

DURSLEY TOWN HALL AND MARKET HOUSE

Summary of the Minutes of the Meetings of the Trustees (1841-1996)

Background

This summary, originally prepared by A.G. Pierce, one time councillor and mayor of Dursley, gives an overview of the Minutes of the Trustees as contained in a worn brown-leather foolscap sized book that was purchased from Jno. Williams & Co of London.

The Minute Book is entitled:

"Borough of Dursley - Minute Book of proceedings at meetings of the Bailiff and Aldermen".

Inside the front pages someone has made notes:

1. *The Bell on Market House - "1747 Come away without delay".*
2. *Fire engines may be purchased for the use of the parish.*
30 & 31 Vict. Cap...Sec. 29 "... shall provide fire engine, ladder or escape as well as procuring a proper place to keep same and of maintaining it."

A cutting from the Dursley Gazette of June or July 1894 has been glued inside. The cutting reproduces a placard of 1814, printed by Rickards, Printer, Dursley on the authority of the Bailiff:

Dursley. Oct. 24th 1814.

At a public meeting, it was the unanimous opinion of those persons assembled that some steps should be taken to remove and prevent nuisances and for regulating the Police of the Town.

The leaving of carts, wagons or other carriages; or any timber, stone or rubbish (except for the use of buildings immediately under repair) is a Public Nuisance and that the necessary steps be taken for preventing the same.

The exposing of meat for sale in the Market Place after the hour of nine in the evening is a Public Evil and that the necessary steps be taken for preventing it.

The Laws for preventing Tippling, Drunken-ness and Gaming in public houses be strictly enforced, and particularly against any Innkeeper for allowing the same; and any person for committing such offences after the hour of ten in the evening.

The Laws for preventing Tippling on Sabbath Days be strictly enforced.

The Laws against Night Walkers and other disorderly Persons in the streets of this Town, be also strictly enforced- The Laws against Vagrants be likewise strictly enforced.

At the rear of the book is a true copy, certified by the Clerk to Mr Vizard, Solicitor, of the Original Deed of Gift of the Market Hall and its income to the Bailiff and the Aldermen of Dursley, dated 6 Dec 1841. Additionally there is the Deed of the Charity Commission dated April 30th 1889 setting up the Town Trust to administer the Town Hall on the dissolution of the Corporation of Dursley by the Municipal Corporations Act, 1883.

The Minutes – Items of significance

April 28th 1841 - The first meeting of the Bailiff and Aldermen of the Town of Dursley was held to consider the offer made by Henry Vizard Esq. for vesting the Market House and Tolls in the Bailiff and Resident Aldermen to be held by them and their successors for the benefit of the Town. It was agreed unanimously to accept the offer; they resolved to present to Mr Vizard their warmest acknowledgements and thanks for his most handsome and liberal gift.

In discussions about the Market House, the Bailiff was requested to:

- Get the Market House yellow washed.
- Procure a board for affixing handbills.
- Procure a board prohibiting the sticking bills on the pillars.
- Order a book for Minutes of Proceedings and a Cash Book.
- Obtain an estimate for enclosing it with Iron Railings, one straight and the other concave
- Enquire what steps can be taken for removing the Pig Market.

August 14th 1841 - An estimate of £50 was accepted for enclosing the Town Hall with railings. A Collector of Tolls was appointed; this was an item of business that occurred every year. The tolls were the source of income for the Trust and they gave a percentage of the amount received to the Collector.

Note: At this point in the Minute book, there occurs a list of the bailiffs of Dursley from 1566 to 1886. No reason is given for its inclusion; Eric Heath, a Secretary to the Trust suggested that it would have been copied out of a previous minute book of the proceedings of the Court Leet up to 1841 and then kept up to date by the Trust's Secretary. A copy of the list is on display in the Town Hall together with lists of Chairmen of Dursley Parish Council from 1895 to 1974 and of the Mayors of Dursley from 1974 to the present [1996]. These were made by Councillor A.G. Pierce to commemorate the wedding of the Prince of Wales to Lady Diana Spencer.

