



## Slindon Parish Council

### Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Slindon Parish Council

Held at Slindon Coronation Hall, Reynolds Lane, Slindon BN18 0QZ.

On Monday 23 August 2021 at 7 p.m.

**Present:** Councillors Jan Rees (Chairman), Barbara Brimblecombe, Peter Fenton and Derek Thomas.

**In attendance:**

Sarah Linfield BSc (Hons), CiLCA (Parish Clerk/RFO/Proper Officer)

Lisa Trownson, Area Ranger, National Trust

2 members of the public

23. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Fenton declared his role as a Chairman of a committee of the Slindon Community Land Trust.

24. Public Participation

A member of the public spoke regarding the draft flag flying policy to be adopted, advocating the payment of a small honorarium to the two Flag Officers in recognition of the work undertaken and of a monthly check to maintain the flagpoles in good order. Another spoke later regarding 'Operation Watershed' and was reassured that the willow would only be felled by the Council if its application was successful.

25. Apologies for Absence

Not applicable, all Parish Council members present.

26. Minutes from the Council Meetings Held On 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021 and 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

It was **Resolved** - to approve the minutes of the meetings as a true record of the decisions of those meetings and the Chairman be authorised to sign them.

27. Chairman's Report

Councillor Rees spoke regarding –

- The A27 Elected Representatives' Forum with Highways England and of the ecological surveys and archaeological work currently being undertaken. Two 'green bridges' will be constructed at Binsted and Tortington Lane – landscaped bridges allowing wildlife to keep moving safely despite the road blocking their path. There would be no Ford junction as, even with new homes, the criteria would not be met. Ideas on how the detrunking of the existing A27 would work were awaited with interest.

The implications for Tye Lane of the planning sought to extend Avisford Park were as yet unknown.



- The Arundel-Ford Pathway to make cycling and walking safer between Arundel and Ford Station, a letter had been sent to support this and members were encouraged to sign the online petition.
- A letter from Andrew Griffith MP highlighting the Boundary Commission's Proposals for West Sussex Parliamentary Constituencies which could result in the loss of the last purely rural constituency in West Sussex. The boundary changes are required to equalise the number of electors per seat across the United Kingdom, but with a knock-on effect that rural areas might not then receive the same level of representation in parliament. The first consultation ended on 2 August 2021, there will be a second in early 2022, when the responses to both will be assessed and a decision made on what changes may be appropriate to the initial proposals. The Clerk undertook to share a link to the map with those present which shows the current boundary and the initial proposal for the boundary (it can be viewed on the Boundary Commission website).
- The defibrillator at the Forge, its location would remain unchanged after consultation with trustees of the Coronation Hall.
- Nigel Lynn, Chief Executive at Arun District Council, who has announced his departure after almost ten years and will shortly be taking up an appointment in West Berkshire.

28. West Sussex County Council Matters.

There was no representation on this occasion. Councillor Trevor Bence sent his apologies as he was unavailable, with nothing further to share other than to acknowledge the Council's efforts in keeping him up to date on its Operation Watershed application.

29. Arun District County Council Matters

There was no representation on this occasion. (Apologies subsequently received from Councillor Faye Catterson).

30. National Trust Matters

Lisa Trownson, Area Ranger, providing cover for Katie Archer who is on maternity leave spoke to confirm -

- The impact of COVID-19 on the National Trust with the team now responsible for some 6000 acres although they are now back up to full capacity at six rangers, welcoming two new members of staff. However, self-isolation and using up holiday entitlement which has built up means resources are still stretched.
- Work continues replacing the fence by the orchard with help from volunteers, digging out ditches in the Bellows and ash die-back management which may require some road closures and power outages. The ash will be used in a variety of ways, including for charcoal, and also sold to contractors as part-payment for work.
- Anti-social behaviour including fly-tipping and 'Countryside Code' posters being defaced.



- In response to a question from the meeting, that the National Trust had not sold the land at Fontwell.

