

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 17th December 1894 and 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 were not 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

Population in Birchington by 1901 was 2128