

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Manorial Government

In 1285, John de Villiers claimed that Henry de Seis was his tenant and had not done suit at John's court for seven years.¹ This court met every three weeks. In 1296, when John de Villiers granted a toft and virgate in Brooksby to his brother Alexander at an annual rent of 3s. and suit at John's court.² In 1347 the sheriff ordered 'twelve of the view of Brooksby' to recognize whether certain people dug in the separate soil of Geoffrey de Villiers, lord of the manor of Brooksby.³

The only record to survive from the manorial courts of any period is a court roll for 1481. This shows three people breaking the assize of ale, and identifies the sale of bread by a baker from Kirby (Bellars).⁴ Deeds of 1677 and 1681 mention a court baron and view of frankpledge, and a court leet at the earlier date.⁵

Parish Government

The sole records of parish government before the 19th century are found in poor law statistics in parliamentary papers of the later 18th century.⁶ If the lord of the manor, his family and servants did not serve as parish officers this only left the occupants of the mill or non-resident farmers suitable for the posts. East Goscote High Constable William Hyde signed a return in 1817 as overseer of the poor for Brooksby,⁷ suggesting there was no suitable Brooksby resident for this office.

In 1829, a 'Church Book' was started by parish clerk William Addison with the heading 'Church and Constable Account'. The combined account from 1829 to 1841 includes expenses of 6s. 6d. for the

¹ G.F. Farnham, *Leics. Medieval Village Notes*, VI (Leicester, 1929), 250, citing JUST 1/956, m. 2.

² G.F. Farnham, *Leics. Medieval Village Notes*, VI (Leicester, 1929), 252, citing TNA, CP 40/113–114, m. 25d.

³ G.F. Farnham, *Leics. Medieval Village Notes*, VI (Leicester, 1929), 255, citing TNA, CP 40/350, m. 258.

⁴ ROLLR, 44'28/188.,

⁵ ROLLR, DG8/183 (1677) and 6D 40/2/9 (1681).

⁶ *Report of the Committee appointed to inspect and consider the Returns made by the Overseers of the Poor, together with Abstracts of the said Returns of Overseers* (Parl. Papers 1776-7 (9), p. 382.

⁷ ROLLR, QS 93/2/115.

constable's attendance at the Statute hiring fair at Rearsby in 1830. From 1841 to 1874 it contained solely the churchwardens' accounts.⁸ There is mention of the overseer's list in March 1831.⁹ In 1841 reference is made to a separate constables' account, missing in 2019.¹⁰ Expenses were incurred at other parishes, including Thurmaston, Leicester, Melton Mowbray and Sileby, but the reasons are not given.

In 1834 the overseer of the poor and churchwarden was widow Catherine Hives, tenant of Brooksby Mill.¹¹ Mrs Hives died in April 1840,¹² and this may be the reason for the change in the Church Book account from that time onwards. In 1857 a year's salary of £3 3s. 0d. was paid to miller Elijah Cunnington, overseer of the poor.¹³

In 1841 the new police districts are mentioned, and Brooksby petitioned for a different allocation, but whether this was agreed is not known.¹⁴ Brooksby was in the Melton Mowbray Division for the Court of Special Sessions in 1842, with neighbouring Rearsby in the Leicester Division.¹⁵

In 1861 Thomas Henton Simpkin, tenant farmer, was fined for failing to produce a highway account for Brooksby parish.¹⁶ In 1863 he was appointed again as waywarden.¹⁷ In 1883 the lord of Brooksby manor, Ernest Chaplin,¹⁸ was elected as waywarden.¹⁹ In 1887–8 he was also named as a churchwarden.²⁰

⁸ ROLLR, DE 2193/16, church book.

⁹ Not extant, 2019.

¹⁰ ROLLR, DE 2193/16.

¹¹ *Royal Commission into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws, Appx A, Pt 2* (Parl. Papers 1834 (44) xxix), pp. 104-5.

¹² ROLLR, DE 7804/2.

¹³ ROLLR, DE 2193/16.

¹⁴ *Leicester Mercury*, 9 Jan. 1841.

