

 <p>VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY</p> <p>Leicestershire</p>	<p>WELBY</p> <p>Alan Fox</p> <p>2017</p>
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LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The sources for this chapter are extremely patchy. Welby was a chapelry of Melton Mowbray and the extent of its independence with regard to government of the parish at the lowest level is not clear.

Manorial Government

In the Middle Ages, most of the parishes around Melton Mowbray were under the overall lordship of the Mowbrays.¹ Only one court roll for Welby appears to have survived, which is from 1439.² Melton Mowbray had three manors, the main one being the honour and manor of Melton Mowbray, which was almost entirely in the possession of the Mowbrays until it went to the Berkeleys in 1483.³ In the eighteenth century the documents about this manor came via the Pate family to the Melton Mowbray Town Estate and it was noted that the Berkeleys had held a leet jurisdiction.⁴ This suggests there had been a leet court in medieval Melton Mowbray. If so the manor probably had a court baron as well. Court rolls and suit rolls from the late 17th and 18th centuries survive for the manor of Lewis in Melton Mowbray.⁵

¹ TNA, SC 8/36/1763: petition, 1322-6?

² ROLLR, DE 23/2/36.

³ D. Pockley, 'The origin of early records in the Melton Mowbray Town Estate', *TLAHS* 45 (1969-70), 20-38.

⁴ D. Pockley, 'The origin of early records in the Melton Mowbray Town Estate', *TLAHS* 45 (1969-70), 27.

⁵ Lincs. Arch., REEVE 4. There are also a few later records relating to Melton Mowbray manor at Melbourne Hall.

Parochial Government

Melton Mowbray Town Estate, established in *c.*1547, ran much of the town's administration from that date. The evidence from Town Estate documents indicates that it dealt solely with Melton Mowbray township, and not the chapelries.

In 1847 a parliamentary paper on superintendent registrar districts stated that Welby chapelry was a part of Melton Mowbray parish.⁶ Nevertheless nearly all other parliamentary papers on Welby treat it as a separate entity.

Although Welby was part of the Melton Mowbray vestry, from the 18th century onwards there are suggestions that it was treated as a separate unit for some purposes. For example Land Tax and Poor Law documents are separate from those of the town.⁷ In 1776 Samuel Draper and William Marriott, both Welby residents, were assessors and collectors of the Land Tax in Welby parish.⁸ Although there are no surviving settlement certificates associated with Welby, there is one for the neighbouring chapelry of Sysonby.⁹ In 1800 Welby parish was the appellant at the Leicester Quarter Sessions for the removal of Jane Higgleston and her infant from the parish, when a removal order was made for the unmarried mother and child to go to Long Clawson.¹⁰ The Melton Mowbray churchwarden in 1845 paid 1*s.* 6*d.* for someone to take notices to the hamlets about the rates.¹¹ In that year the town itself raised £151 3*s.* 0¼*d.* in rates and the hamlets contributed another £19 19*s.* 0*d.*¹²

In 1836 Welby became one of the parishes in the newly formed Melton Mowbray Poor Law Union.¹³ Thomas Barnes, the overseer, conducted a revaluation of the parish in 1837, giving

⁶ *Superintendent registrar districts* (Parl. Papers 1847 (648), xlix.585), p. 84.

⁷ ROLLR, QS62/327 land tax Welby.

⁸ ROLLR, QS62/327 land tax Welby.

⁹ ROLLR, DG36/169-180, settlement certificates in Melton Mowbray parish records 1766-88.

¹⁰ ROLLR, QS3/342/8, removal order 1800.

¹¹ ROLLR, DG36/140/38, churchwardens' accounts Melton Mowbray 1843-1913.

¹² ROLLR, DG36/140/38, churchwardens' accounts Melton Mowbray 1843-1913.

