

Document Transcript 1

Preparations for the Queen's Visit: Extracts from the Norwich Assembly Proceedings Book, The Guildhall June-July 1578

20 June 1578

This day it is agreed that it shall be lawful for any citizen or inhabitant to procure any mason, carpenter, joiner, reeder [thatcher], painter, and others of such like occupation, out of any place in the country, and to work here in the City with the citizens and inhabitants for the repairing and beautifying of the houses here between this and the last day of August next. And they [are] to work without prejudice or forfeiture, notwithstanding any law heretofore made in this City. And that all citizens and inhabitants that shall have in commandment to store [restore] and to cast [plaster] their houses towards the street side, and shall not do it between this and the last day of July next ensuing, shall suffer pain of imprisonment, and to undergo such fine and penalty as Master Mayor and certain of the justices shall set upon them. And that tilers, plasterers, or any other of what occupation soever they be, may without prejudice do any thing for the setting forth or beautifying of any houses towards the street side.

24 June 1578

Imprimis [in the first place] that there shall be letters sent by Master Mayor [Sir Robert Wood] to the Mayor of [Kings] Lynn [Robert Hullior] and other places, to request them to send certain masons hither that be good workmen, to work for the beautifying of the City against the Queen's coming. And that these workmen that shall be sent hither shall have allowed their reasonable charges for their coming hither and going back. And [they are] to be set a-work without incurring any danger by reason of any law made within this City heretofore [previously].

And that order be taken among the lime-burners that they sell not their lime so near but that there may be always reserved sufficient [lime] to serve the necessity of the City and the citizens.

And where the pathing is decayed against [next to] any men's houses, [it is allowed] that any man shall repair their defaults [defects] with so convenient speed as may [be]. And where it cannot conveniently be pathed before her Majesty's coming, then [it is required] to gravel the waste and noisome [uncultivated and unpleasant] places.

And that the river and the necessaries [toilets] adjoining to the river may before the sixth day of August next be amended and repaired by the commandment of the Surveyor of the River, upon pain and forfeiture of such sum of money as by virtue of an old law made for the river and the streets may be set upon them.

And that the White Friars Bridge, with the advice of the Chamberlain's Counsellors, may be repaired and

amended for the present time with plank and board; and they [are] to call unto them such assistance as they shall think good to see that it may be done.

And for the better victualling of the City, it is agreed by the whole consent of this Assembly that during the Queen's Majesty's being [in Norwich], foreign butchers and victuallers shall be suffered [permitted] to bring and sell their victuals here in open market, so far as it [the food] be good and healthsome [healthy] for man's body, without contradiction or danger of any law or ordinance heretofore made in his City.

And that the butchers that dwell in the City, and all other foreign butchers that do kill any cattle in the City, shall from Saturday next until the last day of August convey the offal [innards] of the cattle that they or any of them shall kill, and bury the same [offal] in some convenient place out of the City, so as no annoyance may be. [This is to be done] upon pain of forfeiture of 10 shillings for every time that any one of them shall offend, and [if the offender doesn't have the money] the same to be levied by committing the offender to prison. And the forfeiture [is] to be divided into three parts: one part to Master Mayor, the other to the City, and the third to the presenter.

And the Cross in the Market [is] to be painted: the posts in timber colour with oil, and the rest to be new whited.

And the Pillory and Cage to be taken clean away within three or four days before her Majesty's coming, and for the time to be planked [covered with planks], and one other Pillory to be made to serve until some other order be taken.

And the wall at St John's Churchyard [St John Maddermarket] to be clean taken down for the widening of the street. And so far as the parishioners will bestow [contribute] the cost so as it may be done and re-edified again before the Queen's Majesty's coming, they shall have allowed and paid out of the Treasury £5.

And that the way without [outside] St Steven's Gate may be amended with gravel, and that Master Gooche may be called unto for the £20 that remaineth in his hands for that purpose.

And the muck-hill at Brasen Gate may be clean taken away at the charge of the Wards, and laid into some other grounds near adjoining. And the straightness of the way without [outside] St Giles' Gate [is to] be amended, and the hills cast down [flattened] and the way gravelled and the charge of the Ward and the inhabitants of the town of Heigham.

And that every innkeeper shall be charged [required] to have and to keep one good and able horse to serve for a post-horse or hackney-horse, and to be ready to serve as cause shall require. And [if] that every innkeeper being called before Master Mayor and warned to provide and to have such a horse by a

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[certain day] shall make default [fail to have a horse], [they] shall forfeit 20 shillings, to be divided into two parts: one part to the Mayor, and the other to the City, and to be levied as before.

And that during the Queen's Majesty's abode in this City, no dairy cattle shall be brought into this City to be milked, but everyone that has any cattle to milk shall milk them at the pasture where they be fed, or else keep them at home in their yards for that time. Upon pain of forfeiture for every time offending contrary to this order, twelvence to be levied and divided as before.

And that warning [is to] be given to the scourers of bays [washers of coarse woollen cloth] and combers of wool that dwell in any high street, that they do not annoy the streets with their washing or with the same of their wools.

