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## KIDDERMINSTER RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the  
year ending December.31st.1919.

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Mr Chairman & Gentlemen.

The Regulations of the Ministry of Health require that every year a report of the health of the District should be submitted to your Council. These regulations made it necessary for the Medical Officer of Health in addition to supplying the vital statistics and diseases of an infectious nature, to give also a survey of the sanitary arrangements and condition of the District during the year, with a report of such necessary and fundamental matters as the Water Supply of the District: Disposal of refuse: the Drainage of the District: the Housing accommodation and matters kindred to the health and sanitary arrangements of the people.

The Council is fortunate in the selection of its Sanitary Inspector without whose co-operation and assistance the work of the Medical Officer of Health would be non-effective. He brings to his duties a zeal which is most commendable and a mind thoroughly interested in his work: and his help has been of the utmost assistance during the trying periods through which we are now passing.

It is satisfactory to state that there has been no recurrence of the scourge of Influenza which decimated all the countries of the world and which was dealt with in my last Annual report. Here and there have been cases of a mild nature, but in no sense could they be compared with the ravages of that epidemic which swept over the land in 1918.

The Rural District Council has to take in its review a District which has many advantages over the Borough of Kildermminster itself. Its elevation is conducive to the general health of the people and the best sanitary conditions.

Since my appointment as your Medical Officer it has been my aim to develop the natural advantages to be found in such elevation. With the hearty co-operation of your Sanitary Inspector satisfactory progress has been made year by year. This consistent and careful regard to the laws of health have resulted in a diminution of disease and an improvement in the health of the people. The cases of Infectious disease have been considerably fewer and not only so have been milder in their nature. It has been for some years the policy of the Council to isolate cases of infectious disease at their own house-where there is the necessary accommodation. This policy is meeting with increasing success and your Council will appreciate also the financial saving which this procedure has effected, in addition to the fact that the disease is located, personal attention of your Medical Officer is afforded in such cases as well as the vigilance which this course provided for the Sanitary Inspector.

**Births.** The number of births registered during the year was 119: or equal to an annual birth rate of 16.2. This is considerably below the average birth rate of England & Wales-18.5-but is decidedly higher than in 1918 when the births were 95 with a rate of 13.15. Of these 119 births 60 were males and 59 females and were registered as follows:-

	<u>Males.</u>	<u>Females.</u>
Bowdley District.	24.	21.
Chaddesley Corbett.	20.	15.
Wolverley District.	16.	23.
	<hr/> 60. <hr/>	<hr/> 59. <hr/>







**Deaths.** The mortality returns of the District are somewhat higher than usual should be. The total number of deaths registered was 104—equal to a rate of 14.7—which is however slightly above the average for England & Wales—13.8. The death rate is calculated on the actual number of inhabitants. To obtain the correct death rate non-residents who died in the district were taken from residents, while the residents who died outside the area were added. Last year 15 residents died outside the district and four non-residents died within the district. The mortality rate therefore is 14.7 and shows an increase on the previous year when it stood at 13.19, and is also an advance on the figures supplied by the Registrar for England & Wales of 13.8 per 1000.

#### Infantile

**Mortality.** The deaths among children under 1 year of age was 12, or an infantile mortality rate of 100.8—which is much higher than that for 1918. In view of the increasing attention now being paid to child welfare in other districts this figure is somewhat disturbing.

#### Infectious Diseases.

**Scarlet Fever.** There were eight cases of Scarlet Fever which were confined to six houses and all were treated at home. One case took place at a farm house at Chaddesley Corbett. The patient was removed to a vacant cottage on the estate so that proper isolation could be carried out and precautions taken to prevent the infection of the milk supply which had the required result. No further cases were reported.

**Diphtheria.** There was a somewhat serious outbreak of Diphtheria at Arley in September which necessitated the closing of the schools. There were 15 cases reported during the year—12 of which occurred at Arley and these affected 7 houses, four cases being reported from one house and three in another. Dr Miles of Bewdley called at these houses every day and your Medical Officer of Health was in frequent attendance. By careful isolation methods the disease was checked. The Schools were thoroughly cleansed and disinfected and in a short time the disease was effectually stamped out. It is certain that but for the prompt action of the Authorities the matter would have assumed a serious aspect. One death resulted.

