



Minutes of General Meeting

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of St Benedicts (Tooting) Management Company Limited held online on Thursday 27th January 2022 at 7.00 pm.

Online meeting

The Annual General Meeting for St Benedicts (Tooting) Management Company Limited was held online on Thursday 27th January 2022 at 7.00 pm under the provisions of the Articles of Association as amended in 2020.

Papers for the meeting were distributed to members (property owners) online or by post in early January as required by company law. These Minutes should be read in conjunction with the separate document explaining the resolutions that was sent to members with the Notice of meeting. These are available on the Estate website at <https://www.stbentooting.co.uk/docs>.

Attendees and Proxy nominations

- Kevin Herrmann (who chaired the meeting) and Ravi Joshi, Directors and property owning shareholders with 1 vote each in that capacity.
- 8 other property owning shareholders from a total of 15 including the Directors who had registered or nominated Proxies in advance.
- Tia Nicholson (Assistant Property Manager) from Rendall and Rittner Ltd, who was not able to vote, while Angela Petts (Senior Property Manager) sent her apologies.
- There were 4 Proxy nominations to the chairperson with instructions on voting, 1 to the chairperson with discretion in a personal capacity and 1 other Proxy nomination to a named person with discretion on voting.

In total 15 property owning shareholders cast votes. House owners were asked to abstain on resolutions only affecting flat owners.

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The chairperson opened the meeting at 7.02 pm and welcomed those present. The Directors and Property Manager present introduced themselves. The chairperson then explained how the meeting would be conducted, as explained in the Notice of Meeting and in the information how to participate:

- Video and audio must be enabled initially and the participant's name and property address owned to allow eligibility to participate to be confirmed. Video can then be turned off.
- The meeting is recorded.
- Participants are muted and should stay muted unless invited to speak. The Microsoft Teams facility to raise a hand electronically should be used to indicate a wish to speak. On being invited to speak it is necessary to unmute, then mute again afterwards. Unmuting at other times would create feedback disrupting the sound for others.
- The Microsoft Teams chat facility must not be used, will not be monitored, nor receive a response, nor form part of the meeting.
- Because the resolutions were explained in a separate document sent with the Notice of Meeting and on the Estate website, the Directors will only summarise the explanations during the meeting, not repeat them in full. Questions raised in advance as requested will be answered in the meeting and in the Minutes and the Directors will try to answer other questions raised in the meeting.



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- Votes could be cast in advance to allow equal participation to those unable to join online. Please open the link in the instructions for the voting web page to confirm votes online this evening. You will be invited to register attendance then, when each vote is taken, to confirm your vote. Any vote you cast in advance is shown, otherwise the Directors' recommendations, which can be changed. Difficulties voting should be reported by raising a hand electronically in *MS Teams* so they can be resolved. When voting for each resolution is closed, the result is shown on the voting web page.
- All resolutions are ordinary resolutions decided by a simple majority of votes cast.

1. To receive and approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 19th November 2020.

No questions were raised in advance or in the meeting and the resolution was passed with 14 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions.

2. To receive and adopt the Report of the Directors and the Accounts for the year ended 30th June 2021.

Under current accounting standards and with the Company using all the exemptions available, the Company Financial Statements that are voted on contain very little and are not audited. A separate Service Charge Statement is provided to show how money is spent.

The expenditure closely matched the charges collected, arrears are reduced after good work by Rendall and Rittner and payment of one large debt, while health and safety fees were lower because inspections were suspended during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In answer to a query on the evening it was explained that the largest rises in expenditure were insurance over the last couple of years and now electricity costs, now increasing greatly, which are annual costs so cannot be deferred. It is hoped that savings by carrying out periodic maintenance in a more economical way may partially offset these. It is not possible to estimate future charges until the budget is prepared.

The resolution was passed with 13 votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention.

3. To receive a report from the Directors on the challenges of arranging periodic work, the costs involved that affect charges and proposals to split work into work packages suitable for smaller local contractors that offer lower prices while combining packages where this would save cost.

