

Dorney Parish News

April 2021



(With thanks to Richard Shymansky for this Spring picture)



As responsible publishers, we have sought advice from the local police regarding the distribution of the magazine during this lockdown. We were delighted to be advised that we are permitted to distribute the magazine through our excellent, and willing, volunteers.

Our distributors have agreed to apply the government guidelines regarding hand cleanliness and social distancing.

Should you not wish to handle this printed copy, please dispose of it safely and email our Editor, Peter Bowman, on peter.bowman@talktalk.net or call him on 07889 912714 and ask him to email you a digital copy as a PDF file.



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EDITORIAL

'This decision is final so there is no longer any opportunity for further discussion'

The online meeting of Dorney Parish Council on March 9th was a shocking event. To this participant, it was also deeply saddening.

Given that our Parish Council had presented Bucks County with a petition made up of 553 names supporting their position, given the support of the three county councillors present, and given that funding had been secured from the Beeches Community Board, dazzled no doubt by the offer of free construction from a soon to depart Highways England, it wasn't to be expected that the progress towards some form of roundabout would be derailed by a show of opposition at this meeting.

But a complete shutdown of any discussion was unexpected. The dropping of multiple muted jaws on many screens was quite a sight – and those participants would dispute the low number of residents present quoted in the PC minutes carried in this issue. But far worse was the aggression shown to my friends, neighbours and colleagues, many who had made contributions to the life of this community. Worst of all was the peremptory silencing of a resident living adjacent to the proposed construction who had recently seen plans for nine new lamp posts, literally on his doorstep.

How on earth did it come to this? The Clerk read a statement which claimed there was 'no longer any opportunities for further discussion'. Madame Clerk, 'Dorney Parish News' respectfully disagrees. Yes, opponents of the roundabout have to face the elephant in the room of those 553 signatures, and petitions are the accepted way to present a case to county councils – no doubt they may well be used in future in aid of causes more of us agree on like reducing speed limits. Yes, given all that perhaps the Parish Council have achieved what little is required by Bucks to pass as 'consultation'. But why have our Council put so much faith in this project before they saw any plans? There has to be 'further discussion' about plans that surely must exceed in impact what any proponent of a roundabout would have expected? Right now, residents are investigating these plans and this magazine welcomes the contributions in this issue from Clive Randle and Bill Dax.

Viewing the recording of the Beeches Community Board meeting which allocated funds to the roundabout, it's striking how this worthy body believes it is giving Highways England the means to compensate Dorney residents for the smart motorway disruption of the last couple of years. Many in Dorney Reach, where the disruption was felt, may be finding it strange that they are being compensated for two years of roadworks by more roadworks, which they probably do not welcome, intended mainly to calm traffic entering Village Road.

The Parish Council, whoever are its members after May 6th, must ensure such a disconnect never happens again. The Council are fond of claiming that the roundabout has a heritage stretching back 20 years or more. Maybe, but that was when Council and community worked in harmony, the Chair had a regular column in this magazine, and notice boards were well stocked. Add all these to online communications like Nextdoor, hitherto rejected by our Parish Council, and a fresh start can be made.

A shocking precept?

Dorney residents might have got a bit of a shock last week. Envelopes containing your 'Council Tax Bill for 2021/22' dropped on to the mat. The larger part of this bill goes to Buckinghamshire Council and they were only asking for a modest 2% more than last year. The shock came because, although smaller actual amounts were involved, in contrast Dorney Parish Council were expecting a whopping 12.5% more than in 2020/21.

Our Parish Council released a budget statement in time for last month's issue of this magazine, and they posted it on their website, and we published it alongside the reprinted minutes of November's Finance Committee Minutes – the meeting where decisions are taken. But that only prepared eagle-eyed readers for the 7.6% rise in the precept requested by Dorney PC from Bucks CC, in itself quite an increase. That 12.5% hike in the actual bill took many by surprise.

These increases run contrary to recent trends. In the last three financial years, from 2018/19, our Council has asked, each year without variation, for an increase in the precept of exactly 3%. How this works is that parish councils may ask to raise a 'precept' on the council tax bills produced by their local billing authority, which in our case is the Bucks Unitary Authority. Before the new authority it was the former South Bucks District Council. This sum demanded is collected through the council tax system, hence last week's bills. Over the last three years, the actual payment (on the Council Tax bills) for Dorney Parish Council has increased by 2.0%, 4.8% and 1.2% respectively.

In normal times, an explanation for all this might have been given at the Annual Parish Meeting, but in the likely absence of any statement, residents might ask two questions. Why is there such a disparity between the increase in the precept request and that in the actual bills? Why has the Council felt it had to depart from its usual habit in recent years of raising the precept by 3%, indeed this year doubling, and more, that normal rate of increase?

The Council Tax Base is the number of properties in the parish which are liable to pay council tax. It is theoretically possible for a council to make a request for an increase in their precept and within the year the Council Tax Base has fallen so much that the final bills are some way out of line with the requested increase. The base might decline if there were many discounts, exemptions or even empty/demolished properties. I understand that the Clerk informed a resident who asked that 'this probably happens every year.' Well, apparently that has not been the experience in our parish in recent years. But 7.6% up to 12.5% just doesn't sound feasible and in any case in considering the precept any parish council should be considering changes in the Tax Base as well as the cost of services the council wants to provide.

Well, what of the expenditures expected in 2021/22?

A few years back, it was announced at an Annual Parish Meeting that Bucks County had reduced the 'devolved highways subsidy' by about £5,000. It seems that our Council has been struggling to balance its income to its expenditure ever since. This

subsidy had been employed to maintain verges and the like around the village. Indeed, a deficit of over £7,000 is forecast for 2021/22. It seems that an answer has been to overcharge the Village Hall for cutting the grass on Village Hall property by £1,000 a year between 2015/16 and 2019/20. The Village Hall refused to pay this £1,000 contribution from April 2020 onwards and having taken legal advice, have been advised to reclaim the overcharged £5,000 sitting in the PC's bank account. The PC have included this payment of £5,000 in their 2021/22 budget and presumably, to avoid further depletion of their cash reserves, have budgeted for an increase of £1,778 in their precept income to replace the £1,000 they used to charge the Village Hall.

The role of the Village Hall does seem to vex the Parish Council. At the March meeting (see minutes in this issue) it was pointed out that residents in Taplow pay well under half the rate to their parish council as we do here in Dorney. This is because Taplow PC own their village hall and derive income from it, whereas Dorney's only income is from the precept. But what action is suggested? Dorney PC does not own the Village Hall, never has done (the new Village Hall was set up as a charity in 1970) and as far as we know this has never been an issue. We understand that only a minority of parish councils do own the hall in their village.

A large item in the latest budget is the cost of IT support. Those who ask questions about this budget do not begrudge spending per se. Dorney Parish Council's use of IT has been utterly inadequate and the website falls well below legal requirements and the justified expectations of residents. If anybody does oppose expenditure on IT, they should take a look at the websites of virtually every other parish in Bucks. It appears that one hapless parish councillor has been left with the sole burden of maintaining what we do have, and she has our sympathy and thanks.

The budget includes an increase of £1,100 for IT support (which is stated as £1,000 in the minutes of the Finance Committee) and £850 for a new laptop and software (again, the Minutes say an additional £300 for a new laptop for the Clerk). By the time of the February PC meeting, a sum of £2,500 was under discussion.

On this subject, the DPC minutes of February 2018 noted that *"The Clerk had applied for a grant from NALC last October 2017 and funding of £1414 has now been received to update Dorney PC's IT and web site. It was agreed for Cllr Foxley to purchase the IT equipment and software and organise the relevant updates for the web site."* Was the money used as proposed? No obvious changes appear to have been made to the website. Why do we need yet more money from residents?

The budget throws up other questions. How does the council propose to spend £933 on 'election expenses? If the expenditure on 'street lighting' is £2,250, might this in future years have to rise with a planned expansion of lighting at Dents Corner in order to bathe the new roundabout in illumination?

There is an open invitation to Dorney Parish Council to use our pages to cast light on this budget and to correct the undoubted inaccuracies in this article.

Services in the Local Churches



St James the Less, Dorney

St. John the Baptist, Eton Wick
St. John the Evangelist, Eton

**Vicar: Revd. La Stacey, The Vicarage,
69a Eton Wick Road, Eton Wick, Windsor,
SL4 6NE**

Tel: 01753 852268 email: revlastacey@gmail.com

For information about our churches, activities and church history please see our parishes' web site:

www.stjohnstjamesed.org.uk

Methodist Church, Eton Wick Alma Road, Eton Wick, SL4 6JZ

Minister: Rev Margaret Dudley, 01753 867117

Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church, Burnham

Parish Priest: Fr. Joseph Udoh, M.S.P. 01628 605764

From Stephen J. Baker, Safeguarding Officer on behalf of the Rev. La Stacey.

As we slowly move through Boris' 'Roadmap out of Lockdown', with 1a and 1b, already achieved, St. James was delighted to be able to re-open its doors for worship on Sunday 21st March. Whilst certainly a smaller congregation to what we were used to pre-lockdown, it was a good opportunity to ensure that we were safely able to tick all the boxes for social distancing, minimal contact and, of course, face masks and hand sanitiser.

As we enter into the Easter period, we will be advertising our services on the website. Please note that some of these will be 'booking only', similar to those taken over Christmas, to ensure that we can minimise the risks for those attending. The church's updated website can be found at the following address:

<https://www.stjohnstjamesed.org.uk/dorney-church>.

During lockdown, the church has been open for private prayer and worship each Wednesday and Sunday. This will not be continued so that we can ensure that the necessary 72 hours between use can be complied with.

