

THE OPERATION AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE WINCHESTER PAVEMENT COMMISSIONERS 1770–1866

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ABSTRACT

Improvement Commissions were established in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, by individual Acts of Parliament, to address particular local concerns. The most popular form of Improvement Commission, the Pavement Commissions, were established in over 300 towns and cities. The Winchester Pavement Commissioners were established in 1771. Their role was to address the poor state of the streets of Winchester, in respect of paving, lighting, cleansing and safety.

The 1770 Winchester Pavement Commission Act specifies the qualifications of potential Commissioners, the activities that the Commissioners could undertake and the means of finance for these activities. The Act was repealed in 1866, following the introduction of the 1858 Local Government Act and the responsibilities of the Pavement Commissioners were largely taken on by the town council.

There were 112 Commissioners named in the Winchester Pavement Commissioners Act. The Commissioners financed their activities by a rate on buildings and an additional turnpike toll. They could borrow money secured against these income streams.

The Winchester Commissioners agreed contracts for the paving of streets and installation of oil street lamps and, later on, gas street lamps. They employed the scavenger, the constable and the night watchmen. They regulated nuisances and obstructions in the streets and also regulated hackney chairs. They discussed the possibility of introducing sewage facilities for over twenty years without coming to a conclusion.

INTRODUCTION

During the late seventeenth and eighteenth century Winchester emerged as an administrative and social centre. It had a prominent role in the judiciary, with visits of the Quarter and

Assize sessions; the church, based around the Cathedral; education, with Winchester College; and the military. It hosted the Winchester Races and the Winchester Fairs. This in turn created a city that received an increasing number of visitors, a growth in trade, and a demand for improved facilities and infrastructure.

On the streets, the impact of the City's growth was beginning to be seen by 1691 with the banning of horse teams in the High Street on market days to avoid congestion and the widening of the Kingsgate in 1713 to protect pedestrians from traffic. By 1770, however, the High Street was still largely unsurfaced, without pavements, unlit and un-numbered. This situation was common across towns and cities in England and Wales.

The preferred means to address urban issues was the creation of Improvement Commissions of various types, most notably Pavement Commissions. Between 1748 and the middle of the nineteenth century Pavement Commissions were established by Acts of Parliament across the country. All municipal boroughs except four, with a population of over 11,000 in 1831, had introduced Pavement Commissions. These acts gave the commissioners specific mandates and fund raising authorities. The Winchester Pavement Commission was established in 1771. Its main focus was the paving and lighting of the streets although its mandate included the appointment of a scavenger and watchmen; the regulation of bow windows, gutters, drains and roof spouts; the naming of streets and numbering of houses; the emptying of 'necessary houses' and the licensing of Hackney chairs.

The minutes, accounts and limited other material directly associated with the Winchester Pavement Commission are held by the Hampshire

Record Office (HRO). These cover the period from when the Commission was established in 1771 until 1866 when its remaining powers were transferred to the Winchester Local Board. The HRO holds 10 volumes of 'Proceedings of the Winchester Paving Commissioners', covering the period 1771 to 1866. The accounts for the Commissioners are held in separate volumes covering the period 1811 to 1866. Pavement Rate documents are held separately for 1807 to 1815. The Winchester Pavement Commission's set of documents also includes approximately thirty other documents, including copies of the Act of Parliament, lists of mortgages, notices, leases and contracts with service providers.

THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Various attempts had been made before the Winchester Pavement Commissioners Act to enforce a good consistent standard of street repair and cleanliness in Winchester. In 1577 and 1584, ordinances were agreed to regulate the disposal of waste and the control of animals in the streets. A later order was agreed to 'avoid the infections of the Plague' (Woodland 1932, 176). The Corporation of 1652 tried to order inhabitants to pave in front of their own property and to the middle of the road. When Charles II came to Winchester in August 1683, the inhabitants were required to hang out lights in front of their houses, sweep their part of the road, and repair it. Prior to 1770, each Winchester city inhabitant had the responsibility for the state and good repair of the section of street in front of their property.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there were a number of authorities which had been set up by Acts of Parliament. The authorities had specific remits, covered precisely defined geographical areas, and were superimposed across the existing parish, borough and county structure. These bodies have been classified as 'Statutory Authorities for Special Purposes' and consisted of the Guardians of the Poor, responsible for administering the Poor Law; the Courts of the Sewers, responsible for the waterworks maintenance, drainage schemes and river banks in their area; the Turnpike Trusts, responsible for the main

roads; and the Improvement Commissioners, responsible usually for the maintenance of the town streets, although the same approach was also used to improve other areas such as police, prisons and harbours (Webb & Webb 1922, 1).

The Winchester Pavement Commissioners were one of these bodies, established by the 1770 Winchester Pavement Commissioners Act. On 14 November 1770, a petition from 'the Aldermen of the City of Winchester..., and of several Gentlemen and other Inhabitants of the said City and Suburbs' was presented to the House of Commons (Journals of the House of Commons 1770, 13–14 November, 5). The petition described the condition of the streets in Winchester as 'in a very ruinous and dangerous Condition' and requested leave to bring in a Bill for the 'better paving, repairing, widening, cleansing, watched, lighted, and widened where necessary' of the streets. The Bill was presented and read to the House for the first time on 22 November 1770, and for the second time on 26 November 1770, when it was referred to Committee. It was 'committed' on 29 November 1770, returned to the House on the 10 December 1770, where it was reported that a number of further changes were required and 're-committed', returning on 11 December with the amendments. The Bill was read for the third time on 13 December 1770 and passed to the House of Lords for their concurrence. The House of Lords agreed the Bill without any amendments on 19 December 1770 and it was given Royal Assent on 21 December 1770.

The clauses contained in the Act appear in an unstructured way, possibly reflecting the evolution of the standard wording of improvement acts over the previous 30 years. Clauses dealing with broad principles were interspersed with clauses dealing with finance. Clauses dealing with minor offences were interspersed amongst those dealing with appeal procedures. The title of the act summarised its purpose very well, if somewhat verbosely:

An Act for the better Paving, Repairing, Cleansing, Lighting, and Watching the Streets and other public Passages within the City of Winchester; and also the several Parishes of Saint Bartholomew Hyde, Saint John's in the Soke, Saint Peter's Cheesehill, Saint Swithin, and Saint Michael in the West Soke, in the Suburbs of the said City;

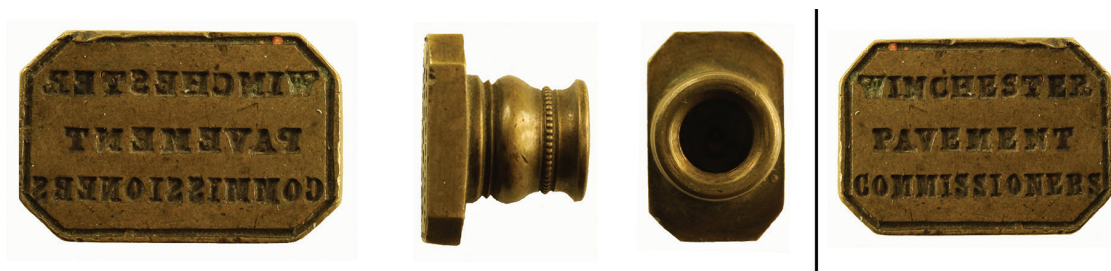


Fig. 1 Bronze seal matrix of the Winchester Pavement Commissioners

and for preventing Nuisances and Annoyances therein; and for widening and rendering the same more commodious.

Similarly, the rationale for the Act is clear in the following paragraphs:

Whereas the Streets, Squares, Lanes, Alleys, Courts, and other public Passages ... are in a very ruinous Condition, and in general very ill paved, repaired, cleansed, lighted, and watched, and the Passages thereof are greatly obstructed by various Nuisances and Annoyances:

And whereas several of the said Streets, Squares, Lanes, Alleys, Courts, and other public Passages are, in some Parts thereof, too narrow, and extremely incommodious for the passing of Carriages and Persons:

And whereas it would tend greatly to the Health, Safety, and Advantage of the Inhabitants of the said City and Suburbs thereof, and be of great public Utility to all Persons resorting thereto, if the said Streets, ... were properly paved, repaired, cleansed, lighted, and watched, and widened where necessary; and the said Nuisances, Obstructions, Annoyances were removed...

