



BRIEFING NOTE

**A TRUSTEE OF
UNITED UTILITIES TRUST FUND**

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United Utilities Trust Fund
Registered Charity: No **1108296**
Company Reg in England No **05309512**

ABOUT THE CHARITY:

United Utilities Trust Fund is a Registered Charity. It is also a Company Limited by Guarantee¹. This corporate model is fairly typical of charities generally. Importantly it limits the liability of the Trustees.

Established in 2004 by United Utilities, its object is to provide support to United Utilities customers who are in need and unable to meet the cost of water services.

The charity is successful and is known and has a good reputation throughout the utility industry and the money advice sector.

The Trust Fund's activity is managed by Auriga Services Limited (Auriga) who also act as company secretary. Auriga is wholly owned by Severn Trent Water Charitable Trust Fund, and runs as a not-for-profit, contributing surplus to its charitable clients.

Therefore, United Utilities Trust Fund does not employ staff or rent premises directly. It has a contract with Auriga to provide all management and administration for the Trust Fund.

¹ 'Limited by Guarantee' is an alternative to a company whose liability is limited by shares. Each of the Trustees (who are also the only members of the company) guarantees to pay £10 in the event of the Charity/Company not being able to meet its liabilities.

This safeguards the financial position for Trustees who in a non-incorporated charitable trust can be personally liable for commitments

APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES

The Trust Fund is governed by Memorandum and Articles and therefore Trustees must be appointed in accordance with these.

Under Charity Law, Trustees cannot be paid for their time whilst acting as a Trustee. However, expenses can be paid.

Trustees are also Directors of the incorporated Company, although they are referred to as 'Trustees'. Whilst the Mem & Arts also talk about 'members', the Trustees are the only members of the company.

Trustees therefore must not be precluded by any of the normal rules from being either a Trustee of a Charity or a company Director.

All Trustees have the same voting rights on the Board and although a Chair may be appointed (see below for the role of Chair for information) he or she has no greater powers than any other Trustee.

THE ROLE OF THE CHAIR

The role of the Chair is to act as figurehead of the Charity when required; to chair meetings and to help guide trustees - ensuring that meetings are conducted correctly. He/she is expected to lead discussion on policy and strategic matters and would normally consult with the CEO of the organisation prior to jointly introducing new strategy.

When required the Chair would liaise with high profile third parties and media. In practice and to date this seldom happens – but it may well in the future.

Importantly, the Chair is the main strategic point of liaison with United Utilities senior people e.g. Directors. This is because the Charity was established by United Utilities who remains the main donor to the Trust.

In addition to Chairing approximately 4 meetings each year and meeting with the CEO of Auriga from time to time, the Chair will occasionally need to meet with United Utilities senior people to ensure that the Trust is guided and that the relationship is maintained. It would be unusual however if the total number of all meetings each year were to exceed eight.

United Utilities are looking to appoint further Trustees and the Chair can expect to play an important part in the selection process.

UNIQUE TO UNITED UTILITIES TRUST FUND

All Trustees can expect to take an interest in the relationship that exists between the Trust Fund and Auriga. In practice Chair will take the lead in this relationship.

Auriga has its own Board of Directors and periodically, no less than once per year, the CEO of Auriga will attend the United Utilities Trust Fund Trustee meetings to assist and report on activities. Between these times, other staff of Auriga attend each meeting and submit written reports on the Trusts operations and Auriga's activities.

FACTS ABOUT UNITED UTILITIES TRUST FUND

- A Registered Charity: Established in 2004 by United Utilities who continue to give generous support.
- Making help available to United Utilities 2.9 million household customers who are in genuine hardship and unable to meet the cost of their water/sewerage bills.
- Donations come from United Utilities up to 2016/17 total £57 million.
- A simple concept but well executed: Instead of chasing people for money they simply don't have, their situation is assessed carefully and confidentially. They are then helped to clear their existing debt with grant aid and offered where needed, other help to get them back on their feet financially. Experience shows that customers, once helped, often manage better in the future.
- Over 66 thousand families have been helped directly from the Trust with grants totalling over £46 million.
- Over £3 million has also been given to advice agencies in the region to support money advice work.
- Tried and tested, the charity has gone from strength to strength achieving a good reputation in the region and nationally – others have followed its best practice.

United Utilities Trust Fund is managed by a Board of independent unpaid Trustees who set and oversee policy (Day to day administration is carried out by Auriga Services Ltd who also manage other similar schemes for major clients):

- *Debbie Morton* *Chair*
- *Alastair Richards*
- *Simon Dewsnip*
- *Carl Smith*
- *Kevin Appleton*
- *Sally-Ann Watkiss*