

Appendix Z

GREAT STANMORE LOCAL POLL (1930)¹

In 1930 controversy erupted in Great Stanmore parish over an application from a builder, Mr. Henry J. Clare,² to **divert a field footpath** that ran from Elm Park to Marsh Lane. To consider the matter, a Parish Meeting was called for the 21 July, taking place at the Bernays Institute. The meeting was described by the *Hendon Times and Guardian* as being “overcrowded”, and despite proceedings being “interrupted on several occasions” both supporters and opponents of the diversion were allowed to state their views “at some length”.

The meeting was chaired by the Chairman of the Parish Council, Sir John Fitzgerald.³ He stated that upon the election of the council [the last elections were in 1928] its first act was to appoint a footpaths committee.⁴ He claimed that the committee had met “every week since they had been formed, and had walked over all the footpaths.... In view of the work of the committee the Council were apt to agree with their recommendations.”

Mr. B.C. Alford⁵, one of those who had called the parish meeting, stated that he was convinced the application was illegal: he believed Clare did not own the whole of the land through which the footpath passed, and therefore the Parish Council should not give permission for the diversion. The Chairman refused to discuss the legal position stating it would be solved by the Hendon Rural District Council or Quarter Sessions. He said the point to consider was whether the diversion was beneficial for the parish or not.

Heated discussions then took place. For example, a Mr. Potter⁶ said the diversion was a serious matter, and there was “no greater crime than the way in which building estates were being developed today they should say to the builder ‘Hands off the footpaths’.” He added, “when the decision of the Council was arrived at only four Mussolinis voted for it.”

At one point parish councillor Cllr. John Armour read a letter that had been distributed round Stanmore by [former parish councillor] Samuel Wallrock.⁷ Armour stated that when he “first came to the district Elm Park was a nice road, and remained so until Mr. Wallrock came with his estate. Mr. Wallrock had made more mess than anyone, and the Hendon Rural District Council had finished the job (hear, hear)” and that “the Council [had] acted strictly in the interests of Stanmore by granting the diversion (hear, hear).”

Eventually those present at the meeting voted on the following motion:

That this meeting of the parishioners of Great Stanmore resolves that the motion passed by the Parish Council on June 10, recommending the granting of the application in respect of the field footpath, Elm Park — Marsh Lane, be not confirmed.

On a show of hands the motion was defeated by 111 votes to 42. Mr. Alford demanded, and Mr. P. Davenport seconded, that a poll should be taken.

The poll duly took place on 31 July 1930 with the polling station set up at the Bernays Institute.

Electors: 1,160
Valid votes: 456
T'out: 39.3%

Preference	Votes	%
In favour of the diversion	308	67.5
Against the diversion	<u>148</u>	<u>32.5</u>
	160	35.0

Notes

1. As detailed elsewhere in this volume, Minute Books for Great Stanmore Parish Council have not been located for the period November 1914 - February 1933. Consequently, this Appendix has depended, in particular, on the accuracy of two articles in the *Hendon Times and Guardian* (editions for 25 July and 1 August 1930).
2. Henry J. Clare was a building contractor in the Stanmore area. After St. Bartholomew's Hospital sold its farmland, Clare was one of those who bought plots. By 1933 he had opened an office adjacent to Stanmore Village railway station and was building houses in Abercorn Road, Belmont Lane and Old Church Lane. "Henry J. Clare" was incorporated as a private limited company on 24 May 1935. The company was still active in Harrow at least as late as 1967 and is currently [May 2020] a "developer of building projects" with a registered office in Wadebridge, Cornwall.
3. Sir John Fitzgerald (1884-1957) was an Irish Baronet and Knight of Kerry. He inherited Warren House, Stanmore, on the death in 1922 of his grandmother, Clarissa Bischoffsheim.
4. The footpaths committee reported to the Parish Council at its meeting on 21 June 1928 that there were nine miles of footpaths in the parish and that "the public appear to value increasingly the advantages of footpaths as a means of avoiding modern traffic conditions". (It is pertinent to note that at the same meeting the Council unanimously refused an application from Clare to divert a footpath from Elm Park to Marsh Lane.)
5. A "William C. Allford" had been an unsuccessful candidate at the 1928 Great Stanmore Parish Council election. It is possible that this is the same person as "Mr. B.C. Alford".
6. It is possible that this was Thomas J. Potter. He had been an unsuccessful candidate at the 1928 Great Stanmore Parish Council election.
7. Samuel Wallrock was elected as a parish councillor at the 1928 Great Stanmore Parish Council election, but resigned his seat a few months later. He was a London estate agent who had bought a property ('The Croft' on Old Church Lane) and 4.5 acres of adjacent land in 1923. 'The Croft' was demolished and by November 1929 Wallrock had built a replacement mock Tudor Manor House — to designs by architect Douglas Wood, who coincidentally replaced him on the Parish Council — reputedly at a cost of £100,000. The property was sold in 1933 on Wallrock being declared bankrupt. He was a renowned horticulturist and one-time president of the Sweet Pea Society. Some of the grounds of Wallrock's Manor House Estate form today's Bernays Gardens. See, in particular, *The Register News-Pictorial*, 23 November 1929, p. 22; also at <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/53428536>. He died in 1954 at the age of 73.