And if any having a tenement [a house to live in] and no convenient necessary [toilet], and shall have warning given that he make such provision as the lanes or streets may not be annoyed [with waste]. And [he that] shall make default, shall forfeit for every month lacking a convenient necessary [toilet] 5 shillings.

And that after the first day of August next, no person nor persons shall keep nor suffer to be kept any horse, mare, colt, cow, or swine in the Castle dykes [ditches], town dykes [ditches], or lanes, until the last day of the same month. Upon pain of forfeiture of 3 shillings and fourpence for every one that shall offend in the same, to be divided into two parts: one half to the presenter, and the other half to the City.

And that no tallow be tried [melted down] in the City during the Queen's Majesty's abode in the City.

And for so much as upon present necessity for repairing of diverse decays in the City, the Chamberlain and his four Councillors are not sufficient [in number] to oversee the workmen. Therefore by consent of this house it is ordered that William Ives, Robert Rooke, John Sylver, and William Peter shall assist the Chamberlain, and oversee such workmen as shall be set a-work by the Chamberlain and his Councillors.

And finally, that warning [is to] be given by the Aldermen or by the Constables that every inhabitant do sweep and make clean their chimneys. Upon pain of forfeiture of 6 shillings and eightpence for any one that shall fortune to have any fire burn out at the top of the chimney by such negligence.

25 July 1578

This day, by the whole consent of the Assembly, it is agreed that Richard Sotherton, John Styngatt, William Ramsey, and [blank] Canne shall provide and take up three boats, and to convert and turn them into barges, and to furnish them so as they may be in a-readiness against the Queen's Majesty's coming, to be occupied as cause shall require. And also that other boats be

provided with telts [awnings for covered boats], so many as may conveniently be gotten.

And it is also agreed that for this present time, the five Waits shall have their wages which shall be due to them for the year that shall end at Midsummer next, every of them 36 shillings and eightpence. And further that every of them shall have 13 shillings fourpence for this year, given them in reward towards the making up of the same liveries.

Where [the] present occasion does minister cause for the setting forth of shows at the Queen's Majesty's coming, rewards and presents to be given to certain of the Council and officers and servants to Her Majesty and many others, causes great sums of money to be occupied, it is agreed by the whole consent of this house that £400 or £500 shall be taken up and borrowed, and that such persons as shall be bound for the repayment thereof, shall have counter-bond from the City to be saved harmless, and the money to be repaid again out of such stocks as do belong to the City at such time as they shall have their money paid which is due from Master John Chamberlain of Elingham and his sureties.

31 March 1579

This day, by the whole consent of this Assembly, it is agreed that the Chamberlain of the City, and those that be the Chamberlain's Councillors, shall have authority to sell so much of the apparel and other stuff and things that were prepared for shows against the Queen's Majesty's coming to this City as they shall think good; and the Chamberlain [is] to receive the money for the same.

Extract from the Norwich Mayor's Court Book, August 1578

2 August 1578

Whereas for the worship of the City against the receiving of the Queen's Majesty, it is thought convenient that forty bachelors be appointed to attend and to await upon Master Mayor, the Justices of [the] Peace, and Aldermen. And that they should apparel themselves with mandelian coats [long, sleeved jackets], hats, and slivers [ribbons or laces], all in one suit and one fashion in such sort as is appointed. By the consent of this house, it is agreed that if any of them shall refuse to apparel himself with the said mandelians, hats, and slivers, that then he so refusing, to be committed to prison, there to remain until such time as he shall pay to the use of the City 40 shillings.

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Glossary

Hackney-horse – a horse for hire, for general riding.

Joiner – a craftsperson whose occupation is to construct things by joining pieces of wood.

Lime-burner – a person whose occupation was to make lime by burning limestone. Lime was an important element in the mortar used for building in the sixteenth century.

Livery – the distinctive dress or uniform provided for and worn by an official, retainer, or employee – in this case the dress would have signalled that the Waits were associated with the City of Norwich.

Necessary – a privy or toilet. In the early modern period this would have been a small building or room outside a dwelling place, or without plumbing.

Post-horse – a horse kept at an inn or post-house for the specific purpose of post-riders, who delivered letters and related papers to recipients as required.

Presenter – the person who brings the case against the offender before the civic authorities: an informer.

Reeder – a reeder, or thatcher, was a craftsperson responsible for thatching buildings, usually houses. Thatching is covering the rooves of houses with straw or similar materials.

Tallow – a substance consisting of animal fats, which when processed was used for making candles and soap, and dressing leather as part of the tanning process.

The river – the River Wensum.

Victualling – the providing of food and other essential supplies.

Victualler – a person providing food and other supplies.

Waits – wind instrumentalists maintained by a city or town at public charge, for the purposes of providing appropriate music at appropriate civic and festive occasions.

Ward – an administrative division of a borough or city, originally under the jurisdiction of an alderman.

White Friars Bridge – this bridge crosses the River Wensum to the north of the City.