

Report to the General Board of Health on a further inquiry as to the boundaries which might be most advantageously adopted for Alfreton, in the county of Derby, for the purposes of the Public Health Act / by William Lee, Superintending Inspector.

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6
PUBLIC HEALTH ACT

(11 & 12 Vict., cap. 63).

REPORT

TO THE

GENERAL BOARD OF HEALTH,

ON A

FURTHER INQUIRY

AS TO THE BOUNDARIES WHICH MIGHT BE MOST
ADVANTAGEOUSLY ADOPTED

FOR

A L F R E T O N,

IN THE COUNTY OF DERBY,

FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACT.

By WILLIAM LEE, Esq.,

SUPERINTENDING INSPECTOR.



LONDON:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES & SONS, STAMFORD STREET,
FOR HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.

1851.

NOTIFICATION.

THE General Board of Health hereby give notice, in terms of section 9th of the Public Health Act, that on or before the 1st day of April next, being a period of not less than one month from the date of the publication and deposit hereof, written statements may be forwarded to the Board with respect to any matter contained in or omitted from the accompanying Report on the boundaries which might be most advantageously adopted for ALFRETON, in the County of Derby, for the purposes of the Public Health Act, or with respect to any amendment to be proposed therein.

By order of the Board.

HENRY AUSTIN, *Secretary.*

*Gwydyr House, Whitehall,
17th February, 1850.*

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT (11 and 12 Vict., Cap. 63).

Report to the General Board of Health, on a further Inquiry as to the Boundaries which might be most advantageously adopted for ALFRETON, in the County of Derby, for the purposes of the Public Health Act. By WILLIAM LEE, Esq., C.E., Superintending Inspector.

Gwydyr House, December 11, 1850.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

HAVING on the 18th day of January last made a preliminary inquiry, with a view to the application of the public Health Act to the parish of Alfreton, in the county of Derby, and having reported to you in writing upon the matters in respect of which I had been directed to inquire, and it appearing to you from the statements in such Report that, in case the said Act should be applied to Alfreton, the boundaries which may be most advantageously adopted for the purposes of the said Act are not the same as those of the said parish, and that for such purposes the most suitable boundaries would be those of the *township* of Alfreton: and the Board, in further pursuance of the said Act, having directed me to visit the parts within the boundaries of the said township proposed by the said Report to be adopted for the purposes of the said Act, and to hear all persons desirous of being heard before me upon the subject of the said Report;—it is my duty to state, that having given the notices required by the Public Health Act, I proceeded with such further inquiry on Tuesday, the 3rd instant, at 10 o'clock in the forenoon, in the Magistrates' Room, in the George Inn, at the town of Alfreton.

Mr. Samuel Bland, one of the Churchwardens of the parish, proved that he had duly affixed the public notices;—they had also been advertised in the county newspapers.

After such preliminary observations as I thought right to make in explanation of the objects of this further inquiry, I heard all persons desirous of being heard before me upon the subject of the said Report, and especially as to the proposed boundaries of the district.

[186.]

As the result of this further inquiry, I have to confirm all the conclusions and recommendations contained in the said Report, and further to recommend that the Public Health Act be applied to the said township with as little delay as possible.

I append hereunto several documents, forwarded to your Honourable Board respecting the said Report, and my reply to the same.

I have the honour to be,

My Lords and Gentlemen,

Your very obedient servant,

WILLIAM LEE,

Superintending Inspector.

The General Board of Health,

&c.

&c.

APPENDICES.

Health of Towns Act.

1, *South-square, Gray's Inn,*
September 24, 1850.

SIR,

WE have been requested to present the accompanying petition against the application of the above Act to the town of Alfreton, in Derbyshire.

We were also requested to call your attention particularly to the fact, that the petition is signed by the Lord of the Manor (Mr. Morewood), and by a great majority of the respectable inhabitants of the town, and their preponderance as rate-payers is shown by the certificate of the assistant-overseer attached to the petition.

We are further requested to state, that the occupiers of cottages merely have not been applied to to sign this petition, as it was understood that petitions of this nature are not usually signed by the holders of mere cottages; if they had been applied to, a considerable majority, as we are informed, would have signed, and in that case, the preponderance of the rate-payers consenting to the petition (which, as appears by the overseer's list, is already great) would have been much larger.