February 4th 1847 - Consideration was given to changes required in the Town Hall to allow a County Court to be held there. A rent of £5 p.a. would be charged which was later changed to £10.

December 23rd 1851 - Dursley Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society applied to use the Town Hall and was offered it at a rent of 10/- a quarter.

November 20th 1852 - It was resolved to apply funds to procuring benches and gas fittings. Estimates were accepted for £9-18-0 for the gas fittings and £12-15-0 for chairs and benches, including a middle leg for the chairs.

December 24th 1852 - Application was to be made to the Lord of the Manor for the purchase of some land adjoining the Pound for the Sheep Fair and for keeping hurdles, with a view to the enlargement of the Town Hall.

Note: The Pound was on Kingshill Road between the Tabernacle graveyard and Spring Villa, the home of the Bailey family who bought the Pound in the 1930s. At present [1996], a skittle alley attached to Dursley Cricket and Social Club is built on the site of the Pound.

February 12th 1853 - It was decided to make a new fireplace and chimney; also to shift the steps so as to put them outside the wall instead of inside and bring them into the present flight of steps and removing the Blindhouse; also to fence off with iron railings 6ft high a space for keeping the Market trestles - from the stone pillar opposite Mr Moore's in a straight line to an iron pillar to be erected opposite the foot of the proposed new steps and from thence to such steps including an iron gate 5ft wide and also for iron railings 6ft high to such new steps and an iron gate at the bottom.

Note: Mr Moore's was a grocers and tallow chandlers in the Market Place for several decades on the site of what is now the Midland Bank [1996].

February 26th 1853 - It was decided to postpone further consideration of these alterations. Other things would be done:

- The three windows in the body of the Hall be altered so that the sashes may open at the top instead of the bottom.
- Make the other two windows at the end of the Hall airtight.
- Do the necessary repairs to the windows in the room over.

December 23rd 1856 - A falling off in the income from the Market House is noted.

December 30th 1858 - A proposal from Purnell Bransby Purnell to buy the Market House and Town Hall was rejected by the Trustees; they found it "not expedient to accept such offer. As the Lord of the Manor had not held a court this year making it "injurious to the Town that there should be no power of making presentments and appointing officers as have been accustomed from time immemorial", it was resolved that the Lord of the Manor be made aware of the inconvenience arising.

February 17th 1863 - The Trustees decided that it would be desirable to remove the present steps from the inside of the Market House to the outside so as to carry them up against the wall fronting Parsonage Street and enter through a doorway on a level with the floor of the Town Hall, walling up the present window and opening the other; an iron railing and a zinc or iron covering to be made to the steps and a doorway to open from them into the Market House in lieu of the present Blindhouse; the arch opposite Mr Moore's to be thrown open. Also the present partition in the Town Hall to be removed and the ceiling raised to a level with the lower sidepieces in the roof; a temporary wooden partition be erected to serve for a lobby for the Town Hall; a new fireplace and chimney be made in the Town Hall.

Estimates were:	Fireplace and chimney:	£24-9-0
	Masonry:	£30-15-0
	Carpenter & plasterer, gas fitting:	£25

It was agreed to spend £45 from balances and raise the remainder by other means. The Treasury agreed to pay £25 provided that a retiring room was made for the County Court Judge.

August 17th 1863 - It was agreed to proceed with the revised estimates. Gratitude was expressed to Henry Vizard Esq. for his liberal offer of £50 towards expenses. But it was resolved not to make a second fireplace at present.

September 25th 1863 - The Trustees resolved that it would be for the advantage of the Town to erect a new Market House and Town Hall on some more convenient site and that the present one be sold and taken down. A committee should be appointed to consider what steps can be taken for attaining that object. In the event of it not proving practicable, they be requested to consider the objections made to the present new staircase to the Town Hall and what means can be devised for obviating them.

December 29th 1865 - Received 10/- for the Crier's Bell as directed by the Court Leet.