The Act names the first Commissioners as the Mayor, Recorder and Aldermen of the City of Winchester along with 112 named persons (Fig. 1). The residential and financial qualifications for a Commissioner were specified.

The mandate of the Commissioners was precisely defined in the Act, empowering the Commissioners to order and contract for the paving, lighting, watching and cleansing of the streets. The High Street was specified as the first street to be paved, followed by any others where the majority of owners in the street wanted it to be paved. The Act covered the cleanliness of the streets by permitting the employment

of a scavenger and specifically prohibiting a number of activities in the streets, classed as nuisances and annoyances, such as building fires, slaughtering animals and leaving waste. It addressed safety of the streets by authorising the appointment of night watchmen and controlling the width of pavements, outlawing open cellar doors and preventing carts and carriages from causing obstructions. Their authority also included the licencing of Hackney chairs.

The financial constraints under which the Commissioners could operate were also precise. The Act empowered Commissioners to raise revenue funds by two means. The first was to levy an annual rate on houses in the City and suburbs. The second was to apply a toll at turnpike gates around the city on specific days. In order to raise the capital to undertake the works initially, the Commissioners could borrow up to £7,000, secured against the revenue from the house rate and street tolls.

The need for amendments to the 1770 Act were first considered in 1806. The first Act limited the purpose of borrowing to paving the streets 'for the first time'. The 1808 Winchester Pavement Commissioners Amendment Act added the provision to borrow up to £5000 for the repair and maintenance of the paved streets and another £4000 for improvements to them. The Amendment Act also increased the geographic scope of the Pavement Commissioners to include the parish of St Thomas. There were a number of other more minor amendments including a repeal of the Commissioners' obligation to sweep footpaths, which was transferred to the householder; the regulations on bow windows were modified; and bridges were brought within the scope of the Commissioners' remit.

The first significant reduction in the remit of the Pavement Commissioners came with the creation of a Winchester police force. A meeting of inhabitants of the city on 24 May 1832 agreed to establish a police force for the 'suppression of riots and mischief and the prevention of mendicity' (Winchester Police Committee Minute Book 1832). The eight watchmen who had been employed by the Commissioners were appointed as watchmen by the Police Committee. This was the first police force established in Hampshire. It was also established before the Watching and Lighting Act of 1833, which entitled ratepayers to make a provision for watchmen, and before the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act, which required municipal boroughs to establish a Watch Committee.

The 1835 Municipal Corporations Act established a uniform system of municipal boroughs which were to be governed by Town Councils, elected by ratepayers. Winchester was one of the 178 reformed boroughs in the Municipal Corporations Act. As well as addressing the issues of who could vote for councillors and how councils were to be structured, the act also allowed – but did not compel – the new councils to take on responsibility for areas such as water supply, drainage and street cleaning. The Pavement Commissioners considered transferring their responsibilities to the Town Council in 1842, 1852 and 1856 and rejected the idea each time. There was a public meeting in 1848 to consider the move, which also rejected it.

The case for the retention of the Pavement Commissioners was eloquently stated in an anonymous pamphlet, published in early 1852 (Anon 1852, 1). The writer declared his independence from the Pavement Commissioners, before providing a six point argument on why powers should not be transferred to the Town Council, including the long service of the Commissioners, the faithful service of the Commissioners, the efficiency and popularity of the Commissioners, the lack of impartiality of the Town Council, the creation of a monopoly of local authority and the on-going protection against the introduction of the writer's previous cause, the Health of Towns Act. Although clearly representing only one side of

the debate, it provides a good understanding of the reasons for the consistent views of the Commissioners not to transfer their powers.

The Nuisance Removal and Disease Prevention Acts of 1846, 1848 and 1849, which were aimed at removing nuisances that were injurious to health, increased the scope of nuisances that the Commissioners had to address. These acts were, however, generally thought to be poorly constructed, with a particular lack of clarity in terms of who was responsible for the nuisance removal. They were replaced by the 1855 Nuisance Removal Act. This Act required Town Councils to appoint an Inspector of Nuisances or Sanitary Inspector, along with a number of other measures. This had the effect of transferring some of the responsibilities of the Commissioners to the council. In Winchester, the Surveyor's salary was reduced by £65 per annum to reflect his reduced role for the Commissioners, and he was appointed by the Town Council as Sanitary Inspector, alongside his on-going role with the Commissioners.

The Public Health Act of 1848 allowed local boards of health to be established but was permissive rather than compulsory. A local board could take on responsibility for sewers, street cleansing, public lavatories, slaughterhouses, street paving, pleasure grounds, water supply and burials, over lapping with many elements within the remit of Pavement Commissions. The Local Government Act 1858 replaced the 1848 Act and gave the Town Councils increasing powers that had previously been within the domain of the Pavement Commissioners, and also the power for Pavement Commissioners to adopt the Act and join the Local Board. At a special meeting of the Town Council on 9 Mar 1865, prompted by a petition from the residents of Winchester, there was a resolution for the adoption of the provisions of the Local Government Act 1858. This gave the Town Council, acting as the Local Board, responsibilities for public health, sewerage, scavenging, highway repair, building control, water supply, management of burial grounds, administration of markets and the power of levy rates. The first meeting of the Town Council acting as the Local Board was held on 15 May 1865. This was very much a joint operation. The Town Council's clerk and

finance committee were appointed to similar positions on the Local Board. The Local Board agreed that they should petition Parliament for a Provisional Order to repeal the 1770 and 1808 Winchester Pavement Acts, with the exception of clauses 24, 25, 26, which gave them the rights to extract gravel and other raw materials locally, and clause 57, which ensured that the responsibility for the maintenance of certain bridges and weirs remained with their owners. Following various correspondence with the Local Government office, and the visit of a Government Inspector to receive objections to the repeal, the Local Board received confirmation that the repeal and transfer of the Pavement Commissioners' powers would be contained in the first confirming Bill of the next session of Parliament.

The end of the Winchester Pavement Commissioners came in 1866. The Provisional Order by the Secretary of State to transfer the powers of the Winchester Pavement Commissioners to the Local Board was made on 18 May 1866. This was confirmed in the 1866 Act to Confirm the Provisional Order under the Local Government Act of 1858, which included Winchester amongst a number of towns and cities having their powers transferred. Under the Order, the 1770 Act and the 1808 Act were both repealed. The final meeting of the Winchester Pavement Commissioners took place on 28 May 1866. All documents held by the clerk were handed over to the Local Board. The minutes record that 'authority transferred to the Local Board' and the Commissioners 'hereby declare themselves dissolved'.

The Commissioners were clearly constrained throughout their existence by the terms of the 1770 Winchester Pavement Act. Despite the broad statement of aims to improve the paving, lighting and watching of the streets, and to prevent nuisances and annoyances, the steps that they could take to achieve these aims were limited to specific activities with restricted financing. Although the 1808 Amendment Act gave the Commissioners slightly more scope to act, their mandate was subsequently reduced with the emergence of Police Commissioners; the introduction of Sanitary Inspectors and finally the emergence of the local authority structure.

THE COMMISSIONERS AND THEIR OFFICIALS

The 1770 Winchester Pavement Act states that the Winchester Pavement Commissioners were the Mayor, the Recorder and the Aldermen of the City of Winchester along with 112 named persons. The qualifications for a Commissioner were that the candidate must be an inhabitant of the City and suburbs and he or his wife must have an income of £20 annually or have an estate valued at over £1,000. It was also specified that a Commissioner also could not be a contractor to the Commission. The majority of those named are described as merchants or tradesmen, along with a number of ministers, esquires and gentlemen.

The Commissioners were clearly prominent members of Winchester life (Table 1). Of the 112 named Pavement Commissioners, almost a third were also members of the governing Commonality of Winchester at the time. Thirteen were either magistrates or prominent members of the church establishment (in addition to those with the title Reverend). At the time of the transfer of the Pavement Commissioners' authority to the Local Board in 1866, almost half of the Local Board members at their first meeting were also Pavement Commissioners.

