**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at the Parish of Oakham Town at ROL House, Long Row, Oakham on Tuesday 13th May 2025 at 6pm**

Meeting was declared open by Councillor Paul Ainsley at 18:00 hrs.

Councillor Ainsley opened the meeting with the following speech:-

Oakham: A Town of Strength, Tradition, and Progress

It has been the greatest honour to serve as Mayor of Oakham and Chairman of Oakham Town Council since 23rd October 2024. From solemn moments of remembrance to celebrations of our town’s vibrancy, I have been privileged to stand alongside you, witnessing firsthand the unwavering community spirit that defines Oakham.

Each event, each milestone, and each conversation with residents has reaffirmed my belief that Oakham is not just a place—it is a family, a legacy, and a promise for the future.

**Honouring Our Heroes**

Oakham never forgets. We never fail to pause, reflect, and honour those who fought to protect our freedoms. During the Remembrance Sunday Service, standing with so many of you as we laid our wreaths in solemn silence, I felt the weight of history and the enduring strength of our town. The VE Day Commemoration was another testament to that—our collective promise to uphold the values of sacrifice and courage.

**Celebrating Our Town’s Achievements**

Oakham is more than picturesque—it is a town of tradition, character, and ambition. being named in The Sunday Times&#39; Best Places to Live is not just an accolade—it is a reflection of the heart and soul of our community.

The Christmas Light Switch-On was proof that, no matter the weather—no matter Storm Bert—Oakham shines bright with warmth and joy. Seeing smiling families, hearing children’s laughter, and watching neighbours come together despite the rain was a reminder of the magic we create as a community.

A Future Built Together

We are dreamers and doers. Through Oakham Traders Networking Events, we have strengthened support for local businesses and opened new conversations about revitalising the High Street. Collaborating with Rutland County Council, we have worked on free parking

initiatives and a town-wide spring clean-up—because Oakham deserves to be a place of beauty, opportunity, and pride.

The decision to return to Victoria Hall is more than a move—it is a statement. We are preserving a landmark, investing over £12,500 to refurbish its heating system, and ensuring that this historic site remains a hub for community life.

Meanwhile, our Town Council team—Chris Evans, Kathy Geraghty, and Lee Anthony— have worked tirelessly in the face of unexpected challenges, from collapsed cemetery walls to fallen trees during Storm Daragh. Their dedication embodies the Oakham spirit—steadfast, resourceful, and resilient.

Yes, we have faced staffing challenges, and I ask for your patience as we navigate this transition. But I promise you—we are working toward stronger, more efficient governance, ensuring that our town continues to thrive.

**Our Commitment to Public Service**

Every decision we make is rooted in service—whether it’s supporting the Ukrainian Rotary Impact Club in providing mobility aid donations or overseeing banking changes.

Council operations, or planning for the new Community Café and dance studio at Princess Avenue.

We will continue financing the Hopper bus service (£27,000) and maintaining street lighting because accessibility and safety are non-negotiable priorities for Oakham.

And we are not stopping here.

**Join Us—Be Part of the Future**

Change is never immediate, and progress is built brick by brick. But if Oakham has taught me anything, it is that when we work together, dream together, and act together—we create something truly extraordinary.

We are not just preserving Oakham’s history—we are shaping its future.

If you share our vision, if you want to be a part of this incredible journey, I invite you to reach out—call 01572 723627. Your ideas, your passion, and your commitment are what make Oakham strong.

Together, we move forward. Together, we make Oakham even greater.

Following this, the meeting was opened up to the floor for questions from attendees.

**Mrs. Joyce Lucas (BEM) raised the following issues**:

* Mrs. Lucas emphasized the need to distinguish between councillors who have been co-opted onto Oakham Town Council and those who have been elected, and for clear communication regarding the difference.
* She expressed concern that traders on Oakham High Street should take greater responsibility for maintaining the cleanliness of their shop fronts and adjacent streets.
* Mrs. Lucas highlighted a specific concern about the general maintenance and cleanliness of a doorway on Oakham High Street located between a chemist and a furniture store.
* She noted that a damaged litter bin, reported three years ago, has not yet been replaced.
* Mrs. Lucas observed that a post in Market Place Oakham is leaning at a dangerous angle due to damage.
* She pointed out that a lamppost outside of the Citizens Advice Bureau requires repainting.
* Mrs. Lucas requested that town councillors walk through the town more frequently and mentioned that she would be available this summer, sitting on the bench outside the Congregational Hall, to assist members of the public as there is no tourist board office.
* While she thanked Oakham Town Council for their street clean-up efforts, she felt that these efforts did not go far enough.
* Mrs. Lucas also expressed her satisfaction with Oakham Town Council's decision to move back to Victoria Hall.
* Additionally, she inquired about the numerous vacancies on Oakham Town Council.

Councillor Paul Ainsley responded by assuring Mrs. Lucas that he would investigate her concerns and respond to her via her preferred method of communication (email). He explained that certain initiatives by RCC, such as the potential project for town centre improvements, might delay some repairs or replacements. Until a clear plan from RCC is established, it would be prudent to wait before implementing changes that could later prove to be incorrect. In regard to the pole on Market Place it had been reported to fix my street.

Councillor Ainsley asked if there were any more questions from the floor. There were no further questions, Councillor Ainsley thanked the attendees and closed the meeting.

The meeting was declared closed at 18:20 hrs.