

The early meetings were held

There were no halls in those days - the Mechanics' Institute was not built until _____ and the Board

^{at first} met alternately at Dunbar's and Bowman's Hotels, ^{in order to} to obviate any charges of favoritism.

The first valuation of the property in the Road District amounted to a total net annual value of £346 36s 7/10 and the first rate of 1/- produced the ^{sum} of £182 7/6.

Throughout the wide expanse of _____ acres which composed the Board's area, there were only 235 rated premises. And the estimated population to be served was a meagre 436.

These then were the humble beginnings of local Government 2
in this area

The Roads Board took its duties seriously - and its members, with a limited budget to work on, ~~used~~ obviously considered carefully the spending of every penny. ~~Each~~ ~~of~~ those days ~~transport & access~~ ~~grants~~ it was ^{money} a case of trying to keep bush tracks passable: of giving the scattered hamlet that was ^{then} Dandenong some pretensions to "streets" - (these had ^{only} been laid out by the surveyors in 1852).

~~See after~~ it was found. The ~~year~~ infant Road Board met at Clunbar's Hotel on Nov 26, ^{and just} at a near Bow-Walker St in Bowen - a stone's throw away at Bowmen's ~~Hotel~~

Hotel on Dec 3rd. ~~It~~ These must have been busy days, & the wheels of local government in motion for the ~~early~~ first minute book reveals that there was another meeting on Dec 7 at which one of the notes was "That unoccupied"

allotments in the township be assessed as building lots
and not as pasture land"

3

As you flip ~~over~~ over the pages of that early Minute Book
the story of an emerging civilisation slowly unfolds... the
personalities of our earliest civic fathers, too, emerge

Jan

By 1863

any Wardenery was ^{officially} flexing its muscles

at ~~Board~~

the Board's correspondence included a letter from

the Warden Improvement Association. There was a
motion "That the secretary answer the letter from the Warden
that the District Road Board will be happy to receive any communications
for the improvement of the township".

The John Keys Era

Jan 11. 1863

4

On July 18, 1863 the Board ~~little~~ realised that ~~_____~~ made a vital decision when it appointed John Keys as secretary. ~~little~~ did they realise they were engaging their future member of Parliament and a man who was destined to leave his mark on the budding municipality for many years to come.

Somehow a motion moved by J. Keys + T. Attenborough at the meeting on August 15, 1863, seemed to highlight the frugal spending that must be their lot ~~under such a limited budget~~. "That the engineer be instructed to expend £4 on the Brighton Rd between the Blue pot (^{a rather} ~~an~~ ornamental sounding label!) and the Township."

But Dandenong's needs were pressing too — and there was a further motion "That £30 be expended on the extension of Foster St to Langhorne Street"

Changed Status

5

But it seemed that the probationary period had been served. — The well-worn, but nevertheless well-preserved 111-year-old minute book proudly proclaimed a change in status — be it ever so small: "The first actual meeting of the Wandsworth Road Board under the local Government Act No 176 was held at the Bridge Hotel on September 23, 1863".

John Keys, the secretary, ^{became} ~~was appointed~~ the Clerk — and ~~there~~ was laid down in black and white: "The Clerk shall be in attendance at the office of the Board every Saturday between the hours of 2 and 5 o'clock P.M."

(Meetings were to be held at 4-30pm on alternate Saturdays.)

The Clerk's salary was fixed at £50 per annum. — The Treasurer's £20.

The office of auditor (or auditors) was to be filled at a public meeting - and later Mr Robert Huxson got that office -

⊙ Ratepayers, too, were beginning to exercise their rights. There was a petition for Mr Greaves & others requesting the forming of a length of road to Tower St. Mr Walker & others petitioned for a drain in (below?)

Suburbs!

The town was growing! ~~How else could~~ Authority was moving slowly but surely onwards. You only had to read this motion to realise that: "That the Clerk give notice to all parties having roads fenced in the town AND Suburbs, to open them."

