

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Although Bishops Hull lay in the hundred of Taunton and Taunton Deane its inclusion in the manorial hundred of Hull was more important for much of its post-Conquest history. In 1225 the township of Hull was represented on a jury¹ and by the mid 13th century the parish was divided into three townships, Fideoak, Rumwell and Hull, which included the Taunton area of the parish.² Fideoak was a tithing in Holway hundred the other two were in Hull hundred, which unlike the other manorial hundreds had its own tax returns in the 1370s.³ In 1569 the parish could muster seven archers, five billmen and a two pikemen. Bishops Hull and Rumwell tithings each had a corslet and could supply five pairs of almain rivets, and other weapons.⁴ In 1697 Fideoak returned only four residents and was not considered a tithing by 18th-century tax collectors.⁵ However, like Rumwell it remained a separate tithing for manorial purposes until the early 19th century.⁶ The tithingmen were appointed in the manor court to whose two lawdays they made presentments.⁷ The tithing of Hull was responsible for building the gallows for the assizes although in 1615 they tried to claim Trull should provide the timber. The gallows was erected at Stone Green in Rumwell on the Taunton to Wellington road.⁸ People were still hung there occasionally in the 1800s but the last was said to be in 1814.⁹

After the middle ages and the loss of the chapel of St Paul with its manor barton the Taunton area had little connection with the rest of the parish except for the requirement to use the parish church. By the 19th century the two areas were sometimes known for rating

¹ C. E. Chadwyck-Healey, *Som. Pleas c. 1200—1256*, p. 33.

² T.J. Hunt, *The Medieval Customs of Taunton Manor*, 62—5. The names in the custumal appear in pipe rolls of the 1250s.

³ SHC, DD/SP/2—4; C.C. Fenwick, *The Poll taxes of 1372, 1377 and 1381*, 422, 424, 427.

⁴ E. Green, *Certificate of Musters, 1569*, 277—8.

⁵ SHC, A/CPX/1; Q/RE1.

⁶ *Ibid.* DD/CH/67/5; DD/SP/18/80, 128; above, econ. hist.; soc. hist.

⁷ SHC, DD/SP/10, 21, 29, 32.

⁸ *Ibid.* DD/SP/23/37; above, intro.

⁹ SHC, DD/X/WEA/1. There is a modern commemorative stone on the green at Stonegallows.

purposes as the first and second division and there are references to the ‘town side’.¹⁰ The latter was included in Taunton parliamentary borough.¹¹ After the creation of the creation of the ecclesiastical district of St John in 1864 it was inevitable that the parish would also be divided for civil purposes. In 1875 the town area was absorbed into Taunton Urban Sanitary District and in 1885 two parishes known as Bishops Hull Within and Bishops Hull Without were created. After the Within parish had been absorbed into Taunton borough in 1921 Bishops Hull Without became known simply as Bishops Hull again.¹²

MANORIAL ADMINISTRATION

Manor officers

The manorial officers based at the castle were the constable, bailiff, janitor or porter or gate keeper, clerk and receiver, all responsible for administration. In the Middle Ages there were also a steward, a woodward or keeper of woods and chases and an overseer of waterworks, water bailiff or keeper of weirs, banks and bridges. The woodward received 2*d.* a day, lops, windfalls and seven trees, and herbage of enclosed wood. The overseer of waterworks had a fee of £3 6*s.* 8*d.* and four loads of firewood. Those two had ceased to be appointed by the early 18th century.¹³ During the era of medieval demesne farming a carter and a granger were lodged in the castle. Other possibly short-lived offices were the keeper of the prisoners recorded in 1633 and 1638 when he was granted accommodation in the castle, apparently the south-west range, with the ‘bridehowse’.¹⁴ There had been a prison in the castle, possibly just a room, since 1218.¹⁵ The keeper of the gate, presumably originally the deputy porter, was

¹⁰ SHC, D/P/b.hl/4/1/3.

¹¹ Ibid. DD/SAS/C2550/12; Taunton, local govt.

¹² Youngs, *Local Admin Units*, 672; Taunton, local govt.

