

COMPTON BASSETT **SUMMER 2025** Matters

EDITED BY COMPTON BASSETT PARISH COUNCILLORS JULIAN BARLOW AND LAURIE WAITE

Compton Bassett welcomes High Penn into larger parish

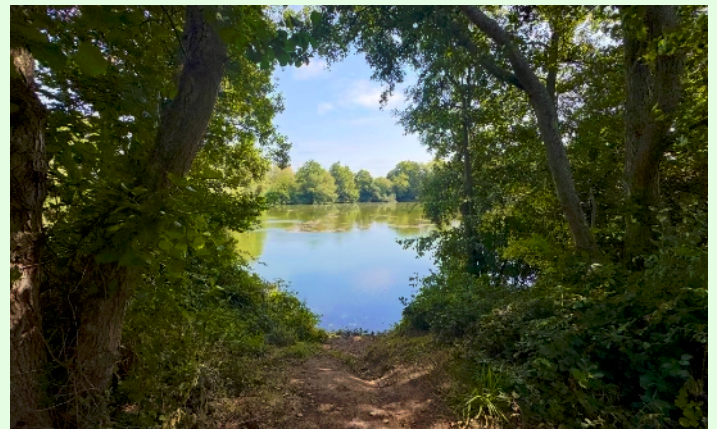
Changes to local authority boundaries around Calne in May this year resulted in Compton Bassett parish increasing by approximately 500 acres, and absorbing the community of High Penn. Fourteen households came into the parish from in and around this area, renewing old links from the 18th century, when High Penn Farm belonged to the Lord of Compton Bassett Manor. Common pasture around Penn was used equally by Cherhill and Compton Bassett farmers before acts of inclosure radically changed the landscape and removed the right of commoners' access.



Penn Wood

Just beyond the small neighbourhood of High Penn is the beautiful 20-acre nature reserve of Penn Wood. This was originally a sand quarry, then used as an inert landfill until the 1950s, when it was restored to pasture for livestock grazing. In 2010, 10,000 trees of mixed species were planted, along with a wildflower meadow and a lake, which Wootton Bassett Angling Club leases. It's well worth a visit, and there are some outstanding views from the top of the hill. Several footpaths can take you on an interesting walk from

Compton Bassett, or there is a small car park at the end of the lane through High Penn. The track leads from Oxford Road, close to the Tesco supermarket.



A gentle stroll around the lake and through the wooded reserve is a lovely way to spend an hour or so.

The reserve is managed by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, who monitor the flora and fauna and hope to increase their diversity. Several footpaths connect the site, and access is free at any time.



So, we would like to extend a very warm welcome to the residents of High Penn, and we hope to get the opportunity to meet up with you soon.

Laurie Waite

Planning for the Future – Parish Council acts to influence new development

Your Parish Council has recently submitted detailed comments on a planning application for up to 20 new homes within our extended parish boundaries. While we recognise that we may not be able to stop new housing entirely, we are determined to do what we can to ensure any development is as environmentally responsible, sustainable, and sympathetic to our community as possible.

Our response sets out clear expectations for high standards in energy efficiency, climate resilience, and infrastructure. We have urged the developers to adopt a shared Ground Source Heat Pump system for low-carbon heating, or at the very least individual Air Source Heat Pumps in each home. We want to see insulation, airtight construction, and modern ventilation systems that meet or exceed the Government's Future Homes Standard for 2025, as well as the use of low-carbon or recycled building materials wherever possible.



New housing should have solar panels properly integrated – as standard



Heat pumps - as standard



Home car chargers – as standard

We have also asked that roof designs make space for solar panels, and that electric vehicle charging points are fitted to every home, with extra provision for visitors. Drainage is another top priority — past problems in parts of the parish have demonstrated just how crucial it is to manage surface water effectively. We are therefore calling for a full Sustainable Drainage System, using permeable paving, swales, and other measures to reduce flood risk.

