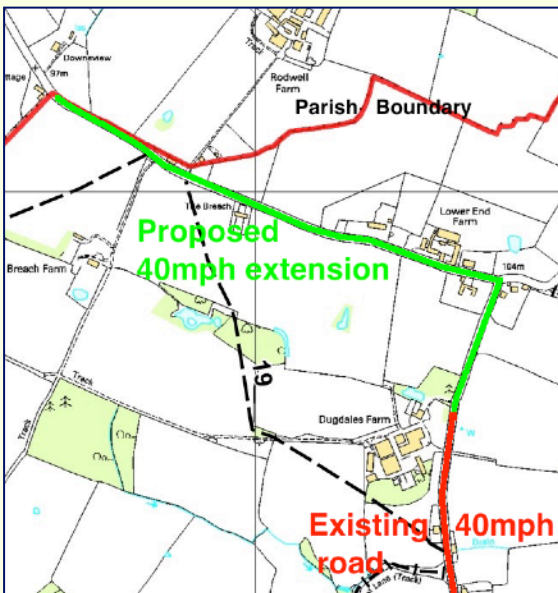


Compton Bassett Matters

Edited by Councillors Barlow and Waite for Compton Bassett Parish Council

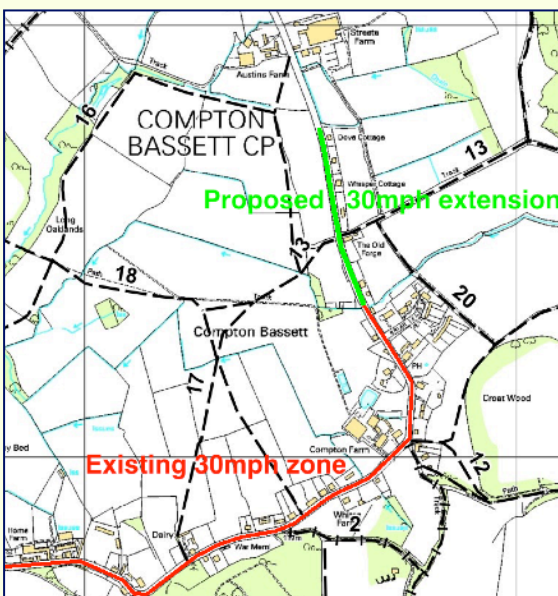
Progress on new speed zones within the village



Stage One of the parish council's traffic calming plans for the village has taken another important step forward. Our local councillor for Calne Rural, Ashley O'Neill, has been actively involved and has kindly agreed to summarise how the proposals are proceeding.

"We are making good progress in achieving the top two priority traffic calming measures that were identified for the village, both of which were set out in the summer newsletter. The first being the extension of the 30mph limit from the village hall out to Dove Cottage and the second being the extension of the 40mph from Dugdales Farm out to Breach Farm.

The Parish Council recently submitted a request to the Calne Community Area Transport Group (CATG) for a speed limit review and I was delighted to be able speak in support of the proposal to do so. The group agreed with us that there should be a review for the village and noted the suggestions made by the Parish Council about the extent of any changes.



Subsequent to the approval from the group to undertake the review, Wiltshire Council have now commissioned an independent traffic consultant to look at the current speed limit arrangements for the village. We are expecting a report at some point over the next few months that will set out any recommendations for changes to those limits and I am hopeful that they will recommend the changes that we have requested.

Whilst the outcome is not certain and it is possible that they will come back and say "no changes required", we believe we have made a good case and submitted sensible proposals. If changes are recommended as we hope they are, our next steps will be to take those back to CATG to secure funding to undertake the work required to implement the new limits. I will endeavour to keep you updated on the progress through future newsletters."

Cllr Ashley O'Neill, Wiltshire Councillor for Calne Rural

Parish boundaries under review for change in 2025

The creation of a new Derry Hill & Studley parish would result in there being a knock-on effect for other boundaries around Calne, including Compton Bassett and discussion has been ongoing over the last few months.

A Community Governance Review (CGR) is underway to consider the effects of Calne Without parish being dissolved and split up in order to create a new parish for Derry Hill & Studley. Wiltshire Council initiated the review which comes under the jurisdiction of the Electoral Review Committee. The purpose of the CGR is to ensure that parishes reflect the identity and interests of local communities and promote effective and convenient local governance. This is important to us all because should the committee so decree, they can impose boundary changes that could alter the size, inclusion, and configuration of boundaries which make up the parish of Compton Bassett. For instance, they could decide to combine Lower Compton and Compton Bassett into a larger Parish that falls under the remit of Cherhill. This is not currently a proposal and we wanted to ensure that it was not put forward as one.

