

# COMPTON BASSETT MATTERS

## AUTUMN 2017



Dear Neighbours,

This is the first edition of our new quarterly newsletter that the Parish Council is going to publish and distribute to our local community in response to the recent village survey.

You will see from the results that there is a mixed level of understanding of our role as a Parish Council and how we can best serve you. Communications are therefore a vital area in which we want to improve; hopefully this succinct, printed and emailed response will be informative.

We also have three enthusiastic new members assisting those existing ones and between them they offer a wealth of experience and skills. Your councillors work hard on behalf of the village attending many meetings, gaining information and acquiring training that enables them to serve as best they can. All in their own time and expense. We have a great team and we are all delighted to be serving you.

Peter Szczesiak, Chairman, Compton Bassett Parish Council

## **The Parish Council's role**

### **Why has Compton Bassett got a Parish Council and what does it do?**

A parish council is the lowest tier of local government. It is an elected body and has variable tax raising powers; these taxes are called a precept and are part of your Council Tax bill every year.

To put the Compton Bassett Parish Council in perspective, parish and town councils vary enormously in size, activities and circumstances, representing populations ranging from less than 100 (small rural hamlets) to up to 70,000 (Weston-Super-Mare Town Council). Most of them are small: around 80% represent populations of less than 2,500.

Specifically, we have an advisory and representative role and it is to us you come if you have observations, complaints, news or questions about matters affecting the parish. We are the formal elected body and it is with us that other organisations communicate if they want a view from Compton Bassett. These organisations are varied and include Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire Police, BT and Calne Running Club, amongst many others.

You will see in this first issue of Parish Matters the results from our recent questionnaire and one of these is that we need to enhance our communications and tell you more about matters that might affect you in and around the village, in addition to emails, the village website and the Villages Magazine.

*\*Please see the back page for specific roles and responsibilities of Compton Bassett Parish Councillors.*

### **TOP 3 ISSUES as chosen by you!**

In future we would like to examine the top issues chosen by you and look at these in some detail to see: *'what progress is being made and is there more that can be done'*

We will report on these in following newsletters.

Please let us know *your* issues by contacting Emelien Waite or Julian Barlow.

## **Your Councillors**



**Peter Szczesiak**

Fact! "The future King of England gave me a standing ovation for my ballet dancing prowess".

I was co-opted onto CBPC in 1991 and have thoroughly enjoyed my time serving the community for the past 26 years as both councillor and in my current role as Chair. I have lived in the village for over 40 years. In my time here I have worked on the village hall committee, flower show, parochial church council and even started a country and western club. I am a founder member of CHADS and helped form a village cricket team. My working life has been varied from manager of a rubber factory, providing parts for the hovercraft industry to manager at the local pub, the White Horse. I am a volunteer lock keeper at Caen locks and a volunteer driver with 'Link'. My major claim to fame was performing the Dance of the Swans over three nights from the ballet Swan Lake at Westonbirt School as part of CHADS. A standing ovation was achieved each evening and I can safely say it is the only time that Princes Harry, William and the Duke of Kent, who were audience members, ever stood up for a resident of Compton Bassett.



**Peter Barnett**

Fact! "My claim to fame includes being mistaken for Tommy Steele whilst on honeymoon in Portugal"

I have lived in the village since I was five years old. I attended the village school before going to boarding school. After graduating to a BSc Agriculture at Wye College, University of London I came home to the family farm. I was elected onto the Parish Council more than 40 years ago, have served as a church warden and have recently re-joined the village hall committee.



**Julian Barlow**

Fact! "I persuaded Margaret Thatcher to do something she was strongly against when she was PM"

I worked as a journalist on the Times Newspaper, the New York Times and Daily Mirror before becoming the youngest appointed board director at the Chartered Institute of Building responsible for marketing and commercial affairs for over 15 years. Following a period as communications manager for the UK's largest food manufacturing business I began my own public relations consultancy and work with clients in many areas from pharmaceuticals to property. I have helped Olympian Sir Steve Redgrave in raising awareness of diabetes and am currently assisting senior members of the House of Lords with social media activity. I am a Freeman of the City of London, Liveryman as well as a member of Media Society of the Reform Club. I have lived in Compton Bassett for 4 years with my wife Angela.



**Jane Marshall**

Fact! "I once built a sandcastle and explored rock pools with Harold Wilson!"