**Phthisis.** Eight cases were notified during the year as against 16 for 1918.

**Enteric Fever.** There were no cases reported in the district.

**Puerperal Fever.** No cases notified.

**Measles.** A somewhat serious outbreak of Measles occurred in the District. No less than 67 cases were reported as against 23 for the previous year. Singularly enough every Parish has been attacked with this troublesome disease, but all the cases were light except those in the districts of Chaddesley Corbett and Arley. At Chaddesley Corbett the attack was serious as out of a class of 25, eight scholars were present, the rest being attacked by the scourge. By proper precautions the disease was located and soon eradicated and there were no deaths.

**Ophthalmia.** There was only one case reported in the district and this occurred in a child 4 days old, and was of the Gonorrhoeal type. The previous year there were no cases reported.







Erysipelas. No cases in 1919 and in the previous year there were only three reported.

Malarial Fever. Two cases of Malaria Fever occurred in the district and these were two ex-soldiers of the age of 20 and 24 years whose homes were in the Wolverley Parish. These soldiers had returned from the Eastern theatre of War: and a recurrence of these cases it is feared is likely to occur during the next few years.

Influenzal Pneumonia. This disease was only made notifiable since March 1st. and eight cases were reported. These all occurred in the parish of Wolverley, two in the Blakeshall area and six in Cookley. During the year the Order making the notification of this disease notifiable has been revoked.

Whooping Cough. An outbreak of this troublesome children's disease occurred at Hockbrook which necessitated the closing of the schools 5 weeks. There was also an outbreak in Wribbenhall in June and it was found advisable to close the Infants Dept of the C.E. Schools for 3 weeks. There were no deaths reported.

Water Supply. The water supply of the district has frequently engaged the attention of the Council during the year. For the greater part it is derived from Wells and Springs which are and have been under constant supervision. An increasing number of the houses in the more immediate vicinity of the Borough of Kidderminster obtain their supply from the Borough mains.

The improvement in the health of the Wribbenhall district can be directly attributable, I believe, to a plentiful supply of pure water and the efforts of your Council should be increasingly pressed forward to securing an adequate and good supply for all the areas in your District.

There is now a good wholesome and sufficient supply to the parishes of Churchill and Wribbenhall, and your Medical Officer of Health would strongly urge the immediate consideration of a similar supply for the Cookley and Wolverley areas. With so many drains and cesspools in close proximity it may be taken for granted that the Wells are either polluted or are at all events liable to pollution. These areas—Cookley and Wolverley—are seriously in need of a wholesome water supply, and as it is of the utmost importance, we desire to impress upon the Council the urgency of the matter.

Where there is no public supply the water is chiefly taken from Wells. At Island Pool two samples of water were taken from the Pool and the Overflow and were condemned by the County Analyst. This water had been used from the Pool for brewing purposes. Conditions very similar exist at Cookley and Wolverley and a constructive policy to ensure a good supply of wholesome water should be at once undertaken. The consideration of such an important matter is long overdue and your Medical Officer of Health respectfully points out that the adoption of such water scheme in these districts is an urgent matter which should be faced at once.







## Housing &amp; Town

Planning Acts. 1909-1919. The Housing & Town Planning Act of 1909 was not taken up with any real enthusiasm until the devastation of war and the dislocation of industry proved how necessary and urgent the matter had become. The Ministry of Health had to face the loss of five or six years stagnation in trade during which time no houses had been built to accommodate the increasing population. Every year there is a certain depreciation in houses and though in a district such as is covered by your Council little effect can be seen, there is a general and acute shortage of houses which affects even scattered hamlets. The public conscience has been aroused and the Government -through the Ministry of Health-have made such provision as is possible. There is in the Rural District much old property which with due repairs and renovations can and is being utilised to lessen the inconvenience caused by the shortage of houses, and during the past year many cottages have been repaired and brought up-to-date--details of which will be found in the Sanitary Inspectors' report--and in this connection really good work has been done. A careful and thorough Housing survey was made in October of last year and particulars with a special report furnished to the Ministry of Health by October. 31st. stating that in your district comprising 11 parishes new houses were not urgently wanted. Your Medical Officer of Health attended a Conference at Birmingham on the Housing Schemes of the Government when the duties of Medical Officers of Health in this respect were clearly laid down. It will be remembered that in September a canvass was made in the Wolverley and Cookley districts on the Housing question. From the returns furnished to your Inspector it was evident that those making application for increased accommodation were not willing or not in a position to pay an economic rent for such accommodation. In many cases alterations and extensions were a matter of negotiation between the Owners and your Inspector. The following is a copy of the special report submitted to the Ministry of Health:-:-

"We, the Medical Officer of Health, Dr Bertram Addenbrooke, M.D., B.Hy., and the Inspector of Nuisances, Mr Daniel Llewellyn, beg to report as follows:-:-

