

Compton Bassett Matters

Edited by Councillors Barlow and Waite for Compton Bassett Parish Council

Compton Bassett resumes life after lockdown

After a tumultuous 18 months during the coronavirus pandemic, life is beginning to resume its natural course in Compton Bassett and since our last Parish Council magazine, much has happened.

In the May elections the core parish councillors were returned unopposed: Pete Szczesiak as Chairman, new Vice-Chairman, Charles Reis, Julian Barlow, Peter Barnet and Laurie Waite once again agreeing to represent our growing community. The village now has a developing, younger population and we are pleased to see Hailei Spencer join us as a new first-time councillor (see back page). We hope to see another new councillor join the Parish Council shortly, offering a wider representation of parishioners.

Around the same time as the local elections, the Benson Village Hall committee also elected a new Chair, Jane Marshall and whilst entirely independent from the Parish Council there is renewed hope that the two organisations will work more closely together for the good of the village. Our first joint event is the "The Great Lockdown Breakout Party" on Saturday August 14th, funded through charity donations, including the late Compton Bassett cricket club, and all villagers are invited. Of course, you must pre-register for a free ticket, which includes a meal, live music, and licensed bar.

Also, if any of you have local produce or goods to sell please get in touch and we can arrange a table for you to offer your wares to villagers.

Finally, we have a new local authority councillor elected called Ashley O'Neill who represents the Calne Rural ward. Ashley is very enthusiastic to engage with the local community and has adopted a proactive approach to his new role, already visiting the village to view traffic management challenges with the Parish Council. His support for any proposed mitigation measures is important and we are actively working with him to come up with some new options to reduce speed and volume of traffic through the village, which is the number one complaint from most residents.

Julian Barlow

Weather forecast according to St Swithin

Thursday 15 July was quite a pleasant day as temperatures improved, on their way to the current heatwave (at the time of writing). The 40 days following promise no rain if the legend were to be believed.

In fact, since records began in 1861 there has never been a record of 40 dry or 40 wet days in a row following St Swithin's Day.

Village Party Goes Ahead Saturday 14th August!

It was the Parish Council's intention to celebrate the conclusion of lockdown with a hog roast event held in co-operation with the Benson Village Hall in July. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we had to adjust our plans and postpone the occasion until Saturday 14th August. If you haven't already done so, please contact Laurie Waite on lauriewaite@hotmail.com or phone 01249 815995 to rebook or let us know if you won't be able to make it.

As we have found during the past 18 months, very little is certain and much is unpredictable, but we are now very much looking forward to sharing some great company, live music, a magnificent hog roast, licensed bar, and other attractions!

The Great Lockdown-Breakout Village Party!

SAT 14 August 5pm-9pm

BENSON VILLAGE HALL

Dear Neighbour, You are warmly invited to a special get-together to celebrate our new found freedom with a magnificent hog roast, licensed bar and live music!

- **FREE MEAL FOR VILLAGERS** (*all tickets must be pre-booked!)
- **FREE MEAL & A FREE DRINK FOR ALL COVID VOLUNTEERS!**

This is an event for all villagers - a chance to say hello to friends & neighbours, and to welcome our new parishioners

BY THE VILLAGE - FOR THE VILLAGE
Organised by Compton Bassett Parish Council
and supported by the Benson Village Hall
Funded by donations

***TICKETS ONLY AVAILABLE IN ADVANCE!**

IMPORTANT! To reserve your tickets, please let us know:

1. Names of those in your household who would like to attend
2. Numbers for hog roast meal or a vegetarian option

BOOKING: lauriewaite@hotmail.com / TEL 815995

Traffic calming ideas for Compton Bassett

The Parish Council are hoping to submit proposals shortly to tackle some of the issues we are experiencing from an increase in traffic volume and speeding in the village. These will initially go forward to Calne Area Transport Group (CATG) for consideration and possible funding.

It's important to emphasise that these measures are but one component and that further talks are ongoing with interested parties to augment this stage with plans for 'a centre of village' concept. We hope to bring you the recommendations of the next phase as soon as possible.

Our Village

The village road is 2.5 miles long from the parish boundary near Breach Farm, to the 30mph entry near Home Farm and is a Class III designated road with three different speed zones within this stretch: 60mph, 40mph & 30mph. Department of Transport 2013 guidance 'Setting Local Speed Limits' is very helpful with criteria to recommend speed limits in different situations.

We have to be pragmatic and prioritise on what we think are the worst problems affecting us. We may not get agreement on all of these but we are going to push very hard and feel we have a strong case to make.

Psychological versus Physical

We are not proposing pinch points, chicanes, build-outs, rumble-strips, speed cushions, ramps or humps; not at this stage anyway. The emphasis will be one of engaging positively with motorists who drive through the village and currently see little change in the linear hedge-line environment as they progress from rural road into our village. This lack of a sense of shared space is our challenge to overcome, and make drivers aware that this is a settlement full of people, not just a highway for commuting.