Things are looking more positive from a Coronavirus perspective across the UK, but this is certainly a time where we cannot afford to become complacent in our approach.

Easter is a time for celebration within the church, with Jesus making the ultimate sacrifice through his crucifixion, so that our sins can be forgiven, and Heaven can be made open to us by His resurrection and finally His ascension to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Keep safe.

Dorney Parish News 2021 Annual Subscription

Dorney Parish News

March 2021



(With thanks to Karen Fairley for this Dorney Common picture)

 COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS	<p>As responsible publishers, we have sought advice from the local police regarding the distribution of the magazine during this lockdown. We were delighted to be advised that we are permitted to distribute the magazine through our excellent, and willing, volunteers.</p> <p>Our distributors have agreed to apply the government guidelines regarding hand cleanliness and social distancing. Should you not wish to handle this printed copy, please dispose of it safely and email our Editor, Peter Bowman, on peter.bowman@talktalk.net or call him on 01628 612714 and ask him to email you a digital copy as a PDF file.</p>
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Dorney Parish News is now offering two ways to subscribe:

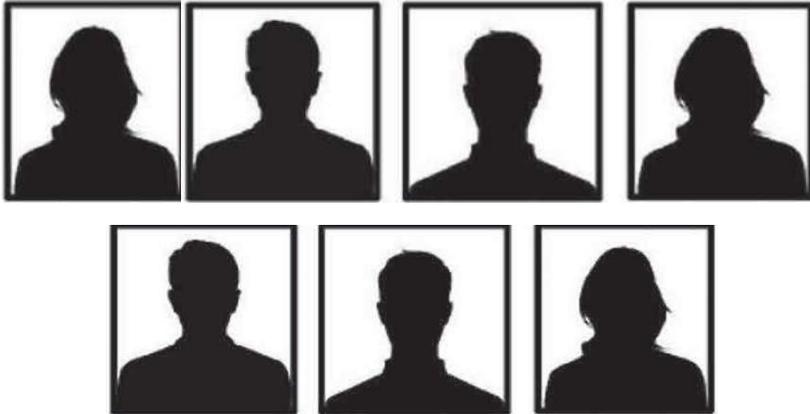
1. In the usual way, via your Distributor.
2. Online, using our section on the Dorney Community website:

www.dorneycommunity.org.uk/dorney-parish-news/

From the online information you provide we will know who and where you are and will advise your Distributor that you have paid online.

Peter Bowman, Editor
peter.bowman@talktalk.net
01628 623228

Have you thought about becoming a Dorney Parish Councillor?



Elections to Dorney Parish Council will be held on 6th May 2021

On 6th May 2021 there will be the election of seven Parish Councillors for Dorney Parish Council for the next four years.

Over past months there has been a very welcome resurgence in attendance of residents at the monthly Parish Council meetings, with strong interest in protecting the Parish from the relaxation of the Green Belt, parking issues around the entrance to Dorney Lake, the “Smart Motorway”, the roundabout at Dents Corner and other important local matters.

This interest and commitment by residents to the protection of Dorney is to be both welcomed and admired. A number of these residents have indicated an interest in becoming parish councillors.

Uncontested elections can result in a lack of new energy and enthusiasm being brought into our local administration. Certain roles in public life do have a fixed period of tenure, resulting in new faces and ideas emerging. However, Parish Councillors may serve as long as they are elected. Our current parish councillors do have, collectively, a considerable number of years’ service – totalling nearly 90 years. The Chairman has served over 25 years and the Deputy Chairman over 16 years. Some others are well over 10 years.

Whilst we thank those who devoted their time to the parish over such time, we should also hope that room is made for new councillors who are also willing and able to serve the community. They will bring new faces, new ideas, new energy, much-needed positivity and a can-do spirit to the running of the parish council.

The benefits of being a Parish Councillor

(with thanks to www.beacouncillor.co.uk, Local Government Association, and www.askyourcouncil.uk)

Why should I become a councillor?

There are many reasons why people decide to become a parish councillor. They include:

- wanting to make a difference and be involved in shaping the future of the local community
- being concerned about your local area and wanting to ensure that the community gets the right services
- wanting to represent the views of local people and ensure that community interests are taken into account
- wanting to contribute your business or professional skills
- concerns about one particular issue
- as an extension of what you are already doing through a charity, voluntary group or school governing body – becoming a councillor can be the next step.

I don't have the time...

How much time you spend on your duties as a councillor is largely up to you and will depend on the particular commitments you take on. One council estimates the time commitment as a few hours a week. Your role within the council will determine how much time you spend on council duties. Joining a planning committee, for example, will increase your workload.

As with most things in life, what you get back will depend on how much you put in. But remember, the amount of time you give to it is almost entirely up to you.

Could I be a councillor?

If you care about the area that you live or work in and the issues facing local people, you could be a councillor. Perhaps you enjoy reading the local newspaper and often have a strong opinion on the issues you read about. You may enjoy talking to friends and colleagues about what's going on in the area. You may feel that certain sections of the community or people are getting a raw deal and need stronger representation. Research tells us that people are most concerned about issues such as crime, schools, transport and the environment. Your local council can make a difference on all these issues and many more, and so can you as a local councillor.

Do I need any special skills or experience to be a councillor?

Groups made up of diverse individuals tend to make better informed decisions. It is important that councils have councillors who not only reflect and represent the communities they serve, but also have a broad range of skills and life experience. You don't have to be highly educated or have a profession. Skills gained through raising a family, caring for a sick or disabled relative, volunteering or being active in faith or community groups add value to the diversity of the council.

While you don't need any special qualifications to be a councillor, having or being able to develop some of the following skills, knowledge and attributes will help you in the role.

- Communication skills
 - These include listening and interpersonal skills, public speaking skills, the ability to consider alternative points of view and to negotiate, mediate and resolve conflict.
- Problem solving and analytical skills
 - This includes being able to get to the bottom of an issue and to think of different ways to resolve it, including considering the advantages and disadvantages of each option.
- Team working
 - Being able to work with others in meetings and on committees and being able to complete any tasks that you agree to do on time.
- Organisational skills
 - Being able to plan and manage your time, keep appointments and meet deadlines.
- Ability to engage with your local community
 - You may have to make yourself available through meetings and on the telephone.
- You may have gained skills and knowledge through your professional, personal or community experience. These could include:
 - knowledge of the needs of specific groups such as children and young people, older people or
 - people with health problems
 - an understanding of financial management and reporting processes
 - legal and regulatory systems or procedures
 - housing, regeneration or environmental issues
 - any other skills that relate to the work or facilities provided by the council.

Don't worry if you don't yet feel that you have the skills or confidence to be a councillor. All councils provide support, information and training for new councillors. Whatever needs changing in your neighbourhood, you could be just the person to change it by becoming a local councillor. Perhaps you are already involved in local affairs and want to take the next step. Or you may be looking for a worthwhile and rewarding way to help your local community.

What powers do Parish Councils have?

To provide facilities

Parish councils have powers to provide some facilities themselves, or they can contribute towards their provision by others. There are large variations in the services provided by parishes, but they can include the following:

- Control of litter
- Provision and maintenance of public seats
- Creation and maintenance of footpaths and bridleways
- Provision of cycle and motorcycle parking

- Acquisition and maintenance of rights of way
- Maintenance of war memorials
- Bus shelters
- Signposting of footpaths
- Lighting of footpaths
- Off-street car parks
- Provision, maintenance and protection of roadside verges

Consultative powers

Parish councils must be consulted by the district or county council on:

- All planning applications in their areas
- Footpath and bridleway (more generally, 'rights of way') surveys

Miscellaneous powers

Parish councils may also exercise the following powers:

- Support and encouragement of arts and crafts
- Providing grants to local voluntary organisations
- Sponsoring public events
- Funding crime prevention measures

To stand for election you must:

- Be a UK or Commonwealth citizen
- Be at least 18 years old
- Be an elector of the Dorney Parish Council; or in the past 12 months occupied land or other premises in the area we serve (as owner or tenant); or work in the area (as your principal or only place of work); or live within three miles of the Dorney Parish Council boundary.

Nomination papers (nomination form, home address form, consent to nomination) must be hand delivered to the Amersham election (DRO) office on a working day from the publication of notice of election, between 10am-4pm, but no later than 4pm on Wednesday 8 April 2021.

Candidates may hand deliver nomination papers themselves or may ask someone they trust to hand deliver them to the Deputy Returning Officer/elections office.

Nomination papers cannot be sent in the post or electronically. Original signed forms must be provided. Dorney Parish News is happy to arrange for any completed nomination papers to be handed in to the Council offices in Amersham on Tuesday, 7th April 2021. We will get a receipt for them. Please email peter.bowman@talktalk.net if you would like us to do this for you.

If you need application forms or any help completing the forms, please contact Sue Moffat : Clerk@dorney.org.uk or telephone 07443 58836.

The Electoral Commission's guidance for Parish Council elections provides further information via:

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/parish-and-community-council-elections-england>

moogBREW

REOPENING THE TAPROOM & BEER GARDEN!



The question we are being asked most frequently, of course, is when we are planning to open the taproom & beer garden?

So to answer that ... for the foreseeable future **we will be opening only for members** and their guests, with numbers strictly limited. It's not too late to sign up; please see below for details.

... and when?

We aim to open the Beer Garden from the beginning of May onwards, but opening dates will be weather dependent and will be notified (to members only) via E-mail.

HOW DO I BECOME A MEMBER?