The creation of Derry Hill & Studley parish would leave remnants of Calne Without to be apportioned between other parishes. Our village is affected in that, Bremhill, Calne, Calne Without, Cherhill, Heddington, Hilmarton and Compton Bassett are all parishes that are being examined by the review committee. Hence we have attended the review meetings and put forward what we think is a sensible revision of our Parish boundary for consultation rather than have changes forced upon us.

The findings of the committee are binding and if the boundaries were changed your representation would also change. We are the smallest parish in terms of population in this review process and therefore our core objective is to both maintain our independence, governance, and identity as Compton Bassett. The voice of our local parishioners are unlikely to carry as much weight if absorbed into a larger parish with a newly formed parish council. However, the ultimate decision is with the CGR committee.

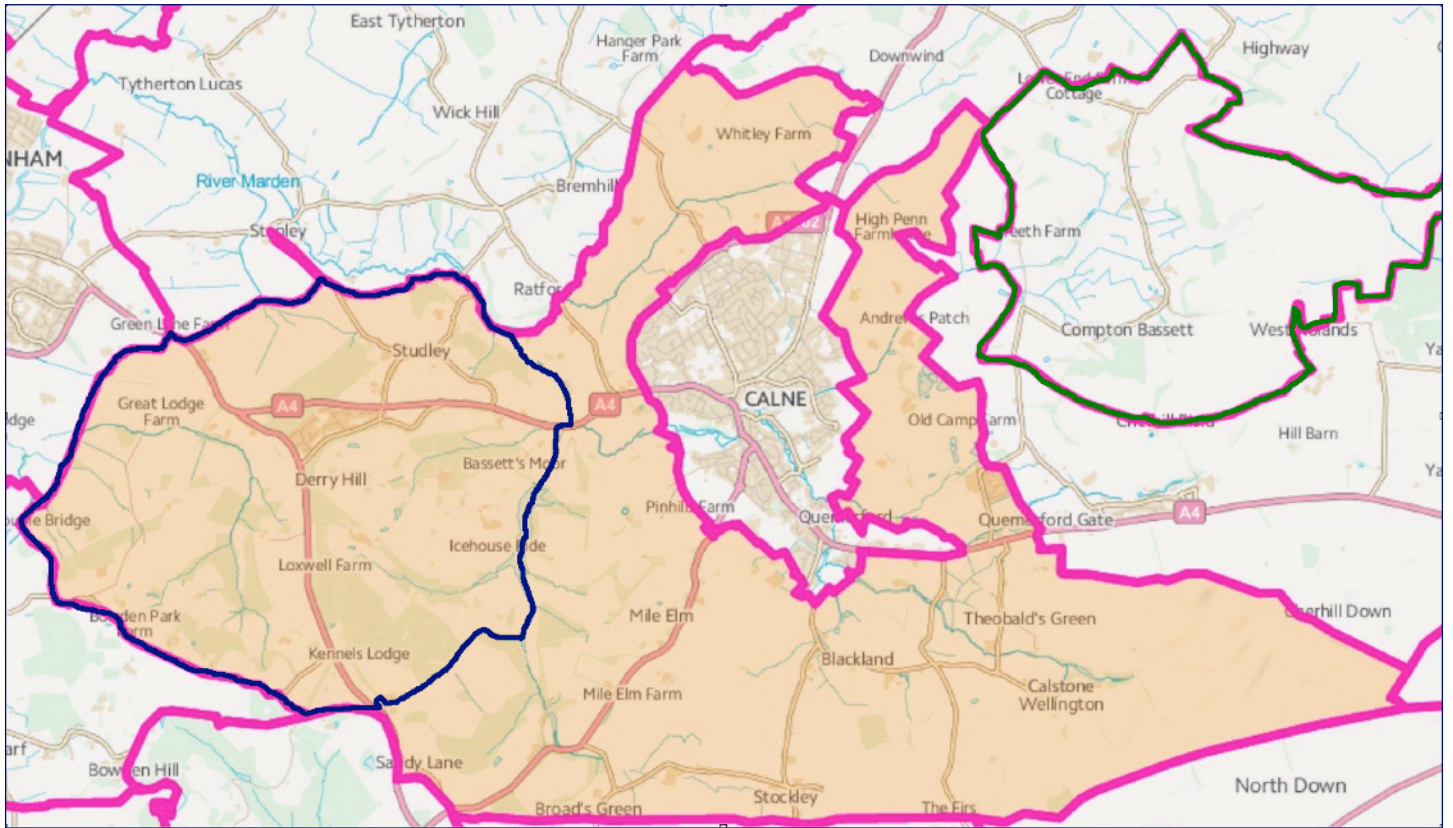
Compton Bassett Parish Council therefore argued its case with Pete Szczesiak, Laurie Waite and Julian Barlow putting forward a suggested change of boundary. This does not mean our current parish becomes absorbed into any of the larger villages but also that we don't absorb an area like Lower Compton which does not have the same rural composition as our own village. We have mooted a move which enlarges our parish to include a small area of Penn Hill and also encompass some of the Hills landfill site, though not Lower Compton.