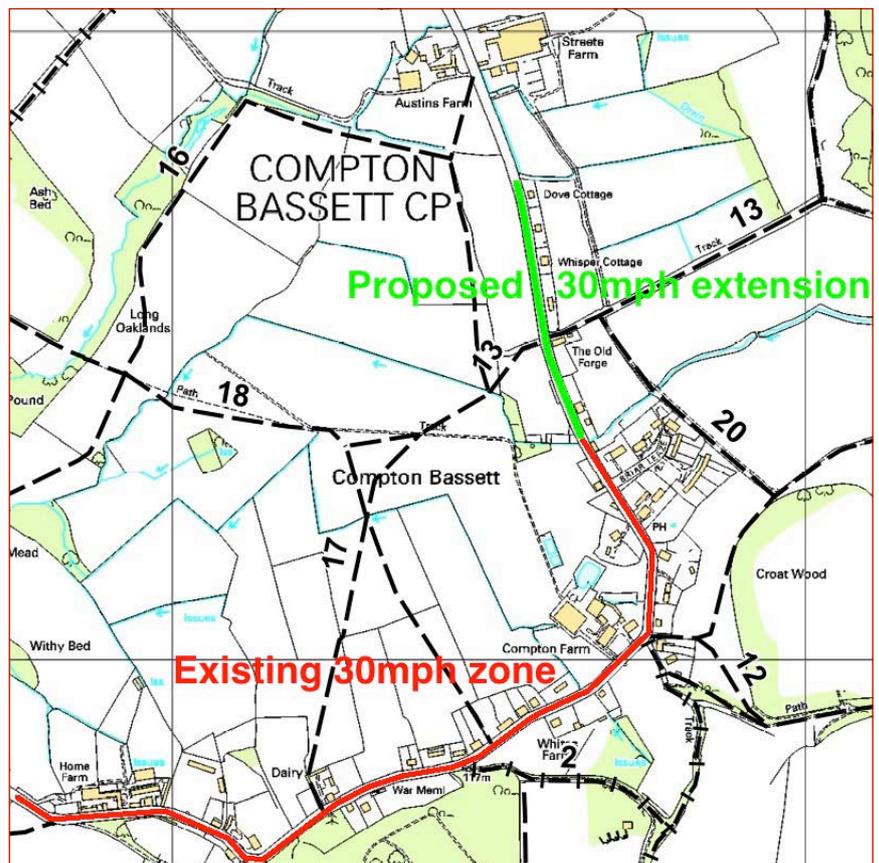
The Proposals

There are five recommendations which we are putting forward for your support and County Council approval. These are in approximate order of priority.

1. Extend 30mph zone from the Old Laundry, 48 CB to include Dove Cottage, 57 CB

It is government policy that a 30 mph speed limit should be the norm in villages. Our existing 30mph zone into the village only starts near the Old Laundry, next to the Village Hall. This is too close to the centre of village amenities (The White Horse Inn, Village Hall, bus stop etc) and results in vehicles coming in from Hilmarton frequently at or above the speed limit, many still in the process of slowing down from 40mph. Furthermore, vehicles proceeding north out of the village often anticipate the increase to 40mph and begin accelerating near the White Horse Inn.

Significantly, a row of 10 dwellings is in the area immediately north of the present 30mph entry point, all within a 400 metre walking distance of the village centre. There is no footpath on this narrow single track road and pedestrians along this section have to endure a hazardous walk in the present 40mph zone. It would not only benefit people to have the speed limit reduced along this constantly walked section of road, but there should be a knock-on effect of lessening speeds past the village hall and Briar Leaze junction, which is currently a well-known problem for villagers.



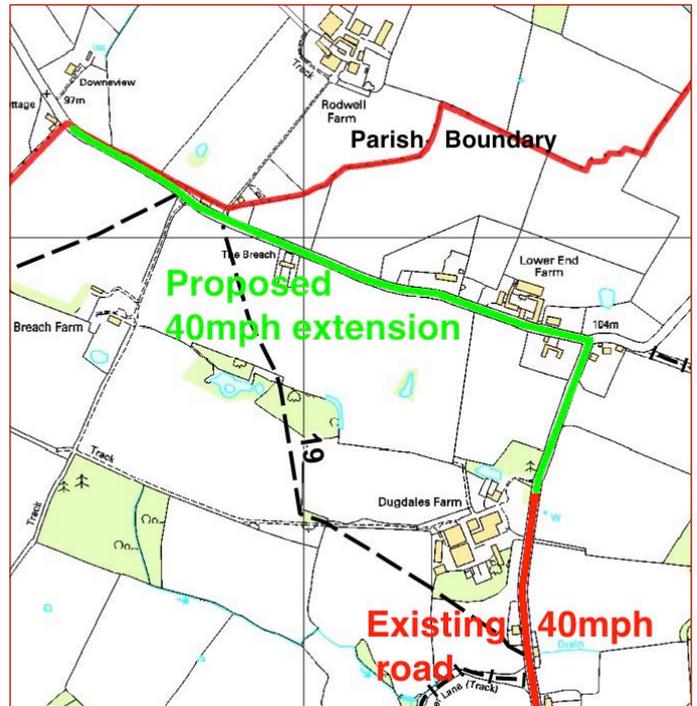
2. Extend 40mph zone from Dugdales Farm to include Breach Farm