### 31. Grant Applications

#### i. CIL Funding

The outcome is due to be confirmed in early Autumn with over 500 applications to assess.

#### ii. Operation Watershed

West Sussex County Council had confirmed that it would not be supporting the Price and Myers' variant application. The original scheme provided by the Parish Council will be considered with a decision expected on or around September 16<sup>th</sup>.

The contractor appointed to fell the willow in the event that the original scheme is funded is no longer able to undertake the work and the Clerk was instructed to obtain further quotes.

As agreed at its meeting on March 8<sup>th</sup> 2021, minute 168, the Clerk undertook to take advice on the ash trees by the pond and obtain a quote for the required work.

### 32. Finance Reports

#### i. Payments

It was **Resolved** - to note and approve payments, including any authorised outside the meeting under its Financial Regulations (Annex A).

#### ii. Bank Reconciliation

It was **Resolved** - to note the Bank Reconciliation signed off outside the meeting at 30.4.21, 31.5.21 and 30.6.21 and authorise sign off as at 31.7.21.

#### iii. Budget Monitor at 30.4.21, 31.5.21, 30.6.21 and 31.7.21

The Clerk highlighted those areas where the spend had exceeded the budget by more than 15%. The legal work required post 2020 budget-setting in respect of the Recreation Ground licence totalled £2160.50 (net of VAT). The Legionella Risk Assessment and associated work to date totalled £438.81 (net of VAT).

#### iv. General Reserves and Earmarked Reserves

It was **Resolved** – to meet the total cost of the legal work and Legionella assessment from the Earmarked Reserves for the Recreation Ground - £2599.31 to be transferred from Earmarked to General Reserve Allocation.

(Proposed by Councillor Rees, seconded by Councillor Fenton, all in agreement)

Finance reports to meetings are posted separately to the Parish Council Website under the 'Finance and Risk' section.



### 33. Risk and Governance

i. Change in Banking Provider

A briefing note had been provided including the Clerk's assessment and recommendations (Annex B) and

It was **Resolved** – to use the switching service to move to Unity Bank.  
(Proposed by Councillor Thomas, seconded by Councillor Fenton, all in agreement)

ii. Risk Assessment – for strimming and grass cutting applying to volunteers, Council members and contractors.

It was **Resolved** – to adopt the policy

iii. Flag -flying policy

An honorarium of £50 per year would be paid to each Flag Officer.

A monthly check of the flagpoles to be completed to keep in good order.

The Council noted the correct process for flying flags at half-mast, included in the policy to be shared with the Flag Officers.

It was **Resolved** – to adopt the policy

iv. Council Policies

It was **Resolved** – to revise and re-adopt policies as circulated and upload to the Parish Council website in an accessible format.

v. Website Accessibility

It was **Resolved** – to continue the existing arrangement for annual scanning and WCAG compliance reports sent out quarterly which ensure that the website meets 'accessibility' requirements. This had not previously been included in the budget but will free the clerk's time for more pressing requirements and also benefits from a professional scanning tool. Cost is £299 + VAT. Annual website secured hosting plus 2 hours support from September 8<sup>th</sup> 2021 as detailed in the budget for 2021/22 at a cost of £199 + VAT, approved.

### 34. Recreation Ground

A Legionella Risk Assessment had been completed at the pavilion, costing £295 (no VAT). A plumber had been appointed to complete the action plan from the Legionella Risk Assessment at a cost of £495 (no VAT) with a legislative requirement to complete aspects of the remedial work within 14 days of the report. General water quality testing (cost £55) and legionella checks (cost £50) had also been undertaken, the results of which were satisfactory. Works undertaken and payments authorised in line with Financial Regulation 4.5.

### 35. Clerk's Update

i. Playground Inspection 28.7.21

The issue of the gate latch had again been raised and with some photos from Arun District Council and the very kind assistance of a resident it is hoped that this is now fixed. The basketball backboard could be replaced at cost of approximately £150 but it was agreed to wait until the grant application was known as it would be replaced along with some other ageing items if the council is awarded the money.



