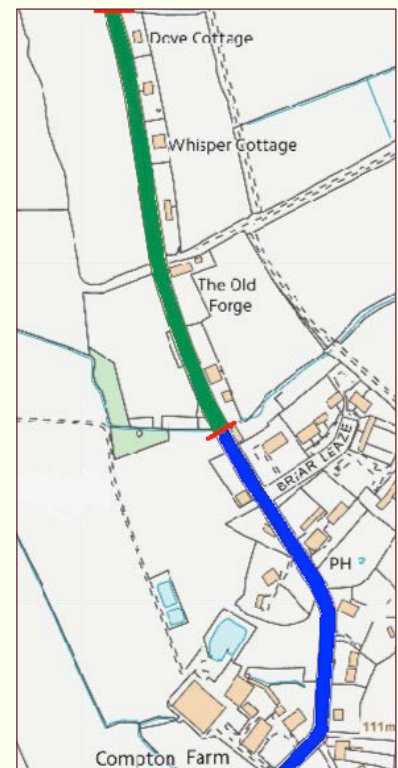


Compton Bassett Matters

**Autumn
2022**

EDITED BY COUNCILLORS BARLOW AND WAITE FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL

30 mph extension set to go ahead!



The new 30mph extension is shown in green, extending from the existing 30mph zone in blue.



Cllr Ashley O'Neill

At the recent Calne Local Highways & Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG) meeting, Wiltshire Council Highways announced that they are 'minded to support an extension of the 30mph' zone in the village.

Cllr Ashley O'Neill, Wiltshire Councillor for Calne Rural said, "I'm delighted we've been able to persuade Wiltshire Council of the need to extend the 30mph limit in the village.

However, I'm disappointed that we haven't yet won the fight for an extension to the 40mph zone. I know speed through the village is a concern for many residents. I will continue to make the arguments on your behalf and I'm hopeful that we can secure the much needed 40mph extension too."

Village takes action to protect pedestrians

New pavement proposed to safeguard walkers

Discussions have taken place at the Calne Local Highways & Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG) forum, where Compton Bassett Parish Council (CBPC) currently has three proposals under consideration. The group is made up of Wiltshire Council Highways officers, Calne Town Council and Calne Area parish representatives, plus other stakeholders.

One such proposal is to convert an 80m or so length of highway grass verge near the war memorial to a paved footway. There is already a kerb-line in place between New Cottages and Tanglewood properties and because the road is so narrow, at around 4.5 metres, CBPC is recommending that a pavement should be installed abutting the existing length of kerb.

Wiltshire Council Highways has now agreed to carry out a survey and fully cost the submitted scheme, which will then go forward for a decision at LHFIG sometime next year.



The area under discussion at LHFIG, for a standard footway to be established behind the existing kerb-line.

20mph bin stickers make drivers think

A local parishioner recently brought to the attention of the Parish Council an action group called **20's Plenty for Us** who campaign for safer urban speed limits where people mix with motor vehicles. Amongst other things, they produce stickers for wheelie bins to encourage a positive response from motorists, so the Parish Council has purchased a pack to hand out.

The stickers approach has been tried elsewhere and found to be effective, and for minimal expenditure, might save lives.

Villagers in the current 30mph zone of the village will receive two of these stickers delivered with this newsletter, and when the new 30mph extension is applied, residents in that area will also be allocated theirs.

As always, if you have any ideas about traffic calming in the village please do contact the Parish Clerk. The Parish Council would be delighted to receive any suggestions from you.



20's Plenty for Us stickers

SID's new location

There is now a new location for the Speed Indicator Device (SID) by Buttle Farm. Wiltshire Highways installed a pole at the end of September so that the Parish Council could move the SID to a second spot at the other end of the village near the 30mph entry point. Vehicle speeds may now be accurately recorded in this area to evaluate whether there is a particular issue here that needs further scrutiny. The SID will stay at this location for a few months and will then alternate between the two positions.

New boundary Gateways to slow speed

Plans for white gateways to be positioned at the two main village entry points have been aired on several occasions in previous editions of *Compton Bassett Matters*. Hence, the Parish Council has been looking at different options for gateways.