The first meeting of the Commissioners was held on 7 January, 1771, just two weeks

Table 1 Occupations of Commissioners named in the 1770 Act

<i>Description</i>	<i>Number</i>
Merchant or tradesman	56
Minister	19
Esquire	13
Gentleman	12
Doctor or Surgeon	6
Inn keeper	3
Baronet	2
School master	1

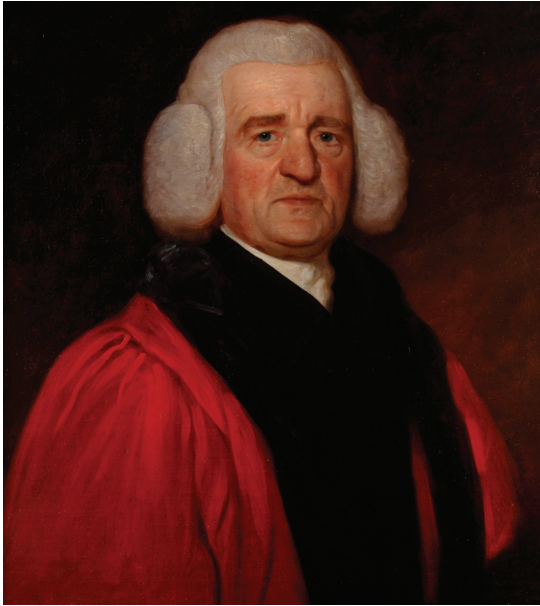


Fig. 2 John Doswell was the son of a butcher from the Hyde area of Winchester and served as Mayor of Winchester in 1777–8, 1781–2 and 1787–8. As well as mayor Doswell was also made a Freeman of the city in 1769 and an Alderman in 1778. Other civic positions held by Doswell were Justice of the Peace and Pavement Commissioner

after the passing of the Act. There were 70 Commissioners present. The Honourable and Reverend St. Andrew St. John was unanimously elected President. Mr James Raven was unanimously appointed Clerk with a salary of twenty pounds for the first year. Mr Thomas Allen was unanimously appointed Collector & Beadle, also with a salary of twenty pounds for the first year. In March 1771, Major Nevington Poole was appointed Treasurer. The first change to the membership of the Commission occurred at the 12 Feb 1771 meeting when it was agreed that as Messrs. Levesuch, Walldin and Kernot had secured a contract with the Commissioners for the paving of the streets, they were no longer allowed to act as Commissioners. Mr Charles Love also declared himself not qualified to act as a Commissioner. It was ordered that notice be given to elect others in their stead. On 4 March 1771, notice was given that the Hon Mr Knollis, the Rev. Mr Buller, Mr Huntingford, Mr Pistell would be elected as replacement Commissioners (Fig. 2).

The number of Commissioners declined from its initial high point but fluctuated over the 100 year span of its existence. The number of attendees at meetings also declined from its early high, but soon settled to a more manageable level of between ten and twenty for much of its existence. The table below shows the number of Commissioners at ten yearly intervals and the average number of attendees at the first three quorate meetings of that year (Fig. 3)

The ratio of quorate to inquorate meetings of Turnpike Trusts is used by Freeman as a measure of their administrative effectiveness (Freeman 1979, 417). The percentage of quorate meetings for the Southampton North; Winchester to Stockbridge; and Winchester Stephen's Castle Down Turnpike Trusts, which were regarded by Freeman as 'effectively managed' and all had a termination point in Winchester, varied between 72% and 95% (Table 2). For the same period, 1771 to 1831, quorate meetings of the Winchester Pavement Commissioners varied between 39% and 88%. Using this metric, it could be argued that the Commissioners were less efficient than their counter part in the Turnpike Trusts. A counter argument is that the level of activity of the Pavement Commissioners varied with the issues of the period – the debates around the introduction of gas, water, and sewage all generating wide interest at different points. The peaks in the number of quorate meetings does coincide with key points in its history. There is an initial peak after its formation, another peak after the 1808 Amendment Act, and surprisingly a peak towards the end of its existence, when interest in the Commission could have been expected to decline.

The trades and occupations of the first Commissioners are listed in the Act of Parliament. The following table shows the occupations of the Commissioners who attended at least one of the first three meetings, in the specified year (Table 3). Their status or occupation has been determined by cross-referencing to Trade Directories. The proportion of tradesman and merchants remains roughly constant. Those classified as clergy, esquires or gentlemen reduces to none, whilst the number of professionals increases.

The Commissioners appointed several officials



Fig. 3 Number of Commissioners and number of meeting attendees

to enable the administration of their work. A clerk and a collector were selected, but no definition of their role or duties is provided in the Commissioners' records, perhaps because they were self-evident. The surveyor and the beadle were employed by the Commissioners primarily to implement and enforce the Commissioners' orders. The surveyor's duties included ascertaining whether any repairs were needed, superintending all works and repairs, ensuring the streets were properly lit and cleaned and paying the wages of the beadle and day labourers. The beadle's duties were to see that no encroachments or nuisances were committed, impound any animals or carriages causing nuisance in the street and to ensure that all pavements and footways were properly swept.

FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

The sources of finance available to the Commissioners were precisely defined in the 1770 Act and the 1808 Amendment Act. In order to finance the capital works required under the Act, the Commissioners could borrow money. This borrowing could be secured against two sources of on-going revenue, a rate on buildings in the City and suburbs and an additional toll at turnpike gates around the city.

Under the terms of the 1770 Act, the Commissioners could borrow up to £7000 to fund the paving of the streets and implement other obligations specified in the Act 'for the

first time'. The Commissioners embarked on a series of borrowings between 1771 and 1775 of amounts varying between £200 and £1500, at 4% per annum, mainly from private individuals. For each borrowing, a notice was placed in the local newspapers. By the end of 1775, the full £7000 allowed by the Act had been borrowed. In 1779 the Commissioners agreed that no new work was to be undertaken in order that they could start to pay off the debt. From 1781, the repayment programme was initiated. Over the next 23 years a series of redemptions were made, with amounts varying between £100 and £500 per year. A notice was again placed in local newspapers giving notice of each repayment. The decision on which loan was to be paid off was made by drawing lots.

The borrowing allowed under the terms of the 1770 Act was specifically for the paving of streets and the implementation of other provisions of the Act 'for the first time'. No provision had been made for the funding of the on-going repair and maintenance required. One of the main drivers behind the 1808 Amendment Act was to permit borrowing for the purposes of maintaining and improving the streets. The amount of borrowing allowed was increased to £9000. Borrowing under the Amendment Act started almost as soon as it was passed. The first borrowing of £750 was agreed in June 1808. A total of 71 loans were made to the Commissioners over the next 14 years. The £9000 limit was reached in 1850. This level of borrowing remained until the

Table 2 Ratio of Quorate to Inquorate meetings

<i>Winchester Pavement Commissioners meetings</i>	<i>1771</i>	<i>1781</i>	<i>1791</i>	<i>1801</i>	<i>1811</i>	<i>1821</i>	<i>1831</i>	<i>1841</i>	<i>1851</i>	<i>1861</i>
Quorate	30	7	11	10	23	7	12	10	13	15
Non-quorate	4	6	4	4	5	11	6	6	1	0
% quorate	0.88	0.54	0.73	0.71	0.82	0.39	0.67	0.63	0.93	1.00
<i>Southampton North; Winchester - Stockbridge; Winchester Stephen's Castle Down Turnpike Trusts Meetings</i>	<i>1770's</i>	<i>1780's</i>	<i>1790's</i>	<i>1800's</i>	<i>1810's</i>	<i>1820's</i>	<i>1830's</i>			
Quorate	7	7.2	7.4	11.4	9.9	15.5	12.4			
Non-quorate	2.7	1.9	0.7	0.6	1	2	1			
% quorate	0.72	0.79	0.91	0.95	0.91	0.89	0.93			

Table 3 Occupations of Commissioners, 1771 to 1861

<i>Year</i>	<i>1771</i>	<i>1781</i>	<i>1791</i>	<i>1831</i>	<i>1841</i>	<i>1851</i>	<i>1861</i>
<i>Commissioners who attended at least one of the first three meetings</i>	78	34	33	21	22	23	32
<i>Merchant or tradesman</i>	44	19	10	11	11	12	13
<i>Minister</i>	11	4	2	2			
<i>Esquire</i>	8	1	2				
<i>Gentlemen</i>	8	0	2				
<i>Professional</i>	4	1	2	2	5	7	9
<i>Inn keeper</i>	3	2	1			2	1
<i>Baronet</i>	0	1					
<i>Alderman/Corporation Office</i>		3	2	2	1		4
<i>Farmer</i>			1			1	
<i>Military</i>							2
<i>Unknown</i>		3	11	3	5	1	3

Commissioners' assets and liabilities were taken over by the Local Board in 1866. A programme of repayment of these loans was undertaken by the Local Board in 1885 (Fig. 4).