On page 3, two maps are shown to give an indication of how the local governance areas might change. At the present time these are only suggested changes, following consultations.

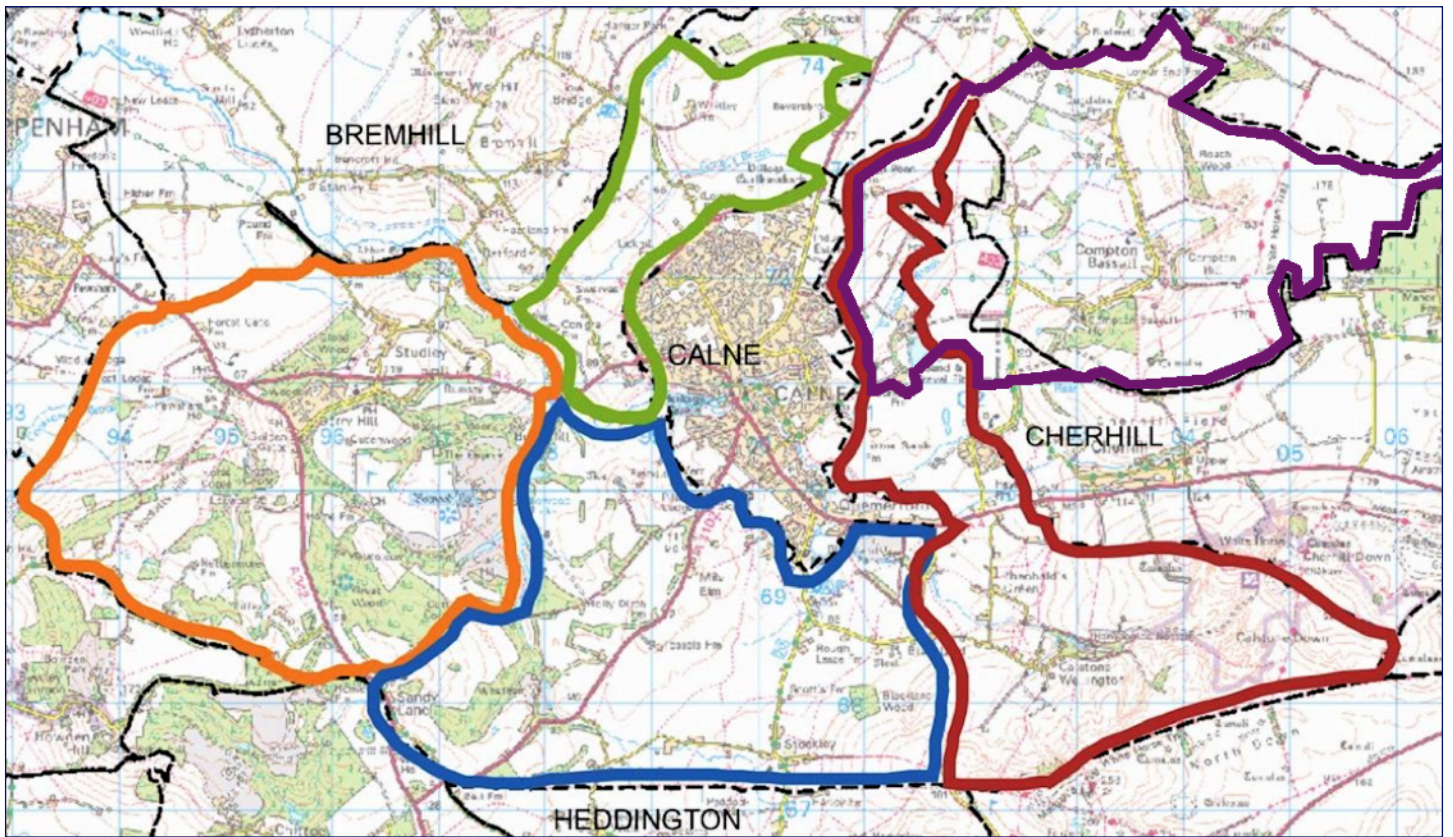
The CGR timeline for reporting is shown below:

- *Early Jan for collation of data*
- *Jan/Feb public consultation on draft recommendations*
- *April/May consideration of submissions and final recommendations*
- *June/July full council considers recommendations*
- *Implementation May 2025.*

Finally, our draft boundary changes which affect Cherhill parish, have been reviewed at their council meeting and accepted as a sensible change with the amended Compton Bassett parish better reflecting footpaths and historical boundaries.



In the above depiction the present Calne Without parish boundary is drawn in pink, while the proposed new Derry Hill & Studley parish is overdrawn in blue. In this possible scenario, the remainder of Calne Without would be carved up and given to other neighbouring parishes. The current Compton Bassett parish boundary is highlighted in green. No decisions have been taken yet.



The proposed Derry Hill & Studley is outlined in orange. Remaining parts of Calne Without to be apportioned are shown in blue, red and green. Our submission is that Compton Bassett parish be extended westward up towards the Calne town boundary, which would take in a northern sliver of Cherhill and a similar sized piece of Calne Without; this suggestion for a slightly larger Compton Bassett parish is highlighted in purple. Cherhill Parish Council has agreed in principle to our revised boundary.

Traffic Calming – what's next?

If we are successful in extending the current 30mph and 40mph speed zones, the next step will be to augment these changes by introducing gateway welcome signage at each end of the village, highlighting the entry into the parish with a noticeable upgrade in appearance. This won't affect the painted village-scenes boards that are a little further in to the village and will remain. A radar speed sign will also be obtained soon to help in our mission to bring about a change in drivers' attitudes as they proceed through the village.



New gateways & signs

The effect of gateways on traffic speeds is known to bring a positive benefit. They focus attention on a change in environment from rural to urban.

In Compton Bassett, a greater impact needs to be made at the village entry points. A pair of white gateways with welcome signs and 30mph speed limit information will replace the old speed roundels on poles, and have a dedicated nameplate will make a prominent statement to motorists entering the village near Home Farm on the south-western side.

At the northern end of the village we propose a second pair of similar gateways near Breach Farm at the point where we hope the new 40mph zone starts.

These gates are made from a blend of wood fibre, recycled thermoplastics and adhesive resins. They give the appearance of wood with all the longevity of plastic so they will not rot or require varnishing or painting.

Speed Indicator Device

The parish council has agreed to purchase a vehicle activated sign to help remind drivers of the speed limit. 30mph speed enforcing signs have been shown to contribute to a reduction of speed, estimated at between 2.6 and 7.1mph in a study conducted by the Transport Research Laboratory.

This particular sign, a Speed Indicator Device (SID) will be solar powered and accurately measures the oncoming vehicle speed and displays this value to the driver. It will even record vehicle speed data with the display in 'turned off mode' so that the effectiveness of the device can then be compared with data recorded when the speed display is switched on.

SIDs may be relocated to other designated sites in the village, even in suitable 40mph locations and are a useful means of raising awareness of vehicle speeds and educating driver behaviour.

Besides vehicle speed, data are also recorded for date and time, the results for which are downloaded periodically.