I have lived in the village for eighteen months now and I love it here. I was elected to the Parish Council in May of this year. I decided to stand because I wanted to give something back and be a part of my new community. I am semi-retired! I still work as an executive coach and also run an on line management programme for Harbour Masters and Container terminal managers across the world. Prior to being self-employed I worked in the pharmaceutical world, in retail and in a local authority (Kent County Council). Although this was quite a while ago the experience has proved invaluable to me in this new role! I really hope to be able to bring something useful to the Parish Council. Please do get in touch with me if I can help you.



**Charles Reis**

Fact! "I worked as a gaucho on a cattle ranch in Chile".

I was born at The Manor Farm and lived in the village until I left school. After 12 months travelling, which included employment as diverse as working on a ranch in Chile and a re-treading tyre factory in Sydney, I started work at Coys of Kensington in London who offered me my dream job working for an auction house specialising in vintage and historic cars. Seven years working in the big smoke was enough, and the allure of the countryside grew. I left London in 1995, and after 6 months working on a farm in Zimbabwe, returned to Compton Bassett. After several years gaining experience of Dairy farming, I made the decision to convert the land and cattle to organic status, in order to produce organic milk. In 2004, I set up The Hairpin Company with an ex-colleague from Coys, which specialises in trading classic cars. I married Louisa in 2006 and we have three daughters. I am a director of the White Horse Inn and we bought and renovated The Freeth four years ago, where we now live.



**Emelien Waite**

Fact! "Many moons ago I was junior cross-country and show jumping champion of Holland".

Although Dutch I have only lived in the Netherlands for about 12 years. I was born in Hong Kong and travelled the world, living for while in gorgeous County Cork, Ireland where I met Laurie. I moved to England in 1980 and have worked in the NHS as an Admin Manager for over 20 years. We bought our house in Compton Bassett in 2011 and I am now looking forward to reducing my working commitments a little to spend more of the daytime hours in our glorious village with my family and friends. I love it here and am very keen to do all I can to keep it as great as it is now.

## **Parish Council Survey results are in!**

The purpose of the survey was to see if those living in Compton Bassett are aware of how the Parish Council (PC) functions and to find if people feel the Council should have a greater engagement within the parish.

In terms of key points, whilst the PC has no direct jurisdiction to affect many of the issues raised in the survey, it is our role to represent the public mood and views, to try and influence those who do have power and are able to effect change.

### **Key outcomes were:**

A significant number of people said they were not sure or had no idea what the role of the council was in their community (52.6%).

Concerning potholes, 66% of you thought that the PC performed averagely or well in representing village views on core problems. 66% thought that the PC does well or average at representing their views for Broadband. Traffic Management was higher at 70% saying that the issue is well or averagely represented. In terms of representing views on Hills, the score was high at 81% for a well or average performance at liaising with the waste disposal/quarrying firm. For community engagement the scoring was 78%, feeling that the PC performed well or average in this area. Finally, wellbeing and welfare of residents showed that 82% felt the PC was performing averagely or well.

Just over half (52%) of respondents felt that PC had no power to affect planning applications or had no idea of their role in the planning process.

Most people surveyed wanted to know more about what goes on at the PC meetings (57%).

In terms of future communication most want a regular newsletter, if possible, delivered by email (66%) and also to see the information on the village website (37%)

For the Annual Parish Meeting, held in May, the majority of respondents want a social element to the occasion to include outside speakers (64%).

### **What Next?**

The survey shows that the community feels they would like to know more about the role of the Parish Council and how it can be harnessed to represent the views of villagers and apply pressure where appropriate on the key issues that affect them.

Continued overleaf....



### **What next?** *continued*

In support of this objective the survey shows that there is a desire for the PC to communicate more effectively with villagers about actions it is taking on their behalf and a new newsletter will now be produced periodically. We will ensure that draft minutes are circulated via email within 10 days of each meeting as well as posted on the website and we will continue to contribute to the Villages magazine to ensure all matters pertaining to the PC have a print format for any residents that do not have access to email.

Maintaining pressure on BT and Wiltshire Council over Broadband and road issues are important and will be stepped up.

We need to ensure that the Annual Parish Meeting is more attractive to villagers so we will endeavour to make the evening more entertaining and less formal than has been the case in recent years whilst at the same time being informative.

Our aim is to conduct another survey after a reasonable amount of time has passed to see if we have attained our goals.