Until 1820, the loans were made at a 5% interest rate. This was reduced to 4.5% for the 1822 loans. From 1830, there was a recognition by the Commissioners that the loans they had at 5% were paying higher interest rate than the current market rate and a number of attempts were made to lower the committed interest

rates. Several attempts to borrow money at 4%, in order to pay off loans at 5%, were made during the 1830s but it was not until 1844 that the committed interest rate was reduced by a combination of some loan holders agreeing to reduce their rate to 4% and other loan holders having their loans paid off by the Commissioners, having acquired new financing at 4%.

During the periods of fund raising, the Commissioners rarely struggled to find ready loan providers. There is a recognisable pattern of

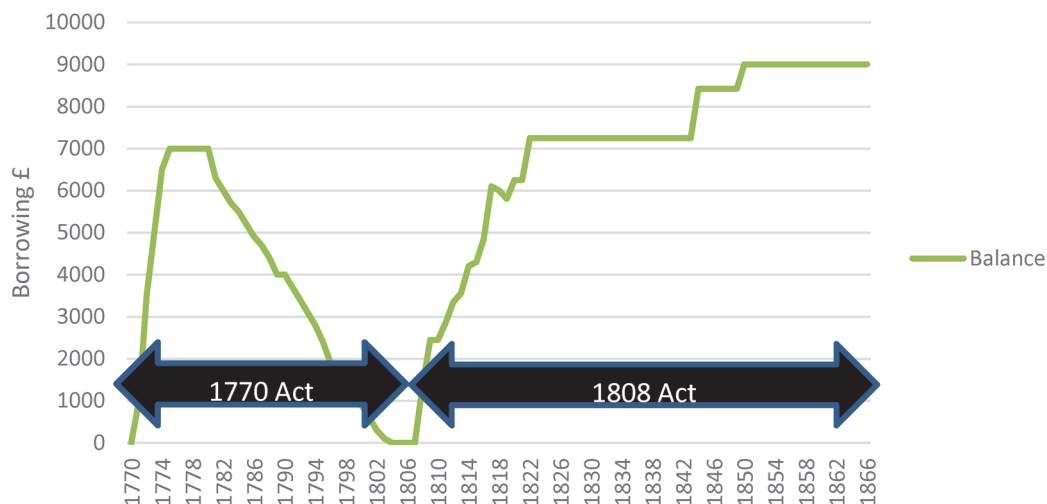


Fig. 4 Balance of Borrowings of the Pavement Commissioners, 1771–1866

the Commissioners agreeing to seek additional funds at one meeting; the advert appearing in the press within days of the agreement; and fund providers being named at the next meeting. The providers were all private individuals until the refinancing activity in the 1840s. The main competitors for public funding during this period were the turnpike trusts, the railways and the canals. Improvement Commissions were seen as being in the same financial category as the turnpike trusts, i.e. low risk and steady income. The railway and canal companies issued shares and were high risk, profit making ventures (Albert 1972, 93). The rate of interest paid by turnpike trusts from 1770 to 1830 was 5%, falling to 4% in the 1830s. Canal companies were occasionally paying very large returns. The Loughborough Navigation Canal Company paid dividends of 140% in 1829 and the Birmingham and Erewash canals paid 70%, although the average in 1825 was 5.75%. The other alternative means of investing available to individuals were Government Bonds. The long-term interest rates on Consols at the time was 3%. The attraction of investing in loans to Improvement Commissions was, therefore, that it was relatively low risk, with a rate fixed at a level comparable to turnpike trusts and above that available from government bonds.

Prior to 1770, the concept of levying rates on buildings had not been adopted. The City of Winchester's revenue came from Quit Rents and from the rental and leasing of farms and buildings. The 1770 Act allowed the Commissioners to set two rates on buildings in the City. A Proprietors (or Owners) Rate was allowed to cover costs for the paving of streets for the first time, and for securing loans for that purpose. This was to last for up to 30 year and cease when all work was complete and debts paid off. An Occupiers (or Tenants) Rate was allowed to cover maintenance costs. The Proprietors Rate was to be paid by tenants who could then deduct the amount from their rent. The Act also dictated that the rate assessed on buildings located in the unpaved streets was to be no more than two thirds the rate of buildings located in the paved streets. The Proprietors Rate ceased in 1804 with the repayment of the debt.

The 1808 Amendment Act gave the Commissioners the authority to assess proprietors for repairs and improvements, and to allow borrowing to be secured against this rate, rather than just the initial costs as allowed under the original Act. In practise, the Tenants Rate was not collected after 1808, although the Amendment Act does not appear to preclude this and a report for the Commissioners in 1852



Fig. 5 Mr. Hillier, Winchester Pavement Commission's Rate Collector, 1805

questions whether the Tenants Rate should have ceased. In 1837, the additional tolls on the turnpikes were abolished and the rate on houses was increased to compensate for this. No rate was set in 1866 as there were sufficient

funds to continue until the transfer to the Local Board on Lady Day of that year. The Proprietors Rate was initially set in 1771 at 1s 0d for houses on paved streets and 8d for houses on unpaved streets. The Tenants Rate was set at 6d for paved streets and 4d for unpaved streets. The last rate set by the Commissioners in 1865 was 1s 6d for paved streets and 1s 0d for unpaved streets. A special one-off rate, referred to as Rate in Aid, was levied in 1852, at 6p for paved streets and 4p for unpaved streets, for the purposes of repairing and improving the carriageways and footways of a number of specified streets in the City.

One of the first acts of the Commissioners, taken at the first meeting, was the creation of a committee to establish the annual values of all the 'Houses Lands Tenements and Hereditaments in the City and parishes', with the exception of a small number of buildings, such as those belonging to the Cathedral and Winchester College. This was completed and agreed by October 1771. There were 985 buildings in the assessment, including 163 buildings in the High Street. The total rate raised was £278 9s 7d. The Union (or Parochial) Assessment Act of 1862 had an impact. The revised assessments resulted in a loss of £280 revenue, approximately one fifth of the income from rates. To counteract this, the Commissioners agreed a rate increase of one fifth, from 1s 3d to 1s 6d.

The level of arrears on the payment of rates became an issue from time to time. This appears to be blamed on the efficiency of the rate collector rather than any particular objection to the payment of rates. Debt first became an issue in 1778. The Collector was deemed to be 'very dilatory and negligent' in collecting the rates, and 'incapable due to his youth'. A new collector was appointed, along with the requirement for Collectors to lodge a bond of £400 as security against any uncollected rates (Fig. 5).

The 1770 Act allowed the Winchester Pavement Commissioners to collect an additional toll on the turnpike gates within one mile of the centre of Winchester. This provision for raising income from turnpikes appears to be unusual in Improvement Acts. The Act creating the Southampton Pavement

Table 4 Toll Gates and Turnpike Trusts in Winchester

<i>Toll Gate</i>	<i>Turnpike Trust (date created)</i>
Cock Lane (now Romsey Road)	Winchester and Romsey (1759)
Southgate	Southampton, North District (1758)
Week Gate	Stockbridge and Winchester (1758)
Swan Lane (1771)/ City Arms (1791)	Andover and Winchester (1762)
Hyde Street Gate	Winchester and Romsey (1759)
Short Sledge Gate (now Alresford Road)	Winchester and Alton, Lower District (1752)
Bar End	Stockbridge and Winchester (1758)
St. Cross	Southampton, North District (1758)

Commissioners, set up at the same time as the Winchester Commissioners, had no such provision, even though the two cities were connected by turnpike. The Webbs' review of financing of the pavement improvements makes no mention of using turnpikes as a source of income. Winchester's role as the administrative, judicial, educational and ecclesiastic centre of Hampshire resulted in significant traffic into and out of the city and meant it was particularly well served by turnpike links (Fig. 6). Freeman shows that Winchester had the second highest level of turnpike traffic of any town in Hampshire in the period 1775 to 1823, when it then became the highest (Freeman 1979, 425). This may well have been the basis for the rationale of imposing additional tolls on particularly busy days.