Physical measures at village gateways have been shown to consistently reduce vehicle speeds very effectively. The siting of gates close to the edge of a road provides a visual deterrent to excess speeds. Gates also have the added benefit of enhancing the environment, particularly in rural locations, while also highlighting further the presence of a settlement which aids local identity and community cohesiveness. Importantly, surveys have shown that gates can reduce vehicle speeds by 5mph, which could help save lives in the event of an accident.

A local difficulty to resolve

In Compton Bassett, there is a regrettable delay impacting the proposed installation of gateways near Breach Farm on the north side of the parish. Talks are still ongoing over the Parish Council's request for a 40mph speed limit to be imposed at this location as currently, motorists are at liberty to drive into the village here at 60mph, which is both shocking and unsafe. Consequently, there have been two unfortunate and dangerous incidents in the past few months involving cars attempting to pull out into the highway from driveways with restricted views. We are hopeful that in time our pleas will be heard and an enforced 40mph supported, and then we can explore funding options for the boundary gates.

A recent survey was conducted at the behest of Wiltshire Council to assess the merit of introducing 40mph at the start of the village near Breach Farm; the survey, by Atkins Ltd, recommended controversially that there be no change. In response to the report Wiltshire officers proposed consideration of other measures such as white gates.

The Parish Council fundamentally disagree with Atkins' findings and have made their views known to the Wiltshire CC. Moreover, they have pointed out that there is little merit in installing expensive new gateways and signage, while vehicles may drive past legally at speeds of up to 60mph!

Common sense must be allowed to prevail and that ultimately, the Parish Council's submission should gain approval. The next LHFIFG meeting is due to take place in January 2023.



Welcome to Compton Bassett – at 60mph?!

Meanwhile, at the southern end of the village close to Home Farm, the tired and tattered 30mph signage and name plates are well overdue for replacement. White gateways are proposed here, along the lines of the one displayed in the mocked-up image above, and these will go ahead as soon as possible.

Once the different options for gateways have been explored, the best designs will be put forward to the village for consultation as well as looking for sponsorship.



The best gateway design options will be put to the village.

More Parish Stewards

Wiltshire County Council have agreed to invest a further £233,000 each year for the next three years into a new two-person team with improved equipment.



Make use of the parish steward if you spot anything needed

The new two-person support team will expand the service by helping the existing Parish Stewards with larger jobs that require heavier machinery and more than one person. The support team will be kitted out with a pick-up vehicle, a cage trailer, a mechanical weed ripper, a flail mower and power tools, and will travel throughout the county to help with bigger jobs as required.

The scope of the Parish Steward scheme, though wide, focuses on highway and footway issues. Parish Stewards engage directly with parish council highway representatives, in our case Cllr Peter Barnett. The once-a-month visits by the Parish Steward enables us to carry out small maintenance work and repairs:

- Highway, verges, and ditches
- Rodding of small culverts and manholes
- Hedge trimming around road signs
- Painting railings such as the one by the pond
- Small pothole filling with asphalt

Potholes have to be actually on the highway, rather than an overrun for them to be included for repair.

If you spot something in the parish that requires attention please ring Peter Barnett on 01249 812274 and he will add it to the list.

The next visit to Compton Bassett is Wednesday 14th December.

Please, no Fatbergs!

It seems that the urban issue of fatbergs and congealed waste is not purely the provenance of Swindon or Bristol. Compton Bassett has discovered its own mound of fat and non biodegradable materials blocking drains in the village. The issue first arose when a local resident noticed unpleasant smelling waste water leaking out of a manhole cover near Compton Farm. Foul water was also reported leaking into local fields (below).



Not what Sting had in mind, when he wrote 'Fields of Gold'. Photo courtesy Johnny Wrench.

Wessex Water was duly called and within a couple of days a two-person crew was working just beyond the White Horse to investigate and clear the blockage. It took them nearly three hours clearing the sewers that run down the main road towards Briar Leaze. They focused on the manhole cover at the junction with the main road bordering the estate. The engineers found all sorts of unmentionables blocking the drain, from congealed fat creating a large fatberg, to baby wipes and other non-biodegradable materials flushed down the system.

