

## **Dorney Parish in 2007: A Year of Community Engagement, Environmental Concerns, and Looming Olympic Shadows**

The year 2007 in Dorney Parish was marked by a vibrant community spirit, active engagement in local issues, and a growing awareness of the approaching 2012 London Olympics and their potential impact on village life. The *Dorney Parish News* serves as a valuable chronicle of this period, capturing the concerns, aspirations, and everyday experiences of Dorney's residents.

### **Dorney Lake and the Olympics: From Local Treasure to Global Stage**

While the 2012 Olympics were still five years away, the implications of hosting a global sporting event at Dorney Lake were already a topic of discussion in 2007.

- **Expansion of Heathrow Airport:** The proposed expansion of Heathrow Airport, with the potential for a third runway and increased flight frequency, was a major concern for Dorney residents due to the proximity of the village to the flight path. The Parish Council actively engaged with the 2M Group, a consortium of local councils, to oppose the expansion and advocate for noise mitigation measures.
- **Olympic Infrastructure and Logistics:** The Parish Council began to grapple with the logistical challenges of hosting the rowing and canoe sprint events at Dorney Lake. This included concerns about increased traffic, the need for parking facilities, and potential disruption to village life during the Games.
- **Early Engagement with Olympic Organisers:** To ensure that residents' voices were heard, the Parish Council initiated contact with Olympic organisers, emphasising the importance of minimising disruption and maximising the potential benefits of the Games for Dorney.

### **Community Life: A Tapestry of Events, Organisations, and Local Pride**

The sources vividly portray Dorney Parish in 2007 as a community with a strong sense of identity and a vibrant social fabric:

- **The Dorney & District Horticultural Society (DDHS):** The DDHS played a central role in village life, organising events such as the Annual Show, a coach outing to Stourhead Gardens, and a Summer Garden Competition. The society also spearheaded Dorney's entry in the Buckinghamshire Best Kept Village competition.
- **Dorney Village Hall:** The village hall served as a hub for community activities, hosting events like a "Hollywood Party" with the Piccadilly Dance Orchestra, dance classes, badminton club meetings, and the Parish Council meetings.
- **Dorney Over 60's Club:** The Over 60's Club provided social opportunities for older residents, with regular luncheon gatherings.

### **Key Issues and Concerns in 2007**

Beyond the anticipation surrounding the Olympics, the *Dorney Parish News* and Parish Council minutes reveal a range of local issues that occupied residents and the Council:

- **Traffic and Parking:** Inconsiderate parking, speeding, and congestion, particularly around the school and on roads leading to Dorney Lake, were recurring problems. The Parish Council considered implementing measures like Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) to address these issues.
- **M4 Motorway Noise:** The noise from the M4 motorway continued to be a major concern for residents. The Parish Council pursued dialogue with the Highways Agency

to advocate for noise mitigation measures and potential resurfacing of the affected road section.

- **The "Ward Herbs" Site:** An ongoing dispute regarding the Ward Herbs site on Lake End Road, involving planning permission and alleged breaches, required the Parish Council's attention. The matter was eventually escalated to the South Bucks District Council (SBDC) for enforcement action.
- **Footpath Safety and Improvements:** Residents expressed concerns about the safety and condition of footpaths in the parish, particularly along Marsh Lane, which was used by children walking to school. The Parish Council advocated for improvements and secured funding for a new footpath connecting Harcourt Road to Dorney Lake.
- **Preservation of Trees and Green Spaces:** The preservation of trees and green spaces was a priority for the Parish Council and residents. This included appointing a Tree Warden, seeking Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) for notable trees, and addressing concerns about the removal of trees in certain areas.

### **The Dorney Parish News: A Platform for Community Dialogue**

The *Dorney Parish News* served as an essential communication channel and a platform for diverse voices within the community:

- **Sharing Information:** The magazine provided updates on Parish Council decisions, community events, and local news items, keeping residents informed about issues affecting their lives.
- **Expressing Opinions:** The "Letters to the Editor" section allowed residents to articulate their views on a wide range of topics, fostering a sense of open dialogue and civic engagement.
- **Celebrating Local Achievements:** The *Dorney Parish News* highlighted the accomplishments of local individuals and organisations, contributing to a sense of community pride.

**2007 was a year in which Dorney Parish embraced its community spirit, addressed local concerns, and began to prepare for the significant changes that the 2012 Olympics would bring.** The sources offer a rich and nuanced glimpse into a village on the cusp of transformation, where residents were determined to preserve their unique way of life while navigating the challenges and opportunities of the future.