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Alford Urban District Council

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH'S
ANNUAL REPORT

For 1948

July, 1949

ALFORD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

*Report of the Medical Officer of Health
for the Year 1948.*

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present to you the Annual Report for the year ending Dec. 31st, 1948, on the health and sanitary conditions of the Alford Urban District.

I am pleased to be able to report that once again the general health in Alford has been good throughout the year and except for a small outbreak of Whooping Cough in July the Town has been free from epidemic disease. The steady improvement in sanitary conditions has continued.

From a health point of view the most important event of the year was the coming into force of the National Health Act in July. This Act, which has taken so many years to prepare, provides, in conjunction with the National Insurance Act, free medical and hospital treatment of all kinds to every individual in the Country. It has received the co-operation of the great majority of Medical men, and considering its magnitude and the extensiveness of its various ramifications, has made a good start. All the Doctors in Alford are co-operating in the scheme.

Owing to economic conditions the Government has found it necessary to continue the severe rationing of food stuffs to which we have all become accustomed, but fortunately it was possible to remove bread and potatoes from the list. There is no evidence in Alford that the health of the people has in any way suffered as a result of the restrictions in foodstuffs; but there is no doubt that some people, particularly old people living alone, exist on a diet that is meagre and dull in the extreme.

Vital Statistics.

The area of the district is 1,138 acres.

The population of the town is estimated at 2,250.

The Rateable Value is £10,327 and the value of a penny rate is £41 4s. 2d.

The number of inhabited houses is 811.

The births numbered 38—19 male and 19 female. This represents a birthrate of 16.8 per thousand of the population. The figure for the whole of England and Wales was 17.9. The Alford figure of 38 includes 1 illegitimate birth.

The Deaths numbered 32—12 male and 20 female. This represents a deathrate per thousand of the population of 14.2 and compares with 10.8 for the whole country. Of the deaths: 5 were due to Cancer, 11 to diseases of the heart and circulatory systems, 5 to intracranial disease, 3 to bronchitis, 1 to tuberculosis and 2 to violence. There was one death in a child under one year of age—it was due to premature birth.

General Provision of Health Services.

Laboratory examinations are carried out by the Public Laboratory Service at Lincoln. This service is now very extensively used by medical men here and also by the Hospital and the Health department. Water analyses are carried out by Messrs. W. W. Taylor of Nottingham.

Midwifery services are unchanged.

Hospital and District Nursing services are unchanged except that the War Memorial Cottage Hospital is no longer a voluntary hospital but under the Health Act is State-owned and is in the Grimsby Hospital Area.

Infectious diseases, if requiring hospital treatment, are sent to Osgodsby or Scarthoe Infectious Diseases Hospitals or elsewhere if necessary.

Scabies. I have had no cases reported to me during the year.

Venereal Diseases. A clinic for the treatment of these ailments is in operation at Skegness. I am pleased to say that no cases were reported to me during 1948.

Diphtheria Immunisation. From July, 1948, the Immunisation of children against Diphtheria was taken over entirely by the County medical authority. There are still a number of children in Alford not protected by immunisation, and I once again wish to impress on all parents the urgent necessity of having this done as soon as the child is a year old. Since immunisation was started in 1940 the deaths from Diphtheria throughout the Country have been reduced from 2,480 to 150 per year. If all children were given protection the disease would be almost stamped out.

Tuberculosis. No new cases were notified during the year; as compared with 5 in 1947. There was one death from this cause.

There were no cases of Puerperal fever and no deaths from any maternal cause.

Prevalence of Disease. The general health of the town was good. The only infectious diseases that were notified were 16 cases of Whooping Cough in July. Alford was fortunate in missing

the measles epidemic which was so prevalent over most of East Lincolnshire.

Water. The Town's water supply continues to be excellent in quality and quantity. Regular analyses were taken throughout the year. Altogether 35 houses and other premises were supplied with the Town water supply and of these two were in respect of bakehouses. Extensions of mains were made to Commercial Road, Christopher Road and Chantry Road, and the mains now reach every part of the Town.

Housing. 22 Council and 3 privately-built houses were completed during the year and are in occupation. The Council now owns 95 houses and it is proposed to build another 30 in the future.

Sewerage. The sewage disposal works have proved quite efficient, and I am pleased to note that we have had no complaints from that source throughout the year. Besides the newly-erected houses, 4 fresh premises have been put on to the sewerage system. There are, however, still 44 privy vaults and 291 pan-closets in Alford. It is a matter of great satisfaction to me that following the recommendations of my 1947 report, the Council have decided that the obsolete methods of sewage disposal still extant in parts of Alford shall cease as soon as possible, and has resolved to take action under Sect. 47 of the Public Health Act, 1936. They intend in the first place to invite owners of property affected to submit a scheme for a proper water carriage system and will subsidise reasonable expenditure incurred to the extent of 50%. At a later date they intend to bring the remainder of the properties into the scheme under a compulsory basis. This scheme will take time to accomplish, but when complete will have brought the Town right up to date in Sanitary matters.

Cowsheds. The 5 registered cowsheds were inspected and found to be satisfactory. There were no new registrations during the year. I am hoping that the day is not far distant when infants and school children will all be supplied with milk from Tuberculin herds only.

Squatters. There were 12 huts in the station camp occupied by squatters throughout the year. All are supplied with water, sewerage and electricity, and the families are happy and contented.

I have the honour to be, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

C. S. E. WRIGHT,

Medical Officer of Health.