

within their county as to them shall seem meet; to qualify themselves for the office of trustees for the poor of their county, which they are to do by taking and subscribing the several oaths (or affirmations) appointed by law to be taken to the government, and subscribing a declaration of their belief in the christian religion; and also taking the following oath, viz. "I, A. B. do swear, or affirm, that I will duly and faithfully discharge the duties and trusts committed to me as a trustee for the poor of Talbot county by an act of the general assembly, entitled, An act for the relief of the poor in Talbot county, according to the best of my skill and knowledge; so help me God;" the which oaths are to be administered by any of the four persons last named for the county to the person first named, or in his absence to any one of the three persons first named that shall be there present, the which person being sworn as aforesaid, shall administer the oaths aforesaid to all the rest, and so successively, the person first named that shall be present shall always administer the said oaths to any that have been absent, or that shall hereafter be elected and chosen pursuant to the directions of this act, to supply the place of any that shall be dead, or remove out of the county, or of any who shall refuse or neglect to qualify and act as a trustee, when elected and chosen pursuant to the directions of this act; and the aforesaid persons, or the majority of them, being sworn as aforesaid, shall be constituted and qualified as trustees for the poor of their said county, and as such are hereby invested with full power and authority, as a body politic, to plead and be impleaded, to sue and be sued, to defend and be defended, to answer and be answered, by the name of The Trustees for the Poor of Talbot County, in all and every cause, complaint and action, real, personal or mixed, of whatever kind or nature it shall be, in any court of judicature within this state, and by that name they and any of them, and their successors, shall and they are hereby enabled to take, hold, possess and enjoy, any gift, donation or present, which shall or may hereafter be given, devised or bequeathed, by any person or persons whatsoever, to them, or any of them, for or towards the support and maintenance of the poor in the said county; and they, or any of them, may receive by way of subscription, any sum or sums of money which shall or may be given for the better and more speedy promoting the benefit and good by this act intended; and that they have full power, authority and ability, to purchase, take, hold, receive, enjoy and have, to them and their successors for ever, any lands, tenements and hereditaments, not exceeding the yearly value of five hundred pounds current money, and are hereby empowered and authorized to use one common seal in their business relating to the said corporation, and the same, if necessary, to change and alter; and that the said persons so incorporated, or the longest-livers and successors of them, shall be the true and undoubted trustees, in perpetual succession, for ever, to be continued in way and manner hereafter specified, with full and absolute power, liberty and authority, in the making and ordaining such laws, orders and rules, for the better relieving, regulating and setting the poor to work, and punishing vagrants, beggars, vagabonds, and other offenders, and for the good government of the said alms and work-house in their said county, as to them and their successors shall, from time to time, think most fit and requisite, all which shall be observed by the overseer of such alms and work-house, and by all poor, beggars, vagrants, vagabonds, and other offenders, in such alms and work-house, under the penalties therein mentioned; provided always, that the said rules, laws and orders, be no ways contrary to the laws of this state.

IV. AND, to perpetuate the succession of the aforesaid number of five trustees for the poor in the said county, BE IT ENACTED, That as often as any one of the said trustees for the poor shall die, or remove himself out of the county, refuse to qualify himself, by taking and subscribing the oaths or affirmations, and subscribing the declaration aforesaid, or become incapable of acting, the trustees for the time being then surviving and remaining within the said county, or the major part of them, are hereby authorized and required to elect, nominate and choose, one of the principal and better sort of the inhabitants of the county in the place and room of such trustee, and so to fill up the full number of trustees for such alms and work-house, the which persons so elected and chosen, from time to time, are always to be qualified in the same manner as before by this act is directed.

How vacancies are to be filled.

V. AND BE IT ENACTED, That every person by this act appointed as a trustee for the poor, or that shall hereafter be nominated and appointed as such pursuant to the directions thereof, and who shall wilfully refuse or delay to take upon him the said office, shall forfeit and pay, for every such refusal or delay, the sum of ten pounds current money; provided, that no member of the general assembly, clergyman, attorney, or practising physician, be obliged to accept of the office of trustee aforesaid; or forfeit as aforesaid for refusing to accept and take upon him the same, and that no judge of the general court, county magistrate or sheriff, or any one who hath not the qualification to be a member of the general assembly, if elected, shall be capable to be chosen or act as a trustee aforesaid, nor shall any person be compellable to serve in less than three years after he has served, or paid the said forfeiture for not serving as a trustee aforesaid.

Penalty on refusal to serve, &c.