

DORKING AND DISTRICT TALKING NEWSPAPER

Guidance Notes – Editors

Issue 6.0: Revised March 2024 - **Please destroy all previous editions.**

1. The job of the Editors is to select content for the Talking Newspaper from the Dorking & Leatherhead Advertiser, cutting out those articles to be voiced from the paper and sharing them between folders for the 3 readers. Content may also be taken from local parish magazines and newsletters.
2. You will need: 2 copies of the Dorking Advertiser, a table large enough to spread both copies out, scissors, Sellotape or staples, a pen and some fresh sheets of paper. Also any material from the parish magazine you have been allocated.
3. Our recording room is at the URC Youth Room, behind the church. Access to the building is by keypad lock: you will be sent the current key code separately. Editors have keys to unlock the URC Upper Room and the equipment cupboard and padlock. There is a key safe on the back of the Upper Room door containing the Yale key. This combination is the same as for the outside door.
4. In the cupboard is a tray which contains the three folders, one for each Reader. The Editors should remove the cuttings from the previous week and insert the current articles by 6pm on the Thursday ready for the Readers who arrive at 6.15pm.
5. The recording consists of the news articles, deaths and sport, in that sequence, divided between three Readers. Each Reader should have a total of 7-8 items to read if possible.
6. Editing is necessary because today's Dorking Advertiser actually covers the whole of Surrey, so it contains many items not relevant to our area around Dorking and Leatherhead. Areas we do cover are detailed at the end of this note.
7. Editors work in pairs. Each takes a copy of the Dorking Advertiser for that day. One selects and cuts out stories from odd-numbered pages, the other from even-numbered ones. Cut every story out separately – we aim to have a fresh voice to read each item to keep the Listener's interest.
8. The stories headlined on the front page are set aside to be read first, and the others arranged into a rough order of importance. You should aim for about 21 separate items – 7 for each Reader.
9. Cross out anything on the reverse of each story to be used, so that Readers are clear which side is to be read.
10. **Main headline story:** It is important that the main headline story is the first one read, whatever the subject. All of the front page items, including pictures, should normally be included in the selection – although not necessarily in Reader 1's allocation.

11. The main headline story and the next two main items for the week should be marked "Read First" or "1" and distributed one to each Reader. This should ensure that the most important stories are read at the beginning of the recording. It is desirable to choose and mark a 2nd and 3rd item for each Reader to ensure your choice of the main stories are read. The remaining items are divided between the 3 folders.
12. Sometimes two articles are linked and these should be clearly marked to be read by consecutive Readers.
13. The news should be followed by the deaths announcements and finally the sports news.
14. Our brief is to record as much local news and information from the Dorking Advertiser as is practical in the time and space provided. Resist the temptation to "protect" the Listeners from unpleasant stories: they have the right to know all the information in the paper. Similarly try not to leave out items which might appear irrelevant to blind people: many Listeners have some residual sight and all have sighted friends and family members who may be mentioned in the paper. We, of course, often don't know about these connections, which is why it is important to cover as many items as possible. There have been a number of occasions when our Listeners themselves have featured, perhaps celebrating an anniversary, and they enjoy hearing about it on the recording. Information about public meetings should always be included: our Listeners may be visually impaired but they are entitled to take their full part in local life.
15. 45 minutes of news has been found to be a good duration, so the most important and interesting items must be selected. A spare file is provided for items of interest suitable for inclusion in the monthly Magazine section. For example if there is a special article, say about a local family or historic building, which may be too long to read out, it should be set aside in the Magazine file so that it is available for use by the Magazine Editor at a later date.
16. Our Listeners come from a wide area. We have linked with Bookham TN, so we now draw material from the paper covering the Leatherhead/Bookham/Horsley area as well as from around Dorking. A list of the towns and villages to look for when selecting content follows at the end of this document.
17. **Abbreviating:** It is best to try to include as many items as possible – shortening them if necessary. This is one of the real skills needed for editing: the brief is to abbreviate without losing the balance of the story as published. As a general rule, the important information in a story is in the first few paragraphs. Be aware, however, that in items containing more than one point of view, all sides should be represented.
18. **Pictures:** These should be included if they have a story to tell, particularly if they have actions in them. They add to the experience for the listener. A description of the scene (people, colours of dresses, activities and so on) is important and interesting as most of our listeners have experienced sight and can remember and relate to different colours, descriptions of trees, picture mood etc.