The message is please don't put fat, nappies and baby wipes down the loo. The village sewer systems cannot deal with these sort of items deposited and it creates all kinds of issues for Wessex Water who have limited resources. If in doubt please put them in the bin.

It's owners, not the dogs that need training



Many of us have watched the TV show Dogs Behaving (Very) Badly, where dog whisperer Graeme Hall is on a mission to help canines with behavioural issues to develop a healthy relationship between the dogs and their owners. Sadly, in the past few months we could have benefited from Mr Hall's wisdom here in the village. Three dog related incidents in the past five weeks have brought the subject of canine control to the attention of the Parish Council.

One serious incident has resulted in a consultation with one of the Wiltshire Dog Wardens. Dog wardens work to encourage responsible dog ownership and are able to issue notices where there concerns are raised about dogs straying, fouling or not being under control. The dog wardens regularly contribute to a Facebook Page "Public Protection" where they offer news and advice on responsible dog ownership. Reports on specific incidents can be reported to the dog wardens by emailing dogs@wiltshire.gov.uk

In a small and tight knit country community where dogs are a feature of every day life, we simply cannot afford to allow poor pet management to impede the pleasure of those choosing to live in the village with their animals and we will take action against those who continue to fail to manage their pet in the appropriate manner.

To aid understanding of what we mean by appropriate dog management here are some simple and easily understood guidance notes from the Kennel Club.

1. Ensure your dog is under effective control, which means:

- you have a short lead with you and use it when needed (e.g. around livestock, or where signage requests it)

- you do not let your dog off the lead unless you keep it in sight and close enough to come back to you on command.

2. Prevent your dog from approaching horse riders, cyclists, or other people and their dogs, uninvited.

3. Keep your dog with you on paths or access land and don't let it stray into crops including fields of grass and vegetables.

4. Never let your dog worry or chase wildlife or livestock. Follow advice on local signs to reduce disturbance to plants and animals.

5. Stay SAFE around farm animals and horses:

- S - stop, look and listen before entering a field; be aware of any animals present
- A - always keep your dog on a short lead
- F - find the safest route around animals, giving them plenty of space and using paths or access land where possible
- E - exit the area calmly and quickly if threatened, releasing your dog to make it easier for you both to reach safety.

6. Always bag and bin your dog's poo wherever you are. You can use any public waste bin or your bin at home.

7. Never leave bags of dog poo lying around, even if you intend to pick them up later. Containers and deodorised bags can make them easier to carry.

8. Ensure your details are on your dog's collar and it is microchipped, so you can be reunited quickly if it is lost.

9. Keep your dog's vaccinations and worming up to date. Ask your vet for more information.

This may seem basic and simple advice and we appreciate that the vast majority of owners are experienced, responsible, caring and sensible dog owners. However, for those who are not, the Parish Council will not hesitate to take action against transgressors and support anyone who has a legitimate complaint or concern.

As Graeme Hall might say, it is not dogs that behave badly, it is their owners.

Julian Barlow

Hedge Trimming – a thorny issue

One of the advantages of living in a beautiful rural area is the unspoilt vistas and views. Often on a clear day you can literally see for miles over the Wiltshire countryside. That is, unless you have a large, overgrown and unkempt hedge impeding your eye-line. Hence not surprisingly it is tempting to fire up the hedge trimmer, don strong leather gloves and savage the foliage that is obscuring your view, encroaching on your garden or preventing you from walking the dog without having your eyes gouged out by over-hanging branches.

It is a natural reaction to want to prune, cut and shape hedges bordering one's own property. We would want to warn parishioners that whilst there is no legal impediment to you cutting your hedge at any point in the year there is good guidance from the RSPB, and wildlife trusts. Things are also slightly complicated by the fact all of us live in a Conservation Area and some in the village are covered by Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty status which means hedges/fences are protected. If you want to remove or adapt a large section you would need to consult Wiltshire Council.

We therefore recommend that cutting hedges and trees is avoided between March and August as this is the main breeding season for nesting birds. To get slightly legalistic, it is in fact an offence under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981 to intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built.