- ii. Adult Gym Service 29.6.21 and Monthly Inspection 28.7.21  
The service was completed on June 29<sup>th</sup> 2021 with remedial work undertaken to ensure the equipment remained in good order and safe to use. No issues reported in the monthly inspection.
- iii. Allotments (lease review/renew)  
Jane Cecil, General Manager, National Trust (South Downs) in consultation with Rebecca Marshall, Estate Manager, had confirmed –
  - There will be no claim for the rent due for 2020 or 2021.
  - A new agreement will be put in place from March 2022 and the rent for that year will be £200.
  - People can continue to enjoy the benefit of the allotments until there is a new agreement in place.
  - One of the National Trust's Rural Surveyors, Mark Lyall would be in touch with the Allotment Society about the new agreement in due course.
- iv. New Bins  
The two new (general waste) bins on order had now been installed, one on the Top Field with the other on School Hill, replacing the old wooden one by the junction close to Church Hill. There will be no cost for the bins themselves nor emptying them this year at a total estimated saving to the parish of £1371.98. The bin on the Recreation Ground, which is already scheduled for twice weekly emptying, is also due to be replaced at no additional cost with a larger one.
- v. Other Correspondence
  - Freedom of Information request – fly-tipping enquiry via 'whatdotheyknow' website.
  - Boundary Commission review consultation – refer minute 27.
  - Draft West Sussex Transport Plan survey – opportunity to comment between 16 July to 8 October, further details to follow on 'quiet lanes'.
  - Parish Online subscription – the Parish Council currently subscribes via a 3-year agreement commenced February 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 at an annual fee of £22.50 + VAT, arranged via the now disbanded Surrey and Sussex Association of Local Councils. The newly formed West Sussex Association of Local Councils have advised a new subscription rate based on number of electors at £50 +VAT, which has been queried as it would be more than the Council's current rate.
  - Arun District Council's Consultation on Tree Planning Strategy – response approved.
  - Winter Gritting – existing arrangement whereby West Sussex County Council allocation stored at the National Trust to continue, no top up required.

### 36. Highways Matters

- i. Flood Management  
West Sussex County Council has undertaken various reactive cleansing actions during recent months, the most recent being on 4<sup>th</sup> August when they emptied and cleansed all the gullies from part way up School Hill back down to the junction with the A29. Further works are planned to improve the drainage situation in the village



and prevent flooding and involve increasing the size of the concrete aprons around five of the gullies and pipe size from 150mm to 225mm between some of the gullies. The increased capacity of the system will assist in alleviating the overloading issues in this location and the wider concrete aprons will enable more water to access the gullies, again removing excess water from the road surface. The first stage will be to price up the proposed works.

ii. A27 matters

The A27 Elected Representatives' Forum meets next on 28 September 2021 (a hybrid meeting with the opportunity to join online or in person) and the minutes from previous meetings can be found on the Highways England website, with a link also available on the Parish Council website.

37. Planning Matters

i. New Applications

SDNP/21/ 03328/HOUS Tiverton, Sunnybox Lane – two storey extension, revised vehicular access, response date 6 September 2021.

It was agreed to assess the % increase in the floorspace and view the site before agreeing a response.

ii. Approve Responses provided under Scheme of Delegation and current status

a. SDNP/21/02647/FUL and SDNP/21/02648/LIS-Courthill Farm House Court Hill Farm Road Slindon West Sussex BN18 0RJ (No objection/Application in progress).

b. SDNP/21/02556/HOUS 4 Mill Road Slindon BN18 0LZ (No objection/Approved).

c. SDNP/21/02980/HOUS Mill Lane House Top Road Slindon BN18 0RP (No objection/Approved).

d. SDNP/21/03113/FUL. The Ridings Shellbridge Road Slindon BN18 0LT (No objection/Application in progress).

e. SDNP/21/03093/HOUS Hazelgrove Church Hill Slindon BN18 0RB (No response as declaration of interest by Councillors as applicant and neighbour/Approved).

