

## BIRCHINGTON'S FIRST PARISH COUNCIL

The first Parish Council for Birchington was elected under the Local Government Act of 1894. They met in The Institute, behind the shops on the north side of the Square.

The first election took place on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1894 at the institution, which carefully safeguarded the interests of the Parish, by looking after the rights of way, scavenging, street lighting etc and by voicing the views of the Parishioners.

### Those elected to this first Council were:

W. Tomlin	201 votes	
Rev J K Fox [Vicar]	178	“ Chairman
T. Pointer	159	“
C R Haig	155	“
H. Histed	152	“
G. Pointer	132	“
H. Tapsell	117	“
G. Cousins	108	“
J. Pemble	105	“

### These people not were elected:

D. Golder	87 votes
F H Watson	79 votes
A. Erlebach	75 votes
C E Solly	62 votes
A. Matthews	44 votes
W H Walker	43 votes

W. Tomlin was a J. P. and lived in Alpha Road.

Rev. J. Kirkham Fox was the second Vicar of Birchington.

Charles R. Haig was the father of Miss Haig of 'Creta', Ethelbert Road Minnis Bay. He was the founder of the Congregational Church at Minnis Bay – a little wooden building, constructed from timber left over from the building of the Exhibition Building, Minnis Bay. At first, Mr Haig took the services himself and the local Minnis Bay Coast Guards, who had helped to build the church, kept it clean.

Mr George Cousins was the owner of the Seabreezes Cycle Factory, which stood next door to where Benefield and Cornford had their Estate Agents for many years (and is now Christies Wine Bar). He invented the first Ladies' Cycles, but never fully patented the design. He became the chairman of the Council soon after its creation and later died suddenly in office in 1908.

Arthur Erlebach was the Founder and Co-Principal of Woodford House School, Station Road (now the site of Woodford Court flats). He gave the village the Memorial Ground between Park Lane and Park Road, in memory of three of his sons killed in the First World War. It is now wrongly called the 'Recreation Ground'.

C E Solly was the landlord of the Acorn Inn.

W H Walker owned the Livery Stables and later, the first horse buses that ran from Birchington to Westgate and Margate. Later on he owned and ran the motorbuses for the village.

J. Pemble ran a business in the village and was a fairly outspoken member of the Council.

D. Golder ran the little shop at the bottom of Park Lane, opposite the Acorn.

H. Tapsell ran a bakery in Station Road

### **PARISH COUNCIL – cont.**

4<sup>th</sup> April 1898 : the following members were elected:

A. M. Green	140 votes
C. R. Haig	130 votes
J. Pemble	124 votes

G. Cousins	117 votes (chosen as Chairman)
E. Warner	114 votes
G. Pointer	113 votes
C. E. Solly	63 votes
J.. Knott	60 votes
W. Lightfoot	59 votes

Mr R R Edwards was appointed as Secretary at a stipend of £10 per year. This was later increased to £17.

1899 – There was great excitement over the Parish Elections. The main issue was about the Drainage Scheme, as it had been decided in the January to carry out the scheme for new drainage in the village and in order to do this, they decided to raise a loan of £16,500.

In February, the Local Government Board carried out an enquiry concerning the Scheme. Those elected at this juncture were:

G. Cousins	156 votes (Chairman)
James Pemble	143 votes
Geo. Pointer	140 votes
E. J. Warner	138 votes
C. R. Haig	130 votes (Vice Chairman)
W. Lightfoot	128 votes
Dr J. S. Harris	121 votes
Alderman Rayden	118 votes
C. E. Solly	106 votes

1900 – The Drainage Scheme was rejected by the Local Government Board

1901 Population : Birchington – 2128  
Acol – 225

1935 – The last Parish Council meeting was held, when Albert Hodges, Headmaster and Proprietor of Woodford House School, Station Road, was the Chairman. In that year Birchington was 'taken in' to the Borough of Margate and became part of Margate.

Until 1935, Birchington was part of the old Eastry Rural District Council, but when Birchington was taken in by Margate Borough, that situation was changed.

Our Rural District Councillors at that time were :

George Farrar  
F. Mellanby  
Mr Miller

George Butterworth was our Surveyor and Mr Hutchinson was Sanitary Inspector.