And there must be a plan to work from; hence on Nov 17 1863, ~~the~~ the meeting decided "That the engineer be instructed

To call tenders for a plan of the District on a scale of 8-inches
to the mile" "Please Explain!" 7

And the local medical Dr Phillips, must ^{surely} have offended the dignity of
the Board ^{or suggestion} in some way for ^{the record} "Dr Phillips is to be asked for an explanation
of his letter dated October 10, 1863"

Year's Expenditure £1280

On 21st the meeting on Dec 5, 1863, the Engineer estimated the expenditure
for the coming year at £1280. & again a rate was struck.
John Keys had the office of Rate Collector added to his duties
— for a reward of 5% of the collections.

~~Election~~
New Board Members Challenged

When the time came ~~at~~ to elect two new members to the Board an election was held on Dec 27, 1863

Four candidates came forward and despite the limited number of ^{eligible} voters interest was obviously keen & judge by the heavy poll. The results were

Joseph Chandler	61 votes
Robert Hucksom	57 "
Obadiah Potter	36
John W. Strange	32

The first two were elected, but when they landed in their declarations at the next meeting of the Board and sought to ~~take their seat,~~ ^{join the Board,}

Chairman George Hughes protested against them taking their seats on the grounds that their declarations were not in conformity with the Local Govt Act, 1863. (This must surely have been one of the first occasions of the many occasions since then that the Local Act has been invoked) — Ed.

And Mr AW Bowman, ^{too,} also protested against Robert Hucksom taking his seat on the grounds of him holding office under the Board

Mr Hucksom moved swiftly to remove that impediment, for the minutes recorded that "Mr Hucksom's resignation as auditor was then accepted"

Somewhat the differences were resolved

These Troublesome Tolls

~~But~~ Rates & road tolls were the Board's main source of income — apart from a small ^{annual} grant — and the ^{or a few day fees} troublesome tolls loom large in the minutes of those early days

~~As always~~ ~~As~~ The settlers obviously ~~at~~ viewed the road toll gates ¹⁰ with distaste. The Board regarded them as a necessary evil — and the toll-keeper who rendered liberally for the right to man them ~~as must~~ ^{most} ~~surely~~ certainly find them a paying proposal judging by the keen competition for them when tenders were called.

6 Negotiations With Early Toll-keepers

The first we heard of the tolls ~~for~~ the minute was at the meeting held ≈ 3 1963 when ~~there was~~ the following resolution was adopted:

That the chairman proceed to Valmoe with a view of negotiating with Mr Newell respecting the Wanders Toll Bar & that he be empowered to offer £30 ~~as~~ as compensation provided Mr Newell will hand over the toll into the hands of the Board, and that Mr Hughes be allowed £2 travelling expenses

From Wards to Kelmore was a long & arduous journey a whole
 day & £2 was ~~little enough~~ a pretty major "expense" and
 But Chauncy Hughes must have carried out his mission
 successfull at the Adams meta Dec 22¹⁸⁶³ it was decided all
 senders for the toll.

John Keys resigned as collector about this time &
 the ubiquitous Henry Cowis was appointed in his place.

In 1864 I was decided to meet at Dunbar's Hotel for
 6 months & at Bowman's Budge Hotel the following six months

The Board was settling down to quite a program
 On Jan 30, 1864 the Clerk was in to call tenders for clearing
 the Bury to be from Brown's east corner to Argill's East corner.
 Mr Robert Argill had entered his tender of £25 accepted

The engine too, was used to prep plans & spec - on a part
 of the east of jany & clay Laye St fr Walker to Coover St
 (up Church Hill where the BofE was at and a school & was about
 to build the first part of St James Church.)

£20 was voted for the work - & Henry Gower got the job at that figure.
 £15 was also voted for clearing Thomas St & Roberts St - & Henry
 Gower took the job at that price of £13.

But

It would seem that the Board was still troubled
with fences & other obstructions ^{to} roads for on Feb 27 1864
was resolved " That the Bd take the neces steps to procure the
opening of all roads & remove the obstacles therefor with the
least delay