f. APP/C3810/C/86/946 Old Timbers Shellbridge Road Slindon BN18 0LT (No objection, on the basis this application merely seeks to correct the requirement for 'gypsy occupancy' and that it does not create any precedent for future mobile homes, either on this land or elsewhere in the parish /Application in progress).

g. SDNP/21/03102/HOUS 51 London Road Slindon BN18 0NG (No objection/Application in progress).

h. SDNP/21/03710/HOUS Flint Cottage School Hill single storey rear extension (No objection/Application in progress).

i. SDNP/21/03898/TCA Lawson cypress (T30) - dismantle and fell to ground level (No objection/Application in progress).

iii. Previous applications (Status)

a. SDNP/21/01406/HOUS Fairbourne Bridle Lane Slindon BN18 0NA (Approved).

b. SDNP/21/01392/HOUS & SDNP/21/01393/LIS Church House, Church Hill (Application in progress).

c. SDNP/21/01798/LDP SDNP/21/00856/TCA Mill Lane House, Top Road (Approved).

d. SDNP/21/02645/DCON The Coppice Sunnybox Lane (Approved).

e. SDNP/21/02547/HOUS Laburnham Cottage Bridle Lane (Approved).

f. SDNP/21/00431/FUL Northwood Cottage Courthill Farm Road (Approved).



- g. SDNP/21/03263/PRE Mulberry House Dyers Lane Slindon BN18 0RE. (Pre-advice outcome pending).
- h. SDNP/21/03459/TCA Hazelgrove Church Hill Fell Cedar Tree (Objection raised by SDNPA, served a Tree Preservation Order).
- i. SDNP/21/03630/PRE Mill Farm Mill Road (Pre Application Advice complete)

38. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday September 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 at the Slindon Recreation Ground Sports Pavilion, to commence at 6 p.m.

The meeting ended at 8.30 p.m.

Signed as a true record of the meeting

Dated.