¹³ SHC, T/PH/win 1208—9, 1316—17, 1433—4, 1518—19; DD/SP/71; DD/MK/50; DD/CN/ 29/7.

¹⁴ Ibid. Q/SR/69/10; DD/SP/356; Webster, *Taunton Castle*, 25—6.

¹⁵ SHC, T/PH/win 1217—8; Webster, *Taunton Castle*, 23, 25.

paid 2d. a day in 1680 to shut and open the gate to the town, that is in the Castle Bow the former East Gate, leaving a wicket open on Sundays, and to chain the western gate.¹⁶

The constable held the office for life for a fee of £20 and 5a. of meadow by the river. Although there were political appointees, especially by the Crown during vacancies in the see of Winchester or times of unrest,¹⁷ and others who had no connection with the county, many were Somerset landowners including Thomas de Tymeworth, Sir Edward Stradling, Sir Humphrey Stafford, Sir Giles Daubeney and his son Henry, earl of Bridgwater, Sir Thomas Arundel, Sir Francis Popham and in 1821 the Revd Francis North.¹⁸ The constable may have employed people to represent him at the castle. In 1225 his man Lindesie was accused of protecting thieves and he took two men to seize a woman and her son and falsely imprison them.¹⁹ The accounts were kept in his name until the early 14th century and he was still entitled to three ricks of hay annually for his horses in the mid 15th century. He and the clerk received summer robes in the early 14th century. After the Middle Ages if not earlier it was a sinecure post and by 1821 the fee was reduced to £16.²⁰

The bailiff of the manor also had provender for his horses.²¹ He had a fee of £4 and allowances of rye and green peas from Nailsbourne hundred, a £2 gift from the bishop, 12 loads of firewood and an extra load for each of the Taunton fairs, presumably to heat the Tolsey or tollbooth.²² Like the constabulary the bailiwick had become a quasi hereditary sinecure post by the 17th century and the bailiff was usually called the keeper of the castle although that title was also given to the porter and was also bailiff of the liberty of Taunton.²³ By 1647 the food allowances appear to have been paid in cash according to the summer

¹⁶ SHC, DD/SP/18/2.

¹⁷ e.g. *Cal. Pat.* 1258—66, 7, 180, 193; 1266—72, 77, 143, 204; 1272—81, 365, 403.

¹⁸ Hunt, *Medieval Customs of Taunton Manor*, xii; SHC, T/PH/win 1453—4, 1462—3, 1500—1; TNA, E326/50590; SHC, DD/CN/ 29/7; DD/X/VNL/1

¹⁹ E.H. Chadwyck-Healey, *Som. Pleas c. 1200—1256*, pp. 35, 85.

²⁰ SHC, T/PH/win 1301—2; DD/X/VNL/1.

²¹ *Ibid.* T/PH/win 1443—4.

²² *Ibid.* DD/SP/71.

²³ *Ibid.* DD/X/VNL/1; T/PH/win 1500—1.

market price between the two fairs.²⁴ Successive bailiffs bought grants of office from the bishop of Winchester, notably Sir Benjamin Hammet in 1786 who at least did some work on the building. By 1821 the bailiff was regarded as entitled to the two houses formed out of the castle as well as the assize hall and its appurtenances. The office was virtually hereditary and in 1866 Edward Jeffries Esdaile, nephew of Hammet and described as surviving keeper of the castle, assigned the office to the lord of the manor with all the fees and emoluments and a message.²⁵

The medieval janitor or porter appears to have been originally housed within the castle by the entrance in what is now Castle House but in 1215—16 there were two janitors one for the inner gate and one for the outer.²⁶ By the 14th century the porter's servant may have had a room near the inner gate, known as the janitor's lodge in 1464. John Orleton, porter in 1338 when the bishop was Adam Orleton, had two houses probably by the East Gate, out of a row of at least three in 1338, probably the site of the later porter's house, an allowance of hay for his horse, and 60s. 10d. The office was held for life by the 1450s and in the 1460s was held with the office of supervisor of the lords woods.²⁷ By the 16th century the portership was also a sinecure post and in 1566 it was shared by Sir Henry Seymour and Henry Portman for their lives. The porter had a mansion and garden in the castle precinct, the Castle Green and Ditch or moat, half Porter's Mead (3 ½ a.) and its stable, 12 loads of firewood, 2d. a day from the receiver and other accustomed fees.²⁸ A deputy carried out the duties for the fee and presumably occupied the house. The value of the office lay in the rents that could be charged as Castle Green was developed.²⁹ The North family were quasi-hereditary porters by the early 19th century when the Easton family held the deputy

²⁴ Ibid. DD/SAS/C795/TN/16, 142.