Freeth Farm sand quarry - silence from Hills

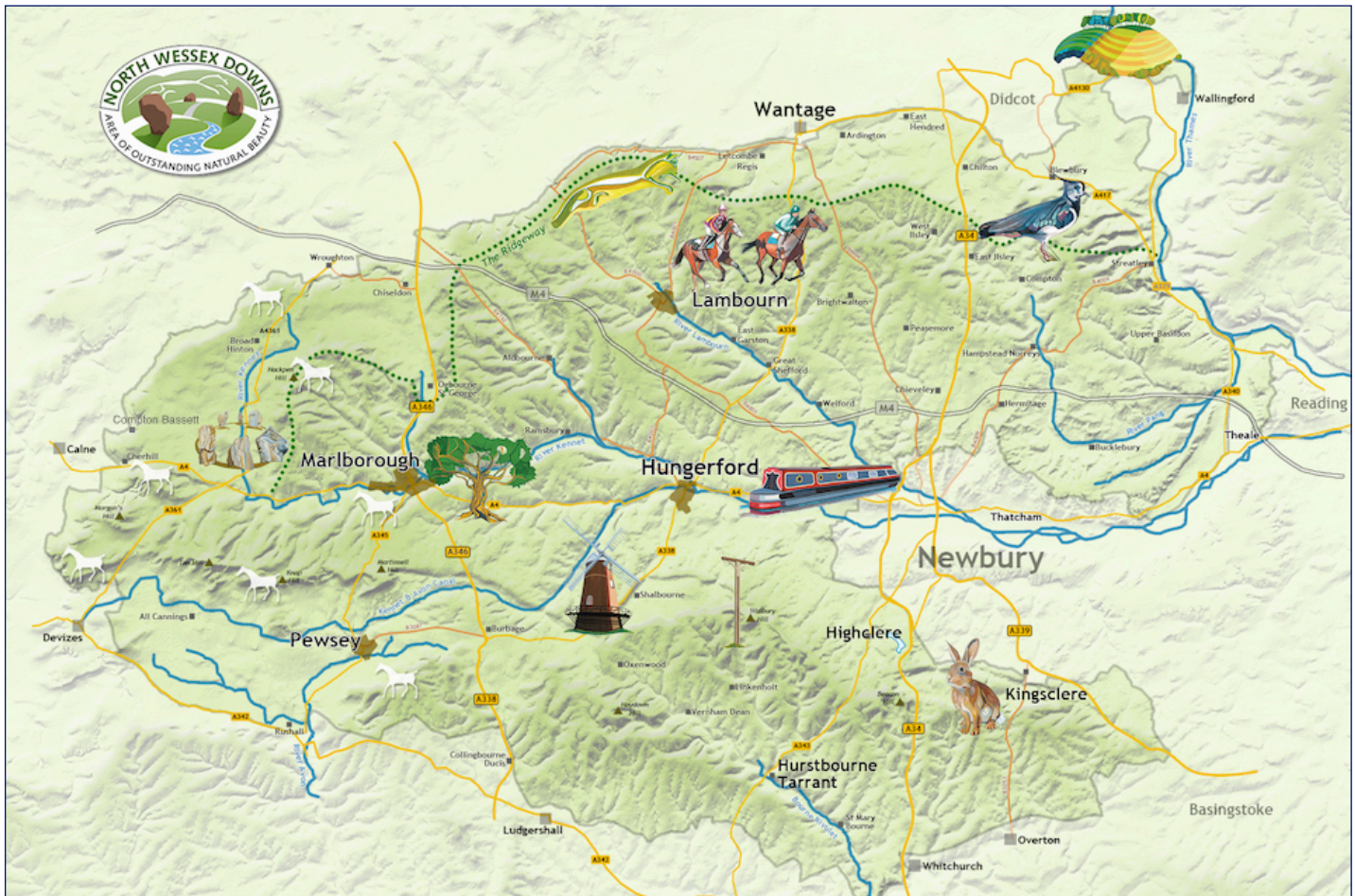
Since the Wiltshire Council Strategic Planning Committee meeting on 14 July 2021, there has been no official response from Hills Quarry Products Ltd made public, concerning the ruling made by the committee that, should the quarry go ahead it will need to be at a minimum distance of 70m from the nearest dwelling, have a covered conveyor and continuous noise and dust monitoring installed. The quarry is less than a mile from most of us in the village and considerably nearer to others living near Freeth Farm, so the response from Hills is awaited with much interest. We understood they would be required to re-submit a revised set of their plans to reflect these changes in the planning conditions.

However, in the last couple of weeks the parish council has sought clarification on the current position from Wiltshire Planning Officer Jason Day, who has now responded to confirm that the extra conditions issued in July this year remain in place but are still not published.

So as we move into 2022, it's a waiting game for interested parties. It seems that Hills water management plans have to change in light of the ruling that the quarry needs to operate at least 70m from the nearest dwelling. Wiltshire Council planning department will review and accept these changed plans and once they find them acceptable they then need to issue their own schedule of mandatory conditions regarding continuous noise monitoring and covering of conveyor belts. There does not appear to be a timeline given for all this activity but since Hills/Wiltshire Council have already had 6 months to carry out an impact assessment, we are hopeful that a response will be forthcoming from their legal department to allow Hills Quarry Products to either move forward in line with the planning Committee's stipulated controls, appeal these controls or cease and desist, which is the Parish Council's preferred option.