December 31st 1869 - Resolved that the corner opposite Mr Moore's be repaired and an iron guard be fitted against it similar to the one at the other corner. Also it was decided that the inside of the Hall be cleaned and the outside woodwork be painted. A large board was to be placed on the wall near the Savings Bank for bills to be posted. A message was sent to the Superintendent of Police requesting him to prevent nuisances being committed in the Market Place.

December 30th 1871 - [*Bad writing makes this difficult to read*]

Resolved: Supply of 2 star [?] lights and remove the 2 gas pillars [?] in the gallery.

Resolved: The outside of the Town Hall and the woodwork be painted.

December 30th 1874 - [*Again, very bad writing*]

The Trustees asked for estimates to be obtained for panelling the Town Hall.

December 24th 1875 - It was resolved that the outside of the Hall be coloured in the Spring.

November 7th 1876 - A special meeting of the Trustees was called to consider a letter from the Gloucestershire Agricultural Society proposing that the Meeting of the Society next year be held in Dursley. A proposal to decline the offer was made but not carried; eventually the meeting was adjourned for a week.

November 13th 1876 - This adjourned meeting decided that a general meeting of the Inhabitants of the Town be called to consider the matter.

November 17th 1876 - It was agreed at this General Meeting that in the event of the Gloucestershire Agricultural Society Meeting being held in Dursley then:

- The Society should conduct it themselves, with the Town providing the land, water and a Flower Show.
- The Town would pay the Glos.Agri.Soc. the sum of £500 in cash but keep the receipts of the event.
- The meeting be adjourned for further consideration.

November 21st 1876 - It was agreed that Dursley would invite the Glos.Agri.Soc. to the Town. Further, a General Committee would be appointed to make the arrangements.

December 31st 1877 - The windows be made to open at the top with proper fastenings and blinds put to all that have none; the present ones to be repaired.

December 13th 1878 - The Town Hall be coloured outside during the year.

December 23rd 1879 - The Town Hall be coloured during the year and the walls inside be washed.

December 29th 1880 - The Town Hall be painted during the year outside and the inside walls washed, painted and repaired as this had not been done in the previous year. Also the roof be repaired where required and the blinds and cords repaired.

December 28th 1881 - Instructions were issued to prepare estimates for the necessary repairs.

December 29th 1882 - The painting not having been done, it was resolved that it should be done next summer.

December 30th 1885 - The following matters were decided:

- The front of the platform be extended and steps put at each end.
- The inside and outside of the Market House be painted and coloured next spring.
- A bill posting board be affixed to the wall opposite Mr Carr's.
- That bill posting on the walls or pillars be prohibited except during elections.

Note: Mr Carr's was a grocers shop occupying the site of Mr Moore's mentioned in 1853; now [1996] the Midland Bank site.

June 19th 1889 - This was the first meeting of the Trustees of the Dursley Town Trust. The Bailiff, Aldermen and Court Leet of Dursley had been replaced by an elected Dursley Parish Council in 1884/5.

Note: It is presumed that one of the last acts of the old regime was to set up this trust to look after the Town Hall and Market House.

The new Trustees decided that existing arrangements be continued; other points considered were:

- That the windows and seats be repaired and new blinds be put on the windows.
- No carts or carriages should be allowed to be placed in the Market Place under the Town Hall.

August 4th 1891 - The meeting agreed that estimates be obtained for colouring with Portland Stone colour the outside of the Market House and repairing the plaster where necessary. Also a separate estimate be obtained for taking out and renewing the weak places in the plaster inside and repainting the walls (one coat), to include the entrance passage. Also for stopping the wet from coming in. Also a posting board be provided for the wall opposite Mr Carr's.

December 28th 1892 – Rev. N.W. Gresley applied to use the Town Hall for the Young Men's Institute. This was granted, with leave to put in a stove and pipe if desired.

March 26th 1895 – Resolved:

- An oak post or two if necessary be placed in the Market House, south side, so as to prevent vehicles being put therein.
- To colour the outside of the Hall and to repair the lead gutter where necessary.
- Examine the skylight to ascertain how to prevent the wet entering.