²⁵ Ibid. DD/CN/29/7; DD/SAS/S1122/1/18, 33.

²⁶ Ibid. T/PH/win 1215—16.

²⁷ Ibid. DD/S/SBY/6/1; T/PH/win 1433-4, 1452—3, 1462—3.

²⁸ Webster, *Taunton Castle*, 12, 14; SHC, T/PH/win 1537—8; DD/SP/12.

²⁹ SHC, DD/X/WA/3.

portership with the house, which by then was dilapidated and divided into three tenements but the other properties on the Green brought the holder potentially a substantial rental, including the sheep market. As late as 1866 the cattle market, was described as the porter's garden.³⁰ In 1832 Josiah Easton the younger deputed the office to the lord of the manor. By 1874 Easton was dead and the office was assumed to belong to the lord.³¹

The clerk was responsible for the written records and was provided with hay and straw for his horse.³² Several clerks are referred to in the pipe rolls but the clerk to the manor was possibly housed under the bishop's chapel and therefore near the Exchequer where the muniments were kept. He had his own garderobe in 1310 and a chamber under the roof in 1361. By the mid 16th century the office was also held by a local gentleman for life for 20s., other accustomed fees and half Porter's Mead and its stable. He received 18 loads of firewood and expenses for riding, sending letters, parchment, papers and ink. He was responsible for holding all the courts except the two lawdays and kept the records for 60 courts a year for both the manor and the borough of Taunton.³³ It was customary for the Taunton manor records to be duplicated with one set held in Winchester and one in Taunton. During the crown's control in the mid 16th century that was not done causing difficulty for tenants together with the two rooms in the castle known as the Exchequer where they were kept.³⁴ In 1647 it was declared that the Taunton copy records belonged to the tenants not the lord.³⁵ The office of clerk was held by the Farwell family of Bishops Hull in the early 17th century³⁶ and later by the Browne family. George Browne lived in the castle precinct and had the gates put back after 1627 to prevent abuses. Both George and John Browne combined the offices of clerk and porter until the 1650s or later and in addition to their fees were paid

³⁰ Ibid. DD/SAS/S1122/1/5; DD/CN/29/7; DD/CH/23/5; DD/HS/3/2.

³¹ Ibid. DD/SAS/S1122/1/3; DD/CH/23/5.

³² Ibid. T/PH/win 1433-4.

³³ Ibid. T/PH/win 1310—11, 1361—2; DD/SP/71; DD/SAS/S1122/1/5.

³⁴ BL, Lansdowne MS. 110/19.

³⁵ SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/16, 148.

³⁶ Crisp, *Som. Wills*, IV, 65.

generous expenses for riding to Rimpleton, supervising repairs and attending court and spent large sums on writing materials.³⁷ Deputy clerks were appointed by the early 17th century and one was prosecuted for fraud in land transactions and fees in 1622.³⁸ By the 18th century the deputy clerk was in charge of the records, kept in a room above the castle entrance still known as the Exchequer until transferred to the Somerset Record Office in 1936, when the lady of the manor sold her rights to the Exchequer room to the archaeological society.³⁹

The receiver's office appears to have declined in importance after the Middle Ages when he had a room in the castle but he was responsible for receiving and paying money and was entitled to take money from the reeves of the hundreds to pay fees and expenses. He received firewood for keeping the courts leet in the mid 16th century.⁴⁰ This was not an office men chose to take on and the receiver was appointed from among the leading tenants of the manor and the appointment was confirmed in the manor courts. By the early 18th century no names were entered against the office, which was presumably no longer filled.⁴¹