The increased costs tendered by large building firms and proposal to split work into smaller work packages over a period of years that local contractors could undertake at lower cost were explained. Detailed information has been provided on the website, in Newsletters and in the AGM papers. This approach proved successful for the gutter work and roof repairs where a local contractor provided the best price and offered a discount for carrying out both together with one hoist hire. The local handyman used by the Estate offered the lowest price for flat porch work, which was carried out to the highest quality ever. The approach has been successful so far and this will be confirmed if tenders in 2022 to decorate the minority of remaining wooden flat windows and the flat block oriels (the projecting wooden features) are equally successful.

Questions on the fire safety work were received in advance and on the evening. The safety work specification will be made available on the website when it is finalised and the contract is let. It lists relatively minor issues that we, the health & safety and door inspections have found, for which some examples were given. The inspections undertaken were confirmed. There are no known instances where fire precautions to the standards when built rather than current standards have prevented mortgages or sale. The Management Company will not provide inappropriate certification that does not apply under Government guidance. Neither is it able to recommend contractors because of the legal risk.

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The recent tragedy in New York demonstrates again that it is much more important that flat owners and residents do not reduce fire door safety, for example, by removing automatic closers, stopping them working or propping open doors. Following this tragedy any owner or landlord of a tenant found creating such a risk to life, such as not having an operable flat door closer, will face immediate solicitor action (like with water leaks) to compel them to reinstate fire safety.

A question on roof inspections was received in advance. The surveyor and all contractors who visited site advised against roof inspections as physical inspection of our type of old interlocking tiles is more likely to cause damage than find it. Our roofs can mostly be inspected from the ground using binoculars, so drones are not necessary (and require operation by specially licensed and insured contractors close to buildings). The consistent professional advice is that it is best to deal with leaks when they are reported as they can occur with no visible fault, such as in Limetree Walk currently. This allows timely repair to avoid deterioration, then the periodic surveyor inspection picks up more minor issues before they deteriorate and cause leaks.

This item was for information so there was no vote.

4. To endorse the proposals to split periodic work into smaller work packages at the intervals proposed in line with those approved at the 2020 AGM and note the constraints on work, particularly window decoration requiring access at height.

The schedule of work packages over the years has been provided on the website, in Newsletters and in the AGM papers. The survey of remaining wooden windows will close on 11 February 2022 and any not registered by then cannot be included in the tender for decoration in 2022, so will either have to wait for the next cycle or the owner will have to pay the additional costs involved.

No questions were raised in advance or in the meeting and the resolution was passed with 15 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions.

5. To note that splitting work with different intervals will require reserve fund contributions to be calculated differently and to authorise the Directors to transfer funds between the single flats reserve and individual flat block reserves in the proportion it has been contributed to cover the cost of periodic and other work allocated according to flat leases.

With work now split into smaller work packages over a number of years, the former method of calculating charges based on fixed maintenance cycles would no longer work. The budget is being redeveloped to collect money over the period of years for each individual work package. Costs will differ between blocks for the different work packages. Consequently, it is necessary to charge much more to the individual block reserves in future rather than the common reserve across all blocks as before. Money needs to be transferred from that single fund to the individual funds to avoid having to contribute again. For fairness this will be done in the proportion it has been contributed.

Effects will include greater variations in charges and blocks where there is more damage having higher charges than those better looked after. This is in accordance with the flat leases that require those properties requiring or benefitting from work to pay for it.

No questions were raised in advance or in the meeting and this resolution, applying only to flats so house owners were asked to abstain, was passed with 12 votes in favour, none against and 3 abstentions.



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6. To receive a report from the Directors on flat water leaks since revised policies on plumbing work and handling of leaks were introduced in July 2020 and endorsed by the 2020 AGM.

