

COMPTON BASSETT **M** SPRING 2025 Matters

EDITED BY COMPTON BASSETT PARISH COUNCILLORS JULIAN BARLOW AND LAURIE WAITE

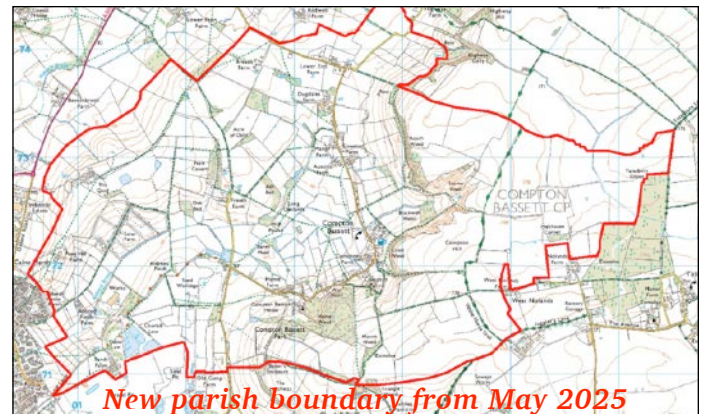
Boundary changes bring challenges for Compton

Creating a new parish for Derry Hill & Studley and dissolving Calne Without Parish have inflicted wholesale boundary changes around Calne. We first reported on the proposal to our parish in 2021 (*Compton Bassett Matters*) after the Compton Bassett Parish Council and six other parishes were invited to discuss redrawing the boundaries.

The final decision lay with the Electoral Governance Review committee but we were urged to engage constructively with the process to avoid decisions being taken externally and then imposed on us. For example, it was recommended early on that we should be joined with Lower Compton. We felt this would be a poor fit with rural Compton Bassett. However, we were aware of Compton Bassett's small size relative to our neighbours, whose parishes are set to grow considerably larger still, so a core objective was to maintain our independence, governance and identity as Compton Bassett and not risk being absorbed into any of the larger villages. We therefore proposed to take the essentially rural area between the east of Calne and our parish. This includes farmland around Penn, around 10 dwellings at High Penn, the nature reserve ponds, the solar farm, and more of Hills landfill and quarry site.

Since the boundary changes were first debated, some pockets of land on the eastern side of Calne have been identified for potential housing development. One of these, a plot for 90 houses east of Spitfire Road, falls inside the new parish.

Whilst the parish alteration is unrelated to the housing plan, which would occur irrespective of a change in the boundary, we are perturbed and have mounted a campaign to highlight that this development, having been rightly refused by Wiltshire Council but recently approved on appeal to the Planning Inspectorate, raises significant concerns regarding its impact on our community, infrastructure and local environment. We understand the need for sustainable development and provision for housing (Wiltshire has had their target increased by over 80%), but we strongly believe that this particular scheme is inappropriate for our parish and will have far-reaching negative consequences.



It is one of a few possible developments that could fall within the new Compton Bassett Parish which we feel, should they go ahead, will be detrimental.

Wiltshire Councillor Ashley O'Neill says, "These developments have come about because of changes in national housing policy forced from above onto Wiltshire council. I have made the strongest representation on behalf of Compton Bassett and would counsel against alarm at this stage."

"The latest development has indeed been granted but it is likely that once built, the houses could be removed from Compton Bassett Parish and absorbed into Calne."

"This does not take away, however, from the likely impact of increased traffic and given the substantial concerns that we have, we have strongly urged Wiltshire Council to make representations to the government and ask them to reconsider their ill-considered changes to planning policy and housing targets so that development on the edge of our towns in Wiltshire does not become a free for all where developers control where houses are built with little or no respect for the painstaking plan-led development process."

Those wishing to see the Parish Council letter of protest and a reply, please go to this link address:

<https://www.comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk/public-letters.php>

Julian Barlow and Laurie Waite

Hills attempt to reject approved planning conditions

Once again, Compton Bassett Parish Council (CBPC) have had to intervene and protest at Hills' efforts to swerve the fair and sensible environmental and community protection measures imposed by the Wiltshire Council planning committee and later upheld by independent planning inspectors, regarding their proposed development of a sand quarry in the village. A project which was originally granted planning permission 69 years ago but which they have decided to progress in recent years in spite of 9 years of determined local opposition.