It's really easy! All you need to do is to place an order via our on-line store that includes either a growler deposit (for draught beer) OR a crate deposit (for bottles/cans). Your growler or crate is your membership token.

You can order for free local home delivery (if you live in Taplow, Burnham, Maidenhead, Dorney or Eton) OR for collection from the brewery. Deliveries are made on Fridays (after 4pm), while collections can be made Mon-Sat 11am-8pm (pre-orders only).

This service will continue once the taproom and beer garden have re-opened.

To sign-up and place your first order, please visit the store here:

<https://moogbrewltd.selz.com/>

We look forward to inviting you into our beer garden soon.

STOP PRESS

It's very good to see, just as we go to print, that the Spanish Bit (see advertisement on the back cover) is re-opening this week.

Jill Harris said this was 'very exciting'. It certainly is!

Dorney Parish Council: Responsibilities and Policies

Which Parish Councillor is responsible for Footpaths? What is Dorney Parish Council's policy regarding Grants for local projects?

Looking at just a few parish council websites of nearby parishes (smaller and larger than Dorney), it is possible to establish which councillor(s) has/have specific responsibility for key issues and, as importantly, what policies have been agreed by the parish council in order to manage the parish effectively.

Currently, there appear to be no councillors who are responsible for anything specific, except for Finance.

Allocating responsibilities has two main benefits. Firstly, within the parish council, everyone is clear who is managing what. Secondly, residents know who will be dealing with each issue.

Other parish councils' responsibility lists look something like this:

Finance	(usually not all councillors)
Planning	(Applications, Monitoring, Parish Plan, Emergency Plan)
Traffic	(Speed, Safety, Parking, Potholes, Signage)
Maintenance	(County Council/Contractors)
Communications	(Noticeboards, Website, Parish Magazine, Nextdoor)
Liaison	(e.g. Palmer Estate, Eton College/Dorney Lake, Environment Agency, Neighbouring Councils)
Footpaths, Bridleways, Cycle Paths	

We do believe that it would be helpful to residents if Dorney Parish Council would agree and publish such a list. Everybody can't be responsible for everything.

Each Parish Council is responsible for agreeing and publishing the Policies they have adopted for certain key items. The current policies adopted by Dorney Parish Council are on their website and are:

- Code of Conduct
- Financial Regulations
- General Privacy Notice
- Information Data Protection Policy
- Standing Orders

Those that are on very many other parish council websites, but not on Dorney's include:

- Complaints Policy
- Consultation Policy
- Document Retention and Disposal Policy
- Expenses Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Grants Policy
- Recording the Parish Council Policy
- Social Media (Communication) Policy

It would certainly be helpful to be able to reference these policies, if they exist. Usually, they are the responsibility of the Parish Clerk.

Bucks Unitary Authority – A Year One Report

Exactly a year ago, in our April 2020 issue, we characterised the new Bucks Unitary Authority as a ‘project in limbo’ whose launch had been ‘hideously distorted’ by the Covid-19 emergency. On April 1, the new Authority did absorb our South Bucks District Council. Twelve months later, the UA seems to be playing a good game and maybe even living up to the claim made by the Council’s leader, Martin Tett, that ‘we would be even more local than the previous structure’.

Last year, we gave prominence to the dozen or so Community Access Points (CAPs) because Bucks did in all its statements. We were a little sceptical of contact with a County Council being based at Burnham Library (Dorney’s nearest CAP) – even though these points were ‘based at the heart of local community life’ to enable residents ‘to access information, advice and support on a range of topics near where they live and work’. Last year we noted that there was no mention of CAPs on the Burnham Parish Council or Library websites. There is now but I suspect that the constraints of lockdown and a growing ability and willingness to access services online is minimising the impact of what was to have been a keystone of the launch.

But the 16 Community Boards are proving effective, and the Beeches Community Board has already directly impacted on Dorney life. This body with 19 members serves Dorney, Burnham, the Farnham’s, Stoke Poges and Taplow. Gareth Williams, Bucks Cabinet Member for Communities said, ‘the Boards have forged close working relationships with groups and organisations and listened to the views of local people.’ Many in Dorney might reply ‘not closely enough’ because last November the Board approved an expenditure of £13,600 from its Communities Area Priorities fund which financially enables the Lake End Road roundabout to proceed. But at the same meeting, the Board approved an application from the Dorney Playground Management Group to fund repairs and the purchase of PPE. The Chair, Cllr David Anthony has been good enough to attend our Parish Council via Zoom and recordings of the meetings, including that fateful November meeting, can be viewed on YouTube. David expressed to ‘Dorney Parish News’ surprise more Dorney voices were not heard in November, so concerned citizens in this village should keep their eyes on the Board’s future agendas.

Overall, accessibility seems improved, and this magazine and other residents have had fruitful direct contact with key players because contact details aren’t shrouded in secrecy while Cllrs Tett, Williams and others maintain a lively social media presence.

The most hopeful progress will be those May elections, held after two years of postponement. Parish Council elections we cover elsewhere, but 147 county councillors will be elected including three from our ward, Cliveden. The former county council had 49 members and Cllr Dev Dhillon has represented Cliveden for the Conservatives since 2009, achieving a 54% share of the vote in 2017. Dev is standing as a councillor for Farnham Common and Burnham Beeches in 2021. Three Conservative candidates have been announced in Cliveden including George Sandy, our former District Councillor, who attends meetings of Dorney Parish Council. We intend to publish more names of candidates in next month’s issue, including, we hope a number of candidates standing for our Parish Council.

Peter Bowman

Dear Editor

Compliments on an interesting March 2021 issue of the Dorney Parish News. I was pleased to read your recall of the extract from the submission to the rowing lake enquiry by DROPET; I do not think we could have imagined back then the current draw of the “Trench” (apologies Lake) or the Jubilee River; and alas neither did those planning car parking spaces. Most comments are about the Rowing Lake parking but the Jubilee River parking at Marsh Lane and Lake End Road are also inadequate for the new demand.

Did I read somewhere the hint that DPN might become an online product? Please forebear. There is nothing better than holding a tome in one’s hands and thumbing through the content. Scientific societies to which I belong have travelled this route and now I find signing in and having the inability to thumb the pages deters me from “dipping in” to read the latest papers. An age thing I am told! There is a perception that costs are eliminated in the move to electronic publication - not so, just transferred cost to your router/laptop/pc/phone, and the massive data storage facilities around the Globe. Astonishingly Bitcoin consumes over 120 terawatt-hours of electricity per year in computing – enough to power Argentina!

Which leads me on to the inadequacy of electronic virtual meetings. The “Magic Roundabout” appears to have fallen foul of another virus that seems to be in circulation – Zoom-fever. It seems to overtake those who control the electronic meeting facilities when a participant presents contrarian views – debate can be shut down at a button press. I have seen this in other forums or fora. ‘Ranganation’ is probably the only well-honed example of virtual gathering; being well orchestrated by a team of producers. If the DPC debate was closed down then I think that is pretty shoddy behaviour by the “controller”. I posted some points on NextDoor so shall not repeat them here, but that medium is not everyone’s cup of tea nor available to everyone; and I find I delete more posts than I read.

The DoT “Mini Roundabouts Good Practice Guidance” illustrates the box ticking exercise of Site Assessment that no doubt lead road planners to present the proposed scheme to the Council. But it also introduces the point that in relation to the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) “detailed guidance on mini-roundabouts, which is mandatory for trunk roads but [is] advisory for applications on local roads.” Therefore, one should be permitted to question whether the proposal has adopted the principles of the guidance.

What I object to is the idea that Dorney Parish Council has deemed the current proposal beyond debate or modification when the specific plans and specification appear not to be in the public domain. It is one thing to get support “in principle” to a concept and support to survey the possibilities; but another to get support for proposed (secret) plans for execution. It is all very well for Cllr Dhillion to recall the matter being discussed with my old friend Ken Richmond, as if to lend legitimacy to the plan but a discussion years ago is not a proposal or a commitment. Many things have been discussed since then and many things have happened since then. Those who think the “democratic process” has been served, usually fail to listen or hear.

I fear that DPC has fallen into the often-occurring situation in councils where money becomes available and spending it becomes paramount without considering if the scheme is a good scheme suited to the purpose.

Clive Randle

THE LAST POST ON DORNEY COMMON

As the slowest winter in history meandered on until Easter arrived, the long worldwide wait continues as most of us sit in the safety of our homes for hope of some good news. Constant bickering dominates the media, but lowers the morale, with the only light at the end of the tunnel being our Covid stats that seem to be steadily dropping at the same time as our vaccine figures rise.

Here, on the Common, the dormant households show little sign of much activity. Horses pace out from yards, dogs take their owners for a run along the footpaths, and soon the cows will arrive to chomp the fresh grass that has recently emerged, uncut and wild like many of our own hairstyles.

The cottage front garden fence has been quite poorly for some time, put up many years ago, it has fought hard to keep cattle out of our herbaceous borders, but the wood now rotten was in danger of collapse. Alex, our friend the cleft oak specialist, returned to exchange it for a similar fence to the one he fashioned last year that encompasses the Garden of Tranquility and veggie plot. Stouter, more robust and dug into the ground using his crushed hardcore and stamping method.

Harsh weather hampered headway, but also an awkward unexpected metal post proved difficult to extract, and nearly took my husband Dave to meet his maker. For many weeks he dug and dug the compact shale, shook and rocked this stubborn post, that had been set deeply down into the earth. Finally, with huge reluctance, he conceded defeat, to summon Maydencroft, from across the road, to come over with a large digger which whipped it out in 30 seconds to reveal a large flat metal plate at the very end of the post. Downhearted, his personal battle was lost, as his motto is very much 'you only fail if you quit'. However, nothing that a nice cuppa tea and slice of fruit cake couldn't make better.

