

We beg the attention of our readers to the Report of the Select Vestry of this township inserted in our last page. We have been requested to notice that the total decrease of paupers during the last year is 130, instead of 108 as erroneously stated in the Report.

Report of the Select Vestry

FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF WHITEHAVEN,

For the Year ending 25th March, 1822.

On Tuesday last the Annual Vestry Meeting was held at the Poor-house, in this Town, when the following Report from the Select Vestry appointed last year was read and ordered to be printed.

The Select Vestry, having completed the period of their appointment, present a Report of their proceedings for the past year.

Adopting the plan laid down by their predecessors, and which they would strongly recommend to be followed in future, the Vestry immediately on entering into office, divided themselves into District Committees for the purpose of visiting at their abodes, every person receiving relief, and, also, such as might, in future, apply for parochial relief, to ascertain their respective circumstances, in order that such aid might be awarded by the Vestry as the result of the inquiries pointed out. From the continuance of this strict investigation, they believe that the best consequences have ensued: for, although it did not prevent the actually necessitous from applying, yet it operated as a powerful check on the impositions of the idle and profligate, whose wants principally arise from their own vicious and improvident habits.

The Vestry have been enabled to make various reductions in the allowances to mothers of illegitimate children, and, when possible, the fathers have either been made to pay, or have been punished by imprisonment in the House of Correction; some women, too, for a repetition of the offence have been committed to the same place.

The circumstances of Whitehaven Paupers, residing in distant Parishes, have, as far as possible, been strictly examined into, and, under this head, considerable reductions have been effected. Those residing at Lyngemount, Harrington, and the neighbouring towns attended the Vestry for examination.

The Vestry have acted upon the principle, that under no circumstances whatever should relief be extended to able-bodied Paupers, without receiving some portion of their labour in return, and that for such labour the lowest wage should be given; the consequence has been that nearly in every such case of application, the Pauper soon contrived to obtain employment elsewhere, and: thus relieved the Township from his maintenance. Connected with labour—that most important principle in the management of Parish Affairs—is the employment of all the inmates of the Workhouse, and, although they mainly consist of children and aged and impotent persons, their earnings have been very considerable. In the course of the year, the Vestry ordered a stove to be erected for the purpose of preparing old rope for oakum: this has been found extremely beneficial, and since its erection, in September, there have been about 700 stones of oakum manufactured, part of which is kept for sale, at the Workhouse, and the other portion has been prepared for ship-owners, and dealers in the article. From this and other labour in the House, the Township has received credit in the Guardian's Accounts, for about £55.

The average weekly number of persons in the Workhouse, during the past year, was 110, of whom 10 were Pauper Lodgers; and the average weekly Expenditure, exclusive of clothing, was £7 17s. 2d., or 1s. 5d. each. Before quitting the subject of Paupers and Expenditure, the Vestry would briefly allude to the Lists which they published of the persons who, at the beginning of last year, were receiving Parish Relief, and they trust that similar Lists will regularly be printed by their successors. The benefit obtained from such publicity is, that it affords an opportunity of detecting those impostors who have escaped their vigilance, but who cannot elude the knowledge of their neighbours.—The Vestry desire to impress upon the minds of the Inhabitants, the duty they owe to themselves and the Township at large, of giving information of such characters whenever they come within their observation.

Deeply are the Vestry impressed with a conviction of pauperism being an evil of great magnitude, an unavoidable evil, however, and one which requires unceasing exertions to stay its progress. Under this feeling they have acted; they have spared no pains to lessen the number of persons dependent upon the Township, and have exercised extreme caution in admitting applicants into the class of regular Paupers. In many cases they have deemed it best to advance a little casual relief, rather than destroy the independence of their poorer brethren, by at once making them subservient to parish bounty. And they have the pleasure to congratulate their fellow-townsmen upon the gratifying fact, that the number of Paupers has, in the last year, been considerably diminished! To prove this interesting truth, they offer the following statement:—