The latest Hills Quarry Products initiative would appear to seek to ignore measures imposed by Wiltshire Council, and upheld in 2022 by the Planning Inspectorate. Using a "last minute" style of application whereby they unilaterally revisit all the restrictions imposed on the quarry project, now arguing that they have no responsibility to apply them. Perfectly legal, but it could be argued, an underhand method of developing the quarry without installing the safeguards which would protect the village.

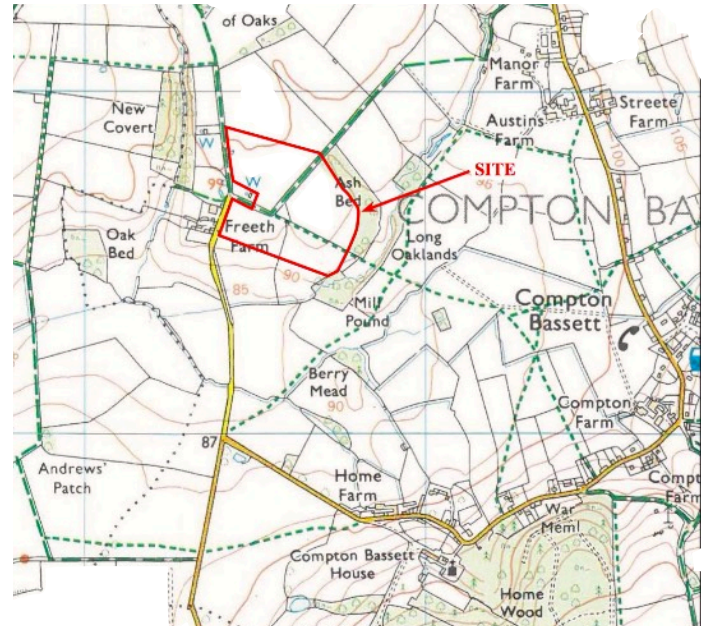
Included in areas of concern for Hills which they wish to "amend" are the continuous monitoring of ultra-fine carcinogenic dust particles generated by mining the sand. They wish to monitor on an ad hoc basis. Presumably when convenient...

In addition, they now don't want to proceed with the stipulated conveyor design to be enclosed, which transports the sand and dust. They just want it to be covered, which is the worst of both worlds as it will keep the rain off, allowing the sand to dry and the dust to become wind-blown.

If that wasn't enough, they don't want to adhere to the planning condition that noise levels should be monitored continuously at The Freeth, Freeth Farm Cottages and The Lodge which are located near the proposed quarry. Again, they propose monitoring for just 3 months and then for just one week every 6 months, presumably at a convenient time!

It is clear from the planning safeguards put in place that any breach of the noise or dust conditions would cause the quarrying to be suspended. Although fair, sensible and hardly onerous safeguards, they are not popular with Hills.

In addition to their proposed changes to these regulatory safeguards, Hills also wish to backtrack on the archaeological survey that should take place prior to the beginning of any quarrying. This is to establish if the site has any special historical value before it is dug up and turned into a quarry. Under Hills suggested changes to the planning regulations imposed on them they only want to "commit" to undertake a study rather than actually undertake it. Once the site is dug up and the site despoiled, it is too late to find it has archaeological value and the heritage asset for the village is lost.



So CBPC have asked Wiltshire Council to police and further commit to their original planning conditions which was further supported by an independent planning inspector. We respectfully pointed out that if they fail to support their own stipulated planning restrictions, they will potentially be in breach of their own public health responsibilities.

As a consequence, Compton Bassett Parish Council have respectfully requested that Wiltshire Council Planning Authority do not allow the proposed works to commence until the various planning conditions are met in full to avoid a potential breach of their public health responsibilities.

