

## Key Events and Issues in Dorney Parish During 1995

The *Dorney Parish News* provides a rich tapestry of life in Dorney Parish throughout 1995, revealing a community navigating major planning decisions, engaging in lively local debates, and celebrating its unique character.

### Dominating Local Discourse: The Gravel Extraction Saga

The most contentious issue of 1995 was undoubtedly the proposed gravel extraction route for the Eton College Rowing Trench project. The debate consumed countless column inches in the *Dorney Parish News* and sparked passionate exchanges within the community:

- **Exhibition and Consultation:** In March, a public exhibition and consultation was held in the Village Hall to present the proposed gravel extraction options and gather feedback from residents.
- **Community Divided:** The community found itself deeply divided over the best route, with each option presenting its own set of advantages and drawbacks.
  - Some residents favoured a route that would minimise the impact on Dorney village, even if it meant longer transportation distances or potential effects on neighbouring parishes.
  - Others prioritised the shortest and most cost-effective route, arguing that prolonged construction would be more disruptive in the long run.
- **Eton College's Role:** The role of Eton College in the decision-making process was a recurring point of contention. Residents questioned the College's commitment to minimising the impact on the Dorney community and expressed frustration at what they perceived as a lack of transparency and consultation.
- **Environmental Concerns:** Environmental protection was a central concern. Residents and the Parish Council sought assurances that the chosen route would minimise damage to the local environment and that appropriate mitigation measures would be implemented.

### Beyond the Gravel: Other Key Issues in 1995

While the gravel extraction debate dominated local discourse, other significant issues emerged in 1995:

- **Local Government Review:** The ongoing Local Government Review and the potential for Buckinghamshire to be restructured into unitary authorities generated uncertainty and debate. Residents questioned the implications for local representation and the delivery of services.
- **Dorney School Building Project:** The long-awaited expansion of Dorney School, including the construction of a new school hall, was finally approved. This development was greeted with enthusiasm by the community, as it promised to enhance educational facilities and accommodate the growing student population.
- **Traffic Calming Measures:** The introduction of traffic calming measures in neighbouring Eton, and the potential for similar schemes to be implemented in Dorney, was a topic of discussion. While some residents supported efforts to reduce traffic speeds, others expressed concerns about the effectiveness and potential drawbacks of such measures.
- **Environmental Initiatives:** The community demonstrated a strong commitment to environmental protection.

- The Parish Council played an active role in seeking Tree Preservation Orders for vulnerable trees, organising efforts to remove invasive elm suckers, and participating in the Best Kept Village competition.
- Residents actively supported initiatives like the "Feed the Children" program and expressed concerns about issues like litter and dog fouling.

### **A Community in Transition: Farewell to Familiar Faces**

The year 1995 also marked the departure of several individuals who had played integral roles in the life of Dorney Parish:

- **Revd. Colin Pontin:** The retirement of Revd. Colin Pontin after nine years as the vicar of Dorney Parish was a significant moment. His farewell service was a testament to his impact on the community, with the church filled to capacity with well-wishers.
- **Peggy Williams:** The passing of Peggy Williams, a lifelong resident of Dorney, was deeply felt by the community. Her dedication to preserving the village's character and her active involvement in local life left an enduring legacy.
- **Mrs. Oxlade:** The retirement of Mrs. Oxlade, the long-serving caretaker and cleaner of Dorney School, was another poignant moment. Her contributions were acknowledged with a heartfelt poem written by a school governor.

### **The *Dorney Parish News* as a Window into Village Life**

The *Dorney Parish News* served as a vital source of information, a platform for debate, and a reflection of the community's values and concerns. It captured the essence of life in Dorney Parish in 1995—a year of transition, challenge, and resilience.