



VCH Oxfordshire Texts in Progress

Sarsden

Local Government

Manor Courts and Officers

Courts for Sarsden manor's free and customary tenants were held by the late 13th century, but were valued at only 3d. a year in 1297.¹ Presumably they continued under the Golafres' successors, perhaps until enclosure, though no court rolls have been found. In the 1270s lords and tenants also owed suit to the twice-yearly county court, to the sheriff of Oxfordshire's twice-yearly tourn, and to Chadlington hundred's three-weekly courts and twice-yearly views of frankpledge. Annual views (held by then in the parish) continued in the 16th century, when (as earlier) the tithingman paid fixed sums for cert money, wardpenny, and hidage, and inhabitants were presented for such offences as breaking the assize of ale and failing to scour ditches.² A constable was mentioned in 1377 and in the 1660s.³

Parish Government and Officers

In 1530 Sarsden had two churchwardens, reduced to one from 1593.⁴ By the 18th century the office was filled (often for several years at a time) by leading farmers, whose duties included maintenance of the church clock and other fabric, and destruction of vermin.⁵ Elections took place at vestry meetings, and continued in the 20th century when the Sarsden House gardener Henry Male (d. 1956) served for almost 32 years.⁶ Other parish officers included overseer of the poor and surveyor of highways, to whom three stone-pits were allotted at enclosure in 1788,⁷ and a joint assistant overseer for Sarsden, Churchill, and Lyneham was employed in the 1890s–1900s.⁸ Under the 1894 Local Government Act the vestry's civil powers passed to a parish meeting, which continued until 1976 when it was united with Churchill's parish council, on which Sarsden was represented by a single

¹ *Rot. Hund.* II, 729–30; TNA, C 133/78/15.

² *Rot. Hund.* II, 730; TNA, SC 2/197/20–1; *ibid.* LR 2/189, f. 110; Glos. Archives, D 9125/3/26, f. 45.

³ *Poll Taxes 1377–81*, ed. Fenwick, II, 305; Gibson (ed.), *Contribs 1661*, 25; TNA, E 179/255/4.

⁴ *Visit. Dioc. Linc.* II, 46; OHC, PAR230/1/R1/1, ff. 3v.–6v. (transcribed in *ibid.* par. reg. transcript, misc. pp. 2–4); cf. *VCH Oxon.* XIX, 183 (Lyneham).

⁵ OHC, PAR230/4/F1/1; *ibid.* MS Oxf. Archd. Oxon. c 98.

⁶ *Ibid.* MS Oxf. Dioc. b 39, f. 290; *Tewkesbury Register*, 18 Apr. 1953, 6 Nov. 1954.

⁷ OHC, PAR230/11/A2/1; *ibid.* enclo. award; *Oxon. Weekly News*, 26 Feb. 1913, 27 Sept. 1916.

⁸ *Kelly's Dir. Oxon.* (1891–1903 edns); *Oxon. Weekly News*, 13 July 1910.

member.⁹ For ecclesiastical purposes a joint parochial church council with Kingham and Daylesford was established following the benefices' unification in 1979, and from 1992 two churchwardens were elected for the united parish.¹⁰

Sarsden 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.¹¹

⁹ *Oxon. Weekly News*, 12 and 19 Dec. 1894; *Tewkesbury Register*, 16 Feb. 1962, 29 Mar. 1963; <https://churchillandsarsden-pc.gov.uk> (accessed Nov. 2022); above, Churchill, local govt.

¹⁰ OHC, MS Oxf. Dioc. c 1879; above, relig. hist. (paroch. organizn); Churchill, local govt.

¹¹ Youngs, *Admin. Units*, I, 404; *Oxon. Atlas*, pp. 145, 151; *Census*, 1981.