Average number of Persons in the House (exclusive of Lodgers) for the year ending 25th March, 1822.	139
Do. 1821.	100
Decrease of In-door Paupers.....	39
Total number of Persons receiving Out-door Relief, 25th March, 1822.	562
Do. 1821.	495
Decrease of Out-door Paupers....	69
Total decrease of Paupers.....	108

For some time it was the opinion of the Vestry, that, in equity, every inhabitant, poor as well as rich, should be compelled to pay the Poor Rates. They understood that in other large towns, this principle had been acted upon, and they had the testimony of the Overseers of those towns to its benefits, for the Rates had been collected with greater ease, and much less dissatisfaction; and, although, at first, it operated with severity upon some few individuals, yet the hardship ceased, and the Rate ultimately fell, where it always ought to fall, upon the property. Encouraged by this information, and knowing that the tenements inhabited by the poor, were, from their exemption from all Assessments, let at immoderately high rents, the Vestry determined to enforce the principle in the August Rate, and a Resolution was unanimously passed, that, with the exception of Paupers belonging to the town, every other rated person should be compelled to pay: the result has been most satisfactory, for 900 rated inhabitants paid that Rate, who had never paid a Rate before; many landlords, too, have, in a most praise-worthy manner, lowered their rents:—and it is certain that, when the inhabitants are once convinced that no exemptions will be allowed, the work of collecting will become comparatively easy, and the dissatisfaction arising from neighbours not paying will entirely cease. Like the adoption of all extensive improvements, however, it will require time and great firmness on the part of the future Overseers, to perfect the measure. This plan, so efficacious in its operation, has, of course, materially increased the arduous labours of the Assistant Overseer, Mr. Braithwaite, who, during the year has, by his industry and exertion, given every satisfaction to the Overseers and Vestry, and who is recommended to the Township, as a fit person to continue in the office for the next year.

During the past year a considerable charge, amounting to £98. 9s. has been incurred by Law Expenses; but the Vestry can truly say, that, notwithstanding its amount, they are satisfied of the propriety of its expenditure. It was not without due consideration that any persons were removed from Whitehaven, and before a removal order was defended upon an appeal, the grounds upon which it was obtained, with such additional evidence as could be collected, were minutely re-examined. In the course of the year, the Parish Officers have had to defend Six Appeal Causes, and, with one exception, have succeeded in all. In the case excepted, they had removed a woman to Grysouthen, believing that place to be her settlement (for she had been relieved for years, by that parish; her husband, the son of an Irishman, having been born there,) but, when at the Sessions, from evidence which they could not anticipate, it was proved that she belonged to Thornthwaite, as the place of settlement of her husband's maternal grandfather.—So that even in this case, the Township had a parish found for her. One large family removed, by 2 orders, to another parish, and whose orders of removal were confirmed by the Sessions, had received parochial aid for many years from Whitehaven, and had cost the Township, during that time, a very considerable sum.

The Vestry would, in the next place, state the result of their labours, as it regards the disbursements of the year, and, perhaps, the benefits arising from the appointment of a Select Vestry may be best shown by exhibiting the account of the year in contrast with the accounts of the two preceding years.

The Guardian's Account, ending March, 1821, showed an Expenditure of £5,910
The Expenditure of the Year, ending March, 1822, (being the first after the appointment of a Select Vestry) was..... 4,166

Exhibiting a saving in one year of..... £1,044

The following is an Abstract of the present Guardian's Accounts; and, as was stated in the Abstract, read at the General Meeting, last year, so it may be noticed now, that every account against the township that could possibly be made up has been discharged.