## Annex A

meeting 23.8.21 - payments for approval since last meeting 4.5.21									
Community Account									
DATE OF CHEQUE/SO/DD	BENEFICIARY/PAYEE	TRANSACTION TYPE	Cheque number	NET AMOUNT	VAT	GROSS AMOUNT	STATUTE (UNDER WHICH PAYMENT MADE)	REASON/COMMENT	AUTHORISED (Relevant minute)
9.4.21	ICO (information Commissioner's Office)	Direct Debit	N/A	£ 35.00	£ -	£ 35.00	LGA 1972 s111	ICO registration fee - mandatory	within budget, annual payment authorised by DD.
12.5.21	Sarah Linfield	Standing Order	N/A	£ 532.83	£ -	£ 532.83	LGA 1972 s111	Clerk's monthly salary - period 2	Recurring - Clerk's salary per contract
12.5.21	HMRC	Cheque	100408	£ 133.20	£ -	£ 133.20	LGA 1972 s111	Tax on Clerk's salary - period 2	Recurring payment per contract
12.5.21	Streetlights	Cheque	100409	£ 64.46	£ 12.89	£ 77.35	Parish Councils Act 1957, s.3; Highways Act 1980, s.301	Streetlights - maintenance contract	within budget
27.5.21	Sercombe & Sons (Gaston Farm)	Cheque	100405	-£ 475.00	-£ 95.00	-£ 570.00	PHA 1875 s 164 - England	Hedge Cutting along A29 by Slindon Common/Recreation ground, including signs and signals	Stop placed on cheque, item destroyed
27.5.21	Sercombe & Sons (Gaston Farm)	Branch Payment	N/A	£ 475.00	£ 95.00	£ 570.00	PHA 1875 s 164 - England	Hedge Cutting along A29 by Slindon Common/Recreation ground, including signs and signals	Replacement method of payment (payment authorised at meeting 29.3.21 minute 178 (ii))
27.5.21	HSBC	Charge	N/A	£ 10.00	£ -	£ 10.00	LGA 1972 s111	Stopped Cheque Fee	Per HSBC Terms and Conditions, charging tariff.
7.6.21	HMRC	Cheque	100410	£ 133.20	£ -	£ 133.20	LGA 1972 s111	Tax on Clerk's salary - period 3	Recurring payment per contract
7.6.21	Sarah Linfield	Cheque	100411 part of	£ 33.32	£ 6.67	£ 39.99	LGA 1972 s111	Office shredder	By Chairman and Clerk - as per budget
7.6.21	Sarah Linfield	Cheque	100411 part of	£ 16.00	£ 3.20	£ 19.20	LGA 1972 s111	Dog bags for dispenser on Top Field	By Chairman and Clerk - as per budget
7.6.21	SLCC Enterprises Limited	Cheque	100412	£ 83.00	£ -	£ 83.00	LGA 1972 s143	Membership of SLCC - split 50:50 with Clapham Parish Council (total cost £166)	By Chairman and Clerk - as per budget
7.6.21	SLCC Enterprises Limited	Cheque	100413	£ 50.00	£ 10.00	£ 60.00	LGA 1972 s111	Recreation Grounds Cost - Compliance and Legionella Control webinar	By Chairman and Clerk - as per budget
14.6.21	Sarah Linfield	Standing Order	N/A	£ 532.83	£ -	£ 532.83	LGA 1972 s111	Clerk's monthly salary - period 3	Recurring - Clerk's salary per contract
28.6.21	Slindon Parish Council	Charge	N/A	-£ 10.00	£ -	-£ 10.00	LGA 1972 s111	Refund of Stopped Cheque fee	Refund confirmed by Customer Relations 28.6.21
2.7.21	Hugh Harris Ltd T/A Fresh Air Fitness	Cheque	100414	£ 360.16	£ 72.03	£ 432.19	PHA 1875, s164 - England	Annual Service of Adult Gym Equipment	Meeting 28.4.21 198 (ii)
12.7.21	Sarah Linfield	Standing Order	N/A	£ 532.83	£ -	£ 532.83	LGA 1972 s111	Clerk's monthly salary - period 4	Recurring - Clerk's salary per contract