¹⁵ *Leicestershire Chronicle*, 5 Feb. 1842, p. 1.

¹⁶ *Leicester Mercury*, 11 May 1861.

¹⁷ *Leicester Mercury*, 4 Apr. 1863.

¹⁸ *Leicester Mercury*, 31 Dec. 1881.

¹⁹ *Leicester Mercury*, 21 Apr. 1863.

²⁰ *Wright's Dir. of Leics.* (1887–8), 365.

Brooksby became a civil parish in 1866.²¹

Poor Law Union and Rural Sanitary District

From 1836 Brooksby parish was part of the Melton Mowbray Union.²² The annual contribution from Brooksby for the relief of the poor was £10 in 1847,²³ which increased following the 1865 Union Chargeability Act, to £69 in 1867–8,²⁴ and £152 in 1895.²⁵ Brooksby provided one member of the Board of Guardians. Appointees included grazier James Cort of Hoby in 1851,²⁶ and 1853, and William Flavell in 1856,²⁷ who each rented land in Brooksby,²⁸ the lord of the manor, Ernest Chaplin in 1882,²⁹ and rectors the reverend John Marsh Lakin in 1886,³⁰ and the reverend Arthur Carter in 1889.³¹

Brooksby was part of Melton Mowbray Rural Sanitary District from 1875 to 1894.³²

Local Government from 1894

Brooksby civil parish was part of Melton Mowbray Rural District Council from 1894 to 1935.³³ The population of Brooksby parish was not large enough for the establishment of a parish council, but there should have been an annual parish meeting to elect officers. In 1909 the parish clerk reported, to much laughter at the district meeting, that there had not been a Brooksby meeting for several

²¹ Poor Law Amendment Act, 1866.

²² F.A. Youngs, *Guide to the Local Administrative Units of England*, II (1991), 694.

²³ *Returns of Amount Levied for Poor and County Rates and Amount Expended for Relief and Maintenance of the Poor 1833-47* (Parl. Papers 1847-8 (53), liii.11), 71–2.

²⁴ *Returns of Poor Rates in Parishes in Unions in Devon, Leicestershire, Norfolk, Northumberland, Sussex and Worcestershire, 1852 and 1868* (Parl. Papers 1871 (59) lix 7, 29), 14.

²⁵ *Leicester Chronicle*, 23 Mar. 1895.

²⁶ *Leicester Mercury*, 4 Nov. 1851.

²⁷ *Leicester Mercury*, 3 May 1856.

²⁸ ROLLR, Ti42/1, tithe award 1847.

²⁹ *Leicester Mercury*, 15 Apr. 1882.

³⁰ *Leicester Mercury*, 31 July 1886.

³¹ *Leicester Mercury*, 20 Apr. 1889.

³² F.A. Youngs, *Guide to the Local Administrative Units of England*, II (1991), 222, 694.

³³ F.A. Youngs, *Guide to the Local Administrative Units of England*, II (1991), 222, 696.

years and that the late overseer had been the only one to attend, appointing himself each year and signing the relevant document as chairman.³⁴

In 1935 Melton Mowbray Rural District Council and Belvoir Rural District Council combined to form Melton and Belvoir Rural District Council.³⁵ Within this council Brooksby parish continued as a separate entity for one year, but in 1936 it became a ward of Hoby and Rotherby parish council, which also included Ragdale.³⁶ In 1974 Melton Mowbray Borough Council was formed,³⁷ and Hoby and Rotherby parish council, including Brooksby and Ragdale, became part of it and this was the situation in 2020. Brooksby ward was represented by one of the five councillors on the parish council.³⁸

³⁴ *Leicester Mercury*, 6 Aug 1909.

³⁵ F.A. Youngs, *Guide to the Local Administrative Units of England*, II (1991), 696; TNA ED31/560.

³⁶ The County of Leicester (Melton and Belvoir Rural District) (Union of Parishes) Confirmation Order, 1936.

³⁷ <https://melton-leadership.com> (accessed 16 Dec 2019).

³⁸ <https://www.hobywithrotherbypc.org.uk> (accessed 16 Dec 2019).