Finally, we want to see thoughtful water management, such as rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling, to reduce pressure on our main supply.

These proposals are in line with Wiltshire Council's environmental goals and national policy, and we will continue to press for their inclusion as the planning process moves forward. While we may not be able to prevent further building, we can — and will — work to make sure that what does happen is designed to be a good neighbour to Compton Bassett, now and in the future.

Edward Budge

Are Hills Greenwashing in Wiltshire?



Hills Waste Solutions Lower Compton landfill site and the encroaching Calne housing development from the west.

It's been another fragrant spring in Calne, where residents have been enjoying that classic West Country bouquet — eau de landfill. In April 2025, the Environment Agency (EA) decided it could no longer hold its nose and investigated reports of a persistent “eggy,” “sulphurous” and “gassy” aroma wafting through homes, even with the windows shut.

The culprit? The EA's survey pointed to infrastructure issues at the Lower Compton landfill — gas and leachate systems apparently not doing quite what it says on the tin. By June, Hills Waste Solutions magnanimously admitted their site was “one of the sites... contributing to odour issues.” This admission came after several weeks of insisting it wasn't them, guv.

In a rare display of backbone, the usually sedate EA issued a Section 36 enforcement notice, giving Hills until the end of July to plug the pong. Hills now claim they've fixed the problem, though locals might be forgiven for keeping the air freshener handy.

Despite official assurances from the UK Health Security Agency that the risk to health was “low,” over 500 residents reported headaches, nausea and nosebleeds. A raucous public meeting gave them the chance to share their feelings — and not just about the smell.

Meanwhile, Hills are keen to trumpet their other contributions to Wiltshire. For more than 30 years, they've partnered with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (WWT), handing over some £9.4 million for nature reserves and conservation projects. They also splash the cash on the Cotswold Lakes Trust and Community First, all via the Landfill Communities Fund (LCF).

This fund, helpfully, allows landfill operators to offset up to 5.3% of their landfill tax bill — and get 90% of that back as a tax credit. In real terms, giving £53,000 to local good causes costs you £5,300, and you get a nice photo in the parish magazine.

Declaring an interest, as a trustee of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, I have shown the organisation another side of Hills. Namely, the vision that we have seen in Compton Bassett as the waste minerals division tries, by any means possible, to impose an unwanted sand quarry in a conservation area.

WWT have also now become aware of the Calne stink and the resulting outcry. Let's hope that in time, eco-based organisations can source funding from partners more in sync with our view of nature and less about maximising profits.

Julian Barlow

Road drain issue is a never-ending saga...

We are still waiting for the Wiltshire Council drainage team to dig up the road by 31 Compton Bassett and replace the defective road drain, which initially caused a water leak onto the footpath. The pavement is now very badly damaged after three years of waiting and seeing only periodic site visits and investigations. During that time, we have been in constant communication to urge them to finally carry out the works, but the road team say they have a significant backlog. We anticipate news of a road closure date coming shortly.

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:

4 September ♦ 7 October

6 November ♦ 4 December



War Memorial garden upgrade

1950

~
2025

The village war memorial is 75 years old this November, and the parish council has agreed to fund some maintenance and upgrade work. An area of path that joins the roadside kerb to the steps requires replacement, while in the garden, metal edging will be installed to enhance the lawn and path.