We have, &c.,

H. Austin, Esq.,
Secretary.

JOS. W. BROMLEY and ALDRIDGE.

(A.)

To the Honourable the General Board of Health, 1848, Whitehall, London.

The petition of the owners and occupiers, and of the tenant-occupiers, of lands and premises situated in the township of Alfreton, in the county of Derby, against the adoption of the provisions of the Public Health Act, 1848, as relate to the sewerage and supply of water within the said township.

SHEWETH,

1. That the town of Alfreton is situated in an elevated, salubrious, and healthy district, nearly in the centre of the kingdom, with the advantage of airy, agreeable, and cheering walks continuous thereto for recreation and pleasure, containing a population of less than 2,000, to wit, 1,774, as taken in the census of 1841, since which time there has been little or no increase in number; and to the knowledge of the oldest resident, been notoriously remarkable for the health and longevity of the inhabitants. The site and area of the town comprised within the limits of the Watching and Lighting Act, 3rd and 4th Will. IV., c. 90, for lighting the same with gas, now in operation, is less than one-fourteenth part of the township.

2. That in consequence of the North Midland Railway passing a distance of about two miles westerly of the town, the great thoroughfare which previously was through the town to and from the north and south, the trade and business of the town is greatly deteriorated, and the property therein much depreciated in value.

3. That the owners of lands and premises, and the greater occupiers and rate-payers within the town, compared with the inhabitants generally, who are chiefly employed in the manufacture of stockings and in coal-mining and agricultural labour, and unable to bear additional imposts, whereby the liability of such owners and occupiers, in case of the said Act of 1848 being adopted, would greatly enhance and become burdensome to them, and induce many to remove from the town to avoid such additional imposts; whereby the property within the town would be thereby greatly reduced in value.

4. That those parts of the town referred to in the Report of William Lee, Esq., C.E., to the Board, as being prejudicial to the health of the inhabitants, have, under the inspection and direction of the Inspector of the recent Nuisance Act, and the principal inhabitants, been greatly remedied and improved by the sanitary operations carried on under that Act as to render the application of the Public Health Act unnecessary.

5. That there are numerous inhabitants residing within the township, but a considerable distance from the limits of the town, to whom the contemplated adoption of the Public Health Act, 1848, as to the sewerage and supply of water in the town, cannot possibly be of the least benefit or advantage, although they would be liable to the imposition of the rate.

6. That the gigantic machinery necessary to carry into effect the Act of 1848, with the numerous officers connected therewith, must be attended with serious expense, which it is humbly submitted was not contemplated by the Legislature to be adopted in towns having a less

population than 2,000, inasmuch as by section 50 of the same Act, other and less expensive means are pointed out whereby the same end may be attained.

7. That the petition presented to the Board of Health for the adoption of the Act of 1848, was hastily and inconsiderately taken, under an imaginary impression and assurance in the soliciting signatures thereto, that the rate for the water would not in any case exceed 2*d.* per week to each householder. But the outlay in establishing such water-works and sewerage by means of district and other rates, was not explained to such petitioners.

8. That the water of the town, of which there are many springs, and additional pumps in contemplation of being put down, (admitting a portion of such springs to be slightly chalybeate,) yet very few, if any, complaints have occurred of the water being unfit for household or culinary purposes, or of its being prejudicial to the health of the inhabitants, and is now procurable at a much less expense to the householders than that suggested in the said Report.

9. That your petitioners confidently submit to the Public Board of Health, that there does not now exist any occasion whatever for the adoption of the said Act of 1848, so far as respects the sewerage and supply of water within the town, and therefore request the said Board will be pleased to direct that the progress of all further proceedings under the provisions of the Act be abandoned, or at least suspended, to afford the inhabitants further time for consideration in the premises.

[Here follow 81 signatures.]

Alfreton, September 23, 1850.

