

Opening A Shire Bank Account

By Mary Verch Thomas

As Exchequer you should ensure that your local group has a suitable bank account for any funds that group has.

Within the UK this should be some sort of “Clubs & Societies” account, available at most High Street banks. For example the following banks offer a suitable account:

Nat West – Clubs & Societies account
Royal Bank Of Scotland – Treasurers Account
Bank Of Scotland - TBD
Barclays - TBD
HSBC - Treasurers Account
Lloyds TSB – Treasurers Account

These usually fall under the Business Banking part of the bank organisation.

The account name should have the general format “SCA – Shire of xxx”.

In order to first open an account, you will need to complete forms provided by the bank. Although the forms vary from bank to bank, the majority as for you to complete a form saying that your club or society held a meeting and agreed that an account would be opened with that bank. They ask that this declaration is signed by the meeting chairman and secretary (not necessarily the people who will become signatories on the bank account). I suggest that the seneschal signs as chairman and one other officer signs as secretary.

The form also requires you to state what type of access you require for the account (i.e. who the cheques have to be signed by). By SCA rules any cheque must need two signatures, so this section should be completed to say something like “any 2 signatories”.

You have to complete a form for a list of signatories. I suggest that you use the equivalent mundane titles for people’s positions. For example the seneschal should be called chairperson or club president. The Exchequer should be called Treasurer. As a bare minimum the Seneschal and Exchequer should be signatories on the account, and it is recommended that at least one more officer is a signatory so that cheques can still be written even if one of you is away.

Each signatory will need to take a completed application form to the bank along with personal ID (passport, driving licence etc) and proof of residency (e.g. utility bill in that person’s name and with their current address on it). This is required by UK law. It should not be necessary to provide this at the branch where the account is being opened – so long as the person opening the account tells the bank, then the other signatories can take their ID into a local branch and get a certified copy faxed to the branch where the account is being opened.

When you take the application form to the bank you will need to provide an initial deposit with which to open the account. This could be as low as £10. With some applications you also need to provide a copy of the laws of the society. For this I suggest that you provide a copy of the Great Book of Laws for Drachenwald, plus a short document stating the financial policy for your local Shire. This could be as simple as stating that your group will adopt all the rules and policies of the Kingdom of Drachenwald, and listing the members of your finance committee (usually Exchequer, Seneschal and one other officer)

Some words of warning – banks are very good at losing the paperwork. If you haven’t had any details about your new Shire account back in 2-3 weeks, check with the bank. Make sure the application is being processed. If it isn’t, and they’ve lost it you will need to start the whole process again.

Once your account is up and running, there may come a time in the future when you wish to change the signatories on the account (e.g. because a seneschal or exchequer has been appointed). This means getting the correct forms from the bank and the new signatory presenting the necessary ID and proof of residency. Another word of warning here – many Insulae Draconis shires have had problems with their bank at this point, with the bank losing the Change of Signatory applications. This has created difficulties, especially when the current signatories have left the Shire or the Principality. Make sure you get any necessary forms completed and signed by outgoing officers, and make sure the bank acts on these forms – keep checking with the bank until you are sure they have processed any paperwork!