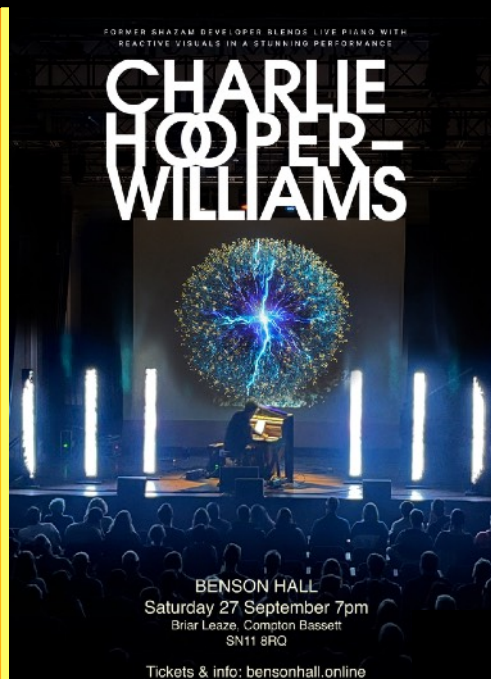
Our continued thanks to the seven-strong team of villagers who maintain the garden, now into their twelfth year, since volunteering to take over its upkeep after a contractor finished.



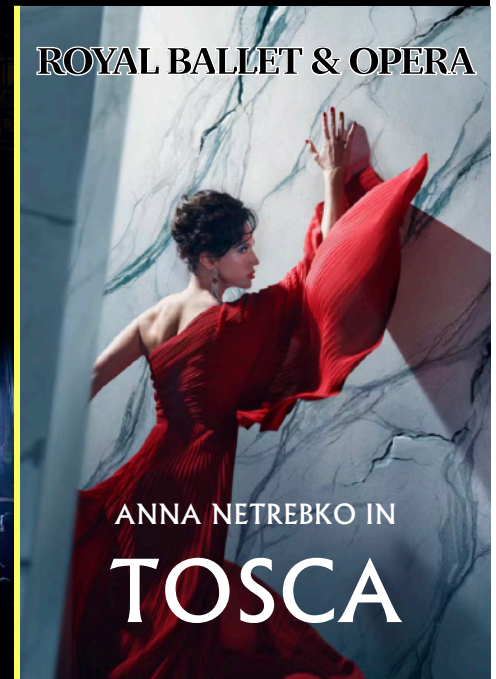
What's on at the Benson Hall?



**THURSDAY
4 SEPTEMBER**



**SATURDAY
27 SEPTEMBER**



**THURSDAY
2 OCTOBER**

BOOKINGS: bensonhall.online/events



Police visit Compton Bassett after shocking speed data from our new ANPR camera

Compton Bassett's ongoing efforts to tackle dangerous driving were given renewed focus this month when representatives from Wiltshire Police visited the village to hear the latest traffic data, and some of it made for sobering listening.

During the visit, which included our local Community Police Officer and a Senior Sergeant from Wiltshire Police, Parish Council representatives shared findings from our recently installed Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) speed camera. The results raised serious concerns: an average of 85 vehicles per day are recorded exceeding 40 mph in a clearly signed 30 mph zone.



The camera is configured to disregard minor infractions and only captures those travelling significantly over the limit, meaning the true number of speeders may be far higher.

But the camera isn't just clocking speeds. It's also checking road legality. Each month, around 10 vehicles are flagged for having no valid MOT or insurance. These drivers are not just flouting speed limits but are doing so while potentially operating unsafe or illegal vehicles.

Unfortunately, residents hoping this data could lead to immediate enforcement action were given a dose of reality by the visiting officers. Due to data protection regulations, the information from our camera cannot be used directly in court. It can, however, be used as guidance to support police awareness and operational planning.

Compounding the issue is a familiar one: a lack of resources. Wiltshire Police admitted they do not currently have the manpower to pursue formal prosecutions against the high volume of offenders passing through the village.

However, all is not lost. In response to the data presented, the officers promised the introduction of a targeted action plan. This will involve police using the ANPR data to identify persistent or repeat offenders, with officers personally visiting these individuals to issue warnings. These drivers will be informed that they are being watched — and that further offences will lead to prosecution.