Then there is the thorny (literally) question of who has the right to cut a shared hedge in Compton Bassett, my neighbour or me? As guidance, a boundary hedge is usually the joint responsibility of both neighbours. Both must agree on major work, including removal, coppicing or laying. If the hedge is just inside your neighbours' garden, they own it. You only have the right to trim any part which encroaches over your boundary line

The owner or occupier of a property has a legal responsibility (Highways Act 1980 s154) to ensure that the public highway and pavement next to a property is not obstructed by vegetation from their property. Local Authorities also have a legal duty to ensure that public highways are unobstructed, and in theory used to inspect roads regularly, however with budget constraints this is an area of activity that has clearly been "pruned" (*sic*) back.

Our message is, remember we share our bucolic village with all sorts of wildlife. Take care to work with your neighbours and not disturb active nests.

Defibrillator FAQs

Several questions have been asked recently about the defibrillator and how it is looked after, so it may be helpful to know who looks after its use and maintenance.

The Parish Council (CBPC) took on responsibility for the device since it was moved from the White Horse Inn early last year and it now resides on the outside of the old telephone kiosk.



The defibrillator is checked once a month to ensure it is functioning correctly. On each occasion, the up-to-date data is then recorded on The Circuit website. The Circuit is the National Defibrillator Network, which provides NHS ambulance services with vital information about defibrillators across the UK so that in those crucial moments after a cardiac arrest, they can be accessed quickly to save lives. That's why the device in Compton Bassett is registered with them.

The Circuit network will inform CBPC every time that there's been a 999 call for an ambulance and if the device is likely to have been used. CBPC then check the device and its battery, change the pads and give it a clean.

In the unlikely event that the defibrillator is used but no call was made for an ambulance, users are asked to inform the Parish Clerk when they are able to afterwards, so that necessary maintenance can be carried out. Contact cards are left in the device bag to deal with this, however improbable, occurrence.

Christmas Tree '22

The village Christmas tree will arrive at the end of November and will, for the second year, feature prominently on the green beside the village hall.

The plan is to turn the lights on at the close of the Christmas Market, around 5pm on Saturday 3rd December.

The tree is again being provided jointly between the Village Hall and the Parish Council.

A very merry Christmas to all Compton Bassett parishioners!



The Demise of Dairy Farming in Compton Bassett

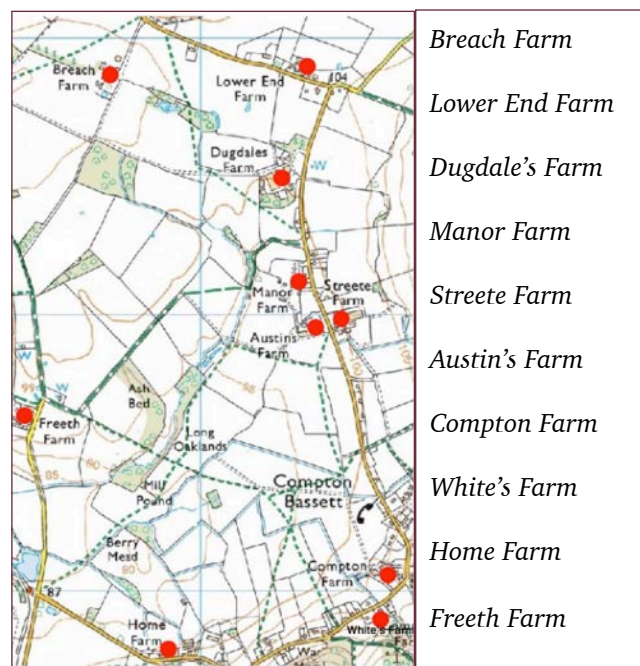
By the 1930s, 10 dairy farms had been operating in Compton Bassett for over 100 years, but ever since then the number dwindled steadily and this year we witnessed the sole survivor, Manor Farm, ceasing milk production in favour of an organic beef herd and mixed crop cultivation.

John Reis gives an indication as to why dairy farming has disappeared from Compton Bassett.