The steward of the bishopric was responsible for keeping the two annual lawday courts and was entitled to hay and straw for his horse in the Middle Ages when he was a regular visitor to the castle.⁴² He would make his own petition to the court concerning nuisances or disputes over tenancy and issue orders based on findings by the jury until 1619 or later.⁴³ He sometimes appointed a deputy by the end of 17th century rather than travel to Somerset if he was not a Somerset landowner.⁴⁴ During the Interregnum a local steward was appointed for life for Taunton Deane manor only with the profits of its courts.⁴⁵

³⁷ SHC, DD/SP/18/13; DD/X/WA/28; Hants. RO, 11M59/C1/19/10.

³⁸ TNA, STAC 8/33/5; *PSANHS*, LXXIII (1936), 11.

³⁹ SHC, DD/SAS/C/909/58; DD/SP/cat.

⁴⁰ SHC, DD/SP/71.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* DD/SP/13, 16, 71.

⁴² *Ibid.* T/PH/win 1360—1, 1433—4, 1500—1; DD/SAS/S1122/1/5.

⁴³ *Ibid.* DD/SP/3; 18/1, 6, 25; 64.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* DD/SP/302.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* DD/VNL/1; DD/SP/11.

Courts

Lawdays or leets or tourns were the twice yearly courts of the manor with three weekly courts for tenancy matters and pleas between tenants held about 17 times a year with separate courts for the infaring and outfaring hundreds. The courts were held in the great hall of the castle. All officers were supposed to attend at lawdays and would be provided with meat and drink while the steward abided keeping courts. Officers were also allowed horsemeat, shoeing and repair of horse furnishings. The bedels of the manorial hundreds also attended and received a dinner.⁴⁶

Each manorial hundred had its own jury, accounted for its own share of the court perquisites and had its own record. By the early 14th century there were two leets and up to 14 manor courts each year.⁴⁷ The twice yearly courts were also known as lawdays, tourns or fulfilling courts and the others as three-weeken or hundred courts, of which one autumn court was the Choice court for the election of officers and another was the Pannage court, although the main purpose of the pannage officers was presenting buildings needing repair. The courts managed to function despite the Civil War sieges only failing to meet between April and June 1645. By the 18th century the only recorded business in the books was appointment of officers and presentations of all well. Even the accounts and the lawday court books were not properly kept apart from the separate admission and surrender books for tenancies. Much business was only recorded on loose papers.⁴⁸

Although an annual court leet continued to exist until the 20th century, after enfranchisement it was largely ceremonial and concerned with the appointment of officers. As early as the late 17th century the court was losing its control especially over nuisances. Powerful men defied the court, for example over road closures and illegal encroachments,

⁴⁶ Ibid. DD/SP/71.

⁴⁷ Ibid. T/PH/win 1316—19.

⁴⁸ Ibid. DD/SP/2—1; DD/MT/13/3. Some books have only headings and titles and the business was not filled in.

racking up large unpaid penalties and the grand jury often admitted it was powerless to help petitioners.⁴⁹ By the 19th century the three week courts had ceased, courts leet were not held in the castle and had declined to two formal lawdays held in April and October. After 1875 only one court was held usually in May or June and in 1914 the last recorded court recited the deaths of the few remaining tenants, the appointment of constables and named those who failed to attend.⁵⁰

Hull Hundred

Apart from Fideoak tithing the parish formed part of the manorial hundred of Hull with Trull and part of Pitminster and all were part of the infaring division of the manor of Taunton Deane, subject to the full customs of that manor. The hundred bedels were required to find men for works on the castle in the 14th century.⁵¹ Unfree tenants were presented for living off the manor in the late 16th century and men called Deane men still owed a day's work for casual labour such as repairing banks and scouring ditches.⁵² As late as 1790 manorial rents included sale of works and almost £90 was collected from Hull tithing in manorial rents and charges.⁵³ The parish had its own bedel in early 13th century but by the 1230s the bedel served the whole of Hull hundred and later only one reeve was appointed for the hundred.⁵⁴ Bedels, reeves and tithingmen were chosen from the holders of ancient tenements until the late 18th century but Rumwell tenants appear to have owed service as tithingman only.⁵⁵ In c. 1743 the holders of 14 holdings in Hull tithing and 15 in Rumwell tithing owed service as tithingman and eight in the parish owed service as bedel. Presumably the offices of bedel and

⁴⁹ Ibid. DD/SP/18/119—21; 23/72.

