

COMPTON BASSETT Matters

WINTER 2025

EDITED BY COMPTON BASSETT PARISH COUNCILLORS JULIAN BARLOW AND LAURIE WAITE

Village road to be closed for 12 days

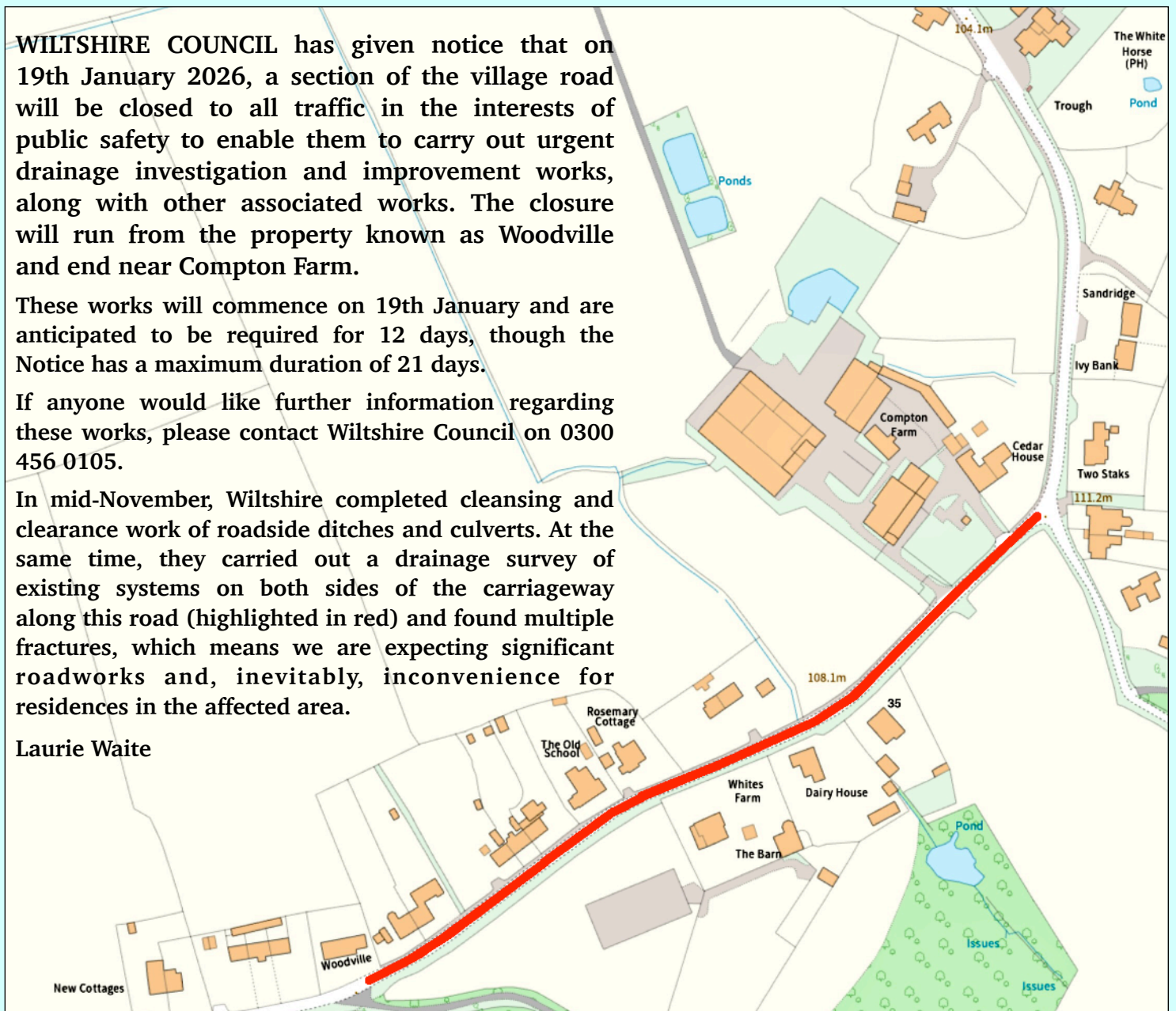
WILTSHIRE COUNCIL has given notice that on 19th January 2026, a section of the village road will be closed to all traffic in the interests of public safety to enable them to carry out urgent drainage investigation and improvement works, along with other associated works. The closure will run from the property known as Woodville and end near Compton Farm.

