

# Poles, Holes & Gates



**One of the greatest blights spoiling our lovely village is the ever growing volume, speed and attitude of drivers passing through Compton Bassett.**

Most issues of *Compton Bassett Matters* over the past eight years have had this challenge as a core topic. We have now agreed measures to improve the situation, including a new speed indicator device (SID) and we still have our original SID with speed warning graphics. Also, in our plan for improving the village are new gates at each boundary point of the parish.

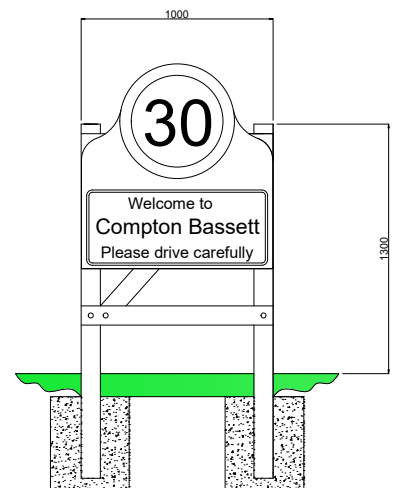
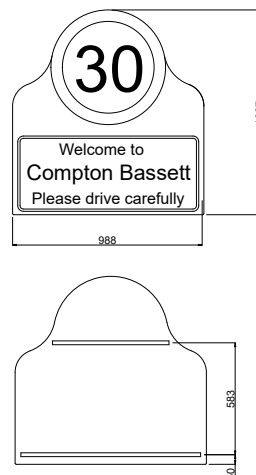
The signage on the gates will implore cars to slow down and take note of speed limits as well as consider that we are a conservation area. The delay in siting these new units has been necessitated by going through the application process in order to obtain part-funding for the installation of the posts by Wiltshire Council Highways. We are delighted to say that, at a recent meeting of the Wiltshire Council led 'Local Highway and Footway Improvement Group' (LHFIG), we have secured £840 out of a total cost of £1,200.

We had investigated the idea of getting a contractor to install the posts for us, but the associated red tape of finding qualified contractors with the required authorisation, proved too big a stumbling block. The rules have changed, for instance, a special sleeve is now required for the hole in the ground.

In addition, a local farmer offered to erect the posts but sadly, he does not have the required certification. Evidently, if the Parish Council was to employ an uncertified pole erector, then should a speeding vehicle collide with the pole/SID the parish could find themselves liable for a claim from the driver's insurance firm.

By way of comment, our traffic is getting worse not better – the local speed-watch team, supported by Wiltshire Police noted five speeders in one hour recently between 4.00pm and 5.00pm. A local record apparently.

**Rod Lloyd-Davies**



# Compton Bassett Neighbourhood Plan (CBNP) – Fit for purpose?

5 Year Review of Compton Bassett Neighbourhood Plan 2015 – 2030

COMPTON BASSETT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN  
2015 – 2030  
5 Year Review



The Compton Bassett Neighbourhood Plan (CBNP) was 'made' in June 2015. It is a comprehensive and binding document with appendices covering all aspects of our residents' vision for the parish over the period to 2030. To expand on this slightly, the plan includes: core strategy, a building design statement and planning

regulations all of which were decided upon after consultation with and a vote by, the residents of our parish back in 2015.

As you may be aware, North and West Wiltshire community policy has recently changed its 'developable commitments' in the Calne area allowing for an uplift in construction from its indicative requirements set out in 2006 from 31% to 80%. What this rather confusing jargon means is that more houses may be built than previously assumed; luckily this will not invalidate our neighbourhood plan as we have already increased the net number of houses within the parish by more than this uplift over the time period.

The next update to the CBNP is due in 2025, however, the parish boundaries will also expand with the inclusion of additional land/dwellings in 2025. The important point here is that this addition to our boundary will not be automatically added into our CBNP because our new parishioners have not been consulted on nor have they voted for the contents of our plan.

