

## **Summary of Important Community Issues in Dorney Parish in 2016**

**2016 was a year of transition and uncertainty in Dorney Parish.** The closure of the Eton Dorney Centre, a long-standing community institution, marked the end of an era. The looming M4 Smart Motorway project cast a long shadow over the year, while residents grappled with persistent traffic and parking issues, particularly around Dorney Lake. Against this backdrop, community spirit and a desire to preserve Dorney's unique character remained strong.

### **Eton Dorney Centre Closure: End of an Era**

- **Centre Closes in May:** The Eton Dorney Centre, which had provided holidays for underprivileged children for over 40 years, closed its doors in May 2016. The closure was a significant loss for the community, as the centre had been a hub of activity and a source of employment.
- **Future of the Site Uncertain:** The closure of the centre raised questions about the future of the site. The Church of England Diocese, which owns the property, planned to sell it, but the high cost of refurbishment posed a challenge to finding a buyer.

### **The M4 Smart Motorway: Planning and Concerns**

- **Project Details Emerge:** Details of the M4 Smart Motorway project, which included plans to replace the Marsh Lane bridge, emerged throughout 2016, generating mixed reactions from residents. Concerns were raised about the impact of construction on traffic flow, noise levels, and the environment, particularly the loss of mature trees.
- **Parish Council Engages with Stakeholders:** The Parish Council actively engaged with Highways England and Buckinghamshire County Council, seeking to ensure that residents' concerns were considered in the planning process.
- **Noise Monitoring Undertaken:** Noise monitoring was conducted at Dorney School to assess the impact of traffic noise, but wet weather hampered the process.
- **Traffic and Parking Issues:** The planned motorway works exacerbated existing concerns about traffic and parking in the village, particularly on Marsh Lane and Lake End Road. Residents complained about inconsiderate parking, congestion, and safety hazards, especially around Taplow Station.

### **Dorney Lake: Rising Popularity and Parking Woes**

- **Increased Visitor Numbers:** Dorney Lake's popularity continued to grow, attracting a steady stream of visitors, particularly during events. This influx of visitors intensified existing traffic and parking problems, leading to frustration among residents.
- **Parking Chaos on Court Lane:** Residents complained about inconsiderate parking along Court Lane, the main access route to Dorney Lake, especially during weekends and events. Blocked roads, damaged verges, and safety hazards were common concerns.
- **Parish Council Explores Solutions:** The Parish Council acknowledged the parking problems and began exploring options for addressing the situation, including the possibility of introducing parking restrictions.

### **Best Kept Village Competition: Mixed Results**

- **Dorney Enters Competition Again:** Dorney Parish once again entered the Buckinghamshire Best Kept Village competition, led by resident Nick Teale.

- **Community Tidy-Up Efforts:** A community tidy-up session was organised to prepare for the judges' visit, but the turnout was less than overwhelming.
- **Disappointing Results:** Dorney received a score of 70 out of 100 in the competition, a decrease from the previous year. The judges' comments were generally positive, but some residents felt the scoring was overly critical, particularly regarding the impact of traffic noise on the war memorial garden.

### **Broadband: Slow Speeds Persist**

- **Dorney Reach Residents Await Information:** Residents in Dorney Reach expressed frustration about the lack of information regarding the schedule for the mobile library service in 2017.
- **Broadband Frustrations:** Residents continued to experience slow broadband speeds, particularly at the Common end of Dorney Village. BT's rollout of fiber optic broadband was eagerly anticipated but faced delays, leaving residents reliant on outdated infrastructure.

### **Community Life: A Year of Events and Engagement**

- **Dorney Horticultural Society Thrives:** The Dorney Horticultural Society continued to be a vibrant part of community life, hosting a range of events, including a coach trip to Mottisfont and the annual Horticultural Show.
- **Dorney Parish News Encourages Discussion:** The *Dorney Parish News* provided a platform for residents to share their views and engage in discussions about important local issues. The publication featured articles, letters to the editor, and reports from Parish Council meetings, covering topics ranging from the M4 Smart Motorway to parking problems to community events.
- **New Year's Eve Celebration:** The Dorney Village Hall Management Committee organised a New Year's Eve party, but noted a low turnout from local residents.

**Overall, 2016 was a year of adaptation and anticipation in Dorney Parish.** The closure of the Eton Dorney Centre created a void in the community, while the M4 Smart Motorway project raised both hopes and concerns. Traffic and parking problems continued to plague residents, particularly around Dorney Lake, prompting calls for solutions. Despite these challenges, the community's commitment to preserving Dorney's unique character and engaging in local events and discussions remained strong.