The Commissioners were entitled to levy a toll, equal to the existing toll, at toll gates within one mile of the city centre, on certain days. The days allowed were:

'The day before Winchester Races and the five following days'. The Winchester Races were held for three days in July.

'The day next but one before Magdalen Hill and St Giles Hill and the two Winchester Fairs, for that and the four following days'. Winchester Fairs were held on the first Monday in Lent (i.e. in February or March) and 24 October; Magdalen Hill Fair was held on 2 August; St Giles Hill Fair was held on 12 Sept.

'From Monday morning to Saturday night in the week in which the Election of the College near Winchester shall be holden'. Winchester College elections were held in July.

This gives a total of 43 days or 12% of the days in a year. The second meeting ordered that a notice be placed in the local papers stating that tolls, equal to the existing tolls, would be collected at each toll gate for the purposes of the Improvement Act. In 1771 there were eight turnpikes entering Winchester managed by five different Turnpike Trusts (Table 4). The Pavement Commissioners appointed Collectors for each of the gates, who initially at least, were the same persons as the Collectors appointed by the Turnpike Trusts.

Of the Winchester turnpike gates with existing records, the analysis by Freeman shows an average of 58 carriages and 10 stagecoaches per day passing through the St. Cross turnpike and 28 carriages and one stagecoach passing through the Bar End gate (Freeman 1979, 424). The traffic on the days on which the Winchester Pavement Commissioners could collect would clearly be much higher.

In 1795, the Turnpike Trustees and the Pavement Commissioners discussed reducing the toll. The principle of the agreement was that the Turnpike Trustees would reduce their toll charge to one sixth of the normal tariff for carriages and one fourth for livestock, on the dates that the Pavement Commissioners were entitled to collect tolls, and the Pavement



Fig. 6 Day's Turnpike Map of Hampshire showing Winchester Turnpikes and trusts. 1. Winchester and Andover Trust. 2. Winchester and Romsey Trust. 3. Winchester and Alton Trust. 4. Stockbridge and Winchester Trust. 5. Southampton and North District Trust

Commissioners would reduce their tolls by an equivalent amount, the net effect being the charging of an amount equal to the standard toll. Notice was placed in local papers to publicise this change.

The Commissioners entered into a treaty with the Winchester and Alton Lower District Turnpike Trust in 1795, by which the

Commissioners would receive £25 10s 0d per year from the Turnpike Trust in exchange for the right to collect tolls at Short Sledge gate. This approach was the forerunner of a change to collecting the street tolls implemented in 1811. Rather than employing people to collect the tolls, the Commissioners let a contract for the right to collect the tolls.

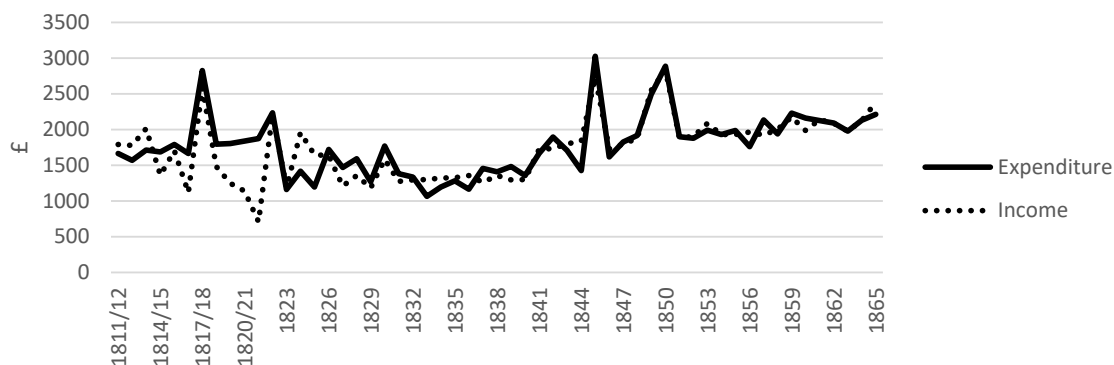


Fig. 7 Income and Expenditure, 1811–1865

In 1837, the Pavement Commissioners received a resolution passed by the Town Council requesting them to abolish their street tolls in order to ‘promote the increase of business of Fairs in this City’. This was agreed and the street tolls were abolished in August 1837.

The accounts of the Winchester Pavement Commissioners do not exist before 1811. The income and expenditure were generally kept in line. Peaks in 1817/18, 1821, 1845 and 1850 correspond to the dates when borrowings were made by the Commissioners. The Commissioners aligned their income with expenditure throughout the period (Fig. 7).

The Winchester Commissioners managed their finances well. Although the Act was very specific with regard to their financial options, they maximised the financial resources available to them. Fund raising through tolls and rates was implemented swiftly. Borrowing was undertaken as funds were required and the amount borrowed was to the maximum allowed under the terms of the Act. They sought to reduce interest rate levels when market opportunities arose. They managed their expenditure against income effectively.

THE OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The responsibilities that were given to the Commissioners were varied and ranged from general direction to specific instructions. The primary activities were those of paving

the carriage ways, and lighting, watching and cleansing the streets. Secondary activities included removing nuisances and annoyances, removing obstacles, improving access and regulating Hackney chairs. Towards the final years of the Commission’s existence it became increasingly involved in reacting to new developments, such as the debate over the introduction of sewers, the arrival of train lines and the installation of post boxes.

Street paving was the primary purpose of the Act. This was not the first record of paving in the High Street, as owners of land in the High Street were ordered to pave the street before their boundary as early as 1660, and continued to be a subject for control after this (Cooper 2001, 140). It was ordered at the second meeting that the ‘footway of the High Street be paved with Purbeck Flatteners and kirb stones and that the carriageway be paved with Guernsey Pebble’. A notice was ordered to be placed in the ‘Salisbury and Reading Journals, and also the Printers of St James and Lloyds Chronicle’, stating that the Commissioners would be ready, on 11 February, 1771, to enter into contracts for the paving and lighting of the High Street. At the meeting on 12 February 1771, it was agreed to accept the proposal from Messrs Hernott, a bricklayer, Leversuch and Walldin, both stone masons, to pave the High Street. This was to be completed by 1 Nov 1772. The contract, signed on 13 June 1771, was to remove the existing foot and horse or carriage ways in the High Street and replace them with new stones from the ‘Westgate to where the Eastgate lately

Table 5 Street paving petitions and outcome

<i>Petition date</i>		<i>Ordered to be paved</i>	<i>From 1811 (Nov) Rate Book</i>
In Act	High Street	1771	Paved
20/7/1771	Southgate Street	1772	Paved
	St Peters Street	1772	Paved - partially
12/8/1771	Kingsgate Street	1773	Paved
	Little Minster Street		Paved
	Great Minster Street	1772	Paved
	Square	1772	Paved
	College Street	1773	Paved
	St Thomas's Street	1773	Paved
	Goal St als Jury Street	1773	Paved
3/10/1771	Parchment Street	1773	Paved
	Paliards Twitchen Lane	1774	Paved
8/10/1771	Upper Brookes		Paved
2/1772	Street from High Street to Middle Brook		
23/3/72	Street from Bowling Green Lane to Little Minster		
9/6/72	Garr Street/ Bowling Green Lane	1774	Paved
28/12/72	Colebrook Street		Paved
	Street from Southgate to the Close Gate		
8/1/73	St Peters Street Cheeseshill		Paved
	St Johns Street		Paved
18/7/74	Hyde Street		Paved - partially
	Durngate	1774	Paved
6/4/78	Water Lane	Rejected	
30/7/1827	St Clement Street		Not yet ordered
	Street up the Walls		Paved

stood'. The contract contained prices per square yard and specifications of the type and size of stone to be used. It included the repair of the carriage way for seven years. A footway was then agreed to be built from Westgate to the west corner of Jewry Street on the north side and to the west corner of Southgate Street on the south side, for the convenience of pedestrians. In 1791 the Commission planned the creation of a 'commodious footway' through

the Westgate for £50. Permission was granted by the Corporation and inhabitants were asked to make a subscription for its completion.