On my volunteering vaccinating mission, our directives have been considerably ramped up. Matron has asked us to speed up the procedures, limit chat and get on with the job job. The vaccine is drawn up by a small team backstage, who double check quantities, tap out air bubbles, then lay the syringes in a plastic kidney dish, each one initialed with a black felt pen along with a time stamp. As I fetched and exchanged each dish this last piece of data gave me a rough idea of time lapse between jabs. Starting off at a pace of one every four minutes, it was with interest that I saw my output had risen to a slick one injection per minute.

At a rough guess, my tally on my last shift was close to 180, which had echoes of a dart score, although no professional standards of care were ever compromised, not on my watch! However, the diversity of issues that arose often hampered fast delivery and required additional time to ensure effective safe vaccination.

A man came into my cubicle, a cheerful fellow, with a ruddy complexion and a history of severe cardiac disease. He was on a high dose of Warfarin, and his bloods had shown a recent elevated prothrombin time. This news didn't bode too well as there would be a high chance that he was going to bleed, and he took great

delight in telling me how he never failed to copiously exude! I'm glad he was comfortable with it, as I was not.

With this expectation, my responses must be effective, as he was obviously used to changing the décor to red, the thought then passing through my mind that I should have brought in a spare uniform. After scanning his skin for vein network so anything obvious could be dodged, steadily inserted the needle, swab ready at hand as for its return journey. Nothing. Nadda. Not a bead to be seen, bit of a letdown really!

The other delays that thwart the pace, are the people who come in dressed in quadruple layers of long-sleeved tight garments, and then another eleventy-eight vests beneath. Others arrive nervous and trembling, often teary, so I turn the jab-chair inwards to preserve their dignity. More often the tears flow post vaccination, as the relief floods out, but each time I find it an honour to sit quietly with them and provide comfort the best I can.

After one particularly tiring day at the vaccine office, my husband suggested we go out for lunch and a short walk. We parked up at the restaurant (a farm field entrance) ate some delicious food (a sandwich from the garage) and opened a bottle (water). After some fine tucker and relaxing chat, the rain was persistent, so we decided to head straight home. Bad news, we had parked on soft clay mud, and had sunk into the quagmire! The more Dave revved the engine, the more the wheels spun around, and the further we sank towards Australia. A steady parade of dog walkers each attempted to push us out, but it was soon evident we may be there for the quite some time.

Fortunately, just as we felt a moment of despair, two stout fellas in a Land Rover pitched up. They had just finished work in a local garage and happened to be delivering a vehicle nearby. Capable hands moved in and looped the van out with a quick tug. This good deed left us very thankful, but I did remind Dave how often he did the same for many delivery vans stuck in mud on the Common. Kindness is very much appreciated, and as they say, even the smallest deed is always so much better than the greatest intention.

This last month saw the first anniversary of a 'Last Post' for those that lost the Covid battle, and we will remember them. As our lives reluctantly adjust, Easter arrives without a clear view of the road ahead. They say a road map, but there is no GPS signal yet. We adapt, change our lifestyle, hope that normality returns, and try the best we can to do the right thing.

A thirsty crow came upon a pitcher containing some water, sadly the level was too low to reach. As it seemed she would die within sight of the remedy, the crow struck upon the idea to drop pebbles into the pitcher. The water level rose, and the crow was finally able to drink.

Kristina Perkins



News from Dorney School

The children are back! As I sit here, in my home office on a Sunday morning, listening to the birds singing sweetly at 6am, I reflect on the past weeks as we re-opened our doors to all our children.

I start with the weeks leading up to the wider re-opening. There was a general sense of despondency and despair amongst pupils and parents as remote learning was finally taking its toll. I received several 'cries for help' from parents who were fast becoming stressed about their children's lack of engagement with online tasks. My role was to reassure them to take their 'foot off the pedal', go easy on themselves and their children and I let them know that each family had done their very best in supporting learning at home. I think we can all agree that home learning does not and cannot replace school education.

Teachers were also anxious and excited in equal measures as they prepared classrooms to welcome all children back. Displays were refreshed, lesson plans were made for having all 30 pupils in classrooms. New signs to encourage Covid safety were placed in all areas of the school. Many had concerns that children may find it hard to cope with routines, learning and friendships.

We also had to prepare our key worker children who had been at school every single day since lockdown. They had the undivided attention of an adult at school and had the luxury of exceedingly small class sizes. Some expressed their anxiety for larger class sizes, and a few could not quite explain how they felt; new friendships had been made, quieter voices had been heard and understandably some were worried they would 'disappear' amidst the great return. Staff worked tirelessly to reassure these children that everyone will be supported and listened to in the weeks and months ahead.

We placed balloons and bunting across all school entrances to signal the grand re-opening. We made gift bags for every family to thank them for their effort over the long, dark months. In each bag was a chocolate bar, a message and a summer planting bulb with the words, '**Together, we grow again!**'. Little did I understand the effect of such simple gestures. Some anxious children saw the balloons and smiled, knowing that they were welcomed. Parents were grateful that their efforts were acknowledged and the number of messages from parents to staff to thank them for

all their support over lockdown was overwhelming. I am so blessed to work with a community that cares!



On that first day, I walked around a school filled with chatter, laughter, joy, ‘fallouts’, friendships and the sound of pupils starting to learn again. This is exactly what Dorney School was designed for. Throughout the week I could see the effort teachers and pupils were making to ease back into school routines. Some found it easier than others but that was to be expected. By Friday, pupils, teachers, and staff were exhausted, almost dragging their feet and their bags out of the school doors. I think this is testimony to the amount of love, care, nurture, and hard work staff have put in over so many weeks. I do not know if their collective efforts will ever be properly acknowledged beyond the school gates, but I am sure, that deep in their hearts, teachers know they too have tried their absolute best.

The next few months and perhaps longer still will be hard as we recover from the effects of the pandemic and lockdown. I, however, do not believe in the words ‘catch up’, ‘lost learning’ or even ‘lost generation’. They do not and will not describe the pupils of Dorney School. I see this return to school as an opportunity to regenerate, re-design, grow and succeed not only in the short term but in the long run. Education has always been a long-term goal – this is a marathon and not a sprint! There is so much hope in this world and what we must all do is rekindle that hope and the love and joy for learning. I offer you three poems by our pupils in Year 4 about ‘Hope’ and I am sure you will agree with me, if our children can see this, so should we.

Warmest wishes,
Mrs Sharifah Lee
Deputy Headteacher

P.S. We are trying to source some pampas grass (not the plant but the feathery tips). We were wondering if any Dorney residents may have some they could donate to school for decorative purposes? If so, please contact the School Office on:
Tel: 01628 620871, Email: office@dorneyschool.co.uk



'Hope' by Jared

Hope

A Poem by Anjali

Thinking of all the sadness in the world today,
Hope is the only thing that can save the day,
Everyone can hope and hope needs everyone.

What a sight people playing, laughing and even crying
Opening up to each other to share their feelings.
Regretful, happy, sad but still hopeful for better things
Love is always in their hearts but maybe hidden,
Dig deeper, look harder and there lies hope.

Never doubt you're not alone.
Everyone has someone.
Everyone has something.
Dream big, love hard, give willingly.
Sharing the goodness, is the right thing to do.

Hope is in everyone's heads and hearts.
Only sometimes we forget or lose it.
Protecting ourselves from hurt and unkindness
[Everyone should remember to have hope!]

'Hope' by Eddie Year 4

I could not cope, if I had no hope,
I would be a big dope, if I had no hope,
You should have hope, so you can cope,
And also, not be a dope!

I hope for fun days seeing friends and family,
African holidays with Ouma, soon I hope,
I can see the antelope.
Cuddling on the sofa, a movie I see,
Eating sweets and drinking iced tea,
At my Nans house I'll be.

Back to school,
Will be really cool,
Because I can see all my friends.
I've followed every rule,
So I'm not a fool,
Covid 19,
What a nightmare you've been.
We win, we have the vaccine.
We coped because we hoped!

Dorney Anagrams in Lockdown (from a local resident)
Answers on Page 24

- 1 NICE SLOW STRAD
- 2 MOOD MEN CRY NO
- 3 WEAR KLINGO
- 4 ON EVERY COTUB
- 5 BRIDE HEM STAG
- 6 MASTEL JESS HEST
- 7 A SLINKY DEMON
- 8 BUNPE PIPELEAP
- 9 MR MRS APLEAS
- 10 YOU TRED CORN
- 11 MR PUD STIL FREE
- 12 LIVE ALL LAGH
- 13 MANAY MAST LEDGER
- 14 BLUE IRE JIVER



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www.etonend.org
#WeAreEtonEnd

Planning Applications (Validated, Decided & Updated) during March 2021

Dorney Parish

From South Bucks Area Planning website:
pa.chilternandsouthbucks.gov.uk/online-applications/

Ref. No: PL/21/0723/KA | Validated: Mon 22 Feb 2021 | Status: Decided

T1 Sycamore - Fell, T3, T4, T5 Sycamore (Acer) - 15% Crown Thinning and 0.5m Crown Lift. (Dorney Conservation Area).

The Palmers Arms Village Road Dorney Buckinghamshire SL4 6QW

Ref. No: PL/21/0258/KA | Validated: Mon 25 Jan 2021 | Status: Decided

T1 Maple - fell, T2 Walnut - fell, T3 Spruce - fell, T4 Spruce - fell, T5 Holly - fell, T6 Apple - fell. (Boveney Conservation Area).

