



Happy New Year!

We do hope you had a nice festive period and are looking forward to 2019. Back in May 2017 we undertook to communicate more effectively with the village and this newsletter is part of the process. Most of our material is published in digital form but this printed newsletter is designed to reach everyone, whether you have internet access or not.

It has been a busy year for the Parish Council with personnel changes and more matters coming before us as local government, constrained by financial considerations, increasingly passes governance issues to the Parish. Some of the changes in 2018 included ensuring any data we hold is appropriately managed under the new GDPR rules, increased auditing fees as well as the mandatory review of all our documentation.

Why do we have a Parish Council and what does it do?

Local councils are the first tier of governance and are the first point of contact for anyone concerned with a community issue. They are democratically elected local authorities and exist in England, Wales and Scotland. The term 'local council' is synonymous with 'parish council', 'town council' and 'community council'. There are over 10,000 local councils in England and Wales, representing the concerns of local residents and providing services to meet local needs. Parish councils have a wide range of powers; one of those is the ability to raise money through council tax. If you would like to know more about the Parish Council please email the Clerk (cb.parishclerk@gmail.com) who will send you a full list of our responsibilities.

Local Taxes

The local tax levied on all qualifying villagers by the Parish Council is called the 'Precept'. In previous years it has increased with inflation but this year we are pleased to inform you that we have recommended there be no increase for 2019/20. This has been communicated to Wiltshire Council.

Briar Leaze Redevelopment

Plans to redevelop Briar Leaze have been in progress for many years, however it appears as though work is due to start early next year with a site office appearing between January and February 2019. The plans are to demolish six homes and garages at Briar Leaze, to construct five affordable rent homes, five Low Cost Homes Ownership, and three for outright sale. Initially developers GreenSquare will be carrying out ecological surveys and rehoming any wildlife found. They will then start on providing the replacement garages and parking spaces before clearing the old garage sites. There are apparently still some issues to be resolved including enhanced provision for drainage and agreed boundaries. GreenSquare are due to appoint a site manager and once we are informed of his details we will publish them.

Broadband

Whilst considerable progress was made in 2018 with the installation of SuperFast Fibre Broadband (SFBB), there remains a serious digital divide in the village about which we are very unhappy. The portion of the village served by Hilmarton Exchange is still only able to reach speeds of barely 3 megabits per second. To put this into context it would take someone with the lower speed up to an hour to download an average length film whereas someone with SFBB should only take about a minute or so. An understanding was reached with funders Wiltshire Council (WC) for suppliers Gigaclear to install SFBB in the Hilmarton section by March 2019.

Upon recent investigation we find this was arbitrarily moved to November 2019 with no firm guarantee of service even at that time. Hence we have raised the matter once again via our local Wiltshire councillor Christine Crisp and Councillor Barlow has had the matter raised in the House of Lords positioning the prospect of compensation for those residents in the disadvantaged portion of the village. The government minister responsible for Digital Communications in the Upper Chamber has responded that the matter is under the control of Wiltshire Council. We will now approach our local Member of Parliament to see if he can affect a change in the timeline.

Long serving Compton Bassett Parish Councillors receive commemorative award

Two recently retired Parish Councillors who together boast just under 90 years of continuous service between them, have been recognised by the village for their unstinting service. A commemorative bench, now situated in Briar Leaze, has been unveiled by the Parish Council as a fitting tribute marking the contribution of John Reis (*right*) and Dave Jackson (*left*) serving, over 50 years and 36 years respectively, on the council.



John Reis was first co-opted onto the council in the 1960s by Bob Henly. The Chairman then was Peter Shepherd-Cross and since that time Mr Reis continued to serve right up to 2017.

The new bench marks his self-effacing, tireless and generous contribution to the village, working as an unpaid volunteer for the betterment of the village which he was pleased to serve. He remains a leading member of the Parochial Church Council for St Swithin's.

Dave Jackson completed 36 years and was originally approached by Henry Goodenough, after showing an interest in the Parish Council and attending regular meetings. He also looked after the war memorial for 25 years following several years of neglect, as well as participating on the Benson Village Hall committee and running the Flower Show. Mr Jackson is still keeping up an interest in the work of the Parish Council despite also retiring from the Parish Council in 2017.