These works will commence on 19th January and are anticipated to be required for 12 days, though the Notice has a maximum duration of 21 days.

If anyone would like further information regarding these works, please contact Wiltshire Council on 0300 456 0105.

In mid-November, Wiltshire completed cleansing and clearance work of roadside ditches and culverts. At the same time, they carried out a drainage survey of existing systems on both sides of the carriageway along this road (highlighted in red) and found multiple fractures, which means we are expecting significant roadworks and, inevitably, inconvenience for residences in the affected area.

Laurie Waite



Parish Councillors visit High Penn Solar Farm

Compton Bassett Parish councillors recently visited High Penn Solar Farm to understand the site's long-term plans and discuss how the village might benefit from its continued operation. Chair Pete Szczesiak, along with councillors Edward Budge and Julian Barlow, were welcomed by representatives from Hive Energy for a guided tour and briefing on the facility's current condition and future intentions.

High Penn Solar Farm first became operational in 2013, making it one of the earlier large-scale renewable installations in Wiltshire. Now in its twelfth year, the farm is entering a stage in which many of its original components—most notably the solar panels and inverters—are approaching the end of their optimal lifespans. As a result, the operators have submitted a planning application to extend the life of the solar farm. This extension would not only allow High Penn to continue supplying clean, renewable energy but would also justify the significant investment required to replace its ageing technology.

During the visit, councillors were shown the areas where upgrades would be concentrated, with explanations of how newer, more efficient panels could increase generation capacity while reducing ongoing maintenance needs. Inverters, which convert the solar panels' output into usable electricity for the grid, are also due for replacement to ensure reliability over the coming decades.

A key point of discussion was that, under revised planning boundaries, the solar farm now falls within our village boundary. This change opens up the opportunity for a more formal and collaborative relationship between the village and the operator—particularly in relation to community benefit funding.

Councillors expressed the view that, should the extension be approved, it would be reasonable for High Penn to contribute meaningfully to local community projects. One priority discussed was supporting the installation of solar panels on the roof of Compton Bassett Village Hall, reducing running costs and demonstrating a shared commitment to sustainability at a local level.

The Parish Council will continue to engage with both villagers and the solar farm operator as the planning application progresses, ensuring that the upgrade brings clear and lasting benefits to the community.

Julian Barlow



The solar farm, divided into six areas, is centre right of photo. High Penn nature reserve is at the top of image.

Parish Steward Visits

If you spot something that needs doing, other than work already planned, and it's 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, all on a Thursday:

- ◆ 8th January
- ◆ 5th February
- ◆ 5th March



New Defibrillator at the Benson Village Hall



The old defibrillator, located on the telephone kiosk, has had to be replaced, and the new device is now situated on the front wall of the village hall. This has enabled us to have it connected to mains electricity for lighting and component self-testing. Many thanks to the Village Hall for allowing us to relocate it.

It's semi-automatic, with the user following clear voice prompts from the defibrillator in tending to someone in Sudden Cardiac Arrest.

Whilst training is not a requirement with the new defibrillator, the Parish Council is looking to arrange a short session for those interested.

Housing growth in Calne and Penn Hill: What does it mean for Compton Bassett?

Wiltshire's growing pressure for new homes continues to shape planning activity across the region, with a number of emerging developments of particular relevance to Compton Bassett. There are proposals for what will be around 1,000 new houses in Calne overall, including specifically some new homes planned around Penn Hill, part of which falls within our new parish boundary. Although these developments differ in scale, they have the potential to influence life in our village, and it is worth considering the likely effects in a balanced and informed way.