- In Arley parish there are four vacant houses.
- " Broome " two vacant houses.
- " Chadkesley Corbett. three vacant houses.
- " Churchill. two vacant houses and two cottages occupied by land workers engaged on the farm adjoining (which has been taken by the land workers) altho<sup>o</sup> there is sufficient accommodation at this farm for all the workers engaged upon this farm.
- " Dowles. No vacant houses.
- " Kidderminster Foreign. three vacant houses.
- " Ribbesford. One farm house vacant.
- " Rushock. No vacant houses.
- " Stone. two vacant houses.
- " Wolverley. Seven vacant houses.
- " Cookley. Two vacant houses and two houses that are now being prepared for habitation: while there is a block of 12 houses, of which three are vacant and which, when added to the adjoining houses, would make seven good houses, each possessing three bedrooms: the owner being quite prepared to carry out the necessary alterations.







In Wribbenhall. Five vacant houses, two of which have been vacant for the past three years and contain ample accommodation in each for two families.

We may state that arrangements have already been made with the respective owners to carry out necessary repairs to make the houses habitable.

The population of the district has not increased for some years past, and therefore there are a certain number of vacant houses in the Rural district: and were it not that a large number of the townspeople overflow into our area owing to there not being sufficient houses in the town there is no doubt we should have a great many more vacant houses than we have now. We are emphatically of the opinion that there is no need for a housing scheme in any parish in our district.

The Borough of Kidderminster has a scheme in hand to build 300 houses and directly there are 300 houses at the disposal of the people in the borough it will leave a still larger number of houses vacant in our rural district.

In almost every parish we have a certain number of vacant houses, as detailed in the statistical survey of the district."

**Milk Supply.** The milk supply of the District has been of good quality and plentiful in quantity. Cleansing and limewashing of the Dairies and Cowsheds have been systematically done. Early in the year several cases of Diphtheria occurred in the Boro' and it was inferred that probably it was due to the milk supply which came from a farm in your district. I duly inspected the premises and examined all persons working there, and found nothing to suggest the outbreak was due to any cause appertaining to the milk supply.

Cowsheds have been altered to suggestions of the Sanitary Inspector so that the trade may be carried out under the best and healthiest conditions.

**Closing of Schools.** It was found necessary to close various schools in the district owing to prevalence of disease among children. The precautions taken had the effect of checking the spread of the infection. The schools were closed altogether for 18 weeks viz:- Wribbenhall. C.E. Infants. 3 wks. Hoobrook. C.E. 5 wks.  
Chaddesley Corbett. 2 " Hill Pool. 3 "  
Arley. 5 wks.

**Slaughter-houses.** There are four slaughterhouses and these have been regularly inspected. No contravention of the law has taken place and the buildings are kept clean and are well conducted.

**Food Inspection.** A welcome return to something approaching normal conditions is reflected by the fact that during the year no foodstuffs have been condemned. There is a general improvement in food supplies which should be further advanced as free and unrestricted trading comes into operation.

**Scavenging.** The scavenging at Wribbenhall-which is the only district in which this work is carried on-was effectually and regularly conducted, and very few complaints were received. The house refuse is removed once a week, the night-soil weekly and cess-pools quarterly, and oftener if necessary. The removal of the house refuse, night soil, etc., is carried out under the direct supervision of your Sanitary Inspector whose constant attention is exercised in keeping the work up to the proper standard.







**Nuisances.** The Sanitary Inspector keeps in touch with all parts of the district with systematic regularity as may be judged by the number of nuisances reported from time to time. Of the 912 infringements reported 97% of the nuisances were immediately dealt with. Similarly the complaints brought to the notice of the Inspector were promptly dealt with.

**Drainage.** Some further improvements in the drainage system have been effected, as will be seen from the Inspectors' report.

**Factories & Workshops.** These have been regularly visited and attention paid to the sanitary arrangements. There are no outworkers in the district.

**Bakehouses.** No nuisance has been reported and the only change is that one bakehouse has closed owing to the illness of the owner. There are no underground bakehouses in the district.

**Midwives' Acts, etc.,** The County Medical Officer receives all notifications, and births notified in the district are attended by Health Visitors appointed by the County Council. These Visitors are appointed for every parish and locality in the County.

**Common Lodging Houses, etc.,** There has not been for many years any Common Lodging Houses in the district or Cellar dwellings.