This change of boundary does not render our CBNP invalid, it is perfectly possible to add a new neighbourhood plan for our new parishioners should they wish, after full consultation and a vote. The result would be that Compton Bassett has two neighbourhood plans based on the specific requirements of the parishioners who voted on them.

In conclusion, the wishes of the parishioners of Compton Bassett continue to be upheld by the legally binding plan that they voted on in 2015.

## Flash Flooding in the village – Gel Sacs at the ready!



Flash floods are nothing new in the village and have been recorded in most decades going back into the 19th century; living at the bottom of an escarpment gives us the problem of significant amounts of hill-wash adding to heavy rainfall events. It's not that we are low-lying that is the issue, but rainwater has to be directed as quickly as possible away from dwellings and the highway into the network of field ditches on the northern or western sides of the road. This means that ditches need to be kept clean and dug out periodically and road drains require constant maintenance, especially in critical locations.

You may have noticed that a good deal of ditch digging was carried out earlier this year and the overall situation has improved. There remain a few places where local low points collect rainwater rapidly and existing drainage becomes overloaded with the consequence of flooding. Fortunately nearly all houses have escaped trouble but it's nevertheless something that requires a solution.

We are in touch with the Wiltshire Council Highways team who, as you might expect, have an extremely heavy workload currently. They have been to the village and collated a survey of affected areas and we are now waiting for a full CCTV drain survey to be conducted.

The Highway Engineer is due to visit again shortly to discuss with us the next steps to be taken and we will keep you informed of developments. In the meantime the parish council has obtained 100 Flood defence gel sacs for use in the event of future flash flooding. These are lightweight alternatives to sandbags to protect homes by holding back floodwater.

**\* Emergency Use Gel Sacs - please ring Flood Warden Laurie Waite on 07831 131171 \***

# **Free Bus Service!**

**For the time being anyway...**

## **Bus services through Compton Bassett are changing**

Since 1 July, Compton Bassett village has been served by a new minibus service **43** instead of the existing bus service **42**.

The service is operated by Wiltshire Council's own minibuses instead of a Stagecoach bus and runs at the following times:

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### **To Calne – every day except Sundays and public holidays**

Picks up at Compton Bassett village bus shelter on Briar Leaze at **1000, 1200** and also at **1350** (not Saturdays).

### **Returning from Calne**

The minibus will return to Compton Bassett from the bus shelter outside Sainsburys on the Pippin in Calne town centre at **0940, 1140** and also at **1330** on Mondays to Fridays and at **1250** on Saturdays.

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The service 43 minibus will also call at Beversbrook Surgery and the Tesco store on request – just tell the driver you wish to go there when you board the bus and agree a return time with them if necessary.

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**Wiltshire Council**  
 Where everybody matters

**We've heard that the pick-up rate from other villages around us has been good. Unfortunately, there is seldom anyone seen on the bus from Compton Bassett.**

**You know the old saying, "Use it or lose it!"**



## Road Closure!

**18th November  
for two days**

The village road will be closed for up to two days from Monday 18th November outside 31 Compton Bassett (Rosemary Cottage) so that Wiltshire Council's Masonry team can dig up the road/pavement and investigate a long standing leak.

The cause of this water leak has been examined several times by both Wessex Water and Wiltshire Council during the last couple of years. Wessex conducted a water test and proclaimed it to be natural and therefore not from their pipework. But Wiltshire has also carried out a dye test and were unable to agree with Wessex.

Hopefully, this time a solution can be found to resolve a deteriorating problem at this location.

## Parish Steward

The parish steward's next visit is on Thursday 5th December. If you have something that needs doing and is within their remit, please let Peter Barnett know on 01249 812274.

Some of the steward's tasks:

- Hand cleaning of gullies & ditches
- Clearing storm debris
- Small pothole repairs
- Cleaning and straightening of small road signs
- Trimming encroaching hedges and vegetation.



