



Newsletter - September 2015

Daniel Fells has a new rôle, so Angela Petts is again our Property Manager at Rendall and Rittner.

Property manager



Budget 2015-16 further details

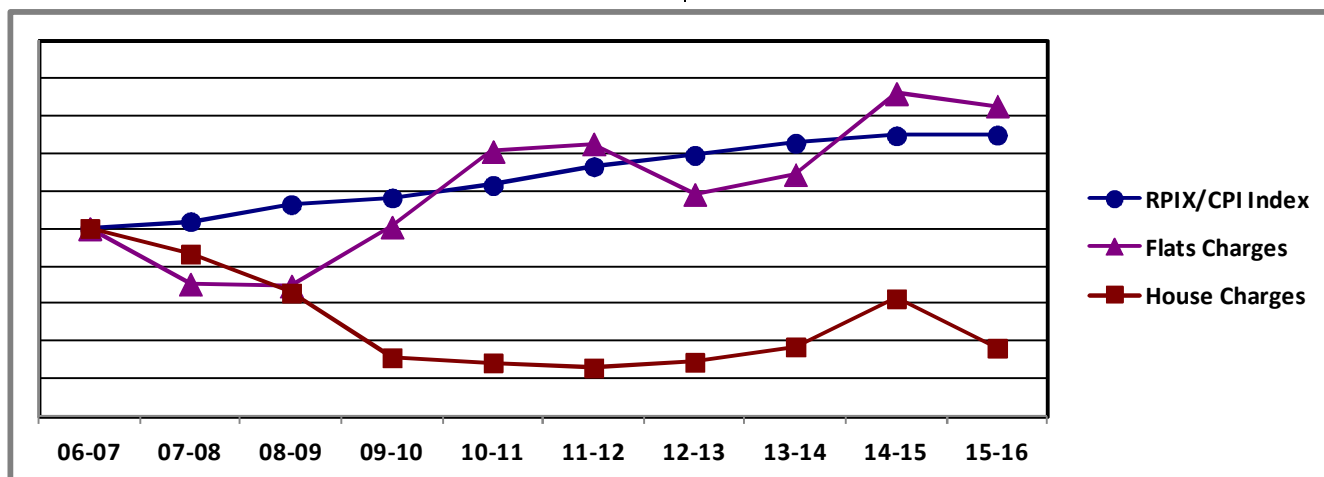
The June Newsletter explained the overall budget for 2015-16. This provides more detailed explanation of some charges.

Costs are increasing now the Estate is getting older and needs more maintenance, so the Directors had to increase changes last year. Owners voted at the 2014 AGM to extend the next maintenance period to 5 years to spread costs. Otherwise, charges would be about 1% higher for houses and about 7% higher for flats.

This reduced the average charges from last year, although not by as much as hoped for flats as the periodic re-decoration was more expensive that estimated in 2010, so more needs to be allowed for the next re-decoration in 2020 too.

Some flat blocks have increased charges, particularly small blocks. Up to 2010, decoration costs were split according to the charges paid. Since repair work was needed and costs varied, they must be calculated separately for each block because the leases require it. On this basis, costs per flat are now higher in smaller blocks because the costs of work to common features like the block entrance and roof level are split between a smaller number of flats.

The diagram below shows how service charges compare with inflation over the period for which we have complete records since changing managing agent. Our costs are increasing by over 2% in line with average salaries, rather than being near 0% like CPI including food and oil.



The separate sheet enclosed with this Newsletter shows where your money is spent for houses and typically for flats, based on average charges.



Tree pruning

The sycamore, ash and cedar trees between Abbey Drive and St Benedicts Close were pruned in August after Council permission was finally granted, along with an overgrown maple. The oak tree in Rectory Lane overhanging Abbey Drive houses was also cut back as much as the Council allowed.

Trees at the back of Abbey Drive overhanging parking spaces will be pruned in September. Cars will need to be moved so Rendall and Rittner is writing to the properties concerned.

No other work is proposed this year.



Parking controls

Owners and residents are reminded that, once the periodic maintenance is complete, parking controls will apply again fully across the Estate.

This is expected to be during October or November and we will give notice of this on the website. It will be when the site office and all equipment have been removed.

After that, cars must park in the bay matching the permit numbers shown in the windscreen again, otherwise they will be liable for a penalty charge.

Email Angela at angela.petts@rendallandrittner.co.uk or phone her on 020 7481 6980.

Contact details





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Periodic maintenance

Periodic flat and Estate repairs and re-decoration and the remaining flat wall repairs are currently being carried out between July and October.

No responses were received to the second section 20 consultation required by law, so the directors awarded the work to Polyteck as the lowest bidder on the advice of surveyor Hallas & Co, which is supervising the work.

Both Hallas &Co and the Directors will inspect to check that work has been carried out according to the specification and to reasonable quality. If you are aware of any problems, please advise our managing agent, Rendall and Rittner, so these can be checked specifically.

The work covers:

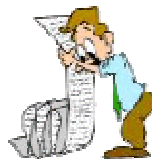
- Repair and re-decoration of flat blocks externally and internally.
- The less urgent repairs to flat block walls, following the more urgent repairs last year.
- Repair and re-decoration of the clock tower.
- Repair of the top of the portico on Limetree Walk.
- Permanent repair of the roof of 18-28 St Benedicts Close that was previously repaired temporarily from inside.
- Work at roof and eaves level of 30-36 Abbey Drive to prevent pest entry.



Window rebate

Flat owners who have fitted maintenance-free windows with permission will receive a rebate reflecting the cost of decoration saved. The leases require that costs are shared across all flats in each block, so this has to be done by rebate not by reducing service charges.

Rebates will be set against service charges in January 2016 amounting to £57 for qualifying one-bedroom flats and £85 for two-bedroom flats. These amounts are calculated based on the Polyteck tender and are higher than in 2010.



Work this year

The Directors have carried out and arranged a lot of work for owners and residents this year:

- Continuing the flat wall repairs.
- Extensive work to inspect and repair flat block roofs that were leaking.
- Sealing around flat block landing windows.
- Employing a surveyor, working with it to specify the periodic maintenance and re-decoration, carry out the tender, award the work and supervise it after the section 20 consultation required by law.
- Completing the replacement of all old and worn flat block entrance door locks and keys.
- Replacing old door closer units which are gradually failing after decades of use.
- Following a pest survey, repeated visits by a pest control company to deal with mice reported in common areas.
- Repainting faded parking space numbers and dividers.
- Re-laying uneven Estate paths in Limetree Walk and on the steps to Rectory Lane.
- Removing vegetation from the top of the portico in Limetree Walk.
- Replacing failed Estate light units and lamps.
- Servicing the clock in the tower.
- Work underway to deal with damaged parking areas in St Benedicts Close.
- Reviewing all costs and work that will be required and setting the reserves budget for the next five-year maintenance period, taking account of the periodic work tender and feeding into the annual budget for 2015-16.
- Working with the managing agent to recover and keep down service charge arrears.

→ Annual Meeting

As usual, we are looking to hold the St Benedicts Annual General Meeting 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).