The paving of the High Street was a requirement of the Act. All other streets would be paved dependent upon petitions from inhabitants of each street (Table 5). The first petition, from the residents of Southgate Street, was received in July 1771, with a further 20 street petitions received over the next three years. The paving

of these 20 streets meant that the bulk of the city streets were paved.

The state of the pavements became a broader issue again in the nineteenth century. The cost of repairs was a major driver towards the 1808 Amendment Act. The cost of maintaining the pavements, due to both wear and tear and the need to dig into pavements to install gas and water pipes, became a major issue. In 1820, the Commissioners agreed to engage Mr. McAdam to inspect the carriageways within their jurisdiction. It is not clear from the Proceedings which member of the McAdam family of road engineers and surveyors was engaged. James Loudon McAdam was living in Bristol in the 1820s. His sons William and James had been involved with Turnpike Trusts connecting Winchester during the 1820s. He reported that the highways are 'in a very indifferent state' and 'greater sums than necessary expended'. He estimated the cost of repairs currently being undertaken in Winchester to be £100 per mile per annum, and suggested that a typical charge was £60 per mile per annum. He was engaged to be in general charge of the roads and to repair them at not more than £65 per mile per annum. Later that year, however, he was released from his contract as the Commissioners had insufficient funds to pay for his work.

The Commissioners incurred significant costs in schemes to improve the traffic flow through the City, particularly widening schemes for roads leading into the High Street. The entrance to Southgate Street, which was 'very narrow and dangerous to the inhabitants', was modified to make the entrance eighteen feet wide at its narrowest point involving the purchase and removal in 1771 of part of the Black Swan Inn. The entrances to the Soke Bridge, Jewry Street and Market Street were also modified. Street numbers were assigned to properties in the High Street in 1771 and street names were posted in 1792. A 'circular road' was built in 1850 around the Natives Monument, a memorial to the plague victims in 1666.

Addressing the provision of street lights was the second priority of the Commissioners. Oil burning lamps had been introduced in some London streets in the late seventeenth century, and street lighting was incorporated in the Improvement Acts for most towns from

the 1750s (Falkus 1976, 258). At their second meeting on 19 January 1771, the Commissioners ordered notices to be placed in newspapers for the provision and lighting of lamps. At the meeting on 4 March, 1771, a proposal from Mr Knapp for providing lamps and lighting them was accepted and there was also an order to prepare an estimate for the cost of iron work for 150 lamps at 4d per pound weight. The number of lamps was increased from 150 to 185 in 1772, and steadily increased over the following years. The terms of the contract appear to have been imprecise. Following complaints to the Commissioners regarding the lighting of lamps, it was agreed that the lamps should be lit every night except on a full moon and the six nights preceding it. Prior to the renewal of the contract, the Commissioners obtained copies of lighting contracts from Windsor, Rochester and areas of London, in order to prepare an improved contract. They also decided to include penalties in the new contract as the initial contract had 'no penalties for the many notorious neglects' of the lamplighter. A notice for the renewal of the contract appeared in the Salisbury & Winchester Journal in August 1772 for 'providing lamps and for lighting not less than 150 nor more than 200 in number'. Only one proposal was received, however, and the Commissioners decided to employ lamplighters and contract for the provision of oil. Regular notices appeared in the Hampshire Chronicle for the provision of oil for the lamps.

In 1775 the expense of 185 oil lamps in Winchester resulted in an increase in the rates. Residents were encouraged to have their own lamp. An order in 1787 allowed residents to request a private lamp which would be lit for one guinea per season. This was reduced to half a guinea in 1797 and to 7s 0d in 1822.

An inquiry into the expense of laying pipe and lighting the City and Suburbs with gas was made in 1819, but with no documented conclusions. In 1824 a proposal was received from Mr. William Jacob from the London Gas Company to light the streets with gas and a proposition received from Mr. Hedley to do the same, but again no progress was made.

The first gas lighting contract was the result of a proposal in 1831 from Mr J. Bryan of Maidstone to build a gasometer and lay pipes

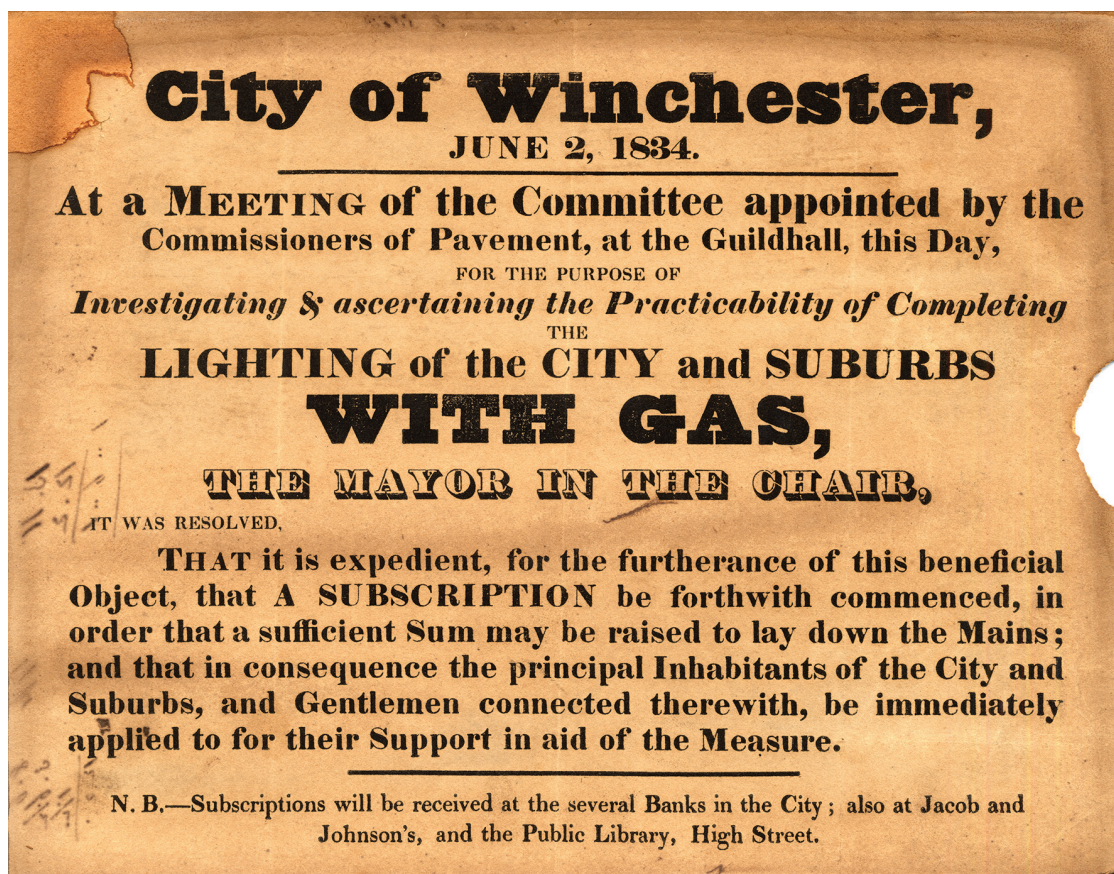


Fig. 8 A poster requesting subscriptions towards the cost of laying down a gas main for the provision of gas lighting to the city and suburbs of Winchester

in or near the city, 'at his own expense for the purposes of manufacturing Coal Gas for the supply of gas to shops and private homes' for seven years, in return for 'the exclusive right and privilege of supplying the city and suburbs with lights'. The Pavement Commissioners agreed that subscriptions should be sought from the 'principal Inhabitants of the City' to fund the laying of the gas mains (Fig. 8).

The High Street from Westgate to the corner of Chesil Street was gas-lit for the first time with 20 gas lights at a charge of £45 for six months in winter, under the terms of a seven year contract. The contract was renewed for a further 21 years in 1840. With the formation in 1847 of the Winchester Gaslight & Coke Company, a new contract was agreed for three years, with a price

per lamp of £2 11s 0d in winter and 19s 0d in summer. The use of a subscription to fund the installation of the mains resulted in delays to the agreement of this contract as there was a lack of clarity as to who owned the mains. The 1847 contract was extended for one year and then a new contract was negotiated. This contract was for five years and extended several times until the final extension for an additional seven years in 1865. The renewal was priced at £3 6s 0d per lamp from 15 September to 14 April, omitting 5 nights during every full moon, and £1 14s 0d per lamp from 15 April to 14 September, lighting only half the lamps. The lamps were lit from one hour after sunset to one hour before sunrise. Lighting had proved so expensive that cost cutting measures resulted in lighting being

discontinued from May to August, from 1834 to 1851.

