

Please enter the proposed new objects for our approval. You will need to provide the complete wording for the revised/new objects clause, not an extract. This wording, if agreed, will be displayed on the public register.

17. The Objects of the charity are:

(a) to promote, for the public benefit, the social, civic, community and cultural life of the inhabitants of Oakham and the surrounding area, in particular by the provision and maintenance of a hall or community facility for:

(i) meetings, events, performances, exhibitions and other cultural activities;

(ii) educational, recreational and leisure-time activities; and

(iii) community engagement and civic use;

(b) to promote and encourage agriculture, horticulture and related rural or land-based activities for the public benefit, including through meetings, exhibitions, lectures or other educational or community uses, in a manner consistent with the Charity's wider objects;

(c) such other exclusively charitable purposes for the public benefit as the Trustee from time to time thinks fit."

What were the charity's original purposes when it was set up (if known)?

"The Hall for the time being belonging to the Charity shall be used for Agricultural Meetings or Lectures (free of charge except for necessary expenses), by any Society or Club existing or to be formed in the County of Rutland for the promotion or encouragement of Agriculture to be approved by the Trustees, and subject thereto, the Trustees may let the Hall on hire for such other purposes and subject to such conditions as they may think fit."

Also explain how you consider that the amended purposes will be as similar as is reasonable to the charity's current purposes?

The proposed amendments to the objects of the Charity forms part of a wider programme of governance modernisation to help ensure the Charity can operate sustainably in the long term. This application should be read in conjunction with the application for consent to change the trustee benefits clause of the governing document, which has been submitted in parallel with this application.

The original purposes focus on the use of the Hall for agricultural meetings and lectures for the promotion and encouragement of agriculture, together with a wider power to let the Hall for other purposes. The amended purposes retain this underlying intention by:

- continuing to provide for the use of the Hall as a venue for meetings, lectures, exhibitions and other activities for the benefit of the local community; and
- expressly preserving the promotion of agriculture, horticulture and related rural or land-based activities as a distinct charitable purpose.

At the same time, the amended purposes recognise that the Hall's role has developed over time into a broader civic, community and cultural facility. The revised wording therefore builds upon the original purposes by more clearly reflecting the range of activities which are now carried out from the Hall and which deliver public benefit to the inhabitants of Oakham and the surrounding area.

The trustees consider that the amended purposes represent a natural and proportionate evolution of the original purposes, maintaining their core substance while providing a more accurate and comprehensive expression of the Charity's current and intended activities.

Explain how the new purposes are suitable and effective in light of current social and economic circumstances.

The trustees consider that the amended purposes are suitable and effective in light of current social and economic circumstances, particularly when compared with the historical context in which the Charity was originally established.

At the time the Charity's original purposes were formulated, agriculture formed a central part of the local economy. Historical data reviewed by the trustees indicates that, in the mid-19th century, a significant proportion of the population in Rutland was employed in agriculture, with estimates suggesting this may have been as high as 80% of the workforce in some areas. The Charity's original focus on agricultural meetings and lectures was therefore well-aligned with the needs and priorities of the local community at that time.

In contrast, more recent data reviewed by the trustees demonstrates that the structure of the local economy has changed significantly. Contemporary reports indicate that employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing now accounts for a relatively small proportion of the local workforce, with approximately 250-400 jobs in the sector against a total employed population of around 16,000-18,000. This indicates that agriculture, while still important, no longer represents the primary focus of economic or community activity in the area.

In light of these changes in the local economy and demographics, the trustees consider that the promotion of agriculture and related rural activities is now supported through a range of other established organisations and venues operating at a county level. These are in many cases specifically designed and better resourced to deliver this type of activity. For example, the Rutland Agricultural Society is a registered charity which operates a purpose-built facility and hosts large-scale events, including the annual county show, and is located in close proximity to Victoria Hall. As a result, the trustees consider that the more specialised agricultural function originally envisaged for the Hall is now, to a significant extent, provided through alternative and more appropriate infrastructure.

Against this backdrop, the role of Victoria Hall has evolved into that of a broader civic, community and cultural facility serving the inhabitants of Oakham and the surrounding area. There is an increasing need for accessible, flexible community spaces which support:

- social connection and inclusion;
- cultural and recreational activity;
- local engagement and civic participation; and
- educational and community-based initiatives.