Julian Barlow

Calne area smell update

A strong, unpleasant smell has been affecting Calne and surrounding areas, particularly early morning and late evenings. Calne South Cllr Sam Pearce-Kearney has been trying to find out why and how to resolve the issue. He's currently ruled out some of the possibilities and is left with the following:

- Agricultural activity (eg slurry spreading)
- Sewage (awaiting report from Wessex Water)
- Hills landfill site at Lower Compton

Wiltshire Council officers are investigating possible sources around Calne but everyone is encouraged to report smell occurrences to the Environment Agency at enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk – feel free to copy in Sam.Pearce-Kearney@wiltshire.gov.uk or call The Environment Agency Hotline at 0800 80 70 60

Sending in your reports is vital in helping to pinpoint the source!

Sewer collapse brings traffic to a standstill in Compton Bassett



Work to repair a sewer main in the centre of Compton Bassett took an unfortunate turn for the worse when Wessex Water suffered a major collapse of the clay sewer pipes on day one of their planned two-day repair programme. The resultant scramble for extensive repairs meant that access to the village was blocked to traffic for seven days last month.

An eight-person team, plus groundworks equipment undertook excavations to piping between 2.1m and 2.5m depth, removing broken sections of old clay piping and installing new sleeves to prevent future spillage and flooding. With around 1,000 vehicles now travelling through Compton Bassett daily, the fact that the initial collapse occurred during half term was helpful. Nevertheless, as the works extended into the weeks following it was astounding to see how many vehicles appeared to view the **Road Closed** instructions as advisory rather than mandatory and attempted to barge through the village only to be stopped by a barrier of Wessex Water vehicles, cones and diggers.

Look out for these invasive non-native species!



What can I do to help?

Recording invasive non-native Species.

In Britain we are fortunate to have a collection of information about our flora and fauna, gathered by passionate recorders over the past 200 years. Every record of non-native species is valuable, as it helps identify the trends of the species growth and their location, for future treatment, if necessary. With the advancement of smartphone apps and online recording platforms, it is now more accessible for individuals (Citizen Science) to contribute valuable biological data regarding non-native species.

Where to send your records:

If you have a sighting of a certain species, we encourage you to use either **iRecord** or **INNS Mapper** which have both smartphone apps and websites. If possible, try and send a photo of the species to help identify them.



Himalayan Balsam

Impatiens glandulifera

Leaves: Pointed oval with toothed edges

Flowers: Jul-Oct | Large slipper shaped flowers with broad petals at the opening

Growth Pattern: Grows in dense clusters up to 2.5 metres tall

Habitat: Found in many habitats, mostly along ditches & river banks

Other Features: The flowers are followed by exploding seed pods which can project the seeds up to 4 metres. The stems are fleshy & hollow, which become red/purple in the summer.



Orange Balsam

Impatiens capensis

Very similar to Himalayan Balsam but has orange flowers



Japanese Knotweed

Fallopia japonica

Leaves: Lush green with smooth edges

Flowers: Sep-Oct | Small, white, and borne in clusters on vertical branches

Growth Pattern: Bamboo-like with regular nodes on the stem. Grows in dense stands up to 2m tall

Habitat: Likes wet areas but can grow in most habitats

Other Features: The red-pink zig-zag stems are a characteristic feature of Japanese Knotweed. The mature canes are flecked with purple. Eradication is required by law, treatment by stem injection from a specialist contractor.



Giant Hogweed

Heracleum mantegazzianum

Leaves: Very large, deeply lobed and toothed

Flowers: Jun-Jul | Large flat umbels which can be up to 60cm across

Growth Pattern: Grows very tall (up to 3.5 metres), generally with a single tall, flowering, spiny purple-flecked stem

Habitat: Found in a variety of habitats, however is common along riverbanks where the river has distributed its seeds

Other Features: The nodes where the leaves join the stem is ringed with coarse bristles. Very similar to common hogweed but much larger. **Warning:** can cause severe skin burns.



Please report any sightings to INNS mapper at innsmapper.org

Want to do more? Sign up as a volunteer volunteering.wiltshirewildlife.org



Parish Steward Visits

If you spot something that needs doing, other than work that is already planned, and is within the Parish Steward's remit, please let Peter Barnett know on 01249 812274, or email the Parish Clerk.