North Wessex Downs

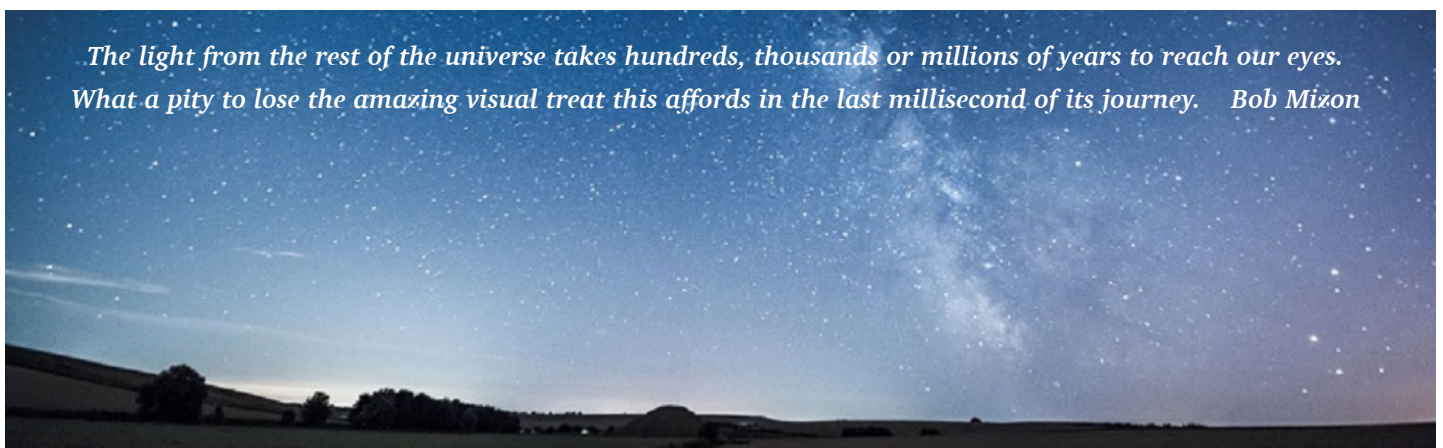
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Compton Bassett lies in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a real privilege. North Wessex Downs was designated an AONB in 1972 and is the third largest nationally. It's managed by a Council of Partners and tasked with the conservation and enhancement of a diverse landscape that extends to 1,730 km², home to over 100,000 people. Bearing in mind that the average population density in England is 434 per km², the North Wessex Downs has a sparse 58 per km². One of the benefits of this is that we enjoy really good dark skies.

Recently, the parish council was invited to attend the 2021 Dark Skies Festival, hosted this year by Marlborough College, Marlborough Town Council and the North Wessex Downs AONB. It was a week long event of talks and activities, all celebrating the night sky. There are concerns though, about the misuse of outside lighting which has a detrimental effect on both wildlife and humans. Lights shining upward at night are damaging to wildlife - more than half the world's species are nocturnal. Of course we need lighting to help us move around safely but it should be the right type and directed when and where needed. The message we came away with from the festival was:

- Exterior LEDs should be 'warm white' and not exceed a colour temperature of 3000K
- Direct them where they are needed - downward.



The Bensons and the Village Hall

When Captain Guy and Lady Violet 'Letty' Benson bought Compton Bassett House, 2 farms and land totalling 777 acres for £23,000 from the Co-operative Wholesale Society in 1929, they began making plans for a new home. The old house, all but discarded by the Co-op for 10 years, was deteriorating fast. In the end they decided to demolish it and build up the stable block for their accommodation, whilst renting Avebury Manor for several years. It was to be a country retreat for Benson, who had just inherited after the recent death of his father, along with his brother Rex. The family were merchant bankers in London. Guy and his wife Letty, second daughter of the 8th Duke of Rutland, were well known socialites in aristocratic circles. Yet for all their wealth and different life, they began to take an active interest in the village. They organised garden fêtes in the grounds of the house to raise money for various local causes and made donations to others.



Jack & Florrie Fell in front of the old village hall, 1952.