The proposed 1,000 homes in Calne represent a major expansion of the town, potentially bringing several thousand new residents and a marked increase in vehicle movements. While the construction will not all occur within the Compton Bassett boundaries, the knock-on effects will be felt across the rural road network that links our community to Calne, Lyneham, Marlborough, and beyond. Many residents already rely on the A3102 and the A4 for everyday travel, and these routes are expected to face additional congestion as Calne continues to grow. As traffic increases, more drivers—especially commuters and delivery vehicles—may seek alternative routes through the surrounding countryside. Even a modest rise in traffic along the narrow lanes near Cherhill, Hilmarton, and towards Penn Hill could impact walkers, cyclists, horse riders, and the general sense of rural quiet that characterises our area.

Large-scale development also brings extended construction periods. Building 1,000 homes typically spans several years, meaning a long phase of HGVs, site noise, and wider activity. Although the distance between Calne and Compton Bassett

softens this, the cumulative regional impact—more commercial deliveries, longer peak-hour queues, increased demand for services—will be noticeable. Local schools, healthcare provision, and emergency services may experience pressure before planned improvements catch up with population growth.

More immediately relevant to Compton Bassett are new housing proposals emerging around Penn Hill. We have discussed these at length in the Parish Council, and whilst smaller in scale, these developments sit far closer to us and therefore require careful consideration. Penn Hill forms part of the landscape setting that defines the western approach to the village. Any new building on elevated or exposed ground risks altering valued views, changing the visual character of the ridge line, and affecting key footpaths. Without sensitive design—lower building heights, appropriate materials, landscaping, and screening—the impact could be significant.

Traffic is also a direct concern for Penn Hill developments, as new homes would feed onto the same narrow lanes that run through or border Compton Bassett. Even a modest number of additional vehicles can affect road safety in an area without pavements or passing spaces. Construction traffic can pose additional risks to verges, hedges, and road edges if not properly managed.

Another issue is the preservation of tranquillity and dark skies. Compton Bassett is valued for its peaceful evenings and low levels of light pollution, and is designated as being part of the North Wessex Downs, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). New homes bring lighting, movement, and general domestic activity, all of which can subtly shift the atmosphere of the parish unless controlled through good planning.

As these proposals evolve, the Parish Council will continue to monitor applications closely and represent residents' interests. Development is not inherently negative, but it must be appropriate to its surroundings and respectful of the rural character of our parish. Active community engagement will remain essential in shaping the future of Compton Bassett.

Julian Barlow

Village pavement

We have requested that a section of pavement from No. 35 and on past Compton Farm be added to a list for footway works in the future. Currently, it doesn't meet any safety intervention levels and, in the words of Wiltshire Highways, "...just looks a bit tired".

However, by adding it onto a list for major work, the surface will be completed along the whole length – otherwise it will be patches, so in the long term this will be better. We'll have to wait a while as the works won't be completed until 2027/28; the 2026/27 programme is already booked. It will continue to be monitored for any safety defects.



SID2 – The Sequel...

I am sure that you are all aware, by now, of the installation of another Speed Indicator Device “SID2” in the village.

This allows us to monitor the speeds of vehicles entering and leaving the village centre. Although the information downloaded from these devices does not give us “individual specific” details, it does provide us with a raft of data, including the number of vehicles, their speeds and the busiest times of the day and night.

We are then able to pass on this information to Wiltshire Police, who will subsequently take what action they need to undertake to support our efforts to reduce speeding within Compton Bassett.

For information, our ANPR camera has been removed for as long as it takes to have another roadside post installed, which hopefully will be early in the new year. This will stop the amount of data we collect, but only for a short while. Because of the lack of sunshine and dark skies at this time of the year, the pictures are often not clear enough to verify the vehicles, which is an essential part of the process.