In 1864, the Commissioners were made aware of a Bill to create a company to provide Winchester with gas and water. This resulted in the incorporation of the Winchester Waterworks Company and the Winchester Gaslight and Coke Company into the Winchester Water & Gas Company in 1865.

Although the employment of night watchmen was a requirement of the Act, this did not take place until 40 years after the passing of the Act. Night watchmen were first employed by the Commissioners in 1812 when eight night-watchmen were employed and assigned areas of the City to patrol. Each was issued with a rattle, lantern and one pound of candles per week. They patrolled from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. each day. The regulations for the Constable of the Night and his Assistant, and for Watchmen were first recorded by the Commissioners in 1824.

The Metropolitan Police Force was established in 1829, and it became a model for other cities to follow. A meeting of inhabitants of Winchester in 1832 agreed to establish a police force. The eight watchmen who had been employed by the Commissioners were appointed as watchmen by the Police Committee. It was to be funded by subscription and the largest single subscriber was the Winchester Pavement Commission who agreed to subscribe £100 for one year, 'in lieu of the present Watch'. As the costs incurred for operating the Watch for the year to March 1832 were reported as being £134, this was a positive financial move for the Commissioners. Running the Watch was also an onerous role for the Commissioners. The proceedings record numerous incidents of misbehaviour by watchmen that had to be addressed by the Commissioners. In the final months of 1832 before the Watch was taken over by the Police Committee, two watchmen were dismissed for 'drunkenness and other misconduct' and another suspended for alleged assault. The annual subscription from the Commissioners to the Police Committee continued until 1835. With the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act, 1835, the Watch Committee came under the structure of the local council (Williams 2012, 10).

The Commissioners' obligation to keep

the streets clean was primarily met by the employment of a scavenger. A scavenger had been employed by Winchester before the creation of the Pavement Commissioners. Contracts exist from 1716 and 1762 for three year agreements between the 'Mayor, Bailiffs and Commonality of Winchester' and individuals for the performance of scavenging duties. This responsibility was taken on by the Commissioners and at their first meeting of the Commissioners ordered that notices be displayed for recruiting the scavenger, and the second meeting confirmed that the Commissioners would be ready to contract for a scavenger on 11 February 1771, although this was later deferred to Whit Monday.

The duties of the scavenger, defined in the contract, were to twice a week bring a cart into every street and sound a horn, bell or clapper to give notice of their presence. The inhabitants were to bring their 'dirt, ashes and filth' to their doors, from where the scavenger would put them in the cart. The cart would have painted on it, in a prominent position, 'The Scavenger's Cart'. The streets were also to be 'scraped and cleansed' twice a week. The scavenger had the right to the soil for their 'use and benefit'. The first contract was let to Messrs. Kernot, Leversuch and Walldin, the same individuals who had obtained the Street Paving contract, for a price of £31 10s 0d for one year.

The performance of the scavenger was subject to frequent criticism and complaints. The Commissioners reviewed various options on how to best provide the scavenger service. They considered employing their own staff rather than letting contracts and also considered the option of using the poor to provide the service. A report by a committee of Commissioners on how best to structure the next contract renewal in 1848 stated that the service was very poor although it concluded that it was no worse than in neighbouring cities such as Southampton, Portsmouth, Salisbury and Bath.

An indication of the state of the streets of Winchester is given by the nature of the nuisances addressed at the first meeting of the Commissioners. Three orders related to nuisances and annoyances were agreed, reflecting the priorities of the Commissioners. It was ordered that a notice be prepared and

sent to all inhabitants of the city stating that they must take down any spouts that did not carry water to the side of the house, and replace them with spouts that did, by the 25 March 1771. A notice was also to be prepared and sent to the butchers of the city and suburbs ordering them to 'remove their Shambles and Chopping Blocks and to forbid slaughtering in their shops, and hanging up any sheep of cattle in any of the streets '... and to prevent any hogs to wander in the streets'. It was also ordered that notices be displayed in public places in order to

'prohibit killing of sheep or swine, or permitting any cattle to wander in the streets, and to prohibit scaling of fowls, making any bonfires, or throwing squibs, making, binding or repairing any wheels, bleeding, dressing shoeing any horses, hewing or sawing timber, sawing any stone or marble, or leaving any timber cart chaises or other carriage in any of the streets longer than necessary than for loading or unloading'.

The Commissioners' role in removing street obstacles started at the 4 March 1771 meeting. The Commissioners agreed that the entrance into Southgate St from the High Street was too narrow and made enquiries to the Black Swan, located on the corner of the streets, to determine how much it would be to purchase it. At the 22 March 1771 meeting, four penthouses were ordered to be taken down by Michaelmas next, along with all other penthouses and pediments in the High Street which projected more than two feet be contracted to two feet.

The activity which probably had most impact on the street scene was the regulation of bow windows. The Commissioners' view was that the new bow window style contributed 'to the Ornament of the Street, and be no inconvenience to the Pavement', despite the fact that the new additions encroached on public space. In order to retain sufficient space, regulations were agreed to ensure that the width of the pavement and street remained at least twenty-four feet wide and the foot pavement at least four feet wide beyond the window. A fee of one guinea was also introduced for the approval of bow windows. Between 1770 and 1802, an average of two applications for bow windows were made each year. In 1803 this jumped to 11, and

subsequently reduced to less than an average of one per year. No applications were received after 1841 (Cooper 2001, 152).

Hackney chairs, or sedan chairs, were the primary means of transporting people for hire. They consisted of a windowed cabin for a single passenger and were carried by two chair men at front and rear. Following a review by the Commissioners on how many Hackney chairs were required for the City, three licenses to operate were issued in 1771. The Hackney chairs were to be licenced on an annual basis. The number of Hackney chairs had only increased to five by the 1830s. All chairs had to be numbered and a 'sick chair' had to be designated as such for carrying people with 'smallpox or other infectious disease' and not used for healthy people (Fig. 9).

The initial rate set for Hackney Chairs was 6d between any two houses within the walls and 9d for journeys outside the walls. A premium was applied for journeys after 11 p.m. The use of the 'sick chair' had a charge of 5s 0d for carrying any person with smallpox or other infectious disease. The Hackney chair service appears to have operated well with no significant complaints about its service being recorded.

Developments in the mid nineteenth century increased the number of areas that the Commissioners addressed. Most notably there was increasing awareness of the effect of poor sanitary conditions on public health during the 1830s and 1840s. The social reformer Edwin Chadwick issued his *Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population of Great Britain* produced in 1842. Chadwick believed that disease was carried by impurities in the atmosphere and that the great problem was to get rid of impurities before they could decompose. The report was followed by a Royal Commission on the state of towns and eventually by the passage of the Public Health Act 1848. Discussions regarding the introduction of sewerage in Winchester lasted for the last 20 years of the Commission's existence and beyond, with little progress being made.

In 1844, the Mayor requested assistance from the Pavement Commissioners in addressing the growing problems caused by lack of a proper drainage system. The Commissioners declared that proper drainage was 'necessary



Fig. 9 Leather sedan chair with two wooden poles used to transport patients to the County Hospital in Parchment Street, Winchester, late eighteenth or early nineteenth century

and desirable for the health and comfort of the inhabitants' but failed to take any action. Correspondents to the local papers took up the debate, condemning the state of the streets. In 1848, the Commissioners' committee originally set up to investigate the best way of progressing the scavenger service, extended its brief to address the broader topic of sanitation in the town. The report made reference to the sanitation debate raging within the city and elsewhere at that time, concluding 'nothing short of a ... constant supply of pure air and water for their consumption, as well as clean roads and pavements ... will satisfy the urgent outcry for Cleanliness and Health which now prevails more or less in every town in the

kingdom'. It also flagged the perceived lack of action by the Commissioners, stating that 'The Commissioners have been plainly told, unless they carry out with more energy the powers with which they are invested ... resort must be had to the provisions of the Sanitary Act'. A letter from the medical practitioners in the town, published in the local paper, expressed serious concern about the

'very defective state of the sewerage and drainage of the town and the consequent dangerous state of malaria, which exists in many parts of it, tending to the rise and spread of fevers and other diseases, which have lately prevailed among the inhabitants to a considerable extent' (Hampshire Chronicle 21 October 1848).