The police also took time to commend Compton Bassett's Speedwatch team, whose vigilance and dedication have become an essential part of the village's road safety strategy. A particularly dramatic example was shared during the meeting. One suspected speeder was clocked by volunteers in the village, failed to stop, and fled the scene. A police chase ensued, which ended in a crash outside Marlborough — and led to the discovery that the driver was transporting illegal firearms. The case has since resulted in a successful prosecution.

This incident starkly illustrates how community action, combined with technology, can contribute to broader public safety beyond just enforcing speed limits.

The Parish Council welcomed the police engagement and the promise of more concrete action. To maintain momentum, a senior-ranking police official is scheduled to attend the September Parish Council meeting to review progress and provide an update on enforcement activity since the visit. The Council will continue to monitor data from the ANPR camera and liaise closely with the police on next steps. Meanwhile, residents are encouraged to remain vigilant, support the Speedwatch programme, and report dangerous driving whenever they see it.

Julian Barlow

What's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)?

Compton Bassett Parish Council is benefiting from the dissolution of the Calne Without ward, because the funds they received had not been fully allocated. CIL money is a levy applied to new developments and is intended to help mitigate the impact of those developments on local infrastructure. There are directives for how the money should be spent and a finite amount of time in which to award it. Local authorities are required to monitor and report on CIL income and expenditure annually. This ensures transparency and accountability in how CIL funds are utilised to support community infrastructure needs.

For us, this means that CIL money has to be spent on projects which are considered to be community assets. The war memorial garden improvements, a new defibrillator, and a second speed indicator device are amongst those that have been given the go-ahead.

VE DAY 80 commemorated in village

On 8th May this year, a wonderful gathering of 70 villagers came together to remember loved ones who had taken part in the Second World War, and the five Compton Bassett men who died in service.

Eugenie Brooks and Brian Shaw gave moving presentations honouring the women and men involved, and also an overview of what happened in the places where the five were killed. Family members came to pay tribute to their soldier relatives, nurses, and Land Army women. Jennie Brooks prepared fabulous rations echoing the period, and the event was partly sponsored by the parish council.

Photographs at the village hall depicted many of the service personnel with personal stories of the bravery and suffering they had experienced. At such occasions, it's often a mix of emotions: reflection, pride, quiet remembrance, joy, and sadness. Here's a small selection of the display:



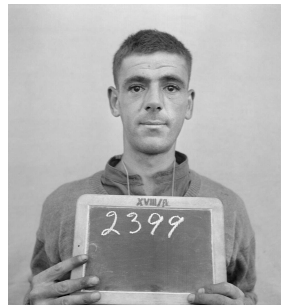
'A' Company Compton Bassett, 1st Battalion Chippenham Home Guard
This photo was taken in front of Compton Bassett House between 1941-44



Emily Young, mother of Jennie Brooks, worked as a nurse at The Southern Railway Orphanage in Woking during WW2, caring for the orphaned children of railway workers.



Frank Coward (grandad to Dave Coward) 3rd from left in the back row, 11th Woking Battalion, Surrey Home Guard

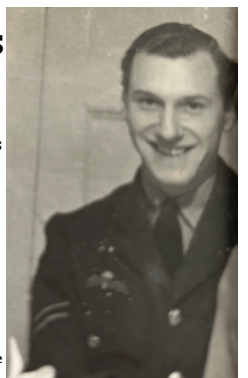


Bill Jardine's war ended after he was taken prisoner of war by the Germans in 1941. He came home in 1945 and lived at Manor Cottage with wife June and two boys.

Corporal Francis 'Jack' Morgan

Joined the RAF and went to Burma at the end of 1942. He was part of a parachute unit attached to the British Fourteenth Army (Forgotten Army). Dysentery and malaria amid the monsoon made conditions in the jungle terrible, but he survived illness and a bayonet injury to move on and take Malaya, Singapore and Java.