Since July 2020, the rate of water leaks into adjacent flats has reduced considerably. The improvement is thought to be because it is now cheaper to pay for maintenance than incur the increased costs for a leak and also because the properties with the worst plumbing have been compelled to rectify this by solicitor action where necessary. One property being brought up to the required standard leaked again, another potential leak is being investigated and there were no insurance claims for leaks in the year. It is hoped that this will help to limit increases in insurance premiums or even lead to reductions as the record improves.

None of the potential issues raised at the 2020 AGM have occurred and, so far, no property with plumbing to the required standard that has been maintained has leaked and been subject to solicitor action and inspection costs. The Directors consider that the revised policies are having exactly the desired effects and there was general agreement on this.

This item was for information so there was no vote.

7. To confirm that, where insurers or other agents request tree or other work with appropriate evidence benefiting specific properties on the Estate, this may be carried out as a matter of goodwill without liability and the costs of work and any legal costs arising may be charged to those properties in line with property legal agreements.

The Management Company will only consider tree work where there is evidence that the trees are causing issues that meets local Government guidance. Property legal agreements absolve the Company of liability arising from trees the builders were required to leave or plant. Over the last two years, a loss adjuster acting for a house insurer sought to avoid paying for tree work requested for a house. Ultimately, the insurer did pay but it would be better to avoid having to dispute who should pay. This resolution allows the costs involved to be charged to the property concerned so any dispute is then about their payment of the charges under the terms of the property deeds. These provide that costs are borne by the properties requiring or benefitting from work, rather than everyone across the Estate.

In response to a question on the evening, it was clarified that this is only likely to apply to houses with buildings insurance. Any damage to flat blocks is covered by the Estate insurance and flat owners and landlords are unlikely to be able to nor are expected to insure such damage under home contents and landlord liability policies. Trees contributed to damage to the two flat blocks that were a contributory cause of the large insurance premium increases with water leaks and those trees have been felled.

The resolution was passed with 15 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions.

8. To receive the report on other work in the year set out in the September 2021 Newsletter.

No questions were raised in advance or in the meeting on the reports of work in the September 2021 Newsletter or over the past year.

This item was for information so there was no vote.

9. To deal with the appointment of Directors nominated in advance of the meeting.

Mr Ravi Joshi and Mr Kevin Herrmann are willing to continue serving as Directors. An invitation was put on the Estate website for several weeks but no nominations were received before the General Meeting was called. No issues were raised with the current Directors continuing in office, nor were there any offers on the evening to become an Alternate Director. Consequently, there was no vote.

Thanks for the work of the Directors were received before, during and after the meeting and were gratefully accepted.



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10. To deal with any other business notified in advance of the meeting.

A question was raised before the meeting whether a bicycle hangar could be installed instead of a parking bay. Parking spaces are part of the properties concerned, so these cannot be used. It would have to be sited by a roadway where there was room to access it without risk of damage, not by a path to avoid encouraging illegal cycling on paths. The only suitable location on the Estate is a grass area in Carlisle Way, which would require significant groundworks to prepare, is some distance from many properties and may need planning consent. Trust funds collected for other purposes could not be used for this, so potential users would need to pay significant funds in advance to cover the costs, which they have been unwilling to do previously.

The owner who raised this explained the Council scheme available and the need for secure storage. This would still require groundworks and may not be available on a private estate. Another option was suggested to lobby Wandsworth Council to make provision on Church Lane or Rectory Lane. The owner had done this and agreed to look into this further if it were publicised in the next Newsletter as the Directors will be fully occupied arranging periodic work. It would be easy to provide an Estate web page to register interest. There is also an issue with possibly abandoned bicycles on the existing Council open racks but legal restrictions limit the action possible.

Another matter was raised concerning food dumped on the Estate. It is thought an elderly woman leaves food intended for birds, while youths eat take-aways on the Estate and drop the containers with uneaten food. This encourages vermin including rats and foxes. If the people doing this live on the Estate and are identified to Rendall and Rittner, action for nuisance could be taken. While it is technically illegal, it is unlikely that the Police would take action.

Matters under any other business are not included in the Notice of Meeting so there were no votes.

The meeting closed at 8.14 pm.