There being no village hall, the school was occasionally used for meetings and Christmas parties. This was often inadequate and so, in 1934 Guy and Lady Benson arranged for Devizes builders W. Chivers & Son to install an old 69ft x 15ft timber recreation room at the top of what was called School Hill, a little east of where the war memorial is now. Even then it had a slightly temporary feel and the building shook when dances were held there. Yet it served a purpose for village gatherings and the Home Guard, who used it during the war years as a canteen and for drills. Benson was Commander of Compton Bassett's 41 strong platoon.

In December 1944 the Home Guard was stood down, though not disbanded. The War Office encouraged them to form Rifle Clubs for continued practice. As the old building was not suited for this function, discussion commenced about a longer, covered shooting range; this soon grew into a much larger scheme to create a village hall for both purposes. Guy Benson was very much the driving force and at the outset saw to it that the new hall should be properly set up as a Charitable Trust. He was also careful to foster villagers' involvement to ensure it would function as a true community resource. Rationing of food and clothes would go on for some years following the war and building materials were prioritised for housing and schools.

Knowing that this would seriously delay any hall building, at a meeting on April 19th 1945, Benson impressed on villagers the need to raise money towards an overall target of at least £500 (about £23,000 today) by means of fêtes, jumble sales, whist drives and the like. A unanimous show of hands approved the whole project.

At the next meeting Benson announced he had been given two promises of subscriptions under a "7 Year Covenant" scheme totalling £805, which after recovery of income tax meant £1,610 to the new Trust. Added to this was a grant from the National Council for £500. It would be another 10 years before plans came to fruition but in the meantime a committee of ten was elected: Guy & Lady Benson; Mr & Mrs Birnstingl; Mrs Deuchard; Mrs Godwin; George Moore; Donald Pickford; Reg Rumming; Sam Rumming. Captain Fielding-Johnson was also elected but withdrew until the end of the year (his son Hugh had just been killed in the final weeks of the war).

But where would the new hall be built? Several sites were inspected yet one, next to the White Horse Inn, stood out. This was owned by Bristol Brewery Georges & Company and in July 1945, Guy Benson called at their offices to ask if he could purchase the frontage of the field next to the Inn. They agreed and also offered a larger portion of land at the back (Briar Leaze). The same month, a fête was held in Compton House grounds, which realised £132-11s-3d (£6,000 today!). In December, Benson rang Mr Hadley, the MD of Georges, to ask him for a valuation for the field. Hadley rang back the same day to say that, "My directors are going to give you that land."

Fund raising continued each year, the 1946 summer fête realised £251-5s-3d and a similar amount in 1947 meant that the original village target of £500 was already doubled by 1948. Yet there remained no prospect of building the hall yet; even concrete posts for fencing were unobtainable. Guy Benson then announced that he would shortly be leaving the village. The blow of this news was tempered by an offer to the hall committee that he would be gifting them the cottage at 18 Compton Bassett plus the paddock on which the old hall stood. At the last meeting Benson was present, Captain Fielding-Johnson, who replaced him as committee chairman, pressed him for information about the two "7 Year Covenants" that were held in favour of the Hall Trust. Reluctantly, Benson informed them that one was his and the other belonged to his wife, thereby disclosing another act of their great generosity.

In 1953, Ron Rogers took over as chairman after Fielding-Johnson had sadly died. £3,000 was now available in cash, enough to build the new hall and so work started in late 1954. It was finished in time for a grand opening on 11th May 1955, for which occasion Guy & Lady Benson returned to the village to see the new hall bearing their name.

At the ceremony, Benson told villagers, "People thought it would be nice to have a permanent village hall. You have had to wait ten years to see that dream come true." "May this hall for ever be the happiest meeting place for the whole community, so that you can foster the old village spirit which has been such a priceless factor in making our old country great." The village could be very pleased and proud of what it had done, he told them.



Lady Violet & Guy Benson opening the new hall in 1955

Laurie Waite - Compton Bassett History Archive

Village News Round-up

Our first ever village Christmas tree?



First ever? That's what some of our more senior citizens have told us, so 2021 is a very special year.

The Benson Village Hall, Parish Council, Compton Bassett Project Fund, and Compton Bassett Rural Arts events surplus fund, all got together and made equal donations to provide not only for the Christmas tree itself but a lot of extra work to install electricity out to a permanent point nearby for the lights. The external power point will come in useful for future outdoor events.

It was a great shame to have to cancel the carols around the tree event but with refreshments planned in the hall we decided that discretion is the better part of valour. There's always next year!