**Conclusion.** The Ministry of Health is taking steps to ensure that the work of Sanitary Authorities and Medical Officers—which was suspended in part during the war—shall be resumed in its fullest sense and have instructed Councils to see that the important matters affecting the health and sanitary condition of all districts shall be effectively resumed. Special attention is demanded on such important matters as Water Supply: Milk supply and inspection: Notification of diseases: Town Planning Acts: and suggest that the Reports be circulated as widely as possible through the Press, so that its contents may be brought prominently to the knowledge of the people.

Mr Chairman & Gentlemen, I cannot conclude the report without once more paying a well deserved tribute to your Sanitary Inspector whose co-operation has been of the utmost importance. He is an officer who by his initiative and enterprise has done much towards maintaining the healthy conditions of the district. He keeps himself thoroughly well versed in all the duties of his office. His help and readiness have been invaluable.

I must also in the heartiest possible manner acknowledge the help and sympathy of the members of the Council in my work as your Medical Officer of Health.

I have the honour to remain,  
Your obedient servant,

Bertram Addonbrooke. M.D., B.Hy.,







Two of these four cottages originally had only one room up and one down, but have since been added to the other two cottages, thereby increasing the housing accommodation, and forming a block of the smartest cottages in your District.







## Housing &amp; Town Planning Acts. Continued.

Houses and Localities.	Action taken and result.
Wannerton Cottage, Blakedown. (Owner Mr A. E. Bond)	This house—which contained only one room up and one down—has been demolished and a new and larger house is in course of erection.
Bungalow, Workhouse Bank, Wolverley (Owner Mr W. Postins)	A Wooden erection containing two good sized rooms and occupied by a family of two (man and wife).
Cornwall Farm Cottage, Cockley, (Owner Mr W. Westley)	This cottage has been thoroughly repaired and renovated and brought up to date in regard to sanitary arrangements.
Clee Hall Lodge, Cockley. Owner Mr W. Westley.	Arrangements have been made for the reconstruction of this cottage, with provision for increased bed and living room accommodation.
Three cottages, Lion Fields, Cockley (Owner Mrs Barker.)	General repairs are being carried out to the whole of these buildings both inside and outside, and the W.C. accommodation is being increased to meet present day requirements.

HOUSING, WOLVERLEY PARISH. In September 1919 your Council directed me to approach the Clerk to Wolverley Parish Council with reference to a housing canvass of this parish, and after perusing the Official forms submitted to me showing the number and nature of the applications for housing accommodation, I found that the greater number of the applicants for extra accommodation were not prepared to pay an economic rent for such accommodation, and that many of the houses referred to were not capable of being altered or adapted to provide additional accommodation: but in all cases where such additional accommodation could be provided, owners were being approached with a view to necessary alterations and extensions being carried out.

Housing & Town Planning Conference. With reference to this matter, at the December meeting of your Council I had the honour of presenting the subjoined brief report:—

"On Saturday afternoon November. 29th. I attended a Conference of Sanitary Inspectors at Birmingham called by the Deputy Housing Commissioner for the purpose of dealing with the duties of Sanitary Inspectors under the Housing Act. 1919. The Assistant Commissioner acknowledged the excellent work of the Inspectors in improving housing conditions and thanks were expressed for the manner in which the Returns were made up to October. 31st. He urged the Public Bodies concerned to get to work, pointed to the required quarterly survey of districts and the necessary reports and urged the desirability of making unfit houses fit for occupation wherever possible rather than closing and demolishing.  
"These are the lines upon which your Council have been proceeding since the passing of the 1919 Act and also since the Act of 1909 came into operation. Confirmation of this statement is to be found in your Annual Reports".







INFECTIOUS DISEASE(Notifcation)ACT and INFECTIOUS  
DISEASE(Prevention)ACT.

The total number of cases reported has been as follows:-

Scarlet Fever.	8	as against	7	the previous year.
Diphtheria.	15.	"	7	"
Tuberculosis.	9	"	16	"
Measles.	67	"	23	"
Malaria Fever.	2	"	Nil."	"
Influenzal Pneumonia.	8	"	Nil."	"
Ophthalmia	1	"	"	"
	110.	"	56.	"

All cases were promptly visited. The Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria were effectively isolated at the homes of the patients and were regularly visited and precautionary measures adopted to prevent the spread of the disease. The Scarlet Fever cases were confined to 6 houses and the 15 cases of Diphtheria confined to 9 houses.

There were four deaths from Phthisis, following which fumigation of clothing, etc., took place.

CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS.

