



Our Ref: 6.1/GB

Nigel Taylor  
Community Banking Director, Sussex & Surrey Community  
Barclays  
Town Gate House  
Church Street  
East Woking  
Surrey  
GU21 6AE

13 September 2017

Dear Mr Taylor,

**Barclays Bank, Billingshurst**

Many thanks to Natalie and yourself for attending last week's meeting of the Parish Council.

The Council resolved that I convey the following points to you.

1. The closure will cause great inconvenience to villagers who will be forced to travel to Horsham or Storrington (few villagers ever go to Cranleigh!) for those services that cannot be undertaken via the internet or telephone. Many of these customers are Treasurers of local village organisations who have to pay in cash over a counter to get a deposit book stamped. This cannot be done online.
2. The closure will have a detrimental knock-on effect to the economic viability of the village centre, notably from the loss of those customers who will no longer be visiting the village to do their banking, and therefore will no longer be spending money in other shops and businesses. In addition, village businesses will also be inconvenienced as they currently use your branch to pay in and withdraw cash etc. It is unlikely that the Post Office will retain significant coinage deposits to meet business needs.
3. The figures in the information booklet (which is of poor font size and colour for the elderly or those with sight difficulties) produced to accompany the closure announcement, are for the last year. It would be of interest to know how these compare to the previous year BEFORE you reduced the opening hours.

4. You have not invested in the branch to make it attractive to users, for example, no deposit envelope facility. Similarly, you could have sub-let redundant space within the building to offset the cost of retaining the branch.
5. You admitted under questioning that you had not spoken to the Post Office in Billingshurst where you propose to offer alternative limited cashier facilities, nor had ever visited it! The Post Office has no automatic door, no ATM outside, is often closed at lunchtimes due to staff shortages, and the car parking outside is a private Pay & Display staffed by a very robust attendant who allows no leeway or discretion, which will lead to considerable stress for the elderly.
6. You admit that cheques deposited at your suggested alternative location will take two more days to clear than they do if deposited in-branch.
7. The closure will particularly hit the most vulnerable in the village, such as the elderly, those on low incomes etc. who have no access to the internet, or the means to travel to Horsham or Storrington.
8. Those with Parkinsons and MS struggle to use ATMs.

Finally, you stated at the meeting that Barclays did not own the premises and that the lease was coming to an end; this influencing your decision. You will see from the attached which has kindly been supplied to me that your lease was renewed in 2006 and has 20 years to run. By my calculation this means your lease expires in 2026; perhaps you could clarify this?

The Council was pleased that you agreed to at least review your decision, and hope that the above points give you some good reasons why the Barclays branch in Billingshurst is an essential part of our community and should be retained and even improved.

It goes without saying that the Parish Council feels very strongly about this matter, and to this end, I very much look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

G C Burt  
Clerk to the Council

Encl.