Some of the steward's tasks:

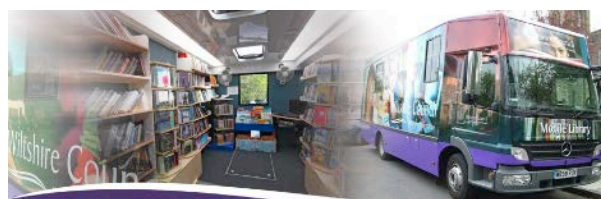
- Hand cleaning of gullies & ditches
- Clearing storm debris
- Small pothole repairs on the highway
- Cleaning and straightening small road signs
- Trimming encroaching hedges and vegetation.

Future visits:

7th April ♦ 5th June ♦ 7th July



Discover your mobile library



The Mobile Library

Stops on

Mondays (every 4 weeks)

at

Compton Bassett, Briar Leaze

arr 11:00 - dep 11:20

next dates 2025:

7 Apr; 5 May; 2 Jun; 30 Jun; 28 Jul; 25 Aug

For more information visit the website www.wiltshire.gov.uk/libraries

What's on at the Benson Hall?

ROYAL BALLET
KENNETH MACMILLAN'S
Romeo and Juliet
The greatest love story ever told



FUMI KANEKO VADIM MUNTAGIROV
Choreography KENNETH MACMILLAN Music SERGEY PROKOFIEV

ROYAL BALLET & OPERA
LIVE IN CINEMAS

THU 20 MAR 2025
[BOOK NOW](#)

Thursday 20 March

National
Theatre
Live



STEVE COOGAN
IN
STANLEY KUBRICK'S
DR. STRANGELOVE
ARMANDO IANNUCCI
SEAN FOLEY

Thursday 27 March

THE ROYAL OPERA
Turandot



ROYAL BALLET & OPERA

Tuesday 1 April

LIVE SCREENINGS

BOOKINGS: <https://bensohall.online/event/>

Become a parish councillor!

Becoming a parish councillor in Wiltshire is an excellent opportunity to serve your community, shape the development of your area, and influence decisions on local services and facilities. Parish councils are the first tier of local government and play a vital role in representing the interests of their communities.

To become a parish councillor, you must:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Be a British citizen, a qualifying Commonwealth citizen, or a citizen of a European Union member state
- Be on the electoral register for the parish or have lived or owned a property in the parish for 12 months, or within three miles of its boundary.

Certain disqualifications apply, such as bankruptcy or having a criminal conviction with a sentence of over three months in the past five years.

Usual routes to becoming a Parish Councillor:

1. **Ordinary Election:** Parish council elections usually take place every four years and there is one coming up in May this year. You can stand for election by completing and submitting a nomination paper, which you can get from the local elections office at Wiltshire Council. You'll need a proposer and a seconder, both of whom must be registered voters in the parish.
2. **Co-option:** If a seat becomes vacant between elections and no by-election is called, the parish council can co-opt a new member. This involves expressing your interest directly to the council and being voted in by existing councillors.

Role and Responsibilities: As a parish councillor, your duties will include:

- Attending parish council meetings, typically held monthly
- Representing the views and concerns of residents
- Making decisions on local issues, like planning applications, community projects, and the upkeep of public spaces
- Managing budgets and allocating funds for local services
- Working with Wiltshire Council and other agencies on broader community issues.

How to Get Started:

- Contact your local parish council to express your interest and learn about upcoming vacancies
- Attend parish council meetings to understand current issues and how the council operates
- Check the Wiltshire Council website for information on elections and the nomination process.



Join us on Thursday 8th May 6pm at the Benson Village Hall for an evening to commemorate VE Day 80th Anniversary.

There will be an exhibition with photographs and stories linked to our local residents followed by a special talk about our Compton Bassett soldiers who took part and fell for their country.

This will be followed by a live screening at 7.30 pm from The Albert Hall - VE Day 80!

Our well stocked bar will open throughout the event, and complimentary 'light bites' and nibbles will be provided for all those who booked in advance!

This is an opportunity for us to come together and share a unique national and local event, honouring this disappearing generation.

To help with the catering we will need to know numbers of attendees, so booking your **free** ticket will be essential! Please use the email address below to indicate names and number of people attending including any dietary requirement.

IMPORTANT! If you have stories and/or photos from the war years to share, please email these to the address below by **Friday April 25th** at the latest. We are really hoping for lots of these!