## Ash Tree Felling

A great quantity of ash trees are having to be taken down in Home Wood because of ash dieback disease. First detected in the UK in 2012, this chronic fungal disease is devastating ash trees across Europe. The fungus attacks the crown and root collar and poses a risk if left unmanaged, as branches can drop off or weakened trees may fall.

It's likely that up to 80% of UK ash trees will be infected. In the long term researchers aim to find the genes that confer resistance to the pathogen, in some ash trees. The Forestry Commission has approved a licence for the work in Home Wood.

A programme of planting new native trees will follow on after completion of the felling works.

# What's on at the Benson Hall?

It's been a busy but successful year at the village hall with work to upgrade the facilities continuing apace. The new chairs will arrive soon, which is something I'm sure everyone is looking forward to.

Benson Hall is managed entirely by volunteers from the village who, since it was created in 1955, have all signed up to be trustees and given their time freely.

This year, they launched their first ballet and opera performances, streamed from the Royal Opera House, as well as many theatre productions from the National Theatre. Response to all of these was very encouraging and so they will continue to add suitable events as well as launching some exciting new ones.

Compton Bassett's very own drama society CHADS are about to put on their second production this year and would love to hear from any villagers who fancy treading the boards. Please contact CHADS secretary Caroline Ransom at [caroline@hungrylab.co.uk](mailto:caroline@hungrylab.co.uk)

Finally, the trustees wish to heartily thank all those who have attended events at the hall and a special thank you to the many who donated so generously to the chair appeal.

**Here's to an entertaining 2025!**

Compton Hall Amateur Dramatic Society Presents

### Murder among strangers

By Sue Randall

Performed at Compton Bassett Benson Hall

**Friday 22 November**  
**Saturday 23 November**

Doors Open 7pm  
Curtain Up 7.30pm

TICKETS £12 TO INCLUDE A LIGHT SUPPER  
★ LICENSED BAR

Box Office 01249 814458  
[bensohall.online](http://bensohall.online)

PLEASE NOTE NO CHILDREN UNDER 12

### Friday Night CASHBUILDER

B I N G O

# £400

## 6th December

An evening of 6 games from just £5!  
Bar opens at 7pm - eyes down 7:30pm

This is a charity event to raise funds for Compton Bassett Village Hall  
Children accompanied by a responsible adult are welcome.  
Registered Charity No: 305495.

THE ROYAL BALLET

## Cinderella

Step into the magic before the clock chimes midnight.

TONY KANE, WILLIAM BRACEWELL  
CHOREOGRAPHY: FREDERICK ARSTON MUSIC: JENNY PROBYREV

ROYAL BALLET & OPERA  
LIVE @ BENSON HALL

TUE 10 DEC 2024  
BOOK NOW

[www.bensonhallonline.co.uk](http://www.bensonhallonline.co.uk)

THE ROYAL BALLET

## The Nutcracker

[www.bensonhallonline.co.uk/event/nutcracker](http://www.bensonhallonline.co.uk/event/nutcracker)

ROYAL BALLET & OPERA  
4th JANUARY 2025

# Hills unsympathetic to village over fire concerns

On June 9<sup>th</sup>, Compton Bassett was engulfed with foul smelling fumes caused by a large fire at the Hills Lower Compton landfill site.

For those of us able to see the plumes of black smoke created by the event and witness various emergency vehicles speeding through the village, it was clearly a substantive emergency requiring the attendance of numerous fire and rescue personnel. The fire raged for three days with unpleasant and nauseous fumes detectable throughout the period impacting the village. Villagers were advised to stay indoors and keep windows closed. Not an ideal summer situation in a conservation area.

The Parish Council wrote to Hills Waste Operations earlier this year asking them for clarification of why the incident had occurred, what monitoring measures were in place to prevent a repetition, this being the fourth fire in the last six years. We also enquired what compensation the village might be offered for the inconvenience of being forced to stay indoors for large parts of June 6<sup>th</sup>; not least of which was the fear of breathing in fumes that were both unpleasant and potentially hazardous to health.