The following schools were closed solely owing to the prevalence of disease:-

Wribbenhall.C.E.School(Infants Dept)

	From June.23rd to July.12th.	Whooping Cough
Hoobrook.C.E.	" Sept.17th."	Oct. 22nd. "
Arley. C.E.	" Mar. 10th."	Mar. 22nd. Influenza.
"	" Sept.29th."	Oct. 11th. Diphtheria.
"	" Dec. 15th."	Dec. 23rd. Measles.
Hill Pool,Chaddesley Corbett.	Mar.10th."	Mar. 29th.Influenza.
Chaddesley Corbett.	" Dec. 3rd."	Dec. 19th. Measles.

DAIRIES, COWSHEDS & MILKSHOPS.

These have been regularly visited during the year. They were found to be in a fairly satisfactory condition. At several farms considerable improvements have been effected. The Statutory obligation of whitewashing in the months of May and October was attended to in most cases.

The milk supply has been, on the whole, well maintained, only one complaint(which was dealt with at the time)having been received.

DISEASES OF ANIMALS ACTS.

There have been no cases of Anthrax reported during the year.

SLAUGHTER-HOUSES.

There are four slaughterhouses in the district, and many visits have been made-practically weekly-and usually on days that the places were used.

A building at Oldington, used for horse slaughtering, has been visited and inspected from time to time, and no cause of complaint has been found. Your Council have recently renewed the licence for one year.

UN SOUND FOOD.

During the year under review a large number of inspections have been made of all shops and bakehouses in your District, with the result that I have not found anything to condemn, food supplies have been good and so far as I can ascertain, plentiful. In a number of cases I was called in by butchers and pig-dealers to examine carcasses but in no instance was it necessary to take action.







BAKEHOUSES.

The whole of the bakehouses have been inspected periodically and found to be regularly cleansed and limewashed. No nuisance has been reported. One bakehouse has ceased to be used as such on account of the illness of the proprietor, but before this building can be permitted to be used again, considerable improvement or alterations will be necessary.

OVERCROWDING.

No case of overcrowding has been reported during the year.

WATER SUPPLY.

Periodical samples of water have been taken in the district for purposes of analysis, and where the water was certified to be Unfit for drinking, steps were taken to clean out the well or to provide the houses with tap water, as at Wribbenhall. In this parish at least from 17 to 20 houses have been connected to the public water supply during the year, and there are few houses in this parish requiring to be connected up.

HOUSE SCAVENGING.

The Scavenging work at Wribbenhall—the only parish in your District in which a scheme of the kind is in vogue—continues to be carried on in a satisfactory manner.

Special attention has been given to the cleansing of Cesspools, etc., and there have been very few complaints.

FACTORY & WORKSHOP ACT.(Workshops & Workplaces).

These have been regularly visited but no infringements discovered. Special regard has been paid to the question of closet accommodation.

The following is a list of the workshops now in the district.

Bakers.....6	Joiners.....4
Blacksmiths.....8	Laundries.....3
Boot repairers....8	Milliners.....7.
Boat Builders.....1	Painters.....6
Builders.....6	Plumbers.....8
Cabinet Makers....3	Photographers....2
Carpenters.....10	Saddlers.....1
Coal Merchants....6	Stonemasons.....3
Confectioners....1	Tailors, Drapers...3
Coffin makers....2	Cycle makers.....2
Dressmakers.....16	Wheelwrights.....6

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Total. 109  
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No cases of home-workers have come under my notice, and no list has been sent in of out-workers from any employers in the district.

PETROLEUM ACTS.

Two new licenses were granted during the year for the storage of petroleum under the above Acts. Periodical visits have been paid to the different premises, but no infringements of the Acts or Regulations were discovered, and your requirements and those of the Petroleum Acts have been duly carried out.







CANAL BOATS

During the year 31 visits were paid to the Wharves, etc., 97 Boats were examined and contraventions were found in 8 cases.

Boats inspected.	97.
Boats contravening the Acts or Regulations.	3.
Persons for which Cabins were registered.	292.
Persons occupying the Cabins.	209.
Men on the Boats.	176.
Women on the Boats.	19.
Children on Boats(between 5 & 12 yrs)	9.
Children on Boats(under 5 yrs of age)	5.

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Details of contraventions:-

Boats not carrying Certificate of Registration.	1.
Boats not properly marked.	1.
Boats overcrowded.	1.
Dirty Cabins.	2.
Painting requiring renewal.	1.
Want of proper water vessels for drinking water.	2.

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In conclusion, I would like to be permitted to take this opportunity of thanking the Council for the support and assistance they have given me in the discharge of my duties during the year, and also for their kindness to me which I can assure them I very greatly appreciate.

I am, Gentlemen,  
Your Obedient Servant,

*Daniel Lewellyn*

Inspector of Nuisances.