It is interesting too that three members of the Parish Council who served in the 1960s all still have sons that live in Compton Bassett and is testimony to the appeal of the village.

Telephone Box

Following an idea which was submitted at the Annual Parish Meeting in May, next year we hope to move the phone box/library. It has for some time been situated in a part of the village where access is limited and hence it has become tired and unattractive.

During 2019, following an anonymous grant we hope to relocate the facility to the centre of the village somewhere near the bus shelter, once its refurbishment is completed and ensure that it is more accessible for those who want to donate and borrow books.



Other Village News

One of the highlights of 2018 was the moving Remembrance Day commemorations marking the centenary of the end of the Great War. The Last Post played at the war memorial after a service at St Swithin's Church and there was a beacon light event at Starve Knoll in the evening. The war memorial gardeners are all volunteers and after a request for funding the Parish Council has given a grant for a new lawn mower and storage facilities.



Compton Bassett Community Resilience Plan – Could you help?

We are somewhat fortunate in the village to be a community of people who are willing to help each other, especially in an emergency! However, as a parish council we have to think of every scenario which may lead to an emergency situation (such as long term power cut or deep snow!) and have a plan in place for how the situation could be tackled. As part of that plan we would like to have a register of people who need help of any kind, such as with mobility issues or support for those living alone.



If you would like to be on our register and know that we will contact you if an emergency arises, please send an email to our Parish Clerk (cb.pariahclerk@gmail.com). Additionally, If you can think of someone else who might benefit from this please talk to them and ask them to get in touch or do so on their behalf and we can then contact them. Finally if you have any comments or thoughts on the kinds of emergency we may face and any actions you would like to see in the plan, please email us.

2019 Dates for your Diary...

Sat 2nd March – Barn Dance at the Benson Village Hall.

Wed 22nd May – Annual Parish Meeting with free drinks & nibbles and talk from Wiltshire Wildlife.

Sun 9th June – Open Farm Sunday – Chance to see a working dairy up close and personal at Manor Farm.

Sun 7th July – Calne/Compton Bassett 5K run.

List of Councillors and responsibilities

Pete Szczesiak (Chair)	01249 815006	Chair, Calne Area & Parish Forum, Hills Liaison Committee, Legal Duties, Neighbourhood and Farm Watch
Jane Marshall (Vice-Chair)	01249 760170 07850 875963	CATG & Calne Area Board, Road Safety, Parish Steward Link, Health & Well Being, Village Hall Rep
Peter Barnett	01249 812274	Hills Liaison committee, Parish Steward link, Village Hall Rep
Charles Reis	07802 863601	Heritage, Neighbourhood and Farm Watch
Julian Barlow	01249 760788	Road Safety, Communications including Broadband, CATG

CATG – What is it and how does it affect us?

The Calne Area Transport Group (CATG) is an important part of the local democratic process and its decisions have affected our village on a number of occasions especially related to traffic and road issues. Therefore we felt a brief explanation of their role may prove helpful.

The CATG is a sub group of the Community Area Boards that specifically deals with highway issues and is normally made up of not more than 10 members from the following groups: Members of the Area Board, Town and Parish council representatives and Community representatives.

Meetings are attended by relevant officers from Wiltshire Council, including a senior transport planner, a senior traffic engineer and a local highway maintenance engineer, as necessary. Their key purpose is to offer advice and support to the group but they do not vote on the issues raised. The CATG may also invite representatives from local organisations to its meetings to give technical advice or to share pertinent local knowledge.

As far as our village is concerned representation for individuals at the CATG is typically made through the Parish Council and it would be for the PC representative to attend the group and endorse the highways concerns or suggestions being made. The CATG has no formal decision making authority on operational matters or budget expenditure but acts as an informal discussion forum to make recommendations to the Area Board; any recommendations must be agreed at a full CATG meeting before being brought to the next Area Board for approval.

Contact Us

If you'd like to talk to your Parish Councillors, all meetings are open and you'll be very welcome.