The reply from Mr Simon Allen, Divisional Director of Hills Waste Operations arrived some months later and was less than helpful in terms of responding to our concerns and disappointing in that it failed to address our specific queries.

Regarding the seriousness of this and previous incidents Mr Allen said, “All four incidents were not described as major incidents by either the Fire and Rescue Service or the Environment Agency, both of which were in attendance (in June) throughout the event and whilst these events are extremely serious, they are infrequent”.

The view of the Parish Council would be that at least nine crews attended the Lower Compton fire, including an incident command unit from Stratton St Margaret and appliances from Calne, Chippenham, Devizes, Pewsey, Trowbridge and Wilton, along with an environmental protection unit from Gillingham. It is therefore difficult to imagine what might be classified as a “major incident” by Fire and Rescue if they deploy this many units and personnel to combat a trivial fire incident?

Mr Allen went on to say “... it is simply not possible to ensure that every load of waste delivered does not contain waste which has the potential to affect the operation of the site”.

Another way of putting this is that, in spite of Hills Waste Operations assertion that they “...operate to the highest health and safety and environmental standards.”, as they put it – if bad luck strikes and something inflammable starts a fire it is apparently simply unpreventable. We don’t find this at all reassuring.

Finally, Hills do say they will carry their own “internal” investigation into the event but that it is “unlikely” the exact cause of the fire will ever be determined.

This is clearly not helpful as there have been three other similar events in the recent past.

The response to our letter from Hills Waste Operations concludes by saying “It is our view that as long as people downwind of the facility followed the advice given by the Fire and Rescue Service there would be very little, if any, risk to the local community”.

If you wish to see a copy of the full letter from Hills Waste Operations please write to the Parish Clerk, [parishclerk@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:parishclerk@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk)

**Julian Barlow**

# Walker-Heneage Model Village 1845–1870



When George Walker Heneage inherited Compton Bassett estate in 1818, he began a series of improvements to the mansion house and its environs. Lodges were built, at the south entrance to the park in 1828 and at the west side (now called Tudor Lodge) in 1830. Throughout the following decade, three elevations at Compton House were encased in brick, and embattled parapets were added; the fourth, north-west entrance facade, had already been renovated in brick earlier.

Then, from the early 1840s Walker Heneage turned his attention to modernising the village housing, clearing the medieval hovels and replacing them with houses and cottages along the village road in a distinctive local style utilising chalkstone quarried from various sites along the nearby escarpment face. The new estate vernacular also comprised ashlar stone-mullioned windows with bevelled lintels, brick quoins, gabled roofs and dormer windows. Glazing was carried out in either Georgian small-pane style in timber casements, or leaded lights in both diamond and rectangular pattern. Roofs were mostly tiled in clay, commonly Bridgwater plain red, but some featured Cotswold stone. 32 houses were built in this way and, although no two are precisely the same, they represent variations from a standard template. The estate housing consists of a terrace of six almshouses (now used as three), 18 semi-detached, and seven detached houses. The school and public house are also built in the same style. The period of construction for most estate cottages, school, inn and almshouses fall between about 1845 and 1870.

Externally, a pigsty and earth closet were built in the rear garden and a well dug for water. A bakehouse was also provided for shared use at the back of some semi-detached cottages. Pyracanthas were planted against the front wall and an estate gardener from 'The House' came to tack up the spurs of each bush and clip into shape the yew hedge which grew next to the outside privies. South or west-facing gable end walls would possess a pear or plum tree beautifully espaliered on them, carefully tended solely by the estate gardener.

