

Wheatley Urban District Council

Wheatley Urban District Council was created under the Local Government Act, 1894, superseding the Local Board of Health from April 1881 to January 1895. It was abolished in 1932 by the Oxfordshire Review Order and became part of the newly formed Bullingdon Rural District.

As the Local Board of Health, it was mainly concerned with serious infections like diphtheria, typhoid and scarlet fever, but also general 'nuisance' (similar presumably to anti-social behaviour of people or a dwelling), provision of proper water supplies (there was a major issue of Shotover Estate not providing water to the new houses in Westfield Road), drainage, and improving the roads which were under their control. They reported regularly on the annual death rate and were content that this was 'normal' and that the population was generally healthy. The (known to the archive) local 'worthies' on the committee were Edward Elton (resigned May 1885), Joseph Frampton, Frederick Fowler, Chillingworth, Rose and other names including Bushnell (? connected to the present family).

In 1902, the committee was G Stanley (not sure which one this was), J C Stanley (presumably Joseph), J W Rose (presumably John), William Lee, Frederick Stamp, William Cullum, John Cooper and F H Alden.

By the 1920s, this council had much greater legal powers and was acting as a local district council does in 2020, albeit only covering Wheatley. In common with other rural and urban district councils, amongst its many responsibilities Wheatley UDC was responsible for public health, housing, rating, planning, building regulations, water supplies, sewerage and some roads. In the early 1920s, the committee comprised Rees Leyshon (chairman), Arthur Cullum, Henry Avery, R Cox, Edward and Charles Shepherd, Caleb Harris, J. Jennings, James Munt and Joseph Rose. Clerk Mr B Purcell.

In September 1924, the rate in the £ was increased from 2/-d to 2/6d. In the same year, letting the grass-keep on the Sewerage Field was considered in March; it was reported that, with the help of subscribers, a mowing machine had been acquired to deal with the ground of the war memorial in September; and it was noted that refuse washed down to High Street from Holloway Road and Station Road after a storm.

One of its more major successes was providing the 50 council houses in 1927/8, see record 0930. In four months, from 18 October 1926 to 21 February 1927, the decision to build 50 house under the scheme was taken, an architect appointed and came up with three schemes, a scheme was chosen, the project was tendered to seven builders, a builder was chosen, the loan was agreed, and work was ready to start. Today this would probably take 15 years.

This Council had a considerable impact on life in Wheatley but, probably, no more than anywhere else in England. But there is no doubt that in its last 12 years or so, it was a fully-functioning self-interested authority seeking to advance Wheatley's cause without influence from other public bodies.