⁵⁰ Ibid. DD/SP/21/5; DD/CH/23/5. The Taunton manorial borough court leet continues to be held annually.

⁵¹ SHC, T/PH/win 1360—1.

⁵² Ibid. DD/SP/3—4.

⁵³ Ibid. DD/DP/43/2.

⁵⁴ Ibid. T/PH/win 1208—1303; A/CPX/1.

⁵⁵ Ibid. DD/SP/71; DD/CH/80/6, note on map.

reeve had been combined.⁵⁶ The last reeve for Hull hundred was appointed in 1840.⁵⁷ Until enfranchisement in the 19th century most land in the parish was copyhold but by then carried little in the way of obligations.⁵⁸

Pounds

It is not clear if the pound at St Paul's, recorded from 1290, was for the entire manor. It possibly went out of use in the 14th century but was recorded as decayed at late as the 1580s.⁵⁹ A second pound within the castle ward was recorded in 1339 when it appears to have been new and for the outfaring hundred but it became the manor pound and was attached to the castle porter's office. It was built of cob, stone and brick and 888 ft of its walls needed repair in 1647 and 1782.⁶⁰ It survived until the late 19th century just inside the East Gate but before 1874 had passed out of the ownership of the manor and was used as a market pound and from c. 1897 as a public lavatory, since demolished.⁶¹

QUARTER SESSIONS AND ASSIZES

Those courts were held in the great hall until the Shire Hall was built in Taunton in the 1850s. In 1215—16 an assize watch was employed for nine weeks but usually the expense was in gifts to the judges.⁶² Prisoners were kept in the castle by 1218, although some escaped, and it was said that the bishop might keep prisoners to the exclusion of the sheriff's jurisdiction.⁶³ By the late Middle Ages most prisoners in the castle were probably awaiting trial at the assizes. Shackles appear regularly in the 15th century accounts together with repairs to doors,

⁵⁶ Ibid. DD/SAS/C795/TN/41.

⁵⁷ Ibid. DD/SP/21/1, 5

⁵⁸ Introduction.

⁵⁹ SHC, T/PH/win 1302—7; DD/SP/4.

⁶⁰ Ibid. DD/SAS/C795/TN/16, p. 147—8; DD/X/BUSH/11.

⁶¹ Ibid. T/PH/win 1305—17; DD/X/WA/28; DD/CH/23/5; D/B/ta/4/3/2 (1896—7); Webster, *Taunton Castle*, 23.

⁶² SHC, T/PH/win 1215—16, 1276—7.

⁶³ Webster, *Taunton Castle*, 23, 25; Chadwyck-Healey, *Som. Pleas c. 1200—1256*, p. 33; E. H. Bates, *Gerard's Survey of Somerset*, 1633, 57.

keys and locks.⁶⁴ In 1695 the bishop of Winchester's bailiffs and those of the sheriff were in dispute over rights to arrest and imprisonment in the castle prison.⁶⁵ Taunton was on the west country circuit for gaol delivery and courts were held in the castle.⁶⁶

Insurrections and war interfered with the holding of the assizes.⁶⁷ In 1652 the grand jury of Quarter Sessions declared that the Castle Hall near Taunton was the fittest place in Somerset for the assizes 'being a place time out of mind made use of for that service' and the Assizes and Quarter Sessions should continue to be held there in the future.⁶⁸ There was a threat to remove them in the later 18th century, which led Benjamin Hammet to carry out work on the building.⁶⁹ In 1830 admission tickets were issued for the public gallery causing complaints to the government.⁷⁰ Other towns wanted the assizes, as they were a source of trade and profit to a locality and fears over losing the assizes was one reason why the Shire Hall was built in Taunton and the courts removed there in the 1850s.⁷¹

Other courts may also have used the castle, for example the Court of Wards, which regularly met in Taunton in the early 17th century.⁷²

PAROCHIAL ADMINISTRATION

In the 1590s the churchwardens were responsible for the parish armour and weapons, giving alms to travellers and collectors for church and other purposes, and pauper apprenticeships including providing a boy with shears in 1595.⁷³ In 1621 it was said that the parish had not had archery butts for many years and was ordered to set up and maintain them.⁷⁴ The

⁶⁴ SHC, T/PH/win 1411—12, 1463—4, 1472—3, 1478—9, 1483—4.