### **Stop Press:**

The village signs have finally gone up and we would like to thank Angela Barlow and Dave Coward for their excellent work in painting the village scenes.

**40mph speed limit.** This is currently out for public consultation. That process ends this month and if the outcome is positive we would hope to see the 40mph signs introduced early in the new year.



**Signage on the A3012 Compton Bassett turn off, to deter lorries coming through the village.** Following the last Calne Area transport group meeting a sign for the A3012 junction is now in the top five priorities for our area of Wiltshire.

The engineer has looked at this and decided that there is no room on the verge from the Calne direction. Rather than wait for lots of surveys we have decided to start with one from the Hilmarton direction and see if this helps. We will find out in early December when this will be done.

**Dealing with potholes!** One of the only ways of doing this faster is to have our own team of people who are trained how to do it. There are other parishes across the country who have done this very successfully.

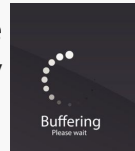
Before we research this any further we would like to know how you all feel about the suggestion. Do we have enough of a problem to warrant this? Do we have enough people that would be willing and able to get involved? Please let us know what you think!

**Why does it take so long to get things done?!**

In Wiltshire we have four area transport groups which all have to use the same resources. In order to get something on the priority list it has to first go through the area board and if they agree it goes forward to the transport group. Calne Area transport group considers requirements of Calne Town and all the surrounding parishes. Each requirement is debated thoroughly and then placed in order of priority. There is only resource available to deal with top 5 priorities at any time. Each of the 4 transport groups follow the same principle so we have to wait until resources are available and we are in the top 5.

**Broadband latest:**

As you will have seen, work to erect new telegraph poles and install the Super-Fast Broadband technology is well underway for those served by the Calne exchange. However, those on the side of the village served by Hilmarton are not included so we asked Wiltshire Council for an update:



"As you may be aware the existing infrastructure footprint of Compton Bassett is particularly complex as the South of the Village is served by the Calne exchange area and the North the Hilmarton exchange. The dividing line is between numbers 50 and 51 Compton Bassett. Work is progressing well and we anticipate the service to be live by Christmas. For those served by the Calne exchange, when the service is live, you will need to contact your chosen Internet Service Provider (ISP) in order to upgrade your service. Although BT has installed the network, it is an open network and all ISPs will be offered the opportunity to provide their services across the improved infrastructure. We would always recommend the use of a broadband comparison website to help you find a package that best suits your needs.

Wiltshire Council has also informed us of the following:

"For those in the north of the village, Wiltshire Council has been working on procuring an Ultrafast Broadband solution after securing £2m from central government and £1m from the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership".

Recently we announced a contract award to Gigaclear to bring an Ultrafast solution to the north of our county and have advised that premises within the north of Compton Bassett are in their high level build plans. Timelines for installation are due to be announced in the near future but they hope to bring SFBB to this part of the village no later than 2019.

**IF YOU WANT SFBB FROM THE HILMARTON EXCHANGE PLEASE REGISTER YOUR INTEREST WITH GIGACLEAR ON:**

<https://www.gigaclear.com/postcode-checker/wiltshireonline>

## COMPTON BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

### Current roles and contact details

**Peter Szczesiak**      **01249 815006**      **peter.szczesiak01@gmail.com**

Chair  
Calne Area Parish Forum  
Hills Liaison Committee  
Legal Duties  
Neighbourhood & Farm Watch

**Julian Barlow**      **01249 760788**      **Julian@barlowcomms.co.uk**

Road Safety  
Communication  
Broadband  
CATG  
Calne Area Board

**Peter Barnett**      **01249 812274**

Hills Liaison committee  
Parish Steward link  
Village Hall Representative

**Jane Marshall**      **01249 760170**      **Janecm16@sky.com**

CATG  
Calne Area Board  
Road Safety  
Parish Steward Link  
Health & Well Being

**Charles Reis**      **07802 863 601**      **Charles@austinsfarm.co.uk**

Heritage  
Neighbourhood and Farm Watch

**Emelien Waite**      **01249 811076**      **emelienwaite@gmail.com**

Calne Area Parish Forum  
Calne Area Board  
Communication  
Village Hall Representative  
Health & Well Being  
Neighbourhood & Farm Watch

**Diane Zeitsen**      **07828630764**      **cb.parishclerk@gmail.com**

Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.