directors and Managing Agent wish all owners and residents a happy, peaceful and healthy Christmas and New Year.