

Tenants launches water charges refund campaign

Tenants of the three housing associations that run the St. Martin's Estate in Tulse Hill are campaigning over refunds for water charges that can amount to several hundred pounds.

They say the associations – Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing, Optivo and Notting Hill Genesis – are only refunding residents from 2004 rather than 2001, as tenants of Lambeth and other local councils have been.

The refunds arise from a national arrangement between Thames Water and social housing providers that was the subject of a High Court case following three years of campaigning on the issue by tenants.

St Martin's campaigners have letters from the associations fobbing off their complaints without explanation after being sent from one department to another when querying refunds.

Tenants have also been told that the refunds will only be paid into their rent account and not by bank transfer or cash. With the help of community

organisers at High Trees Community Development Trust, they are taking collective action on the issue.

Optivo resident Janet Blake said: "When we owe the money, they're practically breaking down our door. Now it's the other way around and they just don't care."

Vanessa Simpson, also an Optivo resident, said: "This is a nice area and we all really get along. It's a shame the housing association doesn't do its job and help the people it's supposed to. That's why we have to make them."

In March last year, Lambeth council announced that it had started legal action against the three St Martin's housing associations over their failure to tackle serious damp conditions on the estate.

The announcement came after six years' campaigning by tenants who had, again, been fobbed off and also blamed themselves for the damp because of their "lifestyle" and "behaviour".

■ high-trees.org/community-action



New pastor for Brixton

Brixton Seventh-day Adventist Church recently welcomed their new minister, Pastor Richard Daly. He has been in full-time ministry for 27 years where he has pastored churches in Bristol, Gloucester and London.

He has a passion for working in the community and has served in local community initiatives and leadership projects.

He has extended his ministry outside of the church as a hospital, prison and university volunteer chaplain and served as an Olympic Games chaplain working with athletes.

Richard Daly is an avid reader and the author of 16 books. He is married to Maxine and together have three young adult boys.

■ For service times and more information about the Brixton Seventh-day Adventist Church, visit: brixton7da.co.uk



St. Martin's Estate tenants (l-r) Janet, Grace, Dennis and David

Brixton prison 'set up to fail'

Brixton prison and its inmates are being "set up

Lifesaving defibrillator in Brixton McDonald's

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Lambeth Council is inviting applications for