

VESTRY MINUTE BOOK, 1829-35

Parish chest. Extracts.

THE VESTRY (1830- 1831)

The parish people who met together to make decisions about parish affairs were called 'The Vestry'. They appointed 'Overseers of the Poor', 'Constables', and 'Surveyors of the Highways', or they named men from whom 'Justices of the Peace' made a choice. They decided when the inhabitants and occupiers of the lands should pay 'Church Rate' & 'Poor Rate', and how much that rate should be.

These are extracts from the minutes recorded in the Vestry Book (now in the Bodleian Library in Oxford) in 1831. These extracts concern claims for extra allowances by the poor and, probably due to the unrest caused by the Otmoor Riots, the appointment of seven divisions of 'Special Constables', six on foot and one mounted.

Altogether there were sixty six men.

VESTRY MEETING (January 20th, year n/k)

At a Vestry held at the Crown Inn January 20th, by adjournment, it was resolved that James Quatremain be hired by the parish at the rate of 2/6 per day to look over the men employed by the parish in repairing the turnpike road from Wheatley bridge to Forest Hill Lane, he undertaking to give in a weekly account of the quantity of carting coating & scraping done & of every other particular relating to the repair of the said road. At the same time it was resolved that the Overseers of the poor meet Mr Gibson to sign the contract for the repair of the . . . Road at the Crown Inn on Wednesday the first of February 1832. W. H. Langley. Chairman. At a Vestry held at the Crown Inn on the 30th of January 1832. It was resolved that the following gentle- men be appointed a committee of management to superintend the execution of the works stated in the specification sent to the parish Officers by Mr. Macadam relative to the repair of the turnpike road5 in addition to the overseers of the poor for the time being who it is resolved shall be members of the Committee by virtue of their office viz.

Mr Stacey Senr.

Mr. Way

Mr. Webb.

Mr. Haynes.

Mr. Juggins.

Mr. Langley.

VESTRY MEETING (March 26th 1829)

At a Vestry held at the Church the 26 day of March 1829 it is agreed to adjourn to the Chequer's Inn tomorrow. . .to nominate fresh Overseers & letting the Town Meadow at 5 o Clock in the Evening

W. Juggins

John Stacey

John Edmond

. . . it was resolved that Mr Stacey and Mr Joseph Cooper should serve the office of overseers of the poor. At the same time it was agreed to let the town meadow to Mrs Mary Harper for £23. 0s. 0d. per annum for three years on condition that the rent shall

be paid half yearly to the Churchwarden. . . .The acreage of the above named meadow is seven acres. . .

VESTRY MEETING (November 22nd 1830)

At a vestry held at the Crown Inn on Monday 22 November. Joseph Cooper in the Chair: Robert Mortimer complains and says his allowance of 5 pence a week for himself and his daughter is not sufficient. The vestry will not agree to allow more saying that 'he and his daughter have their option of going into the workhouse'.

The complaint of William Hawes for more money is rejected 'he having 3 shillings 6 pence per week - the same as other men.'

It is agreed to allow Morris's wife a pair of sheets.

Widow Broadway - it is agreed not to allow anything - her earnings being considered sufficient - or she may come into the workhouse.

Joseph Cooper.

VESTRY MEETING (November 30th 1830)

At a vestry held at the Crown Inn on Tuesday 30 November in the purpose of considering certain charges brought against Mr Williams the assistant overseer by Joseph Ares and Shillingworth and also for the purpose of organising the constabulary force especially to the recommendation of Mr Ashurst and Mr Henley. After hearing the evidence in support of the said charges, it was resolved to postpone the further consideration of them and the adoption of any measure in consequence of them in a future vestry. At the same time it was carried that Mr William Juggins be appointed superintendent of the mounted special constables and that Lang....be superintendent of 'the Foot'. The special constables who are to serve on foot were at the same time formed into the following divisions: *(the superintendents of each division being denoted by the asterisks opposite to their names)*

VESTRY MEETING (Monday 3rd January 1831)

At a meeting of the Select Vestry held at the Crown Inn on Monday 3rd January 1831 - Mr Cooper in the Chair: Edward Shepherd, William Towersey, Richard Merrick and Thomas Allen - men having large families - complain that their parish allowance is not sufficient for the maintenance of themselves and families - John Holder (wife and one child) Thomas Holder (wife and one child), Robert Hayward & wife make the like - The wife of John Tombes complains that her allowance for her husband and herself is not sufficient. We, the Select Vestry, having taken into consideration the state and condition of the poor persons above mentioned, are of opinion that they must be better off than at any period within the last fifteen or twenty years.