Rod Lloyd-Davies

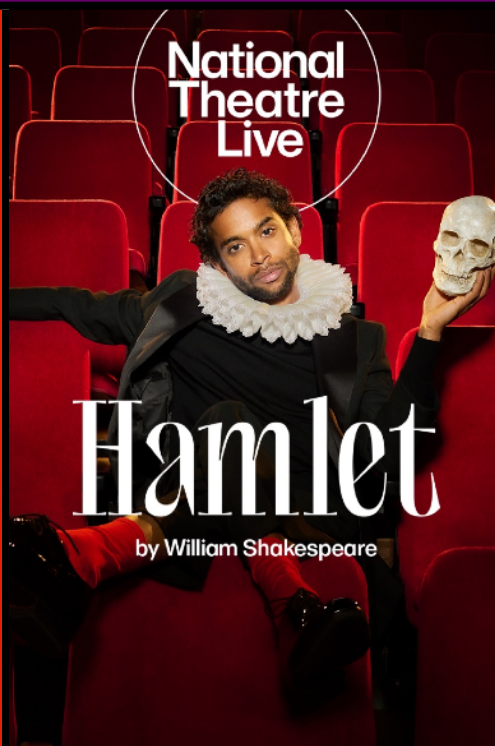
What's on at the Benson Hall?



La traviata



4th JANUARY



22nd JANUARY



ROYAL BALLET

Wolf Works

12th FEBRUARY

BOOKINGS: [bensonhall.online/events](https://www.bensonhall.online/events)



Wildlife Reserve now sits within Compton Bassett Parish boundary

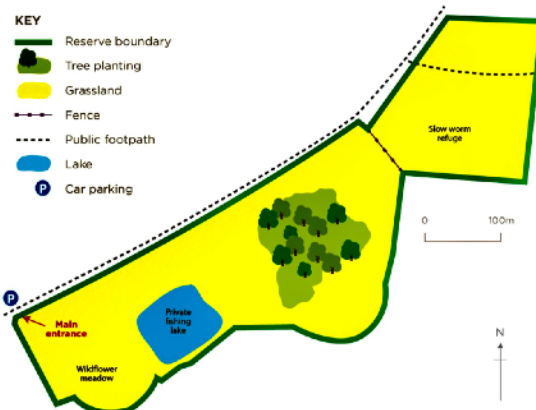
Councillors Laurie Waite and Chair Pete Szczesiak visited newly-registered parishioners recently, following boundary changes that have expanded the parish area. They used the opportunity to introduce themselves, explain the role of the Parish Council and how it can support new residents—offering help, advice or assistance where needed.

As part of the boundary review, the parish now embraces a nature reserve belonging to the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (WWT), offering new communal responsibility and opportunity for nature-minded residents.

The reserve area benefits from WWT’s long-standing conservation work—protecting one of the county’s richest patches of chalk grassland and woodland—and providing free public access for residents to enjoy wildlife, walks and open space.

During the visits, one resident asked whether the Council would consider installing a dog-litter bin in the area, concerned about maintaining cleanliness around the reserve. Laurie and Pete confirm that WWT has been approached on the resident’s behalf to explore whether bins (or other measures) could be provided to help keep the reserve tidy and accessible for everyone.

The Council emphasise that the expanded boundary brings new responsibilities — but also a shared opportunity: to work with WWT to ensure the reserve remains a valued amenity, responsibly used and cared for by the whole community.



- Penn Wood lies at High Penn, Calne, postcode SN11 8RU, accessible via Oxford Road/High Penn, which matches the general area described as “Penn Hill / High Penn.”
- The WWT lists Penn Wood among its nature reserves.
- Local Calne-area documentation describes Penn Wood as a former sandpit and landfill, later restored to pasture and ultimately brought into WWT’s reserve portfolio; the transformation included tree-planting (approx. 10,000 trees).
- The site offers paths, a small lake (used by an angling club), wild-flower meadow, woodland in development, and habitat for wildlife such as slow worms, grass snakes, roe deer, badgers, bats, birds of prey, etc.