Christmas rubbish & recycling collections

Collections will be close to normal with one garden waste omission:

HOUSEHOLD WASTE - 22 DEC & 5 JAN

GARDEN WASTE - 23 DEC & 22 JAN

BLUE & BLACK LIDS - 24 DEC & 7 JAN



Local tax (Precept) changes for 2022/2023

Mindful of a desire for the precept to be kept within sensible limits but taking into account funding requirements for traffic calming, it has been decided to increase the precept for an average Band D home by £5.78 per annum. This equates to a rise of 48p per month - less than the cost of a second class stamp.

It has been agreed that the village will work with Wiltshire Council to reduce traffic speed in the village and much of the precept is going towards funding:

- A review to establish the requirement for extending the speed limit zones through the village, in both 40 mph and 30mph areas
- A Speed Indicator Device to flash and warn cars when they are speeding and record data (although not vehicle registrations)
- A legally required contribution towards establishing new 30 mph signage when approved by Wiltshire Council Highways.



The Parish Steward

Our Parish Steward next visits the village early in the new year. He usually calls once a month to carry out a variety of small repair and maintenance tasks.

If you spot something that needs doing on the highway, verges or ditches, please contact Cllr Peter Barnett on 812274 or contact via email (address on the back page).

Remember that he only repairs potholes if they are on the highway itself and not in the over-runs.

Defibrillator proves its worth in village incident

The decision to move the defibrillator from outside the White Horse Inn to the centre of the village and situated on the refurbished telephone kiosk has already been proven a wise move as it was called into action late in November, when a local resident it Briar Leaze required medical assistance.



Councillor Hailei Spencer now has responsibility for the unit on behalf of the Parish Council and is ensuring it is regularly serviced, primed and maintained for just such an emergency.

Now that ambulance arrival times are becoming more unreliable due to pressure on the NHS through Covid, the ability to have medical back-up of this kind to hand is becoming more and more important for rural areas.



Platinum Jubilee Village Party 2022

In August this year, the Lockdown Breakout party was held outside the village hall and was a great success. It was very timely, as villagers had not been able to have a proper get-together since before the pandemic arrived. 170 attended the event and it was a lot of fun in good weather.

The feedback that the parish council received about the party was very heart-warming indeed; many contacted us to ask whether we could arrange another one next year.

Two local business people have stepped in and offered to sponsor a significant part of the event, which is excellent news and makes organising the rest of the event more doable.

Saturday 9th July 2022 is the favourite date at the moment so please put this date in your calendar.



Jubilee bench revamp

The Silver Jubilee bench has been in place by the front corner of Briar Leaze since 1977 when it was made by local metal worker Ted Jones. He came to the village with wife Lucy in 1956 living first at the back of Dugdales farm until moving into Hundred Acre Cottage after it was built in 1958. They then moved to Austin's farm house in 1962. Ted died in 1986, aged 74.



Ted with granddaughter Carolina, c.1983.

Moving forward 44 years, the bench needed a complete rub down and repaint, and a missing letter from the inscription had to be replaced. This was ably cut out of sheet metal and welded in place by Dave Coward. A new plaque will be fitted to commemorate Ted's handiwork.



Laurie Waite and Dave Coward



New village noticeboard

The parish council will be utilising part of the old telephone box interior to display minutes of the most recent meeting and other parish news, whilst remaining areas inside will show visitors details of nearby attractions to go and see, as well as a large map depicting rights of way around the village.



War Memorial & garden

The annual Remembrance Sunday ceremony was held at the memorial last month. Although the parish council is responsible for the memorial, it is thanks to a small band of local volunteers who maintain it. The garden has steadily improved in recent years, which is looking in great shape and likewise for the memorial and benches.

Always contact the Parish Clerk in the first instance please.

Diane Zeitzen	parishclerk@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk	Parish Clerk
Pete Szczesiak	chairman@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk	Chair, Calne Area Parish Forum, CATG & 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
Julian Barlow	julianbarlow@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk	Road Safety, Communications, CATG & Calne Area Board, Neighbourhood Plan, Wildlife Trust Liaison
Peter Barnett	peterbarnett@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk	Hills Liaison Committee, Parish Steward Link, Village Hall Rep
Hailei Spencer	haileispencer@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk	Health & Well-being
Laurie Waite	lauriewaite@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk	Communications, Neighbourhood Plan, Heritage, War Memorial, Website Liaison, Village Hall Rep