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| **Report No. 12** | **Council**  **Date of Meeting: 13th December 2023** |

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| **OAKHAM TOWN COUNCIL** |

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| **Report Author:**  **Town Clerk** | **Title:**  **Oakham United Charities** |
| **Subject: Trustee membership** | |
| **Applicable Strategies:**   * **To protect and enhance amenities in Oakham Town** | |

Included is recent correspondence from Oakham United Charities enquiring if Oakham Town Council wishes to relinquish its power of appointment of Trustees to the Charity

**OAKHAM UNITED CHARITIES**

Registered Charity Number 217552

incorporating Henry Forster (United Charities) Apprenticeship Fund

and Rutland Society of Industry

Clerk to the Trustees: Mrs Alison Taylor, Manor Cottage, 5 Main Street, Ayston, Rutland LE15 9AE

Tel: 07979 807335 Email: alison.taylor3gp@gmail.com

20 November 2023

The Clerk to the Council

Oakham Town Council

Long Row, Oakham, LE15 6LN

Dear Mr Evans

Oakham United Charities is a local charity which primarily makes small grants to Rutland students undertaking apprenticeships, vocational courses or university courses. The Charity’s Scheme of Governance was set in place by the Charity Commission in 1915, detailing how it should manage the resources of the Henry Forster Apprenticeship Fund, the Charity of Mary Davy and the Charity of John Green. The Scheme provides for Oakham Town Council to appoint four of the Charity’s five trustees. Since 1996, the Charity has also managed the resources of the Rutland Society of Industry.

The Charity’s trustees serve an initial three-year term of office and may be reappointed. They are all expected to play an active part in the work involved. There is no requirement for the trustees to be councillors, and they do not in any way represent the council or its interests. When the Scheme was initiated, Oakham was a small town and the Charity income went to residents of Oakham, Barleythorpe and Gunthorpe only. The trustees themselves, well-known people of standing in the community, may also have been town councillors. More than a century later Oakham has changed greatly, the town council has many more duties, and there has been quite a rapid turnover of councillors. When councillors have been appointed as trustees they have often been unable to serve their full term of three years with the Charity.

This has meant that the Charity has repeatedly had to make requests for the Town Council to appoint and reappoint trustees. On each occasion in recent years, with new councillors present, a full explanation has had to be made, and questions answered. This has led to deferments and unnecessary delays. Most recently it was questioned by one of the councillors themselves whether this was an appropriate responsibility for the Council to have, a valid question given that the Charity now has a county-wide remit.

OUC has therefore had discussions with the Charity Commission who take the view that, subject to the agreement of the Town Council, there is no reason why OUC should not appoint its own trustees, as most other charities do. Therefore, if the Town Council is in agreement with this and resolves to indicate that it wishes to be relieved of the responsibility, the necessary change to the Scheme of Governance can be implemented and the Council will be spared any further inconvenience. Such a change will greatly facilitate the smooth working of the Charity.

At a meeting of the Trustees of Oakham United Charities held on 20th November 2023 it was agreed to ask Oakham Town Council to relinquish its power of appointment of Trustees to the Charity, and so I am writing to request the Council so to do at its next meeting and to confirm this decision to me, so that we can advise the Charity Commission accordingly.

Yours sincerely,

Miss J Hughes, Chair of Trustees