1 New Boveney Court Farm Cottages Boveney Road Dorney Buckinghamshire SL4 6QF

Ref. No: PL/21/0705/FA | Validated: Wed 24 Mar 2021 | Status: Registered

Single storey rear extension and relocation of rear door

The Gatehouse Village Road Dorney Buckinghamshire SL4 6QW

Ref. No: PL/21/0706/HB | Validated: Wed 24 Mar 2021 | Status: Registered

Listed Building Consent for single storey rear extension and relocation of rear door

The Gatehouse Village Road Dorney Buckinghamshire SL4 6QW

Burnham Parish

Ref. No: PL/20/3452/EU | Validated: Mon 21 Dec 2020 | Status: Registered

Certificate of Lawfulness for existing use as a builders yard and storage of commercial vehicles, equipment and building materials. Open for comment icon

Orchard Herbs Lake End Road Dorney Buckinghamshire SL4 6QS

The following comments were made by the Burnham Parish Council Planning Committee on 18th January 2021.

The Committee RESOLVED to OBJECT to the application as the grounds stated for a lawful development certificate were deemed false based on the information available.

The area in question formed part of a carriageway following works by Highways England in 2020 for the M4 junctions 3 to 12 smart motorway upgrade. Prior to the aforementioned works, the nature of the land would have also precluded it from the alleged uses by virtue of its steep gradient.

Additionally, site plans attached to previous applications in the past decade did not conform with the various uses alleged by the applicant, and satellite imagery in the same period displayed the land covered by vegetation.

The severe lack of physical evidence, testimonies, and factual information to corroborate the applicant's claims inferred no reasonable case for a certificate of lawfulness to be accepted.

The Committee also highlighted longstanding enforcement matters present at the site, which it was felt needed to be addressed by the Local Planning Authority before any applications were considered.

Easter Chicks



Huge thanks to our Dorney Knitters! During March nearly 100 chickens, each containing their own creme egg, were delivered to Julie-Anne at the Thames Valley Hospice shop in Reform Road, along with some Easter cards. The team there were over the moon and have put them up for sale on the website as part of their Easter fundraiser. My thanks to Janet Paton, Michele Stacy, Jan Bowman and all the others who made them.



We are now looking at what our next venture might be. If you are interested in crafting something for Thames Valley Hospice, do get in touch through the magazine's contact details and they will pass on your details to me.

Alice Foxley

Dorney Anagrams in Lockdown (from a local resident)
Answers:

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | NICE SLOW STRAD | WINDSOR CASTLE |
| 2 | MOOD MEN CRY NO | DORNEY COMMON |
| 3 | WEAR KLINGO | ROWING LAKE |
| 4 | ON EVERY COTUB | BOVENEY COURT |
| 5 | BRIDE HEM STAG | THAMES BRIDGE |
| 6 | MASTEL JESS HEST | ST JAMES THE LESS |
| 7 | A SLINKY DEMON | MONKEY ISLAND |
| 8 | BUNPE PIPELEAP | PINEAPPLE PUB |
| 9 | MR MRS APLEAS | PALMERS ARMS |
| 10 | YOU TRED CORN | DORNEY COURT |
| 11 | MR PUD STIL FREE | TRUMPERS FIELD |
| 12 | LIVE ALL LAGH | VILLAGE HALL |
| 13 | MANAY MAST LEDGER | ST MARY MAGDALENE |
| 14 | BLUE IRE JIVER | JUBILEE RIVER |



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What next for Dorney Lake?

Janet Walker, Bursar, Eton College recently stated, when asked by Dorney Parish News for some information about when the Lake might be opened:

“For the moment, the Lake will stay closed to avoid the disruption to residents from so many motorists turning up when it’s open. We want to wait until lockdown is considerably eased, with people having far more leisure options before we even think about re-opening.”

The Lake has now been closed for a month and the number of visitors in cars is reducing as the message gets about. However, car parking in Court Lane and Marsh Lane is still causing problems, especially on nice days. The lifting of some COVID-19 restrictions on 29th March and 21st April might also help when people have more recreational options to consider (as Janet Walker indicates above).

So, it looks as though the Lake may remain closed on that basis, but not the footpaths, bridleways and cycle ways that go around the perimeter, until the end of April.

But, looking at the Lake’s event calendar for May to September, there are bookings virtually every weekend – and most, if not all, of these (for COVID-19 or other reasons) are private events with no public access. So, no general reopening then, it seems!

All of which bring us to the question – what next for Dorney Lake?

Let’s put one myth to bed straight away: The Lake is private land. There are no planning covenants to let the public run wild over it. The only relevant statement on this, that was made by Eton College during the 1993 Public Inquiry, was as follows:

Para 83. The College’s normal policy is to permit public access to its grounds consistent with security considerations and it would apply a similar policy to the park, arboretum and bridleways.

Clearly the “security considerations” have now, rightly, come into play – hence the new fencing and gates.

However, Eton College did provide a permissive footpath/cycleway and bridleway from the other side of the road from the main car park down to Boveney. These, and the other perimeter footpaths etc, will all remain open.

Will Dorney Lake ever be open to the general public again? Personally, I doubt it very much. Its main purpose is not providing a park for all and sundry. It is a sporting venue – with a lot of (dangerous) water. The costs of providing additional car parking, main gate security staff and dealing with regular “incursions” was never part of the planning for the Lake. I fear that those days may be over, understandably.

Could local residents be allowed inside the security fencing on certain days? That would be welcomed by the community, but it raises questions about how this might be effectively managed. Certainly, there are many access technology solutions available and there is no doubt that residents would respect the facility considerably more than some of the general public.

Re-establishing the successful Dorney Eton Environmental Panel (DEEP), with Eton College/ Lake personnel and Dorney residents, would be a great first step with their first task to find a way that local residents could, once again, enjoy the whole venue.

Bill Dax

Design and Safety issues at the Dents Corner Roundabout

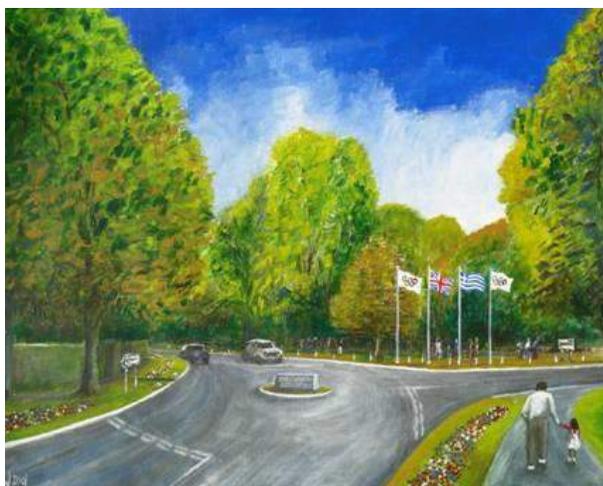
Dorney Traffic Working Group (DTWG)

www.dorneyvillagetraffic.uk

Whilst DTWG does believe that Dorney Parish Council followed the process outlined to them by Bucks Council on this matter, we are not at all convinced that Transport for Bucks have done the same. Concern has, rightly, been raised by Clive Randle as to where the public document from TfB is that confirms the decision to proceed with a roundabout. We certainly can't find it and nor could Clive.

However, for the moment, we are assuming that it will proceed, and we will address the Design and Safety Audit issues.

In 2009, whilst discussing this junction prior to the 2012 Olympics at Dorney Lake, a local artist was asked by Dorney Parish Council to visualise a possible roundabout. This is his sympathetic picture:



This was felt, by the community, to be an excellent concept – in a rural environment such as Dorney.

Given the beauty of our village, especially this junction which embraces the woodland surrounding Dorney Court (Grade 1 listed), the Dorney Conservation Area, a meadow with grazing horses and Dorney Cottage (Grade II listed), we were a little surprised to be passed the proposed design for our very special roundabout – with nine

large lamp posts. Currently there are three very suitable ones!

New Roundabout Design

As far as we are aware, there has been no discussion regarding this design – in fact, again, we have not been able to access a copy of the complete public Design and Access Audit anywhere.

We can only assume that this is the bog-standard box-ticking template for a standard roundabout based on the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), reference CD 116 – Geometric Design of Roundabouts, which is a Highways England originated document. We understand that the primary application of DMRB is on the high-volume high speed strategic road network.

Devon County Council have considerable expertise regarding rural roads – as we expected Bucks Council to have.

On 8th April 2020 Devon CC considered a [Department for Transport's Safer Roads Fund – scheme for approval on the A3123 \(North Devon\)](#). Within this scheme they

identified one of the roundabouts as being in need of special consideration regarding lighting as it was in a rural position.

One of their conclusions was as follows:

There are number of current and new policies that suggest consideration should be given to a restriction of street lighting in rural areas in particular.

DTWG Recommendations:

1. The roundabout is to be constructed in such a way as to be as close to the artist's impression, above, as possible. The circle in the centre to simply be painted, rather than raised.
2. The existing three lamp posts and lights be retained in their current positions. No further lamp posts to be added.
3. No changes to be made to the current island signage/furniture, unless legally mandated and consistent with the environment.

Rationale (based partly on Devon County Council's findings):

- The roundabout is in a rural situation.
- It is partly inside the Dorney Conservation Area
- It is surrounded by woodlands, listed buildings and a meadow.
- The environmental constraints to lighting:
 - Bucks Council's Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change Policies.
 - Requirements for as dark a sky as possible in rural areas.
 - The artificial lighting of bat roosts, access points and foraging pathways can be extremely damaging to bats and should be avoided. There are considerable bat populations in Dorney village.
- The collision statistics at this junction are low.
- The likelihood of an accident occurring at such a rural roundabout is low , the difference between lit and unlit is small and the severity might be slightly lower.
- There is little (or no) pedestrian traffic at night.