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Jennie Brooks on **07510 969267**

Please contact us if you would like to offer any help, and for sending through stories and photos, to:

comptonbassettevents@gmail.com

Further details will follow on the Compton Bassett Facebook page or Village Website.

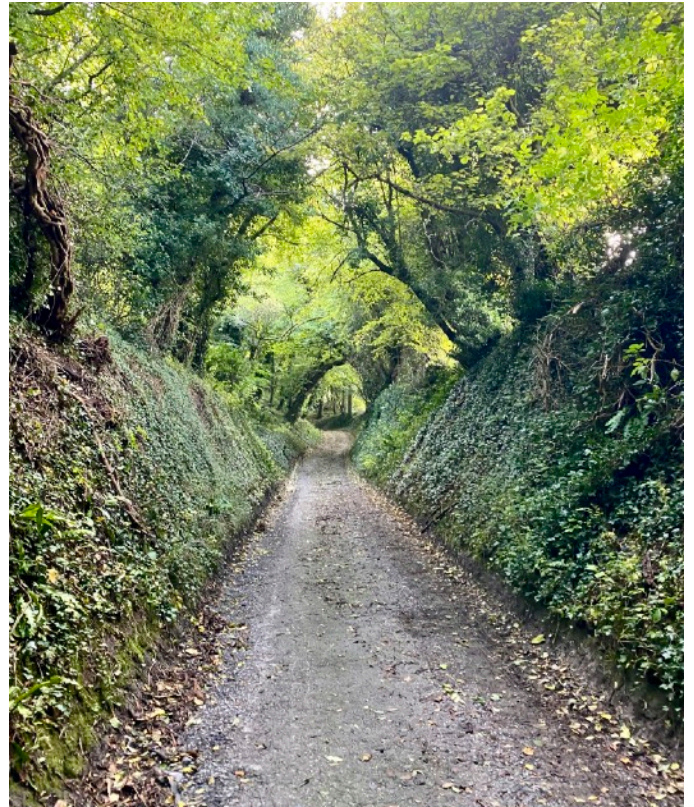


Celebrations on The Strand, London, 8th May 1945

Gloaming Holloway

A stroll up Compton Hill along the sunken track that starts near Compton Farm transports you through thousands of years of history, into a shadowy underworld where sound is deadened, light dimmed and tawny owls may hoot in the afternoon. A sunshade of trees mantle the lane, their exposed roots defying gravity, clutching the sheer sides. Revelling in the sanctuary beneath is a different ecosystem of ferns and fungi, where wild garlic blankets the steep banks in spring, and ivy threads everything. Halfway uphill, the bedrock is exposed, revealing its chalk face and offering an occasional ammonite.

Our sunken lane, or holloway, is one of many in southern England, created wherever the chalk and sandstone bedrock cannot resist the combined forces of nature and humans. The Wiltshire Upper Cretaceous chalk initiated its route along naturally occurring fissures; it began the process of constant erosion, widening and sinking ever lower under the onslaught of hooves, cart wheels and feet churning up sodden ground. The almost vertical banks have been carved to a scarcely credible depth of five metres or more. Ironically, holloways are not associated with streams or springs, yet they now act as efficient waterways in times of wet weather.



"Centuries of foot-fall, hoof-hit, wheel-roll and rain-run have harrowed the land" - Robert Macfarlane 2012



Compton Bassett's winter wander land on 13th December 2008. Annie Monk.

From top to bottom the rise is 60 metres, about a 1 in 10 gradient; eventually the climb to reach the bridleway on top must have become too troublesome and bespattering, and by the mid-20th century the single track lane was metalled. So now, the deepening of the track has largely stopped, if not the colluvium that is still carried down with any significant rainfall, to be spewed onto the village road as an irksome reminder of its capabilities.

Holloways, derived from Old English *hol* + *weg* (road in a hollow) were used as drove roads to transport cattle to market, by farmers to take their animals up to summer pasture, and as a link to the nearby communities of Yatesbury and Cherhill and beyond.

Laurie Waite

Compton Bassett History Archive is available for all to view:

www.comptonbassetthistory.co.uk

Historical photographs, maps and documents, details of the houses and people who lived in them.