I, the undersigned Francis Bradley, the assistant-overseer of the poor, and collector of the poor's-rates of the parish of Alfreton, in the county of Derby, do hereby certify that the annual rated value of the township of Alfreton, as appears by the last assessment for the relief of the poor, omitting the sum of 80*l.* charged upon one John Chadburn, for a corn-mill, now unoccupied, amounts to the sum of 4,703*l.* 18*s.*; and that the amount of such rates on the several persons whose names are appended to the foregoing petition are, in the aggregate, 2,984*l.* 1*s.*

FRANCIS BRADLEY,
Assistant-Overseer.

(B.)

ALFRETON WATER WORKS.

Alfreton, September 21, 1850.

In consequence of nefarious and false representations being made by certain individuals to many of us the undersigned, for the purpose of obtaining our signatures to a petition against the adoption of water-works, and we having been thus deceived, do hereby urge most earnestly the necessity of Mr. Lee's plan being forthwith carried out.

[Here follow 152 signatures.]

(C.)

Friday, September 20th, 1850, a public meeting was proclaimed by the Town Crier of Alfreton, to take place at the Angel-inn, at seven o'clock in the evening, to take into consideration the best means of supplying the above town with pure water, of which it now stands in great want.

Accordingly, at seven o'clock a large number of rate-payers met together, when Mr. George Coates, printer, was elected chairman.

Mr. Richard Ward, of Alfreton, stated, that hearing the meeting proclaimed, he had been induced to attend to know the objects of it, for he had that day signed a counter-petition against having water, which had been presented to him by Mr. William Wilson, who represented to him that the charge upon the town would be enormous, and that he (Mr. Ward) might have an idea what it would be, it would cost him 6s. in the pound per annum.

After a good deal of discussion as to the best manner the scheme could be carried out to be depended upon, it was proposed by Mr. David Bowen, and seconded by Mr. Thomas Parsons, that this meeting highly approve of the scientific report made by William Lee, Esq., relative to the necessity of a pure and constant supply of water to the town of Alfreton, and protest against any unmanly attempt of any other parishioner to prevent the same taking place.

Mr. John Carter stated that they have not had any water for several months past except what has been fetched from the colliery of W. P. Morewood, Esq., and he and his family have never been so well as before they had to use it.

Mr. John Rowe states that he is a tenant of Mr. Joseph Haynes, they have had no water fit to use for the last three months, what little is now left is of a very filthy nature.

A discussion arose as to the nature of the petition that had been carried about that day, when it was ascertained that B. Rickards, Esq., had promised to read it over at the meeting. A deputation was accordingly appointed to wait upon him and solicit his attendance for that purpose, which was positively refused by him.

It was then proposed by Mr. Charles Parker, and seconded by Mr. Samuel Bower, that a petition be carried all over the town to-morrow for signatures, at the same time praying her most gracious Majesty's Commissioner, W. Lee, Esq., to put in force the Public Health Act, as proposed by him when at Alfreton, on the 18th day of January, 1850.

(Signed) GEORGE COATES, *Chairman.*
CHARLES PARKER, *Secretary.*

(D.)

Swanwick-hall, Alfreton,
September 23, 1850.

SIR,

I TAKE the liberty of addressing you as Commissioner for the parish of Alfreton, in consequence of an application to me this morning to direct my tenant to sign a petition (purporting, if I rightly understand it) to postpone the proposed plan for the improvement of the

town of Alfreton, and I was told that my tenant would be called upon to pay his share of rates for carrying such plans into execution, though he resides about a mile from Alfreton, and can derive no benefit whatever from them. Most gladly would we pay for water, if conveyed to my two farm-houses, where, at this time, we have neither water for the cattle or the use of the families; but it seems unjust that we should be called upon to pay a heavy rate, for a purpose which, I am informed, can be of no use or benefit to us.

The favour of a line upon this subject would much oblige,

Your obedient servant,

W. Lee, Esq.

JOHN WOOD.

(E.)

Gwydyr House, Whitehall,

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

October 14, 1850.

BY an order of the 24th September, 1850, you referred to me a petition from 81 inhabitants of the township of Alfreton, requesting, for reasons therein stated, "that the progress of all further proceedings under the provisions of the Act be abandoned, or at least suspended, to afford the inhabitants further time for consideration."

As I shall have other documents to lay before your Honourable Board, I have distinguished this petition by the letter A, and have numbered the several paragraphs for more convenient reference.