Size & Layout: Approximately 7.7 hectares according to WWT’s reserve listing.

- **Habitat & Features:** Penn Wood is a restored nature reserve combining young woodland (trees planted since 2010) with a wildflower meadow, hedgerows, a small lake/fishing water, wide grass pathways (“rides”), and open grass/pasture-like areas.
- **Wildlife:** It supports slow worms (a colony relocated there in 2003), grass snakes, bats (nest boxes installed), birds including kestrel, buzzard, owls, skylarks, lapwing, red kite, and mammals such as roe deer and badger.
- **Public Access:** There is a small car park at the end of High Penn, off Oxford Road; a stile on the north side of the reserve allows access from a footpath. Dogs on leads are permitted.
- **Scenic Views:** Visitors to Penn Wood can enjoy views of local landmarks — for example, towards the Cherhill White Horse monument, and nearby hills such as Morgan’s Hill.

Julian Barlow

Village Gates

Now that the village gates have been installed, which we hope you will agree look very smart, it clearly marks the southern and northern boundaries of our parish. We hope they will also encourage drivers to take care and drive responsibly whilst they are in Compton Bassett.

Needless to say, some drivers will ignore the speed limits, but hopefully the measures we are taking will help to reduce the number of offenders.

Rod Lloyd-Davies



When the German Luftwaffe dropped in to Compton Bassett



No photo exists of the episode - a shame!

In the autumn of 1943, Phyllis Goodenough and two of her sisters, Doreen and Olive, were cycling back home to Compton Bassett after work. They were all employed at Westinghouse in Chippenham, a large engineering company where several thousand workers were busy manufacturing aircraft engines and other items for the war effort. Phyllis, at 16, was the youngest of 13 children to Albert and Bessie Goodenough living at 72 Compton Bassett, now immortalised as Goodenough's Corner; Doreen was 25 and Olive 21.

Each weekday, the three rose at 6 am and cycled into Calne, catching the train there to Chippenham in time for a 9 am start. Phyllis worked as a typist in the Cost Office, and the firm sponsored her for a three-year course to learn secretarial and shorthand skills at a night school.

It was a long day by the time they rode back down the Oxford Road out of Calne, then turning into the village road towards home. Some 500 metres along on the right-hand side is a small piece of woodland called Old Nursery, before the Bushton turn-off. It was at this point, in the half-light of early evening, that the three caught sight of something flapping in the breeze amongst the trees. They stopped and gazed at a large sheet not very high up, so they walked in and managed to tug it down and out onto the road. By now, they had realised that it was a parachute, but to their amazement, they saw German writing. Their excitement now had a tinge of fear; what if the airman was still in the wood, hiding or injured, and had not had enough time to retrieve and hide his parachute? Not wanting to give up their prize, they quickly draped the immense 9-metre diameter silk sheet over the handlebars of their three bikes and scrambled home.

Back at Number 72, on seeing the parachute, Albert Goodenough immediately called on 40-year-old Police Constable Gerald Allen, who lived with his wife at the Police Station House in Hilmarton. PC Allen duly called and inspected the parachute but, to the Goodenoughs' surprise, showed little interest and didn't take the matter any further, though he did stay on to sample some of Albert's homemade wine.

So Albert cut out the German manufacturer's markings as a keepsake and then let Doreen have the rest, who set to work on Bessie's treadle machine, making mostly underwear from the silk. She was a skilful seamstress who later opened her own shop in Goatacre after the war.