The paper above was sent, via George Sandy, one of our County Councillors, to the Project Manager/Principal Engineer, Design Services, Transport for Bucks. His response made the following points (in the left hand column overleaf):

The DTWG response was:

Having carefully considered the points made by the Project Manager it does appear that the engineers who conducted the Road Safety audit for the new roundabout may not have had access to all of the information required to allow a complete Design and Safety audit to be achieved.

If this was the case, we would urgently request that the additional information provided below be incorporated into a re-assessment of the lighting requirements for the roundabout – together with the points raised in our preceding paper.

<i>In the case of Dorney, I do not feel that this junction is suitable to be left unlit for road safety reasons, and I make the following points:-</i>	DTWG Road Safety Comments (based on a Risk Assessment)	Additional Risk:
There is already street lighting on this junction	Correct. The view from the local community is to use this lighting and that there is no need for additional lighting.	
There are hazards at this junction – for example accesses in the vicinity of the junction	Correct. These accesses have been in situ for decades and in one case, hundreds of years.	No additional Risk
The traffic that uses this junction includes road users that may not be familiar with the junction (motorists driving through the village and users of the nearby rowing lake)	The traffic through this part of the village, according to the official Bucks Council traffic counter, is lower (in 2019 pre Covid) than it was in 2005, and is declining year on year. It is also consistent "rat run" traffic - with the vast majority of drivers using the road regularly. The number of people accessing events at Dorney Lake is minimal in comparison.	Reduced Risk
It is possible that long trailers and similar vehicles may be traversing this junction (for example carrying rowing boats) – there may be poorer visibility of these vehicles.	There are only seven permitted regattas at Dorney Lake every year. All but one of these occur during May and June, during British Summer Time when sunset is 20:30 hrs in May and 21:15hrs in June. Boat trailers and similar vehicles are not permitted to enter Dorney Lake after 20:00 hrs and must leave immediately after their race has been concluded. Racing usually stops at 19:00hrs. Dorney Lake closes the main gates at 20:00hrs. So, there are no boat trailers and similar vehicles entering or leaving Dorney Lake during darkness.	No Risk
The engineers undertaking the road safety audit specifically requested every detail of the streetlighting design (this implies to me as a designer that they to consider street lighting to be essential at this particular junction).	Not having seen the road safety audit that Dorney Parish Council paid £5,000 towards, despite very many requests, it is not possible to comment on it. So, whilst they may have requested the detail, their Risk Assessment (presumably on which it was based) could have been created on false or incomplete information - and could, therefore, be wrong. The community also considers street lighting to be essential at this particular junction - just not an excess of it.	

We asked that this additional, relevant information be made available to the engineers who conducted the Design and Safety audit as soon as possible, for their reconsideration.

We await their response.

Bill Dax – bill@daxfamily.com
Dorney Traffic Working Group (DTWG)

The Dorney Traffic Working Group (DTWG) was established in 2015 to research and consider traffic calming and associated issues in and around Dorney.

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Sutton Hoo, Tutankhamun – and Dorney?

Many family and friends seem to have enjoyed the recent Netflix film *The Dig*. Nominated for five BAFTAs, it recounts the race against time to unearth the Anglo-Saxon ship burial at Sutton Hoo in Suffolk just before the war. Archaeology seems to be everywhere. During lockdown I've enjoyed online lectures from BBC History on everything from Neanderthals to Romans. I'm inspired by the enthusiasm of these latter-day Indiana Jones – witness Janina Ramirez presenting *Raiders of the Lost Past*, 'this single find places the dawn of European civilisation back another 2000 years!' Next year will see the centenary of the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun.



But twenty odd years ago, the eyes of the archaeological world were on, yes, Dorney as major discoveries were made. These were the result of the happy coincidence (well, happy for archaeologists) of two major excavation projects, the Flood Relief Channel and Dorney Lake. Between 1996 and 1998, the National Rivers Authority and later Summerleaze contracted the Oxford Archaeological Unit to investigate land to the west of Lake End Road and around Lot's Hole. Between 1995 and 2003, the same OAU excavated the terrain now under the Rowing Lake for Eton College. The director of both projects, Tim Allen, was for a while a rather charismatic presence in our community.

In the wake of this, Dorney achieved some notoriety. The Discovery Channel filmed an episode of its historical series *Two's Company* in 1997 on the lake site. I recently came across a VHS tape of this in our loft – digitised this might find a home on the Dorney History Group website. From it I recall the vast number of young volunteers³⁰

attracted forming a tented village in Dorney worthy of a rock festival, Mr Allen typically exclaiming that this was the most important Bronze and Iron age site in the British Isles, and the discovery of 6,000-year-old human skeleton, presumably Dorney's oldest resident. Channel 4 ran a three-part documentary series on 'Cannibalism' in 2001 and one of the episodes featured Dorney because Tim Allen had published a paper maintaining that his excavations had unearthed evidence that eating people was rife among pre-Roman Celts in this part of the Thames Valley. However fractious life might get in Dorney these days, life was probably a good deal more arduous forty centuries ago.

On a sunny August Bank Holiday weekend in 2000, the site was opened up to Dorney residents and some may recall a conducted tour by Tim Allen. We intended to mark the anniversary last August, but lack of space intervened. Most memorable was the sight of recently unearthed timber bridges or jetties which jutted into the Thames, which in 1400 BC probably ran roughly where the Olympic course is now.

Hunter-gatherers had wandered along the Thames around Dorney for five thousand years – rivers were important to these Mesolithic people, but the excavations painted a picture of nomadic groups gradually adopting farming practices. In fact, another paper claimed that the excavations had established the earliest examples of



cereal cultivation in Britain from charred grains deposited in middens (rubbish tips) between Lake End Road and Dorney Reach between 3500 and 3900 BC. Another horticultural first to go alongside that Pineapple! Further finds of flints indicated the first farmers living in clearings near the Thames, combining a mobile lifestyle with the beginnings of herding domestic animals and cultivating crops.

Those wooden bridges were the most memorable finds, and those present in 2000 were privileged to gaze on what remained. We saw two parallel lines of massive upright stakes which have been radiocarbon dated to around 1400 BC. If those structures dated from the Bronze Age, then a further five waterlogged wooden structures were interpreted as Iron Age bridges. Apparently, these jetties jutting out

into the river might have indicated a degree of trade between the middle Thames and the river downstream, or even with Europe, not realised hitherto.

Another first was the discovery of the oldest maple wood 'ard', or primitive plough, dating from around 760 BC and probably thrown into the river as an offering.

Which brings us to ritual and those cannibals. Leg bones discovered in river sandbanks had been 'deliberately defleshed and damaged'. As the project went on, the theory took hold that rituals took place at the lake site. "The bridges were not just structural" said Tim Allen, "they also had a ritual element, for they appeared to be used as platforms for offerings." We may have had a burial site on our doorsteps, with bodies or bones placed on the sandbanks.

We might all feel a bit of a shudder while walking down the Richmond Path or by the Cress Brook. Re-visiting this project twenty years on clarifies that our local ancestors were agricultural innovators, engineers, traders, herdsman – and participants in rituals we can barely imagine. One wonders whether some descendent of Tim Allen will contemplate two or three millennia hence on further finds – 'we discovered a strange circular stone structure alongside what looked like nine beacons of what must have been considerable height in the midst of one of the ancient trade routes...it seemed to serve no purpose, and was probably intended for the ritual worship of the village elders...'



Peter Bowman



Please feed our swans! Wendy from Swan Support (www.swansupport.org.uk) has been spreading the word that it's OK to feed bread to our swans.... and lots of other food too.

Our swan numbers are down as sadly some have flown elsewhere and permanently moved, searching for food.

Swans, ducks and geese need a variety of foods to keep them fit and healthy.



- Bread
- Wheat
- Leafy Greens
- Dried Grass
- Grains and Cereals
- Swan food or pellets

Swan Feeding Tips

- Feed small amounts at a time, making sure all food has been eaten before giving more.
- Always feed on water.
- Never feed them anything that has gone mouldy.
- Please remember to feed responsibly and follow any guidelines in your area

Dorney Village Hall

www.dorneyvillagehall.co.uk



Coronavirus – COVID19

**Unfortunately, we are closed for parties until at least 21st June 2021,
subject to government advice.**

**Please contact us by email: enquiries@dorneyvillagehall.com if you need
any
further information
Dorney Village Hall Management Committee**

Dorney Village Hall has a large main area with stage, a smaller annexed room,
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It is served by a large private car park and adjacent there is a tennis court, a multi
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It is used by residents for a multitude of activities such as dancing classes, keep fit,
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Main hall: 15 x 7.4m, ceiling height 7m

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A Nice Little Earner

It is the year of our Lord 2028. The Smart Motorway, renamed Digital Motorway, since 'smart' it isn't, has been restricted to electric cars and a few modern petrol vehicles, the owners of which are public enemies.

Elsie and Albert are travelling west on the brave new death trap approaching Junction 8 in their elderly Prius, Albert behind the wheel peering through the spray and gloom left by the recent shower while Elsie berates him for failing to see the exit at Junction 7.

"I told you to come off at seven," she continues to heckle as Albert's steamed up glasses add to the confusion, "but would you listen? No, of course you wouldn't, you never do, and all because you don't want to visit my mother, it's always the!!!!, come off here, look, just there! No, not there.... pull left! Now! or we'll have to go to Bracknell!"

Albert brakes firmly and dives for the nearside lane from the middle lane. He always drives in the middle lane, usually just below the speed limit, (Elsie doesn't approve of speed) and because he feels safe there, all the while in blissful ignorance of the long queue of heavies unable to overtake in the restricted outside lane. After braking he remembers to indicate, but too late for 38 tons of articulated lorry that cannot slow as quickly as a one ton Prius, and also too late for the driver of an electric van as it attempts an inside overtake of the dawdling Prius.

The van brakes hard and by some miracle misses Albert and Elsie, but not before 38 tons clip the back bumper while under heavy braking, pushing it into the 'Armco' crash barrier where the hard shoulder was eight years before. The articulated part of the lorry jack knifes gracefully across all the lanes and comes to a shuddering halt, snapping the brake hoses to the trailer, effectively locking 25 tons of forty-foot trailer across the entire westbound lane. Fortunately, no one following is on a phone, tuning the radio, scratching somewhere private, or in a state of no concentration and all stop, by another miracle, without colliding. Overhead gantries announce the problem to following traffic, and soon, there are three miles of car park, all running down their batteries with lights, wipers and heaters working overtime.

"Now look what you've done!" scolds Elsie as they gingerly step onto the carriageway viewing the carnage. "We'll be late, again. You did that on purpose. It's just like you. Typical. Just typical!"

The Lord must have been smiling on the M4, because no one is hurt, not a scratch, and save for the Prius being converted into scrap, and small dents in the lorry bumper and 'Armco' no harm is done, and everyone gets out of their vehicles and meet adversity in a very British stiff upper lip fashion. The Dunkirk spirit prevails except in Albert who is busy removing his hearing aid.

Police officers from Thames Valley's finest cannot get to the scene and reasonably expect that there will be casualties, and marked cars and ambulances try in vain to get to the scene, routing from their Taplow base since the motorway is now

effectively shut, and find their blue lights and sirens of little use as everyone dives off onto the A4.

Back in Dorney Reach it becomes apparent that there is yet another problem in Highways England's brave new world as a desperate mother and child knock on a nearby door.

"Please, can you help. My daughter needs urgent medical attention, and no one can use the motorway."

The daughter looks ill and the kindly lady of the house ushers her in, calls an ambulance and tasks Peter, her husband, to make the tea.

"Where is your husband?" she asks the distraught mother as she clutches her tea.

"In the car with our 5-year-old son," she is close to tears. "Heaven knows when he'll get away."

She calls him on her mobile, asking the question.

"Well, there's no sign of movement at all at present," he reports. "Young William is thirsty and needs a toilet. Where are you. I worried when you ran off. How's little Kristina?"

"Sorry Darling," she replies. "I thought she might have another seizure so I could not possibly sit there. She's calm and an ambulance is on the way. I've found these really lovely people, and they've given me a cup of tea."

"I'm much relieved," sighs her husband.

"Where is he? I'll take him a thermos, and a cold drink for the boy," volunteers our hero, and off he goes with a tray in search of a blue plug in Jaguar with a tired battery, a little boy who needs the loo, and a worried husband.

On arrival, everyone is out of their cars and lorries, discover where sanctuary is and head in that direction for tea, shelter and loos. The ever-hospitable people of Dorney Reach rise to the occasion, and a party atmosphere ensues as people get to know each other, complain bitterly about the Government in general and smart, sorry, digital motorways in particular and leave a small contribution for charity.

Back on the motorway someone near Albert calls a breakdown service. His battery is almost flat and soon the car will be immobile, as will most of the others as heaters continue to drain the power.

"Sorry," comes the reply. "We've been that busy, our electric breakdown trucks are all flat. They'll be charged up soon though and we can come to you."

"How long?"

"The charge normally takes three hours."

"Haven't they got any diesel one's?" Albert asks.

“Not allowed on the motorway,” comes the reply. “Ultra-low emission zone and all that.”

Albert overhears this.

“What?” he exclaims. “Three hours! Where’s the nearest pub. I need a pint. I’ve got nothing to drive after all.”

“Typical!” scolds Elsie. “Hit the booze the moment there’s a problem.”

“Darling,” ventures Albert in a rare display of recklessness, smiles “nothing is going to happen here for several hours, and frankly, I’m past caring. I would be delighted if you were to accompany me, or Sweetness, you can stay here. Where’s the nearest pub?” he asks again.

A local says, “If you walk back down the motorway for a bit, you’ll see the bridge to Dorney. Turn right there and the Palmer Arms is in the village. Beer’s good!”

Albert steps out at a pace followed by Elsie who can’t speak in the effort to keep up. Soon they are climbing the bank and away from all the problems below, entering the pretty village. To his surprise, Elsie’s hand slips into his.

“You know Albert, it’s years since I’ve been here, and I’ve forgotten how lovely it is. I’ll have a port and lemon when we get there, and if you’re really good,” she smiles as the years and problems fall away, “I’ll buy you dinner and a cab home!”

“Lovely,” sighs Albert. Life did not get better. “Hold on! Who put that awful roundabout there in this lovely place!”

Later in the Palmer Arms, Elsie smiles contentedly as they clink their glasses to each other.”

“You’re a good man Albert, even if you are an awful driver.” She smiles.

Stay safe.

Mike Quincey

The Dorney Reach defibrillator – don’t forget the keycode!



The Community Access Defibrillator is installed on the side of the Village Hall near the Playground Tuck Shop.

Should you need to use it, the defibrillator will lead you through the necessary steps.

The defibrillator case is locked. The keycode is **C123X**.

The information has been added to the Local Issues page on the Parish Council website so that it is always available.

Dorney Parish News will continue to provide Keycode details.

The Defibrillator in the old phone box on Village Road does not require a Keycode.



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Making a SMART exit



Our friends from Balfour Beatty and Highways England might be around these parts for longer than we, and they, expected. It sounds as if the 'endgame' to the M4 J3-12 SMART Motorway project is not entirely going to plan.

As we write, 24-hour temporary traffic lights are in place on the Marsh Lane bridge to be followed by full 24/7

closures between March 29 and April 1 and then April 6 to April 11. According to the letter we received, this allows the work necessary to 'completing the new bridge' ('earthworks, kerbs, drainage, white lining, fencing, verges work etc.'). The end must be near?

The two years of noise and dust and the despoliation of the area around the new bridges has always been compounded by the knowledge that even those who commissioned this project are losing confidence in its safety and acceptability. Last month, Grant Shapps, the Transport Secretary told MPs on the Transport Select Committee 'It was entirely wrong to build a so-called SMART motorway – and you question the naming of it – without the technology in place to make it safer'.

Apparently, the minister commissioned a progress report from Highways England for the anniversary of his department's Stocktake and Action Plan on smart motorways, which was published in March 2020 and which included an 18-point plan. In a written statement to Parliament on March 24 this year he added: 'Highways England has now provided my department with that anniversary report, and work is rapidly being completed to assess it, including stocktake actions, and to establish next steps. The report will be published by summer, once I am assured that the proposals are sufficiently robust.'

Just recently, voices like the AA expressed concern that these delays are holding up progress in making SMART motorways safer. This stretch of the M4 was likely to have opened with 4 lane running this Spring, with the safety technology not fully installed until 2022-23. Now Balfour Beatty tell 'Dorney Parish News' that as a result



of the minister's 'stocktake', new SMART sectors can't open without the installation of radar-based Stopped Vehicle Detection (SVD). Balfour Beatty's contract has been extended and teams will remain to carry out the task starting with Junction 12 to Junction 8/9 in June with J7 to J3 following on after. Although this means the project

is extended, and 60mph limits and road closures will occur, the team's presence will not be so obvious. New radar units at the side of the road will be installed detecting any vehicle which has stopped and alerting the control room in 20 seconds.

Standing on the new Marsh Lane bridge is depressing, not because the former motorway was a thing of beauty, but the sight of the bare verges of the motorway stripped of their mature greenery. Balfour Beatty tell us that more disappointment awaits. This year's spring planting season as been missed. What will mainly be planted is not a majority of 7ft trees many had expected but 2ft tall 'whips' which are planted 'bare root', obviously smaller and looking like a simple twig, with roots in plastic tubs. It seems the M4 embankments have deteriorated over the last decades more than expected and new trees may well not survive, whereas at least whips grow and thrive quickly. We are told that this won't have any effect on, for instance, noise levels, but onlookers may well, at first, not like what they see.

This magazine would like to thank Matt Orchard for keeping us informed, but there is one thing we can all agree on with the Minister of Transport – whichever word best sums up Dorney's experience of the M4 'upgrade' it wouldn't be 'smart'.

Peter Bowman

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**Minutes of the Dorney Parish VIRTUAL Meeting of the Council
on Tuesday 9th March 2021 at 8 pm**

Present: - Councillors K Harris (Chairman), A Purdie, A Foxley, J Dax, R Ormond and C Stoughton.

In Attendance: - Buckinghamshire Council Cllrs Dev Dhillon, D Pepler and G Sandy, Mr Bowman (Dorney Village Pump), 13 Members of the Public and Sue Moffat (Clerk).

As Chairman, Cllr Harris changed the order of the agenda and moved agenda item 7 to the beginning of the meeting:-

166 Updates on the new Roundabout at Lake End Road

The Clerk read a statement to clarify the process undertaken by Dorney Parish Council and the decision makers regards the installation of a new roundabout at Lake End Road:-

THE PROCESS

In the meeting of June 2020, the Parish Council made a formal decision to collaborate with the community and Bucks Council for the installation of a roundabout at the junction of Court Lane/Lake End Road/Village Road.