When I started farming in Compton Bassett in 1963 every encouragement was given to farmers to increase production in an urgent attempt to decrease the quantity of imported food coming into the country. The war had taught us the desperate need for self-sufficiency. A lesson sadly forgotten now with schemes such as the well intentioned luxury of 'rewilding' being paid for by the import of cheap food from abroad with few questions asked about its production.

Generous grants were available for ploughing up old pasture, removing scrub, draining wet fields and removing hedges to enable the use of the new, larger and more powerful machinery. Margins were tight and if any profit was to be made we had to be efficient and embrace these changes or fail. The smaller family farms which largely relied upon their dairies could survive so long as the labour for running them was supplied by those families. But dairy farming is hard, unrelenting and dirty work 365 days a year. Older generations were perhaps willing to put up with this but as time went by fewer of the young could cope with it. It was becoming an unsustainable lifestyle in the modern world.

The larger farms which employed herdsmen to milk the cows needed to maximise their production, remain efficient and also have capital to invest to enable them to remain viable and in Compton Bassett the owners of some of the farms were able to do this and dairies were kept going for longer than might have been the case. Obtaining skilled herdsmen became a major problem. In 1963 almost all the farm labour was supplied by local families but it became increasingly difficult to find skilled men and wages had risen to the level where a senior herdsman was frequently taking more cash out of the business than the farmer. But we certainly found that if one could accept the actual difficulties of dairying, then the margins achieved were considerably greater than other enterprises possible on our land. The thing which tipped the balance in our case was the advent of Bovine TB during the 1970s which became more and more entrenched within the herd over the next forty years, the government's rigorously applied policy of slaughtering reactors reducing herd numbers to an unsustainable level.



Farmers have never had any real control over the prices which they receive for their products. Milk marketing was always chaotic and historically Compton Bassett farmers would have sold what they could locally as liquid milk and made the surplus into butter and cheese. Sadly cheese making has almost entirely gone from Wiltshire, its ghost remaining in our house in the form of the old lift shaft which enabled cheeses to be transported from the dairy up to the attics where they were stored to mature. But the coming of the railways enabled milk to be taken by horse and cart to Calne Station for the journey to London and to a multitude of buyers. In the 1960s there were many local 'old timers' who remembered those days. Things improved in 1933 with the formation of the Milk Marketing Board (MMB), farmer run but with a government guaranteed floor in the market, this gave some stability right up to its disbandment in 2002 when the 'free for all' started all over again. There was overproduction and quotas and increasing bureaucracy with the coming of the Common Market. This did not encourage people to stay in dairying and as farms were sold their dairies closed down, especially those where grassland could profitably be returned to arable.



CWS milk lorry outside Compton House old stable block 1925

Remembrance Sunday



Remembrance Sunday church service at Swithin's ended with a procession to the war memorial, where the Exhortation was recited, after which the Last Post sounded. There followed a two minute silence with Reveille sounding at the conclusion.

As the village is one of five in the benefice, it isn't possible to hold the Sunday dedication at 11am simultaneously. Therefore, please keep an eye out for the advertised times each year.



The Parish Council laid their own wreath this year.

New playground equipment on its way



Handball Basketball Goal - one of the new fixtures coming.

The Benson Village Hall trustees have succeeded in obtaining two grants to improve the fun at the existing site in Briar Leaze. There are now many more children in the parish and this important amenity, the responsibility of the Village Hall, is to receive an upgrade. Two of the forthcoming items are shown in the images here.

These will be delivered during January 2023 but will require assembly and installation. For this, the Village Hall needs a few pairs of hands! If you can please help for just an hour or two, please contact Jane Marshall on **01249 760170** or by email to **janem2020@btinternet.com**



Always contact the Parish Clerk in the first instance please

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Pete Szczesiak	chairman@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk	Chair, Calne Area Parish Forum, CATG & Calne Area Board, Hills Liaison Committee, Legal Duties, Neighbourhood & Farm Watch
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Julian Barlow	julianbarlow@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk	Road Safety, Communications, CATG & Calne Area Board, Neighbourhood Plan, Wildlife Trust Liaison
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