## Annex A – continued

13.7.21	Southern Electric	Direct Debit		£ 41.82	£ 2.09	£ 43.91	Parish Councils Act 1957, s.3; Highways Act 1980, s.301	Account for Q1 2021/22	Recurring
14.7.21	Miss D Thornton Valenswater	Cheque	100415	£ 400.00	£ -	£ 400.00	LGA (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s.19.	Legionella Risk Assessment for Sports Pavilion	By Chairman and Clerk - under emergency powers
14.7.21	HMRC	Cheque	100416	£ 133.20	£ -	£ 133.20	LGA 1972 s111	Tax on Clerk's salary - period 4	Recurring payment per contract
14.7.21	Sarah Linfield	Cheque	100417	£ 45.88	£ -	£ 45.88	LGA 1972 s111	Homeworking Allowance - Q2 1.4 - 30.6.21	Per Clerk's salary per contract
15.7.21	JNR Computer Services	Cheque	100418	£ 212.80	£ 42.56	£ 255.36	LGA 1972 s111	Microsoft renewal annual charge and migration of files to new lap top in April	Meeting 8.3.21 165 (iii) - laptop file migration
15.7.21	Sarah Linfield	Cheque	part of 100419	£ 4.96	£ 0.99	£ 5.95	LGA 1972 s111	6 Pack Fire Door Safety signs	From Ear Marked Reserves at 23.8.21
15.7.21	Sarah Linfield	Cheque	part of 100419	£ 2.54	£ 0.52	£ 3.06	LGA 1972 s111	PAT testing stickers	From Ear Marked Reserves at 23.8.21
15.7.21	Sarah Linfield	Cheque	part of 100419	£ 11.58	£ 2.32	£ 13.90	LGA 1972 s111	Carbon monoxide detector	From Ear Marked Reserves at 23.8.21
15.7.21	Sarah Linfield	Cheque	part of 100419	£ 5.82	£ 1.17	£ 6.99	LGA 1972 s111	Scrubbing brushes x2	From Ear Marked Reserves at 23.8.21
15.7.21	Sarah Linfield	Cheque	part of 100419	£ 3.33	£ 0.67	£ 4.00	LGA 1972 s111	Tile cleaner	From Ear Marked Reserves at 23.8.21
15.7.21	Sarah Linfield	Cheque	part of 100419	£ 3.33	£ 0.67	£ 4.00	LGA 1972 s111	Warning tape	From Ear Marked Reserves at 23.8.21
15.7.21	Sarah Linfield	Cheque	part of 100419	£ 7.25	£ 1.45	£ 8.70	LGA 1972 s111	Cleaning products	From Ear Marked Reserves at 23.8.21
27.7.21	Surrey Hills Solicitors	Cheque	100420	£ 125.00	£ 25.00	£ 150.00	LGA 1972	In connection with Slindon Recreation Ground Advice	From Ear Marked Reserves at 23.8.21 Meeting 10.8.20, minute 44.2 Meeting 14.9.20, minute 60
12.8.21	Sarah Linfield	Standing Order	N/A	£ 532.83	£ -	£ 532.83	LGA 1972 s111	Clerk's monthly salary - period 5	Recurring - Clerk's salary per contract
17.8.21	Sarah Linfield	Cheque	100421	£ 65.36	£ 12.39	£ 77.75	LGA 1972 s111	Pavilion Risk assessment requirements (signage, log book), defib tags	From Ear Marked Reserves at 23.8.21
17.8.21	HMRC	Cheque	100422	£ 133.20	£ -	£ 133.20	LGA 1972 s111	Tax on Clerk's salary - period 5	Recurring payment per contract
23.8.21	Aubergine 262 Ltd	Cheque	100423	£ 498.00	£ 99.60	£ 597.60	LGA 1972, s.142	Website Hosting and WCAG scanning for accessibility compliance	Website hosting per budget and Annual and quarterly scanning to be approved meeting 23.8.21
Totals				£ 4,733.73	£ 294.22	£ 5,027.95			

### SLINDON PARISH COUNCIL

Monthly Income for information : April, May, June and July 2021

RECEIPTS				
DATE/ACCOUNT TYPE	PAYER	TRANSACTION TYPE	AMOUNT	REASON
Community 9.4.21	Arun District Council	CR	£ 9,089.50	Precept (50%)
Community 29.4.21	HMRC	CR	£ 1,894.20	VAT Refund (prior year)
Community Savings 30.4.21	HSBC	CR	£ 0.22	Interest
Community Savings 31.5.21	HSBC	CR	£ 0.22	Interest
Community Savings 30.6.21	HSBC	CR	£ 0.22	Interest
Community Savings 31.7.21	HSBC	CR	£ 0.22	Interest

## Annex B

### Slindon Parish Council - Proposed Change to Banking Arrangements

#### What's Happening

The current banking arrangement is no longer fit for purpose and the Parish Council needs to appoint an alternative provider.

HSBC are currently undertaking a 'Safeguard Review' to minimise money laundering and fraudulent account activity from which it is clear they do not understand how the Parish Council operates as the first tier of local government.

HSBC are unable to offer a suitable online banking facility, which is an outstanding action from the Council's review for the financial period to 31/3/20 and delayed by the pandemic.

#### What The Council Needs to Know

In January 2021 HSBC initiated a 'Safeguard Review' which the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) finally completed in April 2021, albeit the generic questions did not apply to a Parish Council.

This process involved the part-time Clerk/RFO in working significant amounts of unpaid overtime, requiring responses to letters saying the process had not been started - when it had - and attempts to meet their requirements.

Then in May 2021 HSBC wrote again to say the process had not started. HSBC now say the original online process was not fit for purpose and a telephone interview has had to be undertaken with the Chairman and Clerk/RFO.