19. **Letters:** If there are letters that relate to an article, make sure they are marked up to be read following that article. If there are letters from opposing viewpoints, include both.
20. **What's On:** These are valued. Many of our Listeners who live on their own do like to get out and about. They are also interested to hear of events in which family members (grandchildren, for instance) may be involved. Bear in mind, however, that the recording does not reach the Listeners before Saturday morning at the earliest, so leave out events for Friday and the coming weekend.
21. For Dorking Halls events, their Box Office number is 01306 881717 and this should be added to any events notices taking place there for Readers to pass on to our Listeners who may prefer to book by phone. Also look for events at other local venues – churches, local halls, libraries etc.
22. **Contact details** – Where applicable, web addresses and telephone numbers should be left in but only one of each for any one article.
23. **Parish Magazines** – You and your editing partner will be asked to look through one or more parish magazines for possible extra material to include. These are often available online and may yield valuable local What's On content as well as local features. The idea is for the various pairs of Editors to cover different parishes, to avoid duplication. Make sure that any parish material you use is clearly credited to the relevant publication.
N.B. Please make a list of any items you use from parish magazines and send this to jessicathurtell@btinternet.com (magazine editor) to avoid repetition in the magazine.
24. **Death Notices:** The paper now prints very few death notices. Please look online at <https://www.funeralguide.co.uk/obituaries>. Notices are best written out (preferably typed & printed) separately, using whole sentences, not the traditionally abbreviated newspaper “coded” version. Give the name of the deceased, the address, the date and any funeral arrangements – leave out family details.
e.g. *“James Jones, known as Jim, died on 5th March 2024 aged 76, after a long illness. The funeral will be held at Randall’s Road Crematorium, Leatherhead on 19th March at 2.30pm. Donations for MacMillan Cancer Support can be made to Sherlock & Son, Trellis House, South St, Dorking”.*
Sometimes the notice does not say where the deceased lived but mention of a local Funeral Director, cemetery or crematorium can give a clue that they may have lived in our area. Again, funerals to be held in any of the local villages should be included.
25. **Sport:** This should be included as there is an audience for sport which involves local people. Many of the reports are too long and need to be edited; the first and last paragraphs may be enough, together with the results, of course. Make sure the name of the sport concerned is marked clearly at the top of each article (e.g. “Cricket”, “Rugby”, “Football” etc).

26. When you have divided the stories between the folders, please fill in the introductory sheet. There are two of these (attached) one for a normal week, and one for those weeks when a Magazine is included. (You should be sent an individualised Intro sheet by the Magazine Editor on those days when a magazine follows the news, otherwise use the standard sheet). Please ensure that the correct one is used. Complete the form by adding the Date, the Lead Story headline and the Editors' names, and place in Reader 1's folder. There are a few extra copies in the tray at the URC in case of emergency.
27. The task of editing is not an easy one and you may sometimes be critical of the material you are editing. Yes, it may be uninteresting to you, or have difficult wording, but it is what is in the Dorking Advertiser, which is quoted "by the kind permission of the proprietors". While Readers should not need to edit material themselves, they do prefer to have too much material rather than not enough to fill 45 minutes.

N.B. On one occasion only a problem arose when the Dorking Advertiser was not published on a particular Thursday. The whole operation had to be postponed until Friday. It is impossible for one person to re-organise everything, so would you please be guided by the following procedure. It is only the Editors who will know whether or not reading material will be available on the Thursday evening.

If the Dorking Advertiser is not going to be available, the Editors should contact everyone else on that week's team and the Chairman as soon as possible.

It is assumed that in this case recording will take place on the Friday. It is then the personal responsibility of each member of that week's team either to be available on the Friday, or to find a substitute.

In brief reminder of essential editing rules:

- **Do** try to include enough material to fill 45 minutes – at least 144 column inches (that's 12 feet so it looks a lot!). Each Reader usually reads 7/8 items during the session.
- **Do** identify at least the top 3 stories to be read and distribute them, clearly marked, 1 per Reader.
- **Do** get as many news items as possible on the recording by selecting or reducing pieces so that they take no more than two and a half minutes to read – i.e. not more than 6-7 column inches each. If a complex story requires longer than this, divide it between 2 Readers, marking the parts clearly to be read consecutively.
- **Do** make sure that if there are 2 or more items about a single story, they are clipped together or clearly marked as referring to each other.
- **Do** cross out the item/s on the reverse of each cutting, making it quite clear which side of the paper is to be read
- **Do** cut out waffle and unnecessary verbiage to concentrate on the story. Often a story has duplication in it so cut this out.

- **Do** check the parish/community newsletters nominated to you for relevant content.
- **Do** include any more light hearted items.
- **Do** change references to “today”, “tomorrow” or “yesterday” to the name of the actual day because the Listeners do not get the recordings on the same day as the print copy. Watch out for tenses that may need changing.
- **Do** check the story for difficult names and underline them to alert the Readers to a potential difficulty. If you can, give an indication on how to pronounce them. You will have more time and resources to do this than the Readers at the URC.
- **Do** follow up reports of court cases to give the verdict.
- **Do not** include advertisement features.
- **Do not** include “Data News” feature unedited. Sometimes included is a page of “Data News”: charts showing - for example - the number of 999 calls and a breakdown of these by type. If you feel confident to summarise this do so, and write, or better, type out your summary, but do not just cut out the whole chart and leave it for the Reader to make sense of.

Apart from the town itself, **Dorking TN** covers the following communities:

Dorking

Abinger Common
Abinger Hammer
Betchworth
Boxhill
Brockham
Buckland
Capel
Coldharbour
Friday Street
Goodwyns
Holmbury St Mary
Leigh
Mickleham
Newdigate
North, Mid and South Holmwood
Pixham
Ranmore
Strood Green
Sutton Abinger
Westcott
Westhumble
Wotton

And, to a lesser extent,
Forest Green
Gatwick
Headley
Ockley

Bookham TN also covers:

Bookham

Ashtead
Clandon
Cobham
East & West Horsley
Effingham
Fetcham
Leatherhead
Ripley
Send
Stoke D'Abernon