Improvements to the city's sewerage facilities were again considered in 1849, when the medical practitioners in the city were ordered to supply reports of the 'general state of health of the Inhabitants and of existence of disease'. A survey was undertaken by the Sewerage Committee in 1849 reported 'open and offensive ditches, drains, gutters, gratings and other outlets constantly emitting noxious effluvia, and contaminating both the air and water which the inhabitants are under the necessity of using' and a 'smell ... of the most offensive and unwholesome kind'. The report also produced a proposed approach to building a drainage system. By 1852, the Commissioners were seen as effective opponents of the adoption of the 1848 Health of Towns Act, that would have required the introduction of sewers and its associated costs. The Winchester Sanitary Inspector, H. Newman, gave a lecture to the Mechanics Institute in 1857 regarding health and sewage, deploring both the state of the streets and the inaction of the authorities (Newman 1857, 1). He declared that 'absolutely nothing has been done with respect to drainage' since the issue was raised by the Mayor in 1844. He was also critical of the stance taken by the opponents of the Health of Towns Act, which he believed would have addressed the problem, if it had been adopted. A stormy public debate was held in Winchester in 1861. The two sides on the debates were characterised as 'Muckabites', those who saw drainage as unnecessary and costly and the 'Anti-Muckabites' or 'Drainists' who understood the damage to health caused by poor sanitation (Boorman 1991, 161–80).

The debate continued after the Pavement Commissioners' responsibilities were transferred to the Town Council. In 1866, the Town Council defer debate on sewage for six months. The introduction of sewage pipes for connection to houses in the High Street did not occur until 1879.

Unlike the supply of gas, which the Commissioners contracted for to meet their obligation to provide lighting, the Commissioners saw their role in the introduction of a piped water supply as one of controlling the impact of laying pipes under the pavements. In 1839 a Water Works was built in Romsey Road and this only supplied about 30 houses in a local area on the edge of

the town. In March 1841, Mr Robins, proprietor of the Water Works, requested permission to lay down pipes to supply water to the buildings in Winchester. The Commissioners established a Water Works Committee, who concluded that the service would 'conduce very materially to the convenience of the inhabitants' and agreed to the request, subject to the Commissioners having the right to insert 'fire plugs' or hydrants into the water supply. Fire plugs were connected to the water pipes in 1844. Labels denoting the location of each fire plug were affixed to houses opposite and a key for each fire plug deposited at the City Engine House. A list of all 40 installed fire plugs and recommendations for another 27 were made in 1852. The Water Works were acquired by the Winchester Water Works Company in 1855.

Plans published for the route of the London and Southampton Railway in 1831 showed the railway passing on the east side of the Westgate (i.e. the city side). The Commissioners reviewed the plans and declared them 'highly objectionable' and said the route would 'annoy and injure the Inhabitants'. They requested that the route be re-directed to the west side of the Westgate, which is where it was built. The line opened from London to Winchester in 1839. The London and Southampton Railway changed its name to the London and South Western Railway in June of that year. The only other interaction by the Commissioners with the railway company was a discussion regarding the ownership and liability to repair two roads created by the London and South West Railway Company as part of the agreement to build the line originally. There had been no provision made for the maintenance of these roads. The railway company disclaimed ownership and the responsibility was taken on by the Commissioners.

In 1854, the first application for permission to erect a public letter box in Winchester was received by the Commissioners from the Postmaster General and approved. Permission to erect three more 'iron pillars' at Westgate, Kingsgate and Cheesehill Street was made by Mr. Parmiter, Post Master of Winchester, in 1862.

The Commissioners undertook their initial improvement work with great haste. Within a year of their establishment, the Commissioners had addressed their major improvement

obligations with the paving of the High Street, the installation of street lights and the employment of a scavenger to clean the streets. The paving of the other city streets followed in the next three years. Regulations regarding nuisances were published and enforced. Their rate of progress slowed in later years. The decision to move from oil lamps to gas lamps was debated over a period of ten years. Their discussions on sewage took place over the last 20 years of their existence, without resolution, with serious public opposition and concerns over the need and the financing.

CONCLUSION

There is little doubt that the Winchester Pavement Commissioners achieved a great deal, including the paving of the streets, their lighting and cleansing, the removal of nuisances and obstacles, the employment of scavengers and night-watchmen and the regulation of Hackney chairs.

The speed with which the first Commissioners went about their business is impressive. The Act was given Royal Assent on 21 December 1770 and the first meeting of 70 Commissioners was held on 7 January 1771. Over the course of the first three months, they had employed a clerk, a collector and a beadle; obtained temporary financing; assessed the rateable value of all houses in the City; agreed the means for collecting fees at the turnpikes; tendered for paving the High Street and for installing 150 street lamps; employed a scavenger; issued notices regarding the fixing of signposts and spouts; and regulated butchers' activities on the street. By the end of six months they had ordered the demolition of protruding penthouses; bought land for the improvement of street access; agreed and implemented the rates on owners and occupants; and started the long term borrowing programme. Within a year, the major components of the Act – paving the High Street, lighting the streets and cleaning the streets – had been implemented. The paving of the other City streets, which was dependent on petitions from inhabitants, was largely complete by 1774.

As the role of the Commissioners moved

into one of maintaining the improvements that had been put in place, their effectiveness becomes more debateable. The approach and quality of the street paving was called into question by the recurring concerns about the cost of maintenance. Regular complaints were received about the work of the scavenger and the performance of the night watchmen. The Commissioners took over ten years in discussing the conversion of the oil lamps to gas lamps, by which time gas lamps were a common feature in many other towns. The lack of progress in the building of the sewer system, which was being discussed for the last 20 years of their existence, is a particular blemish on their record, although they were facing considerable public opposition, mainly due to its cost.

Contemporary publications give a relevant view of their achievements. The Universal British Directory, 1792–1798, states that with regard to the 1770 Act, 'The business was carried into execution with great vigour and soon completely finished' (Universal British Directory 1792, 913). The William White Directory, 1859 states that the 'Pavement Commissioners have greatly improved the general appearance of the city.... the Commissioners have expended large sums in paving, lighting, and improving the streets, but their labours have been confined chiefly to the surface, so that the drainage of the city is still in a very defective condition. The water works afford an ample supply, but there are no proper means of carrying off the water when used. It is hoped, however, that the sanitary condition of the city will ere long be improved by the construction of efficient drains, either under the powers of the Health of Towns Act, or a local act' (William White Directory of Hampshire 1859, 66). Harrod's Postal Directory, 1865, is more positive. 'The spacious High-street, about three-quarters of a mile in length, of well-built houses, many of them very old, is intersected at right angles by several other streets, well paved and lighted with gas, and supplied with pure water' (Harrod's Postal Directory 1865, 1049). In B.B. Woodward's History of Hampshire 1861–1869, he states that 'The public convenience is well secured by [the Pavement Commissioners] at an annual expenditure of about £2000' (Woodward 1861, 282).

Two articles from the mid nineteenth century give differing views of the Commissioners. The 1852 pamphlet *The Pavement Board or The Town Council?*, was an anonymous eight page printed document, signed by 'A Rate-Payer' (Anon, 1852, 1). The author strenuously denies any connections to the Pavement Commissioners, and declares himself to be the 'Watch Dog of the City'. The purpose of the pamphlet is to make the case against the abolition of the Pavement Commissioners, and the transfer of their powers to the Town Council, and in doing so the author describes in great detail the Commissioners' characteristics and achievements. The Commissioners are described as 'efficient and valuable servants' whose attributes include their experience, their transparency in business transactions and reporting activity and good financial management. He states that he has 'not heard the least whisper of an accusation against the fidelity of the Board'. He acknowledges the concern about lack of progress on sanitation, but attributes this to the Commissioners' desire to move 'gradually and prudently, and not

recklessly and precipitately'. It was, however, the lack of progress on sanitary improvements that resulted in the most criticism of the Commissioners. Newman's lecture to Mechanics Institute in 1857 was critical of the lack of progress made by the Commissioners in the light of strong evidence of its significant impact on public health, a view that was reinforced by the town's medical practitioners (Newman 1857,1).

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