June 12th 1895 - From June 24th it was decided that no persons except residents of Dursley be allowed to sell goods in the Market Place other than on Fair Days. Residents to pay 1/- each.

January 26th 1898 - Leave was given to the Fire Brigade to hang their ladder in the Market House. Regarding the resolution of June 12th it was further resolved that that the Market Place be thrown open generally for sale of goods but the charge for parishioners be 6d and non-parishioners be 1/- per day. Three advertisements to this effect to be inserted in the Gazette.

March 14th 1900 - It was agreed that an endeavour should be made to renew the roof of the Town Hall, the present roof being in an extremely bad state.

March 23rd 1900 - An estimate of £101-8-0 for the roof repairs was considered; discussion centred on the fact that only £58 was in hand. Mr Bloodworth stated that as the work was urgent he would be willing to take £58 and wait for payment of the balance. As the estimate included the dormer windows which were not definitely in need of repair, it was resolved to exclude them to save money. However, it was further resolved to whiten the ceiling of the Hall and repair the plaster fallen down over the windows.

April 18th 1900 - Agreement was reached that Mr Bloodworth be paid £55 for the repairs and the rest in three annual instalments.

August 9th 1909 - The Parish Council was seeking a new site for the Fire Station and suggested that a portion of the Market House be used. After discussion, permission was given to enclose the West end for use as a fire station at 10/- p.a. for 21 years.

November 3rd 1909 - A letter proposed the use of the Town Hall as a Parish Room provided certain repairs and improvements were carried out. The Trustees accepted an estimate for £8-10-6 for painting and colouring, a new lock to the outside door and a new iron handrail to the staircase. They were not disposed to incur the expense of laying on town water or of providing a partition at the NW corner of the hall.

November 18th 1909 - External painting, gilding and colouring were agreed. A report on the condition of the beams was read and it was resolved to have work carried out for £4-4-0.

January 12th 1914 - Repairs to the floor had been carried out to a cost of £2. The fire insurance was increased from £300 to £400.

February 22nd 1915 - Mr Arthur Vizard offered to present to the Trustees an oil portrait of his great-uncle Henry Vizard to be hung in the Town Hall. This offer was accepted. The Clerk reported that he had affixed a brass plate bearing the inscription "Henry Vizard who presented this Market Place and Town Hall to the Town of Dursley 1841".

August 29th 1915 - It was resolved to insure the Town Hall against damage by aircraft.

May 13th 1920 - Dursley and District YMCA Red Triangle Club wished to purchase the large table in the Town Hall; this was not agreed.

The Parish Council complained of the nuisance caused by untidy stallholders and at the low fees charged to them. It was resolved to increase the fee to 2/6 per stall for Dursley ratepayers and 5/- for others.

The Rector wrote complaining of the need for repair and redecoration of the interior [*used as a Parish Room by the Church*]. It was agreed that the tenants should carry out the redecoration at their expense but the Trustees would repair the walls and have the gas pipes put in order.

September 13th 1920 - Dursley Parish Council in a letter dated August 13th 1920 asked the Trustees to conduct a referendum amongst the inhabitants on the advisability of removing the Town Hall as it was an obstruction to traffic. A letter dated September 2nd 1920 from the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings suggested that the opinion of that Society should be obtained before any action was taken.

October 5th 1920 - The Trustees met in the presence of Mr Powys, Secretary of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Hon. Sec. of the Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Society and the Rector of Dursley, Rev. Dr. Mills. After inspecting the area around the Town Hall, Mr Powys noted that the Market House was open, exposing traffic to view; that there had been no serious accidents in recent years; that it was desirable to make driving from Long Street to Parsonage Street possible on the North side of the Market House.

January 31st 1922 - The report from the SPAB was read. It was agreed that it constituted a document of great interest and value and should be preserved for the future guidance of the Trustees. It was decided that estimates for colouring and painting the outside of the Market House next May be obtained and the tenants be requested to have the interior cleaned and painted. A proposal to use part of the Market House as a Fire Station was not entertained as the blocking up of any portion of the openings would render the streets much more dangerous. A subcommittee was appointed to report on the possibility of providing lavatory accommodation and of opening the SW corner of the Market House.