HSBC now require all 'key individuals' to be re-identified and if this process is not completed to their satisfaction they may choose to close the council's bank accounts.

HSBC do not offer a suitable online banking facility which would allow the Clerk/RFO to set up a payment and for two Councillors to authorise it and comply with its Financial Regulations - 'triple authority'.

#### What The Council Needs to Consider

The 'one size fits all' approach offered by high street retail banks creates issues for the Parish Council, as bank staff appear to have no concept of the public sector which does not operate in the same way as commercial ventures.

#### What The Council Needs to Do

It needs to arrange a bank account with a provider that has an understanding of the local authority sector and the role of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) as set out in legislation and governed by its Financial Regulations.

It must allow mandate changes to take place quickly and easily, a seamless transition to allow continued access to accounts should the Clerk/RFO change and dispense with the need for an annual review and re-identification of key controllers.

#### Comparison of Banking Propositions

Be aware that some high street banks are either not opening community accounts at the moment or warn of significant delays in processing such applications and invariably do not offer a suitable triple authority option for online banking or do so at a prohibitive cost.

	<b>HSBC</b>	<b>Nat West</b>	<b>Lloyds</b>	<b>Unity Bank</b>
<b>Account type</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>Treasurer's</b>	<b>Current Account</b>
<b>Sector specific support/niche</b>	X	X	X	✓
<b>Online Banking - triple authorisation</b>	X	X	✓	✓
<b>Cost</b>	N/A	N/A	Nil	£6/month payable quarterly
<b>Service score ranking</b>	=10 <sup>th</sup> (of 14) BVA BDRC survey (overall service)	=5 <sup>th</sup> (of 14) BVA BDRC survey (overall service)	=6 <sup>th</sup> of 14 BVA BDRC survey (overall service)	Unity Trust Bank voted number 1 for its internet services and overall customer satisfaction in 2018 & 2019 (Civil Society Annual Charities Finance Survey)
<b>Availability of switcher service</b>	N/A - existing bank	✓	X	✓
<b>Access to services/nearest branch</b>	Chichester	Chichester	Chichester	Via Nat West (for any cash and cheque pay-ins)
<b>Advertised delay in opening account</b>	N/A - existing bank	In 4 weeks once all information received.	In 4 weeks once all information received.	On average within 1 day
<b>Ease of Access to Information/Contact by Clerk/RFO</b>	Difficult even as an existing customer	Difficult	Moderate, website had most of the information	Easy

## Assessment and Recommendation

**Recommendation - authorise the Clerk/RFO to use the 'switching service' to transfer the bank accounts to Unity, based on the pros and cons assessment below.**

### Pros

- Financial expertise and specialist sector knowledge through an ethically and socially responsible bank
- 24/7 Online Banking with triple authorisation of payments available to comply with Financial Regulation and online banking tutorials
- Easy access to account through UK based call centre with 90% of calls resolved at first point of contact
- Reduce use of paper/printing with a choice of online or paper statements
- Option to pay in cash only at local Post Office, cash & cheques at NatWest, RBS and Ulster Bank branches or freepost service for paying in cheques to Unity Bank
- Payments authorised can be electronically after a meeting rather than paper-based during the meeting which can be quite time-consuming, more efficient use of time and resources
- Save costs through reduced postage and stationery
- Better for our suppliers and contractors through immediacy of funds, no need to pay in cheques
- Award winning service, very positive responses from other Parish Councils
- Website is easy to navigate and find required information presented in a clear way
- Optional charge card (at cost) through Mastercard would allow the Clerk/RFO to pay for admin costs up to a specified amount (as an alternative to a petty cash arrangement).
- No safeguard reviews

### Cons

- Savings account has a 0% interest rate (but with interest rates at a record low there is no financial advantage of running a separate savings account) at would equate to a loss of circa £3 per annum.
- Annual account charge of £72 (but far lower than the cost of time spent in contacting HSBC on various matters, undertaking time-consuming reviews and negate the requirement for stamps and stationery).