



Newsletter – September 2016



Entryphones

Because entryphone faults are becoming more frequent and repair costs are increasing, the remaining 30-year old units are being replaced over the next couple of years.

Contractor Entryphone will replace systems in the centre of St Benedicts Close this September:

- 13-27 on Wednesday 21 September
- 29-43 on Thursday 22 September
- 45-59 on Friday 23 September
- 61-71 on Wednesday 28 September
- 105-119 on Thursday 29 September
- 121-135 on Friday 30 September.

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.

If there is particular difficulty providing access on the day booked, Entryphone will see if it can fit the handset in that flat on a different day when they are on site, after the main system has been fitted in that block. However, Entryphone cannot guarantee to be available on any particular day.

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.

The Directors have negotiated with Entryphone that it will hold its prices to the end of 2017 for the next batch of replacements.

→ Parking control

Residents are reminded that parking on the Estate is controlled as the majority of owners want to prevent their spaces being abused.

You may only park one car or small van within the marked parking space for your property, it must display a permit matching the space number and it must not cause any obstruction.

Parking is not permitted in other spaces or outside spaces. Vehicles breaching the scheme rules are liable to receive a penalty notice.



Pest work

More work is being carried out to try to prevent pest entry. Grilles have been fitted over airbricks at 2-12 Limetree Walk and, if this is successful over the next year, they will be fitted to other flat blocks that have particular problems with mice.

Contractor CSCS has been instructed to fit mesh to deter mice and squirrels in the lofts of 21-26 and 31-36 Abbey Drive and 1-11 St Benedicts Close, where birds were found. It is also planned to do this in all four flat blocks in Limetree Walk.

Fitting the mesh requires the residents of both top floor flats to provide access to the lofts, otherwise it cannot be done. If the residents do not arrange or provide access at an agreed time, the work will have to be left undone and nothing more can be done there to prevent pest entry.

Bait has been laid again in communal areas of blocks with mice. Residents in those blocks have been sent a letter and must also take action or the mice will remain and the problem will go on.



Maintenance

Torrential rain in July that flooded nearby roads and flooded Tooting Broadway underground station washed silt into drains in car parks in Limetree Walk and Carlisle Way. Unbloc cleared these drains again and flushed them.

A number of block front door closers that could no longer be adjusted properly and several failed lamps in fittings that are difficult to access were replaced and more lamp replacements ordered.

The retired electrician that the Directors tried did not prove reliable. They are now trying another local electrician to try to get work done more quickly, particularly at height, like street lamps.

→ Items in communal areas

Residents of flats may not store items in 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. Those not claimed are disposed of after a while.





Flat front doors

The Managing Agent and Health and Safety contractor have reported that more flat doors have been replaced. All flat alterations require Management Company consent under the lease.

Information about flat 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>.

Because we have a duty to maintain the safety of other residents in the block, the Managing Agent will contact all flat owners who have replacement front doors where information on fire certification has not already been submitted.

Owners will need to provide copies of the new door certification or photographs of the markings, or show these to the Managing Agent. If a door is not certified to meet building and fire regulations, the owner will need to replace it with a self-closing certified fire door at their expense.

This applies even if the new door was fitted by a previous owner. When you signed the legal documents to purchase the leasehold, you took on the previous owner's liabilities. Your solicitor should have explained this to you at the time.



Dumped waste

Wandsworth Council now charges residents £17 and landlords £73 to remove up to four items of waste. It has been cheaper for unscrupulous contractors to dump waste illegally and landlords to pay the Company the actual cost of disposal charged, adding to the Estate waste problems.

From 1 October 2016, the Management Company will charge minimum fees around a third higher than the Council to deter dumping and encourage proper waste disposal. These will be £25, £100 if the flat is sub-let, or the actual cost of disposal if higher (a resident was recently charged £240 to clear furniture), added to the property service charge account without further notice. The Company is required not to make a profit, so fees over costs will help to fund rubbish cleaning costs and keep service charges down.



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 contractor that carried out the major work including redecoration and wall repairs was required to correct defective work and a small retention is being kept for 5 years.
- Rebates of service charges were paid to flat owners who have replacement maintenance-free windows that did not need redecoration.
- The *Property Guide* provided to purchasers was updated to meet ARMA-Q guidelines.
- The firm employed by the Managing Agent to administer electricity supplies was required to read meters every six months to ensure accurate bills for communal lighting.
- The programme to replace the 30-year old entryphones continued, two batches of replacements were arranged, and the rest will be replaced over the next two years.
- Tree work was carried out to remove dead wood from the lime trees in Limetree Walk, cut back oaks overhanging the pavement in Rectory Lane, inspect and make safe an oak in poor condition and cut back a number of overgrown smaller trees.
- Pest work is described in this Newsletter.
- The Directors found a local handyman to carry out work more rapidly and generally at lower cost than larger contractors on the Managing Agent's approved list.
- The Directors also tried using a retired electrician but he did not prove reliable so they are now trying another local electrician.
- Maintenance work has been arranged as required throughout the year for electrical fittings, drains and general handyman work.

→ 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).