

WHITEPARISH

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The ancient parish of Whiteparish was, with Landford, one of two parishes making up the hundred of Frustfield.

Manorial

Court records survive for three Whiteparish manors; Cowesfield Esturmy, Whelpley, and Whiteparish. Those for the manor of Cowesfield Esturmy include a court book, with other manors, of 1539–1613, and a court roll from 1561–2.¹ A contract book for the renewal of copyhold leases in the manors belonging to the Savernake Estate includes a record that a manor court was held at Cowesfield in 1569, probably for Cowesfield Esturmy.²

Manor court records from the manor of Whelpley survive for several years between 1460 and 1638.³ A record of a manor court survives from 1813 and a court paper from 1818.⁴ In 1818 the court appointed a tithingman and a hayward for the following year, responsibility for gates in the parish and their need for repair was recorded, and the manor tenants were reminded of the rules for turning out livestock on the common.⁵ The manor had jurisdiction over Whiteparish Common. There were calls in 1913 for a court to be held to resolve matters connected with the Common, as a court baron had not been held since 1872, but the issues were resolved without one being called.⁶

Extracts from the court rolls for the manors of Whelpley, Whiteparish and Sherfield English (Hants.) survive for 1606–13. Fines were imposed for over stocking the common, keeping sheep and cattle on the common without right to do so, and for taking sheep from the hayward as he was driving them to the pound.⁷

Parish government

¹ Manorial Documents Register, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/manor-search> (30 Apr. 2021); WSA, 192/7; Oxford University: Bodleian Library Special Collections. MS Rawlinson B327.

² WSA, 9/1/122.

³ Manorial Documents Register, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/manor-search> (30 April 2021); WSA, 1369/4/23/1.

⁴ WSA, 464/82; 1369/4/23/3.

⁵ WSA, 1369/4/23/3.

⁶ WSA, 1980/15, *Salisbury Times and South Wilts Gaz.*, 10 Oct. 1913.

⁷ WSA, 1369/4/23/2. This record is not listed on the Manorial Documents Register.

The parish was also governed by a vestry, which appointed churchwardens and overseers of the poor. A vestry minute book survives for the period 1725–1816.⁸ There were usually two overseers. In 1726 the vestry agreed to appoint one new overseer each year, each overseer serving for two years.⁹ The vestry minute book does not record the appointment of parish constables, nor of waywardens or surveyors of the highways, though a surveyor of the highways is recorded in 1750 and in 1755. The 1755 entry records the vestry's agreement to defend surveyors of the highways in the event of a case being brought against them by the commissioners of the turnpike, which suggests some conflict connected with the turnpike roads passing through the parish,¹⁰ the parish having a legal duty to provide statute labour on the roads. Although the vestry minutes did not record the appointment of waywardens, a newspaper report of 1879 did record such an appointment.¹¹

The vestry appears to have had some responsibility for the common, as in 1752 it was agreed to mend the 'Bunnys', or streams, on the common.¹²

The vestry was responsible for setting the parish poor rate. In 1812 the churchwardens and overseers were ordered to pay the costs of a challenge to the poor rate made in 1809. They resolved to contest this, and appointed a surveyor to assess the land in the parish in order to make a fair rate for the relief of the poor.¹³

Whiteparish was part of Alderbury Poor Law Union (1835–95), which became Salisbury Poor Law Union in 1895 until poor law unions were abolished in 1930 and their functions transferred to county councils. Whiteparish formed part of Alderbury Rural Sanitary District from its formation in 1872 until 1894, when all Alderbury RSD's constituent parishes transferred to Salisbury Rural District Council. Whiteparish was part of Salisbury Rural District Council until 1934, and then of Salisbury and Wilton Rural District Council (1934–74).¹⁴

In 1885 part of the ancient parish was transferred to Plaitford (now Hants.), and in 1896 part of the civil parish transferred to Landford.¹⁵

Records of the parish council survive from the first meeting in 1894.¹⁶ There were more candidates for election at this inaugural meeting than seats on the council, and election

⁸ WSA, 1980/27.

⁹ WSA, 1980/27, 23 Apr. 1726.

¹⁰ WSA, 1980/27, ff. 3v, 4r (reverse of volume).

¹¹ *Salisbury and Winchester Jnl.*, 29 Mar. 1879, 7.

¹² WSA, 1980/27, f. 4r (reverse of volume).

¹³ WSA, 1980/27, 22 Apr. 1812, 4 May 1812.

¹⁴ Youngs, Admin. Units, 528, 552.

¹⁵ *Endowed Charities, 1908*, 833; Youngs, Admin. Units, 528, 552; see also Landford: Local Government.

¹⁶ WSA, 1980/1.

took place by show of hands. This procedure was objected to by William Frederic Lawrence of Cowesfield House, who had lost on the show of hands. A few days later a formal poll of electors elected Lawrence, and some other candidates who had lost at the meeting.¹⁷

Lawrence was active in the parish matters until his death in 1935, including many years as the parish council chair.¹⁸ From 1895 the parish council was responsible for administering the parish charities.¹⁹

Women, subject to certain qualifications, were eligible to vote in parish council elections and to stand as councillors, but none stood for election in 1894, and the first woman to serve as a parish councillor in Whiteparish was Dorothea Wilson-Smith, elected in 1937.²⁰

Encroachments of the common were a concern in 1943, when the parish council minuted its opinion that it was illegal to fence in any portion of the common land. The following year it was resolved to contact the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society to clarify the situation.²¹ Occasional encroachments continued to be reported.²² The parish council frequently had to deal with reports of obstructions to rights of way, as in 1950, when it reported overgrown rights of way to the rural district council.²³

Straying stock belonging to persons with commoners' rights in the New Forest were a persistent problem; in 1951 ponies damaged the cricket pitch and wandered into gardens where they ate produce.²⁴ The following year it was suggested that ponies could be impounded at Downton Pound, a facility which was available to several parishes, including Whiteparish.²⁵ The problem was still being discussed almost a decade later, but may have been resolved after cattle grids were installed at Landford, c.1964.²⁶ In 1961 the parish council appointed representatives as school managers, to the education foundation charity for Whiteparish, and to the recreation ground and village hall committees.²⁷ By the 21st century, many of the concerns of the previous century continued to be reflected in the council minutes; one set of minutes in 2018 included matters relating to a skatepark on the recreation

¹⁷ WSA, 1980/1, 1–4; I. Slocombe, 'The Establishment of Parish Councils in Wiltshire', *WAM* 98 (2005), 56.

¹⁸ WSA, 1980/1; 1980/2; 1980/3; 1980/4. For Lawrence's death see England and Wales National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1935, 43.

¹⁹ See Social history.

²⁰ WSA, 1980/4, 160.

²¹ WSA, 1980/5, mins. 14 Oct. 1943, 29 Mar. 1944.

²² WSA, 1980/5, mins. 20 Mar. 1947, 30 Jul. 1947.

²³ WSA, 1980/5, 11 Dec. 1950.

²⁴ WSA, 1980/5, mins. 30 Mar. 1951.

²⁵ WSA, 1980/5, mins. 30 Sept. 1952.

²⁶ WSA, 1980/5, mins. 23 Nov. 1960; 2191/3, mins. 31 Jan. 1964.

²⁷ WSA, 1980/5, mins. 25 May 1961.

ground, room hire rates for the Memorial Centre (village hall) and concerns regarding the speed of traffic on Common Road.²⁸

²⁸ Whiteparish Parish Council, mins. 27 Mar. 2018, https://www.whiteparish-pc.gov.uk/Agendas_and_Minutes.aspx (accessed 1 Sept. 2022).