

Key Events and Issues in Dorney Parish During 1986

The *Dorney Parish News* offers a fascinating window into the life of Dorney Parish during 1986. The year was marked by a vibrant community spirit, numerous social and fundraising events, and the diligent work of the Parish Council in addressing local concerns. However, beneath the surface of village life, anxieties were beginning to brew regarding potential threats to Dorney's environmental stability and rural character.

Community Life and Events

- **Dorney & District Horticultural Society (DDHS):** The DDHS was a thriving organisation, hosting events such as a steak pie supper, a cheese and wine evening, a spring garden competition, a bring and buy sale, an open evening, a summer garden competition, a barbecue, a summer show, a harvest supper, a cheese and wine evening, an A.G.M., and a coach trip.
- **Dorney Women's Institute (DWI):** The DWI held monthly meetings, featuring speakers on diverse topics, including "Save our swans" and "Shopping in Victorian Windsor." The DWI also organised outings, such as a visit to Rochfords Nurseries and a trip to Berkeley Castle.
- **Dorney Women's Social Club:** The Social Club provided opportunities for women to connect and enjoy social activities.
- **Dorney Players:** The amateur drama group presented a modern Passion Play, "Christ in the Concrete City," in March. They also planned to stage a production in February 1987 and welcomed new members, particularly men.
- **Dorney Babysitting Club:** The Babysitting Club provided childcare services for the community.
- **Dorney Dog Training Club:** A new dog training club was established, offering classes for both domestic obedience and competition.
- **Church Activities:** St. James the Less Church held regular services, Sunday School, and special events such as a Lent Course focused on the question, "What on Earth is the Church for?" The Church also hosted Lent Charity Lunches to raise funds for various causes.
- **Village Hall Events:** The Village Hall served as a central gathering place, hosting activities such as whist club meetings, dances, and jumble sales.

Parish Council Activities and Local Issues

- **Parish Precept and Budget:** The Parish Council aimed to maintain the Parish Rate at its current level while continuing to provide essential services. The Parish Precept for 1986/87 was detailed in the *Parish News*.
- **Rubbish Skips:** The Parish Council successfully advocated for the retention of the rubbish skip service, which was highly valued by residents.
- **Bus Service:** The bus service underwent changes, with the Wednesday "Shoppers Bus" moved to Tuesday to align with the Maidenhead Market. However, concerns were raised about the declining market and the potential impact on bus ridership. The Parish Council actively engaged with the bus company to address these concerns.
- **Road Maintenance:** The Parish Council persistently lobbied the County Council about the poor condition of local roads, particularly Marsh Lane. Structural repairs were planned for the B3026 and Marsh Lane, including resurfacing and white lining.

- **Planning Issues:** The Parish Council reviewed planning applications and submitted comments to the District Council. Residents were also reminded to reiterate their objections to any planning appeals.
- **Water Table Monitoring:** Following concerns about the impact of pumping on the water table and plant life, the Thames Water Authority (TWA) assured the Parish Council that they were monitoring the situation and would continue to do so.
- **Best Kept Village Competition:** The Parish Council encouraged residents to participate in the Best Kept Village Competition, emphasising the importance of keeping Dorney tidy and attractive. Judging was scheduled for the first two weeks of July.

Emerging Concerns

- **Environmental Stability:** The Parish News editor expressed concern about potential threats to Dorney's environment, referring to past controversies over issues like a proposed motorway and gravel extraction. This anxiety hinted at the future conflicts that would arise, particularly regarding Eton College's proposed rowing trench.
- **Train Services:** Dissatisfaction with British Rail's commuter services was evident, with complaints about overcrowding and cancellations. The Parish Council corresponded with British Rail, seeking improvements to the train service.

The *Dorney Parish News* as a Historical Record

The *Dorney Parish News* from 1986 serves as a valuable historical document, providing a glimpse into a year characterised by community engagement and local pride. It also reveals the early stages of concerns that would escalate into significant controversies in the years to come, particularly those related to development projects and their potential impact on Dorney's environment and way of life.