This 0.7 mile single track road has 16 residential properties on its course, many of which suffer obstructed views joining the highway from driveways. The current 60mph speed limit is unacceptable and dangerous. Additionally, two footpaths and a bridleway connect to it, with walkers and horse riders routinely using it.

Section 7: Rural Speed Management of the Department of Transport's guidance *Setting Local Speed Limits 2013* determines what prescribes an appropriate speed limit, and 60mph is only appropriate for the best quality roads with few bends, junctions or accesses.

The C15 named road, as designated by Wiltshire Council meets the Department of Transport's own criteria for a 40mph speed limit:

- There are multiple access points with a high potential for collision
- Vulnerable road users, walkers, horse riders and cyclists, routinely use it
- Part of the road is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- The road is wholly in the village with 16 dwellings.



At present, it's 60mph along the single track village road (highlighted in green). By contrast, the higher graded two-lane B3102 Hilmarton to Calne road is restricted to 50mph!

3. New village entry signage

The effect of gateways on traffic speeds has been shown to contribute a limited, yet positive benefit. Their usefulness lies in delineating the village boundary and emphasising a conversion from rural to urban. Speed reductions, in surveys said to be worth 4–5mph, may well be local to the immediate area but it's an important first step in ameliorating a sense of change in environment.

The recently installed painted signs are an asset and will be retained in their current locations but a greater impact needs to be made at the 30mph entry near Home Farm. A pair of white gateways, to replace the old speed roundels on poles, with a dedicated nameplate will make a prominent statement to motorists entering the village. At the north end of the village, the nameplate sign has disappeared, leaving just the other painted sign by numbers 1–4 The Breach. We propose a pair of gateways near the parish boundary, NW of the track to Breach Farm at the same position as we recommend the new 40mph speed limit start. 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.



A conjectural view of a village gateway

4. Vehicle activated sign

A new 30mph speed enforcing sign should contribute to a reduction of speed in the proposed 30mph extension zone (Old Laundry, 48 CB to Dove Cottage 57 CB) and benefit the centre of village area where Community Speedwatch is currently undertaken. Speed Indicator Devices attract drivers' attention, decrease vehicle speeds and generally attract a positive compliance.



5. White painted tram lines

Certain straighter sections of village road allow for an increase in traffic speed. One such section has been identified by the war memorial, despite its narrow width making it difficult for larger vehicles to pass each other. There is no pavement and pedestrians feel at risk. One inexpensive plan is to paint a white tram line marginally inset from the road verge. These can convey an illusion of a false kerb-line, visually narrowing the road width and creating sufficient uncertainty to decrease speed. In tests, the reduction in speed was greatest where the edging appeared to be unsuitable to drive on.



Glorious Compton Bassett

Freeth Farm sand extraction goes ahead with new conditions

After five years and three different applications from Hills, a decision has finally been granted for conditions to excavate an estimated 300,000 tons of sand at Freeth Farm.

Planning permission was originally granted in 1956 but the sand was never dug and therefore the site became dormant. In 2016 Hills first applied to dig the sand 8m from the boundary of Freethcot, the cottage which is almost entirely surrounded by the site. Their next application involved a 4m high straw bund on the edge of their garden, which was fortunately not entertained by Wiltshire Council. Their final application proposed a 35m buffer zone from the local properties but with little noise and dust monitoring.

This final application has been rigorously and tirelessly fought by a small team of local residents. Central to this group was Dr Peter Alberry whose ability to forensically examine technical reports and find inaccuracies hidden amongst the data really is astonishing. However, we should also recognise the hundreds of people who have written in and objected to the scheme over the years as well as to Jennie & John Brooks for their tireless help, and to Pete Szczesiak, chairman of Compton Bassett Parish Council for his steadfast support.

The result being that presenting the council with a legal opinion and our own independent reports, the chairman of the planning committee proposed an amendment to move the buffer zone back to 70m, this was subsequently passed by the Strategic Planning Committee. Moreover, they voted that Hills must install constant noise and dust monitoring and the conveyors must be enclosed.

