

Chairman's report for the Town Council Meeting 8th July 2026

"Following a very constructive meeting with the Leader of Rutland County Council, Cllr Christine Wise and Acting CEO Angela Wakefield of Rutland County Council (RCC), I am pleased to share the outcome of that meeting and I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the RCC leadership for their guidance and their ongoing offer of support as we embark on this vital journey.

It is very important for Oakham Town Council to address historic challenges and restoring this Council to a position of strength.

A New Chapter, The "Reset and Rebuild" Phase Oakham Town Council is now in a defined "reset and rebuild" phase.

Whilst it was acknowledged that our Council has not functioned as effectively as it should have in recent years, the Locum Clerk is now taking decisive, structured steps to rectify these issues.

I as Chairman and Councillor are fully committed to ensuring we serve the residents of Oakham with the professional standard they deserve, and I am grateful for the expert leadership our Locum Clerk, Sam Haywood, is already providing to drive this necessary change and advice received from RCC.

Building on Our Audit Baseline we are not shying away from the findings of our recent internal audit. Instead, The Locum Clerk is utilising it as a comprehensive roadmap and a scorecard for improvement.

At the meeting we identified clear areas where historic performance has been insufficient specifically regarding governance, compliance, the backlog of planning applications, and the need for enhanced staff and councillor development.

Our Path Forward Under the expert guidance of Sam Haywood, who is adopting a "phased delivery" approach to ensure we get the fundamentals right, has some immediate priorities, stabilising our governance, ensuring strict adherence to financial and legal regulations. Prioritising the reinstatement of our formal consideration of planning applications to ensure Oakham's voice is heard. Something missed for over two years now.

Transparency is essential, our Locum Clerk will use the audit recommendations as a public scorecard, ensuring our progress is reported transparently to both the Council and our Community.

Medium-Term Growth, our Locum Clerk is working toward re-establishing effective committees, implementing a comprehensive training programme for all councillors, and developing a strategic communications plan to keep our residents informed.

Looking Ahead while Sam Haywood is working to overcome significant challenges, I am encouraged by the positive early signs we are seeing under Sam Haywood's stewardship. The decision to pause specific projects, such as the Victoria Hall project, was made with the

sole intention of ensuring that when we do move forward, we do so on a foundation of absolute fiscal responsibility and sound governance.

We are under no illusions regarding the scale of the task ahead; however, I am incredibly optimistic about our trajectory. With the continued support of Rutland County Council, and through the renewed commitment to transparency and discipline, I am confident we will rebuild the reputation of this Council and prove that we are, once again, working effectively and professionally for the people of Oakham."

CHAIRMAN'S Report: VOTE OF THANKS Recognition of Service – Councillor Sally-Anne Wadsworth As Chairman, it is my distinct privilege to include a special vote of thanks in this report to recognise a monumental milestone of public service within our council chambers. This year marks exactly one decade of continuous service by Councillor Sally-Anne Wadsworth, who first stepped forward to serve Oakham in early 2016. Stepping into local government requires a profound commitment to one's community, a willingness to give up personal time, and a steady hand to navigate the complexities of parish administration. Over the last ten years, Cllr Wadsworth has demonstrated these qualities in abundance. Her contribution to Oakham has been defined by reliable leadership. Serving as a dedicated ward councillor since her initial co-option in 2016. Executing the responsibilities of Deputy Mayor during the demanding 2019/20 municipal calendar. Guiding the council through two consecutive terms as Mayor of Oakham and Council Chairperson from May 2022 through to May 2024. During her tenure as Mayor, Cllr Wadsworth served as the proud, civic face of our town. She represented our community with exceptional warmth, dignity, and an unwavering focus on improving Oakham for its residents, businesses, and visitors. Whether leading initiatives like live music events at Cutts Close, championing local charitable causes, or chairing full council debates, her focus has remained resolutely on the best interests of the residents of Oakham. A decade of municipal service represents hundreds of council meetings, thousands of pages of legislative agendas, and a significant personal sacrifice of time and energy. On behalf of Oakham Town Council, our fellow members, the administrative staff, and the residents of Oakham, I wish to place on formal record our deepest gratitude to Councillor Sally-Anne Wadsworth. Thank you for your ten years of exemplary, unselfish service, your enduring council guidance, and your continued dedication to the future of our town.