

GLAMORGAN RECORD OFFICE/ARCHIFDY MORGANNWG

Reference code: GB 0214 LBA

Title: Aberdare Local Board of Health

Dates : 1854-1908

Level of description: Fonds

Extent and medium: 0.38 cubic metres (41 vols., 1 box)

Name of creator(s): Aberdare Local Board of Health

Administrative/biographical history

Local boards of health were set up under the Public Health Act of 1848 (11 and 12 Vict. c.23), amended by the Local Government Act of 1858 (21 and 22 Vict. c.98). These Acts did not impose a uniform system of local public health authorities on the whole country simultaneously, but enabled individual localities, following certain procedures, to adopt the provisions of the Acts and become local boards of health if they so wished. Consequently, local boards were set up at different dates in different areas, and in some areas none were set up at all. They were usually set up only at the request of local inhabitants but in areas with a very high death rate it was possible for the Acts to be imposed by the General Board of Health.

It was not until the passing of the Public Health Act of 1872 (35 and 36 Vict. ch.79) that an attempt was made to establish a comprehensive system of local authorities for public health matters. Wales (and England) was divided by the Act into urban sanitary and rural sanitary districts. Where local boards of health had been set up, these became the local authorities in the urban sanitary districts (except in municipal boroughs, where the borough council was the sanitary authority). The poor law Boards of Guardians or Unions became responsible for public health in rural sanitary districts, which consisted of all those parts of the poor law unions which were not included in urban sanitary districts. In 1875, a new Public Health Act (38 and 39 Vict. ch.55) revised, consolidated and superseded all previous acts relating to public health.

Local boards of health were responsible for matters relating to public health and civic amenities: the provision of a water supply and sewerage, the cleansing of streets, maintenance of highways, approval of building plans, registration of slaughter houses, and provision of parks, as well as other functions. They were also in some cases responsible for burial grounds, although in some areas these were provided by separate burial boards. Members of the boards were elected by all those in the local board area who paid rates; a system of multiple votes based on the value of the ratepayers' property was in operation and there was a property qualification for those who wished to stand for election. The boards appointed a salaried clerk, treasurer, surveyor, inspector of nuisances, and usually a medical officer of health, although this was not compulsory until 1872.

Local boards of health and urban sanitary districts were superseded in January 1895 by urban district councils, under the Local Government Act of 1894 (56 and 57 Vict. c.73). Under the same Act, rural sanitary districts ceased to be the responsibility of the poor law unions and separate rural district councils were established. The powers and boundaries of the districts remained unchanged, and in many cases the members and officers of the authorities also remained the same, although elections for the new district councils were held in December 1894. For these reasons, it is not unusual to find that the minutes book and sometimes other records of the local board of health for the urban sanitary district remained in use by the successor urban district council. Local boards of health were supervised centrally to a greater or lesser extent, first by the General Board of Health (1848-58), then by the Local Government Act Office, a department of the Home Office, (1858-71), and finally by the Local Government Board (1871-94).

Bibliography

Record Sources for Local History by Philip Riden (Record Office library reference R/694) gives in chapter five a brief account of the development of local boards of health.

'*A Sanitary survey of Glamorganshire*', by William Williams, Medical Officer of Health for the Glamorgan County Council, published in 1895 (Record Office library reference G/134) contains useful information on the urban sanitary and rural sanitary districts in Glamorgan, at the time of their change to urban district councils and rural district councils. (The surveys were carried out between 1893 and 1895.)

'Investment in Public Health Provision in the Mining Valleys of South Wales 1860-1914', by Hamish Richards, in *Modern South Wales. Essays in Economic History*, edited by Colin Baber and L.J. Williams. (Record Office library reference W/532)

Census returns (enumerator's books) for 1871 give the local board, and those for 1881 and 1891 give the urban sanitary district, in which any particular locality falls; they can thus be useful for determining the areas covered by individual boards.

Ordnance Survey maps, first edition (c. 1875), six-inch to the mile scale, also show the boundaries of urban sanitary districts.

Rammell's report on Merthyr Tydfil, with an introduction to the historical background by Tydfil Thomas, is reproduced in *Old Aberdare* volume 1, 1976 (Record Office library reference 61/14)

Archival history

The records were inherited by the Aberdare Urban District Council in 1895.

Immediate source of acquisition

Deposited by Aberdare Urban District Council in 1947 (accessions nos. 71 and 78; file number 11/0118/05); a further deposit was made by Cynon Valley Borough Council in 1974 (accession no. 3318; file number 11/0625/1).

Scope and content

Minutes, 1854 - 1894; committee minutes, 1866 - 1900 (including committee minutes for Aberdare UDC, 1895 - 1900); ledgers, 1875 - 1878; letter books, 1866 - 1894; waterworks company balance sheets, 1858 - 1872; journal of inspector of canal boats, 1890 - 1901.

Appraisal, destruction and scheduling information

All records which meet the collection policy of the Glamorgan Record Office have been retained.

Accruals

Accruals are not expected

System of arrangement**Conditions governing access**

Open access

Conditions governing reproduction

Normal Glamorgan Record Office conditions apply.

Language/scripts of material

English

Physical characteristics and technical requirements

Fair to poor condition

Finding aids

Detailed list available.

Existence and location of originals**Existence and location of copies****Related units of description**

Records of Aberdare Burial Board (BUBA)

Records of Aberdare Urban District Council (UDAB)

Aberdare Local Board: byelaws with respect to nuisances, 1894 (DX444/1)

Records relating to individual local boards of health can be found among the records of the General Board of Health (1848-58), the Local Government Act Office (1858-71), and the Local Government Board (1871-94) held at the National Archives, London.

Publication note

Note

Some of the items have not been assigned individual reference codes and a substantial quantity of records (3 boxes) have been provided with only an interim list. These records are not included in this collection level description.

Archivist's note

Compiled by Richard Morgan for the Glamorgan Record Office

Rules or conventions

This description follows Glamorgan Record Office guidelines based on ISAD(G) compatible cataloguing guidelines for fonds level descriptions used by the Archives Network Wales.

Date of description

November 1999. Revised February 2006 and September 2007

Minutes books

LBA/1-12	Minutes books [12 vols.]	1854-1894
LBA/13, 14	Committee minutes books [2 vols.]	1866-1900
LBA/42	Water Committee minutes book] [1 vol.]	Jun 1893-Jan 1908
LBA/15-39	Letterbooks [25 vols.]	1866-1895
LBA/40	Accounts ledger [1 vol.]	1875-1878
LBA/41	Waterworks Co balance sheets [1 file]	1858-1872
LBA/43	Certificates of registration of canal boats under the Canal Boats Acts, etc. Specifying boat number, owner, address, master, etc [1 vol.]	Nov 1890-Jan 1891
LBA/44	Journal of inspector of canal boats Specifying date, name or number of boat, place of registration, owner and address, name of master, etc [1 vol.]	Nov 1890-Dec 1898
LBA/45/1-7	Papers, specifications, notices and correspondence relating to Aberdare sewerage schemes [formerly held in 'box 14'] [7 bdles.]	1877-1881