Albert was puzzled at the lack of curiosity shown by their local bobby, and with good reason. What Albert knew, but almost no one else did, was that Prime Minister Winston Churchill used to stay overnight at Dugdale's House if he was due to fly out from Lyneham the following morning, often to visit British troops abroad. The house is less than a mile from where the airman came down. William Fielding-Johnson, who owned Manor Farm and Dugdale's, let the house out to Canadian officers during the war, and Albert would quietly visit with various provisions whenever he was given the nod. He was the go-to person in the village, being a wheelwright, undertaker, coffin maker, stone mason, deliverer of newspapers, paraffin and oil, amongst many other things. The family knew if Albert had gone up to Dugdale's, as he usually returned with beer and packs of cigarettes, but he never said anything about who was there. If the family noticed the large black Humber Pullman that came past and parked up at Dugdale's, Albert told them, "Don't you ever breathe a word about any of this!" It remained a closely guarded secret, and probably only the Fielding-Johnsons and farm worker Reg Ruming, who worked at nearby Manor Farm, were the only other villagers aware of these visits at that time.

And what of the German airman? None of the recorded German aircraft wartime crashes in the region matches up with this occurrence; in other incidents, the airmen were all accounted for. Unfortunately, we may never know.

Laurie Waite

War Memorial receives makeover

Compton Bassett's war memorial garden has been given a worthwhile spruce-up in its 75th year. The gravel path around the memorial never had a proper separation between it and the surrounding lawn, and consequently, the boundary became blurred and asymmetrical (Photo, top right). The gardening team, who volunteer their efforts, asked the parish council to consider upgrading the path by installing steel edging to keep the lawn in shape.

The parish council, which is responsible for maintaining the monument and garden, approved and paid for the project, and a local contractor was sourced to fabricate the steelwork. This work was carried out by the local team in time for the Remembrance Sunday service, but a second phase of work to replace the worn concrete roadside path will be completed in the new year.

The memorial was unveiled in 1950 after Captain Guy Benson donated the land for it, while Captain William Fielding-Johnson was a major benefactor; he had lost his son and a stepson during the Second World War. The two captains were the principal landowners and employers in the village from the 1930s for several decades until Benson left in 1949; Fielding-Johnson died in 1953, but his wife continued to run Manor Farm until 1963. Guy Benson and his wife, Lady Violet, returned to Compton Bassett to open the new village hall in 1955, named in his honour as he had done so much to ensure the building was finally constructed.

The group of seven volunteers is led by Eugenie Brooks, who will be glad to hear from anyone who would like to contribute a little time to help with its upkeep (ecwb@hotmail.co.uk).

The Parish Council extends its thanks and appreciation to the team for their continued efforts in maintaining this special place in the village.



Inaugural service of remembrance on Sunday 12th November 1950. Captain Guy Benson stands in the foreground by the top of the steps, left of the memorial.



Laurie Waite

Who Are Your Councillors?

Your Parish Council consists of seven members, all of whom live in the village and volunteer their time to support the community.

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	Planning, Health & Welfare, Neighbourhood Plan
	Rod Lloyd-Davies	rodllloyd-davies@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk	Road Safety, LHFIF Representative
	Laurie Waite	lauriewaite@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk	Communications, Heritage, War Memorial, Website Liaison, Rights of Way, Village Hall Representative, Flood Warden

- **Clerk to the Council – Diane Zeitzen – parishclerk@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk**
A part-time, paid role, the Clerk manages the Council's administration, finances, and compliance with regulations. Please send email enquiries to the Clerk in the first instance.
- **Wiltshire Councillor for Calne Rural – Ashley O'Neill – ashley.oneill@wiltshire.gov.uk**
Ashley represents Compton Bassett and the surrounding area at the county level, providing advice and support on wider council matters.

How You Can Get Involved

The next council meeting is scheduled for Thursday 15 January 2026 at 7 pm. Our meetings are held at the Benson Village Hall and are open to the public; residents are warmly encouraged to attend, listen in, and raise concerns. Whether it's a pothole, a planning objection, or an idea to improve the village, we're here to help. The Council meets every six to eight weeks, with agendas and minutes posted on the village noticeboard and website.

A very happy Christmas to all villagers