May 22nd 1922 - It was agreed not to move further on the matter of the lavatory and opening up the SW corner. Colouring and painting the exterior for £38-10-0 was approved. The Dursley Traders Association urged the Trustees to discourage the use of the Market House by outside traders. The decision was to increase the fee for a stall to 5/- for Dursley ratepayers and 10/- for others. It was further resolved to close the Market House to stallholders at 10 pm and to provide two suspended gas lights for use on Saturdays.

December 4th 1922 - The Parish Council urged the need of a public lavatory in the town, specifically in the Market House near the SW corner. It was decided to ask the Council to submit plans; they then suggested that the West end was a more suitable site for a urinal as it could be better ventilated.

May 8th 1924 - The tenants wrote asking for a contribution towards providing sanitary accommodation inside the Town Hall. The Parish Council wrote pointing out that the public lavatory could be provided in conjunction with this improvement; this was agreed unanimously. Resolved to reduce the stall rent for Dursley ratepayers to 2/6.

July 8th 1924 - Because of the alterations, redecoration of the West end of the building was approved, as was the provision of a coal house and the removal of all billposting boards.

February 22nd 1926 - Fire insurance was increased to £1000. A request for a lock-up butchers shop in the Market House was made by a local trader. It was thought essential to keep the lower part of the building open, so the proposal was rejected.

January 28th 1927 - The Fire Brigade asked for hooks to be fixed to the pillars for the purpose of drying hoses. Complaints of gas leaks in the hall provoked the wish to change to electric lights; estimates were called for.

March 10th 1927 - Mr S. Bloodworth & Son's tender for £18-16-0 was accepted for reflooring the Hall. Mr T.J. Holmes estimate of £25-16-0 for installing electric light with fittings was accepted. The efficiency of the fire bell was doubted so estimates for a electric alarm were requested.

February 10th 1928 - A "Klaxon" alarm was bought for £12-5-0.

August 12th 1929 - The Parish Council complained of untidiness after the market, suggesting that a wire basket be provided for refuse. It was decided to colour and paint the outside of the building and to make good the paving on the ground floor.

March 26th 1930 - Repaving would be held over as the estimates for relaying 86 sq. yds. were £111-16-0 and £107-10-0 respectively. Heating of the building was considered; the existing stove was old and inadequate so it was resolved to fit a new "Tortoise" stove with a pipe inside the building. The Parish Council reported that it had made other arrangements for a fire alarm so the one in the Town Hall was not necessary.

September 7th 1931 - The Trustees allowed the Parish Council to place two litter receptacles in the Market House provided that they were emptied regularly. A supply of free paving stones had been obtained from the Highways Surveyor and these would be laid down in the Market House.

May 31st 1932 - The "Klaxon" fire alarm was sold to Wotton-under Edge Fire Brigade for £4.

September 15th 1932 - Post Office Telephones requested permission to erect a telephone kiosk in the NE corner of the Market House.

February 9th 1933 - The Charity Commissioners suggested that part of the balance of funds of £188 should be invested. It was decided instead to provide iron entrance gates to the new Kingshill Cemetery at a cost of £94.

September 20th 1934 - A suggestion was made to the Trustees that the upstairs lavatory in the Town Hall be made available for ladies instead of the proposed new lavatory in Long Street; this was not agreed. The Trustees did not agree to allow a penny-in-the-slot weighing machine to be placed in the Market House nor to the parking of cycles there.

May 25th 1936 - A fire extinguisher was bought and fixed for £4-10-0. An application by the L.M.S. Rail Co. for a direction sign to the station was refused. The placing of a seat for the public was agreed.

July 29th 1937 - Agreed to redecorate the outside of the Town Hall. Damage was reported caused by the ladder of the gasman accessing the street lamp; the Gas Company was asked to take care in future.