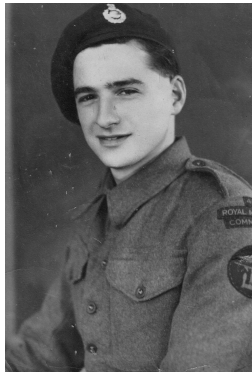
Husband of Phyllis and father of Lizzie Pike



John Goodenough
Served with British army in Palestine



Frederick Goodenough
Mentioned in Despatches



John Rumming, Royal Marine Commando. He took part in the D-Day Landings on Juno Beach and an assault on Walcheren Island, Netherlands. He lived at 6 Compton Bassett, uncle of Rebekah Sloanemather



Flying Officer John Brooks DFC, DFM, father of Eugenie. He flew Hurricanes with 174 Squadron RAF



Alan Lewis was appointed to the rank of Chevalier in the Ordre national de la Légion d'honneur, Feb 2016, for his involvement in the Liberation of France in 1944



Warrant Officer Ted Brooks, father of John Brooks, served with the REME in Iraq alongside the Gurkhas in 1941.

Compton Bassett History Archive is available for all: www.comptonbassetthistory.co.uk

SID – Part of our speed control measures

One of the most worrying aspects of life in our lovely village is the peril of speeding drivers. It makes walking sometimes a dangerous activity.

For many years, the Parish Council has had discussions with Calne and Wiltshire councils about speed reduction strategies. Many of you will have noticed members of our Community Speedwatch Team, braving the elements and sometimes verbal abuse, by measuring the speed of passing vehicles with a hand-held “speed gun”. Our thanks must go out to them. Unfortunately, even when in position at various parts of the village, drivers still ignore their presence and travel above the designated speed limits. At times, Community Police Officers accompany the Speed Watch Team when performing their task and can then act on the information collected.

Approximately three years ago, a SID, or Speed Indicator Device, was purchased by the Parish Council and has been in use at various points within the village. As well as indicating to approaching motorists their speed, it also stores the data, which can then be sent to Wiltshire Police, to inform them of speeding hotspots.

During the last few months, we have purchased and installed an AutoSpeedWatch camera to monitor and record vehicles leaving the village centre, heading northwards. This device not only records speeds but also details, including the number plate, and whether the vehicle has a valid MOT and Road Tax.

In the last 17 weeks since installation, the total verified number of vehicles exceeding 40 mph in the 30 mph zone between the village hall and Dove Cottage is a staggering 3,055. This averages approximately 180 vehicles a week or 26 vehicles a day. Of these, 60 vehicles were without Tax or MoT or with unrecognisable number plates, suggesting possible cloning! To date, one vehicle has exceeded the speed limit 46 times, with a maximum speed of 48 mph. In the same 17-week period, 2 drivers have recorded speeds of 61 mph, 3 others of 60 mph, and 96 drivers guilty of driving at 50-59 mph.

New SID coming!

We are pleased to confirm that we are in the process of purchasing another SID to encourage considerate driving in the village, and inform others that their speeds are above the legal limits and a change in their driving behaviour is needed. The new SID will be solar-powered and we will also buy a solar panel for the existing SID to make its use more consistent.



Rod Lloyd-Davies

Pavement parking - unsafe and unfair



Spare a thought for the pavement users and park on the road.

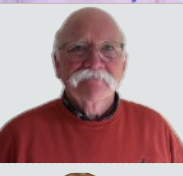
The parish council has received a number of complaints concerning pavements being completely blocked by car parking.

The village road is narrow and it's tempting to seek the ‘refuge’ of the pavement to park your car away from the road, but this causes significant problems for pedestrians and wheelchair users, who are forced to negotiate the road to get around the obstruction.

In addition to the pavement being blocked, it has also caused an issue for a villager trying to drive out onto the road, but their view was impeded.

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	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, 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.
- **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 18th September. Our meetings are open to the public, and 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 two months (more often if needed), and agendas and minutes are posted on the village noticeboard and website.

Here's to four more years of working together to keep Compton Bassett a safe, welcoming, and well-run village.