⁶⁵ *SDNQ*, XII, 195.

⁶⁶ *Cal. Pat.* 1599—1600, p. 74.

⁶⁷ *L&P Hen. VIII*, IV (2), p. 1830.

⁶⁸ SHC, Q/SR/84/12—13.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* Q/AC/1; above, landownership, castle.

⁷⁰ TNA, HO 44/19/81, ff. 292—3, 409—10.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* PC/158—65, 170, 172; SHC, Q/SR/598/194; 606/90, 94.

⁷² M.J. Hawkins, *Sale of Wards in Somerset, 1603—1641*, passim.

⁷³ SHC, D/P/b.hl/4/1/1.

⁷⁴ E. H. Bates, *Quarter Sessions Records, 1607—25*, 297.

churchwardens were presented in 1723 for not repairing the stocks⁷⁵ and they paid for the maintenance of the parish pump in the 1840s.⁷⁶

By the 1690s the parish vestry was apprenticing up to four pauper children a year, decreeing in 1779 that children must be taken to their new household immediately without waiting for the indenture to be drawn up and in 1790 that children should be apprenticed at 9 years of age. The vestry, consisting of eight to ten members including parish officers, appointed a sexton, authorised medical and legal expenses and rates and found men for the militia, 14 in 1813.⁷⁷ They agreed on changes to the church, the wages of the clerk and sexton, the appointment of parish officers and constables, including from 1847 a salaried overseer and rate collector, road improvements and pauper emigration.⁷⁸ In 1821 a select vestry of 13 men was appointed to decide on payments to the poor at the Old Inn.⁷⁹ Thereafter usually 12 men were elected at the annual vestry to serve.⁸⁰ The vestry was chaired by the minister occasionally at first but regularly by 1870.⁸¹ From 1854 the clerk to the burial board reported to the vestry. In the later 19th century the vestry also concerned itself with nuisances and services like water and sewerage, the distribution of charity money, education and housing.⁸²

After the division of the parish in 1885 the vestry continued to administer Bishops Hull Without until a parish meeting was established in 1894. The new body took over most non-ecclesiastical vestry business but was concerned that the most valuable parts of the parish would be taken over by Taunton Borough and about flooding. In 1895 they considered moving the boundstones. In 1896 the meeting became a council with elected members, although this was usually by a show of hands, and met at the school. They had their own

⁷⁵ SHC, DD/SP/18/119

⁷⁶ Ibid. D/P/b.hl/4/1/3.

⁷⁷ Ibid. D/P/b.hl/9/1/1.

⁷⁸ Ibid. D/P/b.hl/9/1/2.

⁷⁹ Ibid. D/P/b.hl/9/1/1.

⁸⁰ Ibid. D/P/b.hl/9/1/2.

⁸¹ Ibid. D/D/va/2/12, 12/12.

⁸² Ibid. D/P/b.hl/9/1/3.

headed notepaper and concerned themselves with paths, drains and the postal service.⁸³ Many decisions were still left to annual vestry meetings in the 1930s.⁸⁴

Although the council said in 1917 that no houses were needed it asked Taunton Rural District Council for six at Mountway in 1919 and for another six in 1925 rather than the two offered as three houses had been burnt down leaving four families homeless. More houses were built at Mountway in the 1930s but the council said eight more were needed including two at Rumwell.⁸⁵ In the later 20th century the council became increasingly involved with planning as housing development increased and with the provision of local services.⁸⁶ The parish council met c. 12 times a year 2017.