July 27th 1939 - The Parish Council requested that a 6 foot screen be erected between the pillars opposite the Police Station to screen the lavatory; the idea was rejected.

March 10th 1941 - The building was requisitioned by the Rural District Council.

October 23rd 1941 - The Parish Council asked the Trustees to consider insuring the Church Clock and Carillon against War Damage; it was agreed to do this for a period up to three years.

Note: No meetings are minuted between 1941 and 1947 [World War II].

December 7th 1947 - It was decided to obtain tenders for work on the exterior.

March 30th 1950 - Tenders of £255 were too high to proceed.

September 1st 1950 - The R.D.C. gave notice of release from requisition from 19th Aug 1950.

September 19th 1960 - A letter from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government gave notice that the Town Hall had been included on the list of buildings of special Architectural or Historic Interest on June 23rd 1952.

August 9th 1961 - It was noticed that no rent had ever been received for the telephone kiosk. [*Note: Permission was given on September 15th 1932!*].

Ronald Edwards, Architect of Dursley, was requested to produce a report of the essential external repairs required with an estimate of the cost.

January 29th 1963 - The rent of the public convenience was increased to £1 per month.

February 3rd 1964 - A thorough survey by the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works together with Mr R. Edwards had given an estimate of repairs at £6000. The Ministry would give £1000 and Mr Hiram Winterbotham had offered £1000 in addition. It was decided to make a public appeal.

March 9th 1964 - This meeting set up the public appeal to be called: "The Dursley Market House Restoration Appeal".

April 6th 1964 - A brochure was prepared and approved.

September 7th 1964 - Fund raising stood at £5220. Discussion noted that the public would like to see the building reroofed with Cotswold tiles.

April 12th 1965 - The fund now stood at £7489.

November 23rd 1965 - The Trustees were still £1000 short for a full restoration.

July 20th 1966 - The restoration was progressing in a satisfactory manner. The final cost would be £6860 approximately plus architects fees. The colouring of Queen Anne and the Estcourt Coat of Arms was not included but would be left until the financial position was clearer. Heating would be by off-peak night-storage heaters. The reopening ceremony would coincide with a display of floral art and be followed by a Wine & Cheese Party whose proceeds would be devoted to the restoration fund.

The Clerk, Mr George Walsh, retired after 57 years service to be succeeded by Mr Eric Heath.

September 7th 1966 - The cost of providing a stone plaque to commemorate the restoration would be £28 so no further action was taken.

October 21st 1966 - Providing funds became available, the Trustees would buy: 50 stacking chairs; 12 or 24 stacking tables (2' x 2'); 6 dozen cups, saucers and plates in Melamine; tea spoons and tea knives; 12 one pint jugs; 12 sugar basins; 12 heavy glass ashtrays.

The fire insurance was raised to £10,000. Permission was given to Dursley Chamber of Trade to hang Christmas lights from the Market House.

March 23rd 1967 - The old toll board setting out the ancient market tolls was erected on the stairway.

January 24th 1968 - The cost of restoration was £6,970-10-6 against the agreed sum of £6,999. This was arrived at from a figure of £7,909 less £910 for items not allowed for grant purposes from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. Curtains for the windows were thought desirable and the advice of a ladies organisation was sought through a Gazette article.

July 31st 1969 - A piece of the Queen Anne statue had fallen off; authorisation was given to have the necessary repair carried out as well as a repair to the handrail outside the door, this having been wrenched off.

November 7th 1969 - Curtain material at 16/6d a yard was chosen (red).

April 28th 1971 - The platform made by Philip Ford & Son at the request of the Flower Arrangement Society was now in place. The Flower Society donated £5 towards the cost even though they no longer used the Hall.

The lights (3 tungsten filament lamps) were to be replaced by three 8 foot fluorescent tubes because of complaints received about the standard of lighting.

July 3rd 1972 - A tender of £725 for external redecoration and painting was accepted. This eventually rose to £1097 because of a building strike and a rise in the cost of hiring scaffolding.

