

## **Dorney Parish in 2005: A Year of Local Issues, Community Events, and Olympic Anticipation**

The year 2005 in Dorney Parish was characterised by a mix of local concerns, community activities, and the growing anticipation of the 2012 London Olympics. The *Dorney Parish News* offers a valuable record of this period, reflecting the interests, concerns, and everyday lives of the village's residents.

### **Dorney Lake and the 2012 Olympic Bid: A Defining Moment**

A pivotal event in 2005 was the **visit of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in February**, as part of their evaluation of London's bid to host the 2012 Games. Dorney Lake, designated as the venue for the rowing and canoe sprint events, was a key part of the bid, and the visit brought international attention to the village. The IOC's decision in July to award the Games to London marked a turning point for Dorney, signalling significant changes on the horizon.

- **World Rowing Cup Regatta:** In May, Dorney Lake hosted the **BearingPoint Rowing World Cup Regatta**, a major international event that provided a glimpse of the scale and complexity of the upcoming Olympics. The event raised concerns among residents about traffic management, parking, and potential disruption, prompting discussions between the Parish Council and the event organisers.

### **Community Life: A Tapestry of Activities and Organisations**

The *Dorney Parish News* reveals a thriving community with a wide range of activities and organisations:

- **Dorney & District Horticultural Society (DDHS):** The DDHS was a cornerstone of village life, organising events like the Annual Show, a steak pie supper and quiz, a coach outing, and the Summer Garden Competition.
- **Dorney Village Hall:** The village hall served as a central venue for community gatherings, hosting events such as the DDHS steak pie supper, badminton club meetings, and Parish Council meetings.
- **Dorney Over 60's Club:** The Over 60's Club provided social connections for older residents through regular luncheon gatherings.
- **Church Activities:** The St. James' Church played an active role in parish life, offering regular services, children's activities, and community events. The Parish Visitors provided support to the sick and housebound.
- **Dorney School:** The *Dorney Parish News* included updates on school activities and initiatives, reflecting the school's importance within the community.

### **Key Issues and Concerns:**

Several local issues dominated discussions in 2005:

- **Tree Felling and Replacement:** The County Council's plans to fell trees along Harcourt Road due to age and disease sparked concern among residents. The Parish Council engaged with the County Council to advocate for replacement trees and to minimise the impact on the village's landscape.
- **Policing and Neighbourhood Watch:** Concerns about policing levels and response times led to discussions about strengthening the Neighbourhood Watch scheme and improving communication with the Thames Valley Police. A new Sector Commander

was appointed for the area, and the Parish Council sought assurances about adequate police presence.

- **Traffic and Parking:** Inconsiderate parking and speeding were recurring problems, especially on Village Road and in Dorney Reach. The Parish Council explored options for addressing these issues.
- **M4 Motorway Noise:** The noise from the M4 motorway continued to be a source of frustration for residents, prompting the Parish Council to advocate for noise reduction measures.
- **Waste Collection and Recycling:** The effectiveness of the waste collection and recycling services was a topic of discussion, with some residents expressing dissatisfaction.
- **Flooding Risk:** The Environment Agency's flood likelihood data raised concerns among some residents about the potential risk of flooding in certain areas.
- **"Ward Herbs" Site:** A dispute regarding the "Ward Herbs" site on Lake End Road, involving planning permission issues, emerged as a local concern.

### **The *Dorney Parish News*: A Platform for Local Voices**

The *Dorney Parish News* served as a vital communication channel, enabling residents to stay informed about local issues and express their opinions. The "Letters to the Editor" section provided a forum for lively debate and community dialogue, covering a range of topics from traffic concerns to the merits of wheelie bins. The magazine also featured tributes to long-serving community members, such as Charles Cody, the editor of the *Dorney Parish News* for over 30 years.

In summary, **2005 was a year of both continuity and change for Dorney Parish**. While residents addressed ongoing local concerns, the impending arrival of the 2012 Olympics brought a sense of anticipation and a glimpse of the transformations to come. The *Dorney Parish News* captured this unique moment in the village's history, providing a valuable record of the community's spirit, its challenges, and its aspirations for the future.