Bishops Hull Within

The almost detached area of Bishops Hull adjoining and including Taunton Castle had probably always had a separate existence in reality but formed part of a unified Bishops Hull parish until 1864. It lay mostly in Hull tithing although some houses appear to have formed part of Taunton's Mill Lane tithing in the 1560s but were in Hull tithing by the 18th century.⁸⁷ The extension of Bishops Hull parish into Taunton caused difficulties including church attendance and billeting of soldiers.⁸⁸ Although not formally constituted as a separate parish until later it was rated separately from the 1840s when it was known as the Town Division and considered part of the borough of Taunton.⁸⁹

The ecclesiastical parish of Bishops Hull St John the Evangelist was formed in 1864 and included small areas of Wilton and Taunton St Mary parishes. It had a vestry, which was

⁸³ Ibid. D/PC/b.hl/1/2/1, 2/20.

⁸⁴ Ibid. D/PC/b.hl/1/2/2.

⁸⁵ Ibid. D/PC/b.hl/1/2/2.

⁸⁶ Ibid. D/PC/b.hl/2/9—19.

⁸⁷ Ibid. DD/SP/71, 214.

⁸⁸ Ibid. D/D/Ca/75, 98, 175; DD/TB/18/9.

⁸⁹ Ibid. D/P/b.hl/4/1/3; D/P/west m/23/24.

chaired by the minister at least until the end of the 19th century.⁹⁰ Although the whole ancient parish had formed part of the Taunton Poor Law union, when the sanitary districts were established in 1875 Bishops Hull was divided between Taunton Urban and Taunton Rural Sanitary Districts. In 1885 the former within the borough of Taunton became a separate parish of Bishops Hull Within, the remainder being renamed Bishops Hull Without.⁹¹ The civil parish of Bishops Hull Within was included in Taunton borough, forming part of the west ward,⁹² but had its own poor rates and overseer. The parish elected a salaried assistant overseer and rate collector in 1889 at a meeting in St John's school attended by 151 people, some with several votes although institutional voters like the gas company were objected to.⁹³ In 1921 Bishops Hull Within civil parish was abolished and absorbed into the new united civil parish of Taunton. In 1972 the ecclesiastical parish was renamed Taunton St John.⁹⁴

BURIAL BOARD

In 1853 the parish wanted to close the churchyard and open a new cemetery and appoint a burial board. Given the cost and the need it was agreed that Bishops Hull should have a joint burial board with Taunton St Mary and provide five members including two nonconformists. A separate Bishops Hull burial board was set up to find the parish share of the costs and elect members to the joint board. A cemetery was created in 1854 on 2 a. of land on the corner of Mountway and Wellington roads with a lodge and two mortuary chapels designed by Edward Ashworth of Devon in 1856 of which only the lodge and gate survive. The railings were taken for scrap despite public outrage in 1943. The chapels were demolished in the late

⁹⁰ Ibid. D/D/Va/12/12, 21/12.

⁹¹ Youngs, *Local Admin Units*, I. 428, 672—3.

⁹² SHC, D/P/b.hl/2/21.

⁹³ Ibid. D/P/tau.jo/13/9/1.

⁹⁴ Youngs, *Local Admin. Units*, I. 428.

1960s.⁹⁵ In 1863 it was agreed some of the proceeds of the poor house sale could be used to discharge the debt.⁹⁶ The churchyard was closed for burials with rare exceptions.⁹⁷ A second cemetery was added across the road in Wilton before 1930 but by 1954 a new cemetery was needed and in 1969 it was estimated 1,800 new spaces would be needed over the following 20 years. The Taunton Crematorium was built in a new cemetery on Wellington New Road in 1966 to which the parish contributed over £3,000. In 1972 the parish also contributed to the repair of the cremators but in 1976 sold its interest in the cemeteries to Taunton Deane Borough Council, which had succeeded the burial boards in 1974. By that date there were very few burials.⁹⁸

SERVICES

Police

From 1842 the parish had three constables.⁹⁹ From 1861 there was a police sergeant in the parish in charge of a police station, kept in various places in the village from the 1890s to the 1930s. Later the parish was policed from Taunton.¹⁰⁰

Utilities

In 1599 the parish maintained a common well.¹⁰¹ The watercourses were not only a source of water for residents but also the sewage system. There were complaints in the 17th century of pollution of the rhynes, which formerly fed the castle moat and by then served as drainage for the houses in the area. One man, probably in Hunts Court, had his newly-built rooms flooded

⁹⁵ SHC, D/PC/b.hl/9/1/3; D/PC/b.hl/2/23; D/B/ta/32/2/1; Devon HC, P&D 15024—6; SHC, D/DC/tau.d unlisted box 17, 1942—3, 38—9.