August 30th 1973 - A letter from the County Chief Fire Officer stating that the means of escape in case of fire was not up to present day standards caused consternation.

October 24th 1974 - The feasibility of installing a second W.C. would be explored and carried out if possible at a reasonable cost.

December 15th 1975 - The purchase of 12 additional ashtrays was authorised.

May 25th 1976 - The toll board was renovated and re-erected. Insurance was raised to £50,000. Twenty additional stacking chairs were acquired.

March 15th 1977 - Improvements put in train were: insulation of roof space; double glazing and sound-proofing; kitchen improvements; draught-proofing; general repairs of cracks and gutters; additional heaters.

Research on the Dursley Market Charter was being carried out by Mr James McGinley, MA. Mr McGinley had furnished a copy of the Charter granted to Nicholas Wykes and his heirs by Henry VIII in the 19th year of his reign.

March 15th 1978 - Insurance was raised to £100,625. External decoration had been carried out at a cost of £2690. A tender of £925-70 had been accepted for internal redecoration. The bad weather had damaged stonework which could cost £2000 to put right.

March 19th 1980 - In a letter dated September 17th 1979, the Chief Fire Officer stated that there had been misunderstandings: providing that certain safeguards were adhered to, it was reasonable to accept the single staircase for use of the building; however, if the hall was used to maximum capacity for functions he would be concerned at the inadequacy of the means of escape.

Stroud District Council proposed to close the public convenience at the Market House and asked for the Trustee's comments. Consultation was meaningless, they said, as the closure had already taken place.

April 30th 1980 - This special meeting was attended by an officer of S.D.C. He maintained that it was not possible to bring the lavatory up to current requirements and he could not recommend its retention.

June 16th 1981 - The Architect, Mr Ron Edwards, reported that the stonework had been restored and he was trying to get the County Divisional Surveyor to provide protection at the western corners to avoid traffic damage.

November 17th 1981 - Permission was given to the Town Council to erect plaques to record the names of Dursley's Bailiffs, Chairmen and Mayors which would mark the wedding of the Prince of Wales to Lady Diana Spencer.

August 2nd 1982 - Dursley Chamber of Trade was permitted to place hanging baskets around the Market House and to affix brackets to support Christmas lighting.

January 31st 1983 - The Trustees were greatly concerned that a young person, later caught by the Police, had set fire to the seat under the Town Hall; the whole building could have been burnt down! It was agreed to request the Town Council not to replace the seat. The curtains were replaced.

September 5th 1983 - The Clerk, Mr Eric Heath, retired due to ill-health and Mrs D.P.B. Barton was appointed in his place. The loan of the staging for use as a saluting base for:

- Royal Naval Association re-dedication of Colours.
- Gloucester Regiment Beating Retreat on the Recreation Ground.

was approved in each case.

January 30th 1984 - Insurance was increased to £155,000. Redecoration outside would cost £4560 in total and would be done in the Lister holiday period as there would be less traffic about. An incident occurred when a very large vehicle (under Police escort) became completely jammed at the Market Place, the Trustees were told.

November 28th 1984 - In an attempt to secure funds, letters had been written to:

- Gloucestershire County Council.
- Stroud District Council
- English Heritage
- Dursley Town Council.

The only reply came from the Town Council who donated £75.

Vandals had on two occasions barricaded the Town Hall door while meetings were in progress inside. The Police promised to pay special attention to the matter.

April 3rd 1985 - Discussions about enclosing the stone steps to the Town Hall took place with the Chief Fire Officer - such a move would keep vandals away from the door. Building regulations meant that there would be major obstruction of the next arch which could not be recommended.

July 24th 1985 - The Play Group Organiser reported that the Social Services, part of Glos. C.C., who register Play Groups were unhappy about the lack of a fire escape. The Chairman reported that provided the area at the foot of the stairs was kept clear, including on market days, the single staircase was acceptable for lower occupancy.

Permission was not granted to the Chamber of Trade to attach two Christmas motifs: it was not thought to be appropriate. The Trustees thought that floodlighting would be more in keeping with the dignity of the building.