The earth closet was installed within a brick or chalkstone-built privy and placed somewhere in the back garden. Reverend Henry Moule invented it in 1859 to improve sanitation and something like the example shown in the illustration would have been used. The hopper is filled with ashes from the kitchen wood-burner, mixed with an amount of earth. Turning the handle released a small quantity of the compound to cover the human waste down in the bucket below. This would be emptied periodically onto the vegetable patch. Moule discovered that clean compost could be produced in just a few weeks.



The concept of a model village, not unique to Compton Bassett, was used by Victorians to describe new settlements built by the landed gentry for their workers. Riots in the 1830s had drawn attention to the squalid state of housing and poor health of rural communities throughout the country, prompting many landowners to set about improving their estates aesthetically, especially where housing lay close around the squire's mansion. The Walker Heneage family allocated the new housing to their favoured workers, although a paternalistic control came with it as particular standards of conduct were imposed on their tenant workers. On Sundays, labourers were to wear a clean smock which could then be worn for the rest of the week but no washing could be hung out on the Lord's Day. Bowing and curtsying, whenever the Heneages were passing by, were expected.

Laurie Waite

Compton Bassett History website is up and running! [www.comptonbassetthistory.co.uk](http://www.comptonbassetthistory.co.uk)

It's still a work in progress but there's plenty of the village's history to look at and enjoy.



# Dazzling moments from 2024

We are part of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, and justifiably proud of the quality of our night sky. We're lucky - let's keep it that way!

## Northern Lights



*Wow! A rare and spectacular Aurora Borealis display was captured over the village on 7th May this year.*

*Spare a thought for your neighbours and wildlife; well over half of the world's species are nocturnal.*

## Southern Lights...



*Outside lighting is effective when angled right down to the ground, where you need it to safely move around at night. Exterior LEDs should be 'warm white', max colour temperature of 3000K.*



*Hmm, a nearby landfill site at night...*



Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

## 5 things you can do to help swifts

**Swifts are faithful to their nesting sites and are only here 3 months of the year – here's how you can help them.**

In Great Britain, swifts are assessed as being in danger of extinction, with numbers declining by 60% between 1995 and 2020. What we can do to help is:

### 1. Never destroy an existing site

Always leave the original entrance open and be careful when renovating not to block entrance holes with scaffolding. Swifts are obsessively loyal to their nesting site and do not readily move on.

Swifts nest in nooks and crannies of eaves and gables (it is house martins that nest in mud cups hanging from eaves) and their nests are not easy to spot, they are often just a few feathers and bits of vegetation, all gathered on the wing.

### 2. Install a nest box or swift brick

Retro-fitting an integrated swift brick is the better option. These are as little as £35 and can be faced to match the house brick.



Alternatively, there are many external boxes available on the market and your local swift group will be happy to advise.

### 3. Make your garden wildlife friendly

Swifts catch their insect prey on the wing, so by make your garden wildlife friendly, don't use pesticides and allow vegetation to grow to encourage more insects that swifts and so many other species depend on.

### 4. Join a local swift group

North Wiltshire Swifts (NWS) is a local conservation group created to inform, advise and act to halt the decline of the Common Swift. You can contact them via their Facebook page.

### 5. Record swift nesting sites

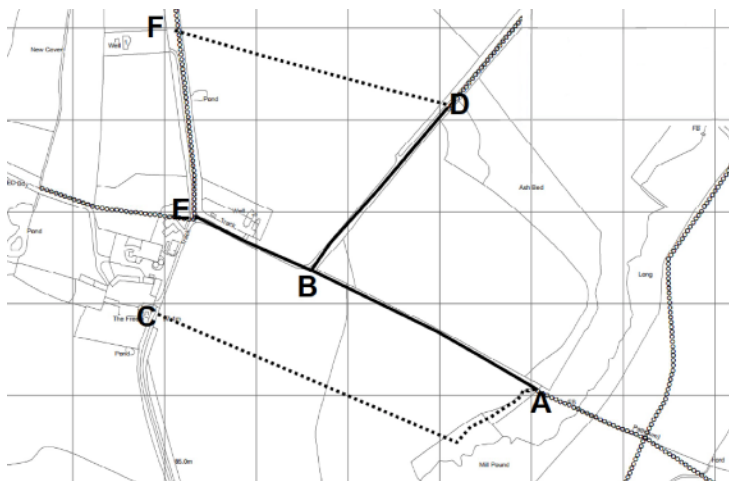
Use the **RSPB Swift Mapper** to record nesting sites.