My remarks will be very brief.

1. The second conclusion of my Report, page 29, shows, as follows, "That the position, the physical contour, and climate of Alfreton is naturally healthy." The Board will therefore judge how intense and how concentrated are the causes of disease existing in the town, when they refer to the evidence of the inhabitants themselves, pages 9 to 13, and to the reports of Mr. Oldham, surgeon, and of Drs. Watson and Budd, of London, pages 32 to 38. Mr. Oldham says, in his evidence, "The late epidemic fever broke out in the beginning of August last. It has been very prevalent. I have had 70 cases myself, and I believe Mr. Spencer about the same number. If it were stated that there had been 170 cases, I should not doubt the fact. It has been a continued fever running into typhus, and is indigenous to the place. I am quite sure that it was not imported into the town," and yet this very memorial is signed by the senior medical practitioner in Alfreton, who carefully avoided appearing before me during the inquiry. Page 7 shows the population of the town to be about 2,000.

2. This paragraph of the memorial is but a confirmation of what is stated at page 7 of my Report.

3. The "impost" of preventible disease has already produced the effects described in this paragraph of the memorial, and nothing but the Public Health Act can restore prosperity to the town. I earnestly request the attention of your Honourable Board to the following paragraph of my Report (p. 13). "The disastrous consequences of the fever in Alfreton have not only been felt in the families that have suffered, but in the whole town. The trade of the place has been greatly depressed in consequence. I was informed that for some time

few persons would attend the market there; strangers were deterred from visiting the town, and the sale-shops infected were without customers for weeks together. There cannot be a doubt, that the effects of this calamity will be long felt by the town of Alfreton, or that, *without such remedial works, as they have no power at present to construct, the inhabitants are liable at all times to this, or any other malignant and fatal disease.*" The memorialists have not attempted to call in question the accuracy of this. They cannot contravene the fact that partial ruin has fallen upon the town generally, and total ruin upon very numerous families, by diseases that the highest medical authorities have, in this very Report, pronounced preventible. Irrespective of all this, however, it is abundantly proved in the Report that proper sanitary works would effect a great pecuniary economy.

4. The Nuisances Removal Act can never remedy the evils existing in Alfreton. That Act was in operation when the awfully destructive fever broke out amongst the inhabitants, and yet all the radical sanitary defects of the town of Alfreton are at this moment in existence.

5. Setting aside the non-professional signatures to this memorial, it is signed by at least three lawyers, who either knew, or ought to have known, that no person can be charged under the Public Health Act, for either sewerage or water supply, whose premises are not drained or supplied with water. The same remark applies to any other improvement under the Act.

6. No gigantic machinery is recommended in my Report, and the machinery recommended is not proposed as a source of expense, but as a means of achieving economy. Your Honourable Board know that the Act has been applied to smaller places, and is now in full operation, with the best results.

7. It is not my duty to enter into the impressions and assurances of those who obtained the 136 signatures to the original petition for a preliminary inquiry "as to the sewerage, drainage, and supply of water, the state of the burial-grounds, and the number and sanitary condition of the inhabitants," &c.; nor whether those 136 persons, including the most wealthy and influential inhabitants, signed such petition "hastily and inconsiderately;" but I have shown, at pages 26 and 27 of the Report, that "the water would not, in any case, exceed 2*d.* per week for each householder;" and more, that the cottages may very probably be supplied at 1*d.* per week each.

8. This paragraph of the memorial is so utterly contradictory of all the evidence in the Report, pages 17 to 20, that I leave the memorialists to settle the questions as to the present quality and cost of the water, with the witnesses, which they will perhaps the more easily do, as many of the same individuals whose names appear in those pages of the Report, have also written their signatures under this remarkable paragraph. I might repeat here the whole of the evidence given on this topic, but it would occupy too much space. Mrs. J. Walters, speaking of persons begging water from her husband's premises, says, "in dry seasons they come all the way from the bottom of the town." George Wilson, Esq. says, "I have no doubt, when water is scarce, they are glad to use any that they can get;" and the Rev. J. R. Errington says, "some persons have to pay from 2*d.* to 5*d.* per week for water."

9. As to the necessity for the application of the Public Health Act