¹³ ROLLR, QS89/28, order establishing Melton Mowbray Union 1836.

the total rateable value of property in Welby to be £991.¹⁴ There were eight occupiers of land and houses, which were all rented from the lord of the manor.¹⁵ In 1839 they paid a total of £87 towards the poor rates.¹⁶

Civil Parish

From 1866, any parish or chapelry that levied a separate rate was to be classed as a 'civil parish'.¹⁷ As a result Welby was so designated and this represented the beginning of a split between the ecclesiastical and civil administration of the parish. There is very little evidence about the administration of Welby civil parish. The population was too small to support an elected parish council, but there would have been an annual parish meeting at which all male householders were eligible to attend. This was extended to include all adults by 1928.

In 1875 Welby also became one of the parishes in the newly formed Melton Mowbray Rural Sanitary District, which dealt with public health, with particular emphasis on clean drinking water, sewers and street cleaning.¹⁸ The district was based on the existing Melton Mowbray Poor Law Union, but excluded Melton Mowbray township itself, which was an Urban Sanitary District.¹⁹

In 1894, Welby became part of the Melton Mowbray Rural District Council and this remained the situation to 1936.²⁰

The offices that used to attach to the parish vestry had become less relevant. Melton Mowbray District Highway Board was formed in 1863,²¹ and Welby sent a representative to

¹⁴ ROLLR, QS27/2/132, parish revaluation Welby 1837.

¹⁵ ROLLR, QS27/2/132, parish revaluation Welby 1837.

¹⁶ *Poor rates, return to an order* (Parl. Papers 1844 (63), xl.351), p. 83.

¹⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/civil_parishes_in_England (accessed 7 December 2015).

¹⁸ Diagram of the Sanitary Districts of Leicestershire showing the civil parishes, Ordnance Survey 1888, Sheet 28 Leicestershire: F. Youngs, *Local Administrative Units, Northern England* (London, 1991), p. 240.

¹⁹ Leicestershire: F. Youngs, *Local Administrative Units, Northern England* (London, 1991), p. 240.

²⁰ Youngs, *Local Administrative Units*, p. 240.

²¹ *London Gazette*, 30 Jan. 1863, p. 526.

the Board meetings. In 1891 Henry Hanbury of Welby Grange Farm was the Welby delegate, complaining about the poor state of the roads in the parish.²² An overseer of the poor was still necessary, as rates still had to be decided and collected, and monies distributed to poor people in the parish. Many of the administrative tasks in Welby would have been carried out by the parish clerk. In 1891, Welby's parish clerk was Samuel Downs,²³ an agricultural labourer, aged 61 and resident in the parish.²⁴

From 1936

Welby Civil Parish was dissolved in 1936, and those people living in the former civil parish became residents of either Asfordby Civil Parish or Melton Mowbray.²⁵ In 1988 the Potter Hill area was transferred again, from Asfordby to Ab Kettleby Civil Parish.²⁶

In 1936 Melton Rural District Council was combined with Belvoir Rural District Council to form the Melton and Belvoir Rural District Council, and Asfordby was one of the parishes in this new body, which stayed in place until 1974.²⁷ In 1974 Melton Mowbray Borough Council was created. It included both the former Melton and Belvoir Rural District Council and Melton Mowbray Urban District Council areas, and this is still the situation in 2015.

²² *Leic. Chron.*, 15 Aug. 1891.

²³ *Kelly's Dir. Leics & Rutland* (1891), 808.

²⁴ TNA RG12/2544, 145 1891 census.

²⁵ F. Youngs, *Local Administrative Units: Northern England* (1991), II, 240; The County of Leicester (Melton and Belvoir Rural District) (Union of Parishes) Confirmation Order, 1936.

²⁶ Statutory Instruments 1988 No. 2100, Local government England and Wales, changes in local government areas, The Melton (Parishes) Order, 5-6.

²⁷ ROLLR, DE 7547/ 15, Melton and Belvoir Rural District Council minutes, 1933-6; F. Youngs, *Local Administrative Units: Northern England* (1991), II, 229.