EMERGENCY Contact Hub

Compton Bassett has teamed up with **Wiltshire and Swindon Prepared** to create an Emergency Contact hub at the Benson Village Hall.

These hubs are designated places throughout Wiltshire that act as a venue for communities to come together to help one another in the event of an incident. The venues can be activated by the community or the Parish Council and are your local place to come to in an emergency. They are run and staffed by the community itself with a simple structure in place to help you look after one another. Everyone is welcome at these hubs whether you need some assistance or want to offer help to others. There's no incident too big or small to use the hub and as a community it's up to us to decide when it's needed.

Naturally, we hope the situation never arises but emergencies do happen from time to time including floods, snow and power cuts. As a community we want to be as prepared as possible.

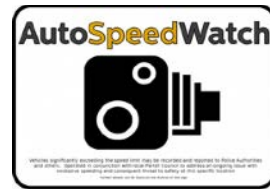
The Parish Council is grateful for the partnership and support of the Benson Village Hall in facilitating the management of the hub.

Speed Indicator Device (SID) and AutoSpeedWatch

Exciting news for Compton Bassett — the village is stepping up its efforts to tackle speeding with the installation of two speed monitoring devices in new locations, both set to be up and running by the end of this month.

The first device is a movable Speed Indicator Device (SID), designed not just to track speeding, but to influence driver behaviour in a friendly, yet effective way. Flashing a smiley face to those who stick to the limit and recording data on those who don't, this simple visual cue has proven surprisingly impactful. While some drivers — often work vehicles like white vans — remain unfazed by the display, most motorists do adjust their speed, making the device a valuable deterrent.

However, data obtained from its earlier location showed that 78% of vehicles were speeding between 30 and 40mph, so there's room for improvement.



The second device, soon to be installed near 52 Compton Bassett, takes things a step further. This speed camera doesn't just monitor — it records the number plates of those who speed through the village. This data won't just sit on a shelf; we plan to share it (in line with GDPR regulations, of course) via social media and other local platforms, ensuring the community stays informed. While we won't publish driver names, the visibility of number plates aims to add an extra layer of accountability.

In light of this, we're also planning to invite Wiltshire's Chief Constable, Catherine Roper, to the parish. We hope to discuss why, unlike many police forces across the UK, her team currently refuses to prosecute drivers based on data from ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) cameras. It's a conversation we believe is vital for the safety and well-being of our village.

With these measures, we're taking important steps to make Compton Bassett a safer, more peaceful place — and we'll keep you updated as to when and if the Chief Constable accepts our invitation.



On the 23rd March, we're joining in the **Great British Spring Clean**, highlighting that the **environment belongs to everyone**, and encouraging all to **love where we live**.

Compton Bassett villagers came out in great numbers last time, and sadly, a litter pick is needed again. Let's show our love for Compton Bassett and meet up at **10am by the bus shelter in Briar Leaze on Sunday 23rd March**.

Annual Community Meeting



Weds 21st May 7pm
at the Benson Village Hall

Come and join us for an informal chat and discuss any local issues of the day! Free entry and we'll have refreshments & nibbles.

Always contact the Parish Clerk in the first instance please

Parish Clerk	Diane Zeitzen	parishclerk@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk	
COUNCILLOR		CONTACT	RESPONSIBILITIES
	Pete Szczesiak	chairman@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk	Chair, Calne Area Parish Forum, Calne Area Board, Hills Liaison Committee, Legal Duties, Neighbourhood & Farm Watch
	Charles Reis	vicechair@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk	Vice-Chair, Heritage, Neighbourhood & Farm Watch, Rights of Way Liaison, Snow Warden
	Julian Barlow	julianbarlow@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk	Road Safety, Communications, Neighbourhood Plan, Wildlife Trust Liaison
	Peter Barnett	peterbarnett@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk	Hills Liaison Committee, Parish Steward Link, Village Hall Representative
	Edward Budge	edwardbudge@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk	Health & Welfare, Communications, Neighbourhood Plan
	Rod Lloyd-Davies	rodlloyd-davies@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk	Road Safety, LHFIF Representative
	Laurie Waite	lauriewaite@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk	Communications, Heritage, War Memorial, Website Liaison, Village Hall Representative, Flood Warden