

members to turn up to meetings, when required. In 1734 Mayor Edward Box called a Hall for 22 July, but business was postponed as too few Aldermen and Burgesses obeyed the call of the Sergeants-at-Mace. For the same reason, the Hall called by the Mayor for 6 August 'to consult about divers weighty affairs and matters for the good and benefit of this Corporation' could not be held [96]. Halls called by Edward Box for 23 September and on two further occasions before 29 September, when his elected successor, Samuel Sansbury, was to have taken his oath of office and begun his mayoral year, did not attract a quorum, although Richard Page and William Bloxham, the Sergeants-at-Mace, testified that all Aldermen and Burgesses had been summoned, either personally or by message [98b]. Whatever 'divers weighty affairs and matters for the good and benefit of the Corporation' Mr Box had in mind, his apathetic fellow Councillors were not impressed! A notable absentee from the Hall held on 4 March 1758 was the Town Clerk, Mr Benjamin Aplin, who was promptly fined 10s.6d. for his negligence [244b].

The generally low level of attendance at the election of a mayor could be explained as apathy, especially among the Assistants; it might also suggest that the number of Assistants had fallen below the thirty prescribed by the 1718 Charter. The Journal records the election of very few Assistants, and there is seldom any mention of vacancies needing to be filled. On 2 September 1736 no fewer than twelve names were proposed as Assistants: William Cartwright, the Hon. John Wills, Henry Abraham, Christopher Doyley, Richard Wheatly the Elder, Thomas Strank, Richard Woodfield, Richard Kening, Francis Goodwin, Bernard Harris, Dr Metcalf and Thomas Paynton. All were rejected by vote of the Common Council; but then, just two days later, William Cartwright and the Hon. John Wills were elected; Henry Abraham, Richard Wheatly, Christopher Doyley and Thomas Strank were also considered again, but were again rejected [115b-117]. On 5 September 1743 the Rt. Hon. Richard Lord Saye and Sele and Richard Wycham[sic] were elected as Assistants, but, in both cases, the note 'not accepts' has been added to the Journal entry [161b]. John Jarvis in 1744 [169], Richard Turner, Nathaniel Goodwin and William Long in 1759 were rejected [255]. On the other hand, Assistants John Blencow and Ambrose Holbech in 1729 had wanted to resign, but their resignations were not accepted [68b, 69b]; however, Dr Andrew Tryst's⁵ resignation in 1744 was [168b].

⁵ See J.W. and B.C. Crook, 'The House at Pye Corner', *C&CH*, 13.8, 220.