An abstract of the Accounts from March, 1822, to March, 1823.	DR.	£	s.	d.
To Balance received from Mr. Fisher.....		39	19	8
To Cash from distant parishes and from other sources.....		863	10	9
To Cash from Overseers.....		3,215	11	0
		£4,149	1	5
	CR.	£	s.	d.
By Cash expended.....		4,147	16	5
By Balance on hand.....		1	5	0
		£4,149	1	5

The amount of Expenditure will therefore be..... £3,254 0 0
Making a saving, when compared with last year, of £912; and a gross saving, for the two years since the establishment of a Select Vestry, of £3000.

In conclusion, the Vestry would express, with unqualified pleasure, their sense of the great benefits arising to the Township from the activity, unwearied exertions, and co-operation of Mr. Brown, the Guardian, and from the steadiness and attention of Mr. Sherwen, the Governor of the Poor-house, and they would most respectfully beg to recommend those Officers to the General Vestry, as fit and proper persons to continue in their respective situations for the next year; nor would they fulfil the last of their duties, were they not to express their approbation of the steady and persevering activity and cordial union of the Overseers.

Officers nominated for 1823.

OVERSEERS.

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| James Bell, | Robert Curwen, |
| Thomas Stubbs, | Thos. Murray, |
| Jonathan Harrison, | Francis Forsler, |
| George Nutford, | Thos. Furness, |
| H. J. Johnson, | Wm. Mitchell, |
| M. Hutchinson, | Jos. Nicholson. |

From this number the Magistrates select four.

RECOMMENDED FOR SYSTEM.

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Daniel Bird | George Gibson |
| Benjamin Brisco | |

From this number the Magistrates select one.

SELECT VESTRY.

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Benjamin Brisco | Joseph Thompson |
| William Atkinson | Job Lepper |
| James Connell | Anthony Steel |
| John Grisdale | John Clementson |
| Michael Hutchinson | Isaac Nicholson |
| William Miller | Isaac Kirkbride |
| John Roan | John Leathery |
| John Askew | Robert Cornick |
| William Wilson | Michael Keswick |
| John Ormandy | Anthony Moore |

THE FOLLOWING OFFICERS WERE RE-ELECTED.

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| John Brown, Guardian of the Poor. |
| William Sherwen, Governor of the Poor House. |
| John Braithwaite, Collector of the Poor Rates. |

Mr. JOHN POOLE was recommended as Surgeon to the Poor-house.

Before the Meeting was dissolved the following Resolution was read, and unanimously adopted:—

TO THE HONOURABLE THE COMMONS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.

The humble Petition of the rated Inhabitants of the Township of Whitehaven, in the Parish of St. Bees, in the County of Cumberland, assembled in General Vestry,

Showeth,—That several years ago the Inhabitants of the said Township of Whitehaven adopted the provisions of the Act, passed in the 22d year of the reign of his late Majesty, King George the Third, "for the better Relief and Employment of the Poor;" since which time, the said Township has been incorporated, and the concerns of the Poor thereof have been managed according to the directions of the said Act.

That your Petitioners have been lately desirous of availing themselves of the benefits of the Act, passed in the 59th year of the reign of his said late Majesty, "to amend the Laws for the Relief of the Poor," by establishing a Select Vestry for the concerns of the Poor of their said Township, and electing an Assistant Overseer for attending to the care and employment of the Poor; but have been advised that by reason of their Incorporation under the said first-mentioned Act, they cannot receive the benefit of the subsequent Act, and that their Incorporation under the former Act can only be dissolved by the authority of Parliament.

That your Petitioners have sustained several other inconveniences from their Incorporation under the said Act, the provisions of which they conceive to be in many respects injudicious and defective, and as they understand that a Bill is about to be brought into your Honourable House for altering and amending the Laws relating to the Poor,

They, therefore, humbly pray that in passing such Bill a Clause may be introduced to enable such Parishes, Townships, or Places as have become incorporated under the said Act, passed in the 22d year of his late Majesty's reign, to dissolve such their Incorporation without the necessity of a Special Act of Parliament for the purpose, or that your Petitioners may have such other relief as to your Honourable House may seem proper. And your Petitioners will ever pray.