The amended purposes reflect this shift by providing a broader but clearly defined framework which supports a wide range of community, civic and cultural activities, enabling the Hall to be used in a way that responds to current local needs while still retaining a link to the Charity's historic agricultural focus, ensuring continuity with its original purposes.

The trustees consider that the amended purposes will therefore enable the Charity to make more effective use of the Hall, enhance its contribution to the local community, and support its long-term sustainability, while continuing to deliver public benefit.

What activities will the charity carry out to further the new or revised purposes?

In furtherance of the amended purposes, the Charity will continue to operate and maintain Victoria Hall as a community facility for the benefit of the inhabitants of Oakham and the surrounding area.

The Charity's activities are expected to include:

- hosting and facilitating meetings, events, performances and exhibitions;
- providing space for community groups, clubs and organisations;
- enabling educational, recreational and leisure activities, including classes and workshops;
- supporting civic use, including local engagement and community initiatives;
- accommodating cultural activities, such as performances, arts events and community celebrations; and
- facilitating agricultural, horticultural and related rural activities, including talks, exhibitions and community-based initiatives where appropriate.

In addition, the Charity will seek to maximise the use of the Hall through a combination of community use and hire arrangements, in order to support its long-term financial sustainability and ensure that the facility remains accessible and well-used.

What factors have the trustees considered when deciding to make the change?

In deciding to amend the Charity's purposes, the trustees have had regard to a range of relevant factors, including:

- **Changes in social and economic circumstances**
The trustees have considered the significant changes in the structure of the local economy and demographics since the Charity was established. In particular, agriculture now represents a much smaller proportion of local employment and activity than it did historically, with more recent data indicating that it accounts for only a small percentage of the local workforce.

The trustees have also taken into account the existence of alternative, purpose-built facilities and organisations in the area (such as the Rutland Agricultural Society) which are specifically focused on promoting agriculture at a county level.

- **The needs of the local community**
The trustees have considered the importance of maintaining an accessible and flexible community facility which supports social interaction, cultural activity,

education and civic engagement, and responds to the needs of the inhabitants of Oakham and the surrounding area.

- **The Charity's original purposes**

The trustees have carefully considered the Charity's historic focus on agricultural meetings and lectures, and the need to ensure that any amendments remain, so far as reasonably possible, consistent with those original purposes. The amended purposes retain a clear link to the promotion of agriculture, horticulture and related rural activities.

- **The long-term sustainability of the Charity**

The trustees have considered the need to ensure that the Charity's governing document provides a clear and appropriate framework which enables the effective use and management of the Hall, and supports its continued operation for the public benefit.

In light of these factors, the trustees consider that the proposed amendments represent a proportionate and appropriate evolution of the Charity's purposes, ensuring that they remain relevant, workable and capable of being effectively carried out in the current context.

Please explain why the trustees want to make the change and why they believe it is in the best interests of the charity.

The trustees wish to amend the Charity's purposes in order to ensure that the governing document continues to provide a clear, relevant and effective framework for the Charity's operation, both now and in the future.

For all the reasons stated in the above answers, the trustees consider it appropriate to update the purposes so that they more fully reflect the contemporary role of Victoria Hall as a civic, community and cultural facility serving the inhabitants of Oakham and the surrounding area.

In doing so, the trustees have sought to ensure continuity with the Charity's original purposes, including by retaining an express focus on the promotion of agriculture, horticulture and related rural activities. The amended purposes therefore represent an evolution of the original intentions, rather than a departure from them.

The trustees also consider that the amended purposes will provide an improved framework for the effective and sustainable use of the Hall. In particular, they will enable the Charity to respond more flexibly to current and future community needs, support a wider range of activities that deliver public benefit, and maximise the use and accessibility of the Hall.

In addition, the trustees have had regard to the opportunity for Oakham Town Council to play a more active role in supporting the long-term stewardship of the Hall. They consider that aligning the Charity's purposes with its modern role will help facilitate this involvement and support the development of a stable and sustainable governance and operational model, thereby helping to secure the Charity's continued operation for the benefit of the community.

Taking these factors together, the trustees are satisfied that the proposed changes are in the best interests of the Charity. The amended purposes will provide greater clarity, reflect the Charity's evolving role within the community, and support its long-term sustainability, ensuring that it can continue to deliver public benefit effectively over time.