The old toilet had been altered to take the street cleaners tools and barrow without the permission of the Trustees.

July 8th 1986 - The heating system was considered to be out-of-date and full of asbestos; an order to M.E.B. to replace the heaters was agreed at a cost of £1010. An Asian trader with a stall was permitted to enter the building to pray at the appropriate times.

April 1st 1987 - The Department of the Environment advised that the building had been upgraded to Grade II* status because of its importance as being of more than special interest - only some 4% achieved this.

May 20th 1987 - At a meeting with the Fire Officer, the Women's Institute learnt that the building was safe for meetings with a limited number of people present.

March 16th 1988 - New kitchen fittings had met with the approval of users.

November 23rd 1988 - Insurance on the building was increased to £300,000. A down-pipe fell off the wall onto a passing car, causing damage of £100.

March 1st 1989 - The old Town Crier's bell was allowed to be placed in a cabinet in the Hall. The stacking tables were criticised as being heavy and awkward; this was a big grumble of users.

October 23rd 1989 - On the Insurer's advice, the insurance was raised to £350,000.

October 14th 1991 - The bookings office was transferred to the Swimming Pool when Stroud Building Society felt no longer able to oblige. Insurance cover was put up to £400,000.

June 29th 1992 - New, lighter and more convenient tables would be too expensive and could not be justified.

Long discussion agreed that a narrow strip of paint on the edge of the outside steps would help people use the Hall more safely even though it may be detrimental to the status of the building.

August 4th 1993 - This meeting was called to discuss the future financing of the building. Income had fallen from £3786 to £1293 and would fall lower next year. The Nursery School was closing, having not been permitted a license because of the building's lack of safe egress; the market did not operate; long-standing bookings were falling off, e.g. the W.I. It was suggested that the only organisation that could levy money to support the building was the Town Council. They should be contacted to see if they would take on the responsibility of running it.

January 5th 1994 - Meetings had been held to assess details of the future of the Town Hall:

- With Fire & Rescue Service over the impending closure of the Nursery School.
- With Fire & Rescue, Police, Traffic Manager and Conservation Architect.
- With representatives of the Town Council to receive views on the possibility of taking over financial responsibility.

In the meantime a Magistrates hearing had decided that the Nursery School should close immediately. A financial report stated that there was a shortfall of income over expenditure of £1000 for 1993.

May 14th 1994 - This special meeting was convened with representatives of the Town Council. The Charity Commissioners had replied to letters about the requirements necessary to transfer Trustee-ship to the Town Council.

November 24th 1994 - Reports of further meetings were given.

April 4th 1994 - The Trustees and representatives of the Town Council agreed that the Council was best placed to protect the future of the Town Hall.

September 8th 1994 - The Trustees heard that the Council, by a unanimous vote, had agreed to take responsibility for the Town Hall and Market House, subject to the approval of the Charity Commission. The Trustees then agreed formally to transfer the trustee-ship to Dursley Town Council at the earliest opportunity by a unanimous vote.

March 29th 1995 - Draft copies of the Charity Commission's proposal were circulated.

October 30th 1995 - The final meeting of the present Trustees was held. Little money was coming in from bookings and only £3689 would be available to hand over to the Council. The Solicitors said that there were no problems; the scheme had been checked by the Inland Revenue and was distributed to each Trustee. It would be put on public display for one month. After that, if no objection had been received, the transfer could take place. The most convenient time to transfer responsibility was December 31st 1995. It was decided that a handing-over ceremony should be held consisting of a formal handing-over followed by a social occasion.

January 8th 1996 - The Handing-over Ceremony took place before the Trustees, members of Dursley Town Council and invited guests. All were invited to sign a final page in the Minute Book.

Mr Peter Bailey, Chairman of the Trustees spoke of the work of the Trustees and thanked those who had contributed over the years.

Mrs Pat Connors, Mayor of Dursley, accepted the transfer of responsibility on behalf of Dursley Town Council.