



VCH Oxfordshire Texts in Progress

Kingham

Local Government

Manor Courts and Officers

The Mandevilles held courts baron by the 13th century, attended by the manor's free and customary tenants, and following the manor's division between the Chastiluns and Flambards separate courts were established for the two halves.¹ In the 14th and 15th centuries New College's court was held at irregular intervals by the demesne lessee, who kept most of the profits,² but by the 16th and 17th centuries it was held by the college's steward, and dealt with a typical range of business including tenants' land transfers, breaches of manorial by-laws, and other agricultural offences.³ Later courts were almost solely concerned with customary tenancy transfers, and continued throughout the 19th century; by then, however, New College's lordship was mostly titular, its authority having been superseded by that of the vestry and (later) the parish council.⁴ A separate manor court was held in the 17th century by the Ramsdens, who demanded suit of court from New College and its tenants apparently without success,⁵ while for a brief period in the 15th century payment for suit of court was also made to the earls of Warwick as the manor's overlords.⁶

Leet jurisdiction belonged to the holders of Chadlington hundred court. In the 13th century the Clare earls of Hertford and Gloucester sent a bailiff to Kingham to hold an annual view of frankpledge, the profits of which went to the Mandevilles except for 2s. paid to the bailiff.⁷ The Mandevilles otherwise claimed exemption from suit to both the hundred court and the sheriff's tourn, prompting a lawsuit in 1260 after the hundred's bailiff forcibly distrained the rector for an alleged trespass.⁸ The view continued to be held in the parish in the 16th century, when the tithingman paid 2s. cert money and inhabitants were presented for offences such as assault or breaking the assizes of bread and ale.⁹ The hundred passed

¹ *Rot. Hund.* II, 733; above, landownership.

² New Coll. Arch. 6583; 6585--8.

³ *Ibid.* 3797--8; 3800--1.

⁴ *Ibid.* 3804--5; 3844; below (par. govt).

⁵ *Woodward's Progress*, 49, 51, 53; above, landownership.

⁶ New Coll. Arch. 6586; above, landownership.

⁷ *Rot. Hund.* II, 733; *VCH Oxon.* XIX, 25, 43.

⁸ TNA, JUST 1/713, m. 5; above, relig. hist. (relig. life).

⁹ TNA, SC 2/197/21; *ibid.* LR 2/189, f. 109v.; *Glos. Archives*, D 9125/3/26, f. 45v.

in the 17th century to the Lacys of Shipton-under-Wychwood, who still collected the annual 2s., although by 1794 their successors received a common fine of 13s. 4d., plus 1d. from each suitor aged over 16.¹⁰ In 1845 the leet court met at the Fox inn, leasing grazing rights on the green.¹¹

Parish Government and Officers

Two churchwardens were mentioned in 1530, and by the 1570s held periodic Whitsun ales in a barn used as a church house.¹² In the 18th and 19th centuries they levied an annual church rate, replaced after 1840 by subscriptions and pew rents, and they also managed the parish's charities alongside the rector, presenting their annual accounts to the vestry.¹³ By the 19th century one churchwarden was chosen by the parish and one by the rector in the usual way, and by the early 20th they were assisted by four sidesmen.¹⁴ Other parish officers included overseers of the poor (mentioned from the 17th century) and a surveyor of highways, who at enclosure in 1850 received an allotment for road-mending.¹⁵ Four annually appointed fieldsmen (mentioned from the 18th century) determined the parish's agricultural calendar, whilst a constable helped maintain order, each of them levying rates and keeping accounts.¹⁶ The earliest vestry book dates from 1867, when members appointed two overseers, two constables, a guardian, and a waywarden, who also maintained the village pound.¹⁷ A police constable lived at Kingham in the 1860s.¹⁸

Under the 1894 Local Government Act the vestry's civil powers passed to a parish council of eight members, who assumed responsibility for the parish's charities and allotments as well as for the village pound (sold in 1917), the village green (taken over from trustees in 1924), and the village hall (from 1942).¹⁹ George Phillips (d. 1942), the council's long-standing clerk, served also as assistant overseer,²⁰ and in 2024 a council of five members met monthly at the village hall.²¹ For ecclesiastical purposes Kingham and

¹⁰ *Woodward's Progress*, 49, 52; New Coll. Arch. 1433; *VCH Oxon.* XIX, 25, 43; above, landownership (other estates).

¹¹ OHC, PAR154/17/MS1/1.

¹² *Visit. Dioc. Linc.* II, 44; *Oxf. Ch. Ct Deposns 1570--4*, pp. 33--4; above, relig. hist. (relig. life).

¹³ OHC, PAR154/4/F1/1; PAR154/4/F2/1; Lainchbury, *Kingham*, 134--8; above, social hist. (welfare).

¹⁴ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. b 38, f. 128v.; *Gore's Visit.* p. 201.

¹⁵ *Prot. Retns*, 90; OHC, MS Wills Oxon. 5/5/19; *ibid.* encl. award.

¹⁶ OHC, PAR154/5/F1/1 (overseers); PAR154/6/F1/1--2 (constables); PAR154/8/F1/1 (fieldsmen); above, social hist. (1500--1800).

¹⁷ Lainchbury, *Kingham*, 104--9.

¹⁸ *Oxf. Chron.* 14 Apr. 1860, 25 Aug. 1866; TNA, RG 9/910; *Dutton, Allen & Co.'s Dir. Oxon.* (1863).

¹⁹ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 28 Nov. 1894, 10 Apr. 1895; OHC, DV/X/68; *ibid.* O41/2/C4/19; Lainchbury, *Kingham*, 185--6, 268--9.

²⁰ *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1891--1939 edns); Lainchbury, *Kingham*, 194--5.

²¹ www.kinghamoxfordshire.com (accessed Aug. 2024).

Daylesford retained a separate parochial church council following the benefice's unification with Churchill and Sarsden in 1979, and continued to elect two churchwardens.²²

Kingham belonged from 1834 to Chipping Norton Poor Law Union, from 1894 to the newly formed Chipping Norton Rural District, and from 1974 to the new West Oxfordshire District, which in 1986 designated the whole village (excluding the detached part along New and Station Roads) a conservation area.²³

²² OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 1879, Order in Council; *Oxf. Dioc. Year Book* (2009), 66; above, relig. hist. (paroch. organizn).

²³ Youngs, *Admin. Units*, I, 400; *Oxon. Atlas*, pp. 145, 151; *Census*, 1981; WODC website (Aug. 2024).