⁹⁶ SHC, D/G/ta/8a/16.

⁹⁷ Ibid. D/PC/b.hl/6/12.

⁹⁸ Ibid. D/PC/b.hl/1/2/4, 2/23; above, rel. hist.

⁹⁹ SHC, Q/APc /84.

¹⁰⁰ TNA, RG 9/1619; RG 10/2375; RG 11/2369; RG 12/1878; RG 13/2277; RG 14/14246; SHC, DD/C/44; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1894—1939).

¹⁰¹ SHC, DD/SP/9.

and his pump polluted by diversion of water through his court c. 1635 and the building of a privy.¹⁰² In 1696 a man was ordered to clear obstructions preventing the watercourse flowing into gardens and cleansing the school privy.¹⁰³

Tangier had only four pumps of which only one was working in 1854, its sewer fed into the river under the gasworks but was for stormwater only. There were 60 houses sharing eight privies and only two cesspits.¹⁰⁴

In 1866 the owners of the castle and its houses were instructed to stop draining the site into the Millstream, fill in cesspits and discharge sewage into the new drains in Castle Green, however a painting of 1891 shows the privies at the town mills and brewery suspended over the Millstream.¹⁰⁵

Serious outbreaks of diphtheria in Taunton in the early 1880s spread to the rural parish and both wells and privies were condemned but nothing was done.¹⁰⁶ In 1894 the parish meeting said they did not need mains water, sewerage, gas or electricity beyond what was already available. The village had a gas main and gas was supplied to the church in the 1860s and to the school, but neither had electricity until the 1950s.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, the council voted against street lighting in 1899 and several times later. It invested in a sewage cart.¹⁰⁸ Sewage was still going into the river in the 1920s and a sewage scheme was proposed in 1936 with works off Mountway Road. In 1931 the council agreed to have mains water if the users paid the cost. By 1944 most people had access to mains water and sewerage although the latter remained inadequate at Shutewater Hill and the outlying areas. Requests for street lighting were refused until 1947 when 14 lamps were installed with 10 more in 1949.¹⁰⁹ An

¹⁰² Ibid. DD/SP/18/16.

¹⁰³ Ibid. DD/SP/4.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. D/B/ta/2/1/2, pp. 49, 61, 83..

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. DD/CH/22/4; Jones, *Harry Frier*, 93.

¹⁰⁶ *Taunton Courier*, 8 June 1881, 29 Aug. 1883; BNA accessed March 2017; SHC, *Dr Blaxall's Report on Epidemics of Diphtheria in the Taunton Rural Sanitary District* (1883); above, soc. hist.

¹⁰⁷ SHC, D/P/b.hl/4/1/4, 9/1/7; A/BEU/1/1; D/PC/b.hl/1/2/1; D/B/ta/14/7/1.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. D/PC/b.hl/1/2/1.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. D/PC/b.hl/1/2/2, 2/1; A/CXR/8 [1944].

electricity transmission depot was built at Fideoak in 1950. In 1972 it was considerably extended as a 400kV substation and it remains in use.¹¹⁰ The rapid development of the parish in the 1970s led to the construction of new sewage pumping stations in 1975 and the old sewage works, already overloaded by 1964, was redeveloped for housing.¹¹¹

VCH DRAFT TEXT

¹¹⁰ *PSANHS* (XCV, 1950), 169—70; *Kelly's Dir Taunton* (1957); SHC, D/PC/b.hl/2/13.

¹¹¹ SHC, D/PC/b.hl/2/19; A/CXR/8 [1964].