# Planning Inspector Confirms Diversion

In May 2023, Wiltshire Council approved a diversion order for footpaths CBAS18 (Part) and CBAS 5 (Part), to facilitate sand extraction at Freeth Farm under the existing ROMP (Review of Old Mineral Permissions).

Compton Bassett Parish Council raised concerns that the approved diversion order might be invalid, noting that CBAS 5 was labelled a “Bridleway,” while Wiltshire’s Definitive Map identified it as a Brown Road, which has a different classification. This discrepancy invalidated the original diversion order and required the construction of the diverted route to be of a higher standard for width and surface condition, than that of a standard bridlepath. As a result, Wiltshire Council resubmitted the diversion order for approval by the Planning Inspectorate, which now included specific requirements from Wiltshire’s Countryside Officer. These requirements included highly detailed specification for the design of the paths and the materials to be used, for a 6 m bridlepath with stone base and a 2 m footpath.



It has been confirmed that the Wiltshire Council Countryside Access Officer must certify the work on the temporary routes before the original paths can be diverted. Once the sand extraction is complete, the original routes must be restored to the same surface standard that was required for the temporary routes, including the footpath.

The diversion order, including specifications, was approved by the Planning Inspectorate on October 15, 2024. He noted that the diversion would be temporary, requiring the quarry to cease operations within six years and for the original routes to be restored within 12 months of mineral extraction cessation.

*Temporary Footpath Diversion A to C, and new Restricted Byway E to F, at Freeth Farm.*

It’s important to note that CBPC was informed by Wiltshire Council that the approved diversions will not take effect until proper certification of the road standards is completed, which is at Wiltshire Council’s discretion. This certification may be delayed until the current paths become unavailable due to the commencement of works. This, coupled with the requirement for the diversion to end after six years, ensures that the diversion will not occur prematurely.

In conclusion, the diversions and subsequent sand extraction are unlikely to happen for some time — at least until the planning conditions for sand extraction are met, which include a major archaeological assessment, and possible subsequent survey, approval of a dust and noise monitoring plan, and the construction of the conveyor.

**Charles Reis and Peter Alberry**

## Always contact the Parish Clerk in the first instance please

<b>Diane Zeitzen</b>	<a href="mailto:parishclerk@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk">parishclerk@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk</a>	<b>Parish Clerk</b>
<b>COUNCILLOR</b>	<b>CONTACT</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES</b>
<b>Pete Szczesiak</b>	<a href="mailto:chairman@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk">chairman@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk</a>	Chair, Calne Area Parish Forum, Calne Area Board, Hills Liaison Committee, Legal Duties, Neighbourhood & Farm Watch
<b>Charles Reis</b>	<a href="mailto:vicechair@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk">vicechair@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk</a>	Vice-Chair, Heritage, Neighbourhood & Farm Watch, Rights of Way Liaison, Snow Warden
<b>Julian Barlow</b>	<a href="mailto:julianbarlow@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk">julianbarlow@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk</a>	Road Safety, Communications, Neighbourhood Plan, Wildlife Trust Liaison
<b>Peter Barnett</b>	<a href="mailto:peterbarnett@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk">peterbarnett@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk</a>	Hills Liaison Committee, Parish Steward Link, Village Hall Representative
<b>Edward Budge</b>	<a href="mailto:edwardbudge@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk">edwardbudge@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk</a>	Health & Welfare, Communications, Neighbourhood Plan
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