At present, we are unaware if Hills will appeal to the conditions and it's unlikely we have heard the end of this saga.

Finally, thanks should also be given to our new Councillor Ashley O'Neill, who although newly elected, has worked extremely hard to protect the interests of our parish.

Charles Reis

Something smelly at Hills landfill site

Following representation from several parishioners about unpleasant smells emanating from Hills landfill site at Lower Compton, three Parish Councillors undertook a site visit to inspect the facilities and gain a greater understanding of the challenges faced by the firm during lockdown. We met with Site Manager David Meakin and Divisional Director Simon Allen.

Whilst they could not definitively explain the reason for the unpleasant aromas, Hills did accept that waste is temporarily deposited near the edge of the site nearest the village and that smells may drift across the locale in spite of remedial measures to manage the pollution already in place. We expressed the negative sentiment of villagers affected and since the visit there has been no reported unpleasant wafts. However, we have agreed to keep a watching brief, so please report any smell issues to the parish clerk and the council will take up the issue on your behalf.



Julian Barlow, Dave Meakin of Hills, Pete Szczesiak & Laurie Waite at the Lower Compton sorting area.



Taken from Starve Knoll, a 180° panoramic view from south to north. The Cretaceous Chalk that makes up the dramatic Marlborough Downs escarpment meanders its way along a rough south-west to north-east direction, and gives way to Lower Greensand and Kimmeridge Clay down in the vale beyond, and home to the settlement of Compton Bassett.

Telephone kiosk & defibrillator in new home



Well, we might not be making any telephone calls, but the phone box refit has moved on a stage further in June with the defibrillator installation; previously it was at the White Horse Inn. Now this has been completed, it will enable us to kit out the interior, which will be used for village and parish council news, along with visitor information. There will be space to advertise forthcoming village events and we would like to display details of parish footpaths for walkers.

Our grateful thanks to Dave Coward for gilding the four Tudor Crowns at the top, a beautiful finishing touch.

The K6 kiosk was designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott in 1935 to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of King George V and introduced the following year. After three years, in 1939, a MkII version was brought out with detail changes, chiefly to make the coin box more vandal-proof. It then continued in production until 1968.

Our K6C is a MkI pre-war kiosk manufactured in 1937 at the Carron Ironworks in Falkirk and is therefore a much less common example.

How would you like to see the new telephone kiosk used?

The box that is now easily accessible in the centre of the village is a resource which could be used for a number of things in addition to being a new home for the defibrillator and an information centre - let us know your ideas?

So far suggestions include seed library, maps on the area for walkers, bird spotting guides...

Give us your ideas - contact the parish clerk: parishclerk@comptonbassettparishcouncil.gov.uk



16 April saw the return of the kiosk to its new position, courtesy of a Merlo and driver. Thanks to Charles Reis for the collection of the kiosk and help with installation.

Traffic Mirrors on the highway



Two traffic mirrors have been installed recently and, whilst we sympathise with issues of visibility from driveways, other problems can arise from such emplacements.

The first thing to point out is that planning permission must always be sought from Wiltshire Council for all mirrors that are positioned anywhere on highway verges.

The second is that we have received complaints about reflected sunlight that dazzled oncoming drivers.

So, we have sought guidance from Wiltshire Council's Highway Engineer, who has responded:

It is not the practice of Wiltshire Council to authorise the use of mirrors as the road safety benefits are very much in doubt. Mirrors can give a misleading image and dazzle motorists in sunlight or with headlights reflected at night.

They can also become misaligned and their performance can be compromised by a covering of moisture or dirt. Drivers involved in accidents often seek to apportion blame and the erection of a mirror on the highway could result in claims against the Highway Authority.

Mirrors may be sited off the highway on private land and that is a matter for the land owner and the person who places the mirror. Planning permission may be required and any applicant should be directed to the Council's Planning Department. Any applicants should be advised that when placing a highway mirror on private property consideration should be given to public liability implications and risk assessment in the event that the mirror is cited as a contributory factor in a road traffic accident.

Should any mirror overhang a highway maintainable at public expense, then a licence is required from the Highway Authority.

The Council would not normally be involved with mirrors that are sited off the highway (in private land), unless complaints of problems similar to those outlined above are being made to the Council. Should the Council ascertain that road safety is being compromised as a result of a mirror being placed not in but near to the highway the Council should use its powers to remove the mirror.

Chairman's annual report

Every year the Parish Council Chairman issues a report and the latest one, for the year May 2020 to May 2021, is shown below:

I would like to thank the two councillors who stood down this year, Jane Marshall and Tony Horseman. Tony's work commitments made it difficult for him to continue, while Jane has served for a tireless four years, three of them as Vice-Chair. We're very grateful to both of them for their hard work.

We have had a difficult