

Banbury Borough

Banbury originally had its rights, including a 'portmoot' (meeting of the leading inhabitants), markets and fairs, conferred by the Bishop of Lincoln in the 12th century. These were confirmed in Letters Patent of Mary Tudor in 1554. By this time the town was governed by a Common Council consisting of Bailiff (Mayor), 12 Aldermen and 12 Chief Burgesses, and was allowed to retain the customary privileges of holding markets and fairs, appointing its own Justices of the Peace and representation in Parliament. During the 18th century, it was dominated by the Norths of Wroxton Abbey, who used their family connections and government patronage to pack the Borough Corporation with their own supporters. However, reforms in the 19th century transferred power to the growing middle classes and led to significant improvements in the town's economic and social conditions.

The Borough archives include:

- **Founding documents:** including Letters Patent of Mary & James I (1554 & 1608), charter of George I (July 1718)
- **Records of early administrative proceedings:** including the minute books of the Corporation (1754-1833) and Improvement Commissioners (1824-1840), Borough Journals (1718-1835) and Banbury Borough Town Book (1562-1741)
- **Judicial records:** including the Manorial Court which dealt mainly with "nuisances" (1804-1837) and Court of Record which dealt with civil matters (1723-1856)
- **Minute books of the reformed Council and its various committees:** including the Borough Watch Committee (1836-1931), Borough Farm & Allotments Committee (1896-1940), Banbury Recreation Ground and Bathing Company (1867-1888), Education Committee (1903-1945)

Where are these records?

Banbury Borough archives are held at Oxfordshire History Centre.

Where is the catalogue?

Banbury Borough archives can be searched online using [Heritage Search](#)

[Visiting and contacting Oxfordshire History Centre.](#)