

## Summary of Important Community Issues in Dorney Parish in 2020

### The COVID-19 Pandemic

- The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns **significantly impacted life in Dorney throughout 2020.**
- The **Dorney Parish News** transitioned to an online format in April and May due to restrictions on printing and distribution. The magazine provided updates on government guidelines, local support initiatives, and the impact of the pandemic on village life.
- The **closure of Dorney Village Hall** from March to August disrupted numerous activities and events, including the Dorney Horticultural Society's Annual Show and the Dorney Drama Guild's pantomime.
- The pandemic **highlighted the importance of community support networks**, with residents using social media platforms like Nextdoor to offer assistance, share information, and maintain social connections.
- **Dorney School** adapted to the challenges of remote learning, providing support for key workers' children throughout the lockdown period.

### Infrastructure and Development

- The **construction of the M4 Smart Motorway**, particularly the works on the Marsh Lane Bridge, caused significant disruption and distress for Dorney Reach residents, including noise, vibrations, and traffic diversions. The Parish Council and residents voiced their concerns to Highways England, seeking mitigation measures and compensation for the negative impacts experienced.
- The **introduction of a new road layout at the junction of Court Lane and Lake End Road** raised safety concerns, leading to a campaign for a roundabout at the junction. The Parish Council, supported by County Councillor Dev Dhillon, sought funding from Highways England for the roundabout's construction.
- The **Orchard Herbs Farm site** continued to be a source of concern, with unauthorised activities taking place in violation of Green Belt restrictions. The Parish Council and residents urged Buckinghamshire Council to enforce existing enforcement notices and restore the site to its intended use.

### Dorney Lake and Access Issues

- The **influx of visitors to Dorney Lake during the first lockdown**, attracted by the opportunity for swimming and outdoor recreation, caused **chaos and significant disruption** for Dorney Reach residents. Parking issues, litter, and anti-social behaviour reached unprecedented levels, prompting calls for action from the Parish Council.
- **Eton College, in consultation with the Parish Council and other stakeholders, closed Dorney Lake to the public from June to September** to regain control of the situation. The closure, while unpopular with some residents who valued their access to the lake, was deemed necessary to address the immediate problems.
- Upon reopening, **Dorney Lake implemented measures to control access**, including fencing, restricted parking, and increased security patrols. The Parish Council sought ongoing dialogue with Eton College to ensure residents' needs and concerns were considered in future management plans.

## Community Engagement and Communication

- The **2020 Parish Council elections were postponed until 2021** due to the pandemic, leaving the existing council in place for an extended period.
- **Residents expressed a desire for greater transparency and communication from the Parish Council**, particularly regarding issues like the M4 Smart Motorway works and Dorney Lake access.
- The **use of social media platforms, especially Nextdoor**, played a crucial role in facilitating communication and information sharing within the community, but also highlighted the need for a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to engaging residents.

## Other Notable Issues

- The **installation of a second defibrillator at Dorney Village Hall**, funded in part by Dorney School, enhanced community safety.
- The **closure of the Barclays bank branch in Eton** raised concerns about access to banking services for residents.
- The **impact of extreme weather events**, including Storm Eunice in February, highlighted the vulnerability of the local environment and the need for preparedness.

## Overall Themes

- The events of 2020 **demonstrated the resilience and adaptability of the Dorney community** in the face of unprecedented challenges.
- **Concerns about protecting Dorney's rural character and environment**, particularly in relation to development pressures and unauthorised activities, were prominent throughout the year.
- **The need for improved communication and engagement** between the Parish Council, residents, and other stakeholders emerged as a key theme, highlighting the importance of inclusivity and transparency in decision-making processes. }