In July Cllr Dev Dhillon suggested getting a petition together in support of a roundabout. Subsequently he suggested that at least one hundred names should be in favour.

By the middle of August more than 500 hundred votes in favour had been registered and the final result was 550.

At the Dorney Parish Council's September meeting, Cllr Dev Dhillon confirmed he had been given the go ahead by Bucks Council for the installation of the roundabout. He confirmed that he will make the Beeches Community Board aware of this project.

On 18th November 2020 the Beeches Community Board approved the application for funding "to improve road safety at the junction of Court Lane/Lake End Road/Village Road in Dorney, by replacing the staggered junction with a roundabout. They stated that "this project would improve road safety in this location, which would align with the Community Board's priority for Infrastructure and Highways."

SUMMARY

Dorney Parish Council recommended the change of junction on the basis of road safety and traffic calming to Bucks Council. Bucks Council requested a petition. A petition was submitted with 550 votes in support. Beeches Community Board approved the funding. Bucks Council are proceeding with the roundabout.

Due process was followed. This decision is final so there is no longer any opportunity for further discussion. Therefore, it is not appropriate for any Councillor or Member of public to raise further issues over the roundabout during the public part of the meeting.

This statement will be published on the web site under 'Local Issues'.

167PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Cllr Dev Dhillon reported: - (i) Bucks Council is increasing the rates for 2021-22 by 3.9% (2% of the increase is for Adult and Social Care); (ii) He has a meeting scheduled with the Local Area Technician (LAT) to discuss the resurfacing of Marsh Lane. Any damage caused by the Smartmotorway work should be put right by Highways England. He is also lobbying for Lake End Road, Marsh Lane and Court Lane to be resurfaced under the Capital road repairs budget. He has left this information with Cllr George Sandy and the Highways Officer as he will no longer be representing Dorney after the May elections; (iii) At the next meeting, Bucks councillors will be in Purdah. He will be attending Dorney Parish Council meetings in the future as he has made many friends in Dorney during the years he has represented Dorney.

It was pointed out to Cllr Dev Dhillon that there has been a build-up of detritus along the kerbs at Lake End Road particularly by the sharp bend by Sainsburys, and this is causing flooding. Cllr Dev Dhillon will point this out at his meeting with the LAT.

Cllr G Sandy reported:- (i) He has already raised concerns about flooding with the LAT. Bucks Council have allocated £6m for gulley clearance in 2021-22 so this should reduce the amount of blocked drains; (ii) The Planning application for Challons Chicken Farm development has been refused on Green Belt grounds. This is important for Dorney as now a precedence has been set; (iii) Orchard Herbs Farm – Still waiting to hear from the Enforcement Officer; (iii) Bucks Council have agreed a 3.9% increase in rates. The Government's maximum allowance is 5% so Bucks Council have done well to keep it to 3.9%; (iii) Taplow parking scheme, which will affect Marsh Lane, has been pushed back to the 22/23 budget.

Cllr Ormond pointed out that for a Band D it is £69.40 for Dorney and 26.83 for Taplow. However Dorney PC has no other income other than the precept unlike other parish councils that may manage Village Halls. Cllr Sandy was pleased to receive this information as he did not realise the Village Hall was not owned by Dorney PC.

PCSO O'Connor has sent in a written report that TVPA have applied for a Clearway in Marsh Lane. Cllr Purdie does not believe this has gone through the due consultation process yet as Dorney PC nor the Church have been contacted. Cllr Dev Dhillon will bring this to the attention of the Highways Officer.

Members of the Public raised concern that they did not have an opportunity to speak about the new roundabout. A Freedom of Information Request has been sent to the Clerk regards the petition. The Clerk acknowledged this. However, as previously stated, Dorney PC has carried out discussion on this issue for many years, made a decision at June 2020 Council meeting to agree a roundabout and carried out a public consultation. It is supported by Bucks Council and all this information will be published on the web site.

Cllr Sandy responded that the set procedures for Bucks Council and those for Dorney PC have all been carried out correctly and a proper consultation has taken place before the roundabout was agreed. As with any democracy different opinions can be voiced but he is sure the majority of residents want the roundabout. A roundabout would be safer, prevent accidents and once the dust settles he is sure everyone will be happy.

Cllr Pepler reported:- He did not have much to add except:- (i) He has been asked at a Planning briefing if there are any Brownfield sites in Dorney? Please let him know if there are any; (ii) He is concerned about the parking situation in Court Lane and one suggestion is that the car park at the Jubilee River is inadequate. Cllr Purdie responded that he believes the Environment Agency are unwilling to increase the size of this car park. Concern was raised by the public regards cars parking along Lake End Rd particularly outside the Pineapple PH. This also affects cyclists when car doors are opened.

A question was raised about whether the Clearway and double yellow lines will resolve the problem in Court Lane. Cllr Foxley responded that this is questionable as there is also the issue for parking for those attending the Church. James Palmer has offered a field for additional parking, but this will increase urbanisation of the area although grass creting can be used. However, there is still the problem as to how the car park will be manned. Cllr Harris added that the parking situation may improve if the Eton Rowing Lake is closed. It was agreed for James Palmer, Lucy Feagon Earl and Cllr Foxley to have a discussion on this.

Martin Westcott asked to have a meeting with Cllr Harris regards the number of dog bins available. Lastly Cllr Harris confirmed again that all documentation on the history and plans for the proposed roundabout will be available on Dorney PC's web site.

M4 Smartmotorway – Matt Orchard sent in a written report:- Marsh Lane - On hold at the moment while some issues with tie-in levels on the north of the bridge are resolved, temporary traffic lights have been removed. Works expected to resume in April. Temporary traffic lights will be needed again for the final finishing of the bridge and its approaches to Lake End / Court Lane roundabout. General Arrangement drawing received from Bucks. Still not enough detail to allow pricing and then construction.

168Apologies- Cllr P Smith, Matt Orchard (Balfour Beatty), Jim Stacey (Highways England).

169 Disclosure of interests – None.

170 Resolved to receive and approve the minutes of the previous Council meeting held on the 9th February, 2021.

171 Clerks Report – (i) Elections will take place on 6th May 2021 and a hard copy of the election pack is available on request; (ii) Need to decide if Dorney PC wants to hold the AGM this year. No AGM was held last year due to the Covid pandemic. A face to face meeting will still not be allowed in April, 2021 due to Covid restrictions. There is no legal requirement to have an AGM; (iii) Just to note that the agenda states under Public Participation, ‘Each person speaking will usually be limited to 3 minutes. Duration of this part of the meeting usually to be no longer than 15 minutes’.

172 Chairman’s Report – None as all included in the agenda.

173 Eton Lake car park - Cllr Harris has been in contact with the Manager of Eton Lake and the Lake will be shut until further notice. It will only be opened for events and these are advertised on the web site.

174 Update on Roundmoor Ditch from Cllr Dax – Cllr Dax had nothing further to report accept the work recently been carried out by the EA has made an improvement to those residents where there was the threat of flooding.

175 Update on the Emergency Plan from Cllr Smith. Cllr Smith has reported that he has been in discussion with Thea Pine and now waiting for further support.

176 Cllr Foxley to report on Web Support or Outsourcing. Cllr Foxley has been in contact with 3 web site companies. She will write a report on this for the next Council meeting. Cllr Stoughton added that he was concerned about the offensive comments made by residents to parish councillors on Nextdoor. It was agreed to ask Nextdoor to tone down comments so less aggressive.

177 Dorney Parish Council’s procedure for recording Council meetings - BALC’s advice is:-

Meetings can be videoed by either the Council or public. If the public are videoing the meeting they should make this known at the beginning of the meeting and are not allowed to add comments to the recording during the meeting. The meeting attendees should be advised that the meeting is being recorded at the start of the meeting. If the Parish Council is videoing the meeting, following the production of the minutes the recording will be destroyed. The recording is only to assist the clerk to write up the minutes so once the minutes have been produced the copy of the video is then deleted.

178 Planning

(i) Resolved to note planning issues, decisions and appeals recently notified by South Bucks Planning.

(ii) Resolved to make comments upon applications – (as circulated).

179 Finance

a) Resolved to authorise payment of Accounts for March 2021 (as circulated).

b) Received the list of income for March 2021 (as circulated).

c) Received recent bank statements.

d) Cllr Ormond reported that there is spare capacity in the budget (£3k in salaries and £2k contingency fund for planning consultant) for web site support.

e) Cllr Ormond asked for an agenda item for the next meeting to be ‘Statement for Repayments to Dorney Village Hall for 2021-22’ as he will not be standing for parish councillor at the May elections he would like it recorded for new councillors exactly what has taken place.

180 Member’s Reports - None.

181 Correspondence: - (i) Your quarterly update from the Beeches Community Board; (ii) Response from Joan Wraight to the last parish council meeting; (iii) Public Service Infrastructure and Permitted Development Consultation response from Buckinghamshire Council; (iv) Buckinghamshire Council Election Information; (v) Taplows response to Hollands Farm Planning application; (vi) Update: Jubilee River, Black Potts weir repairs, February 2021.

182 Resolve any complaints/comments received from residents:- (i) Installation of Court Lane roundabout; (ii) Parking outside Eton Rowing Lake; (iii) Lack of election publicity.

183 Grounds Maintenance and Highway employee/work. The groundsman has returned to work. Cllr Harris is organising the annual service for the tractor.

Date of next meeting – Council meeting at 8pm on Tuesday 13th April 2021 to be conducted remotely.



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Dorney Parish News

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Our current print run is 250. Estimated readership is around 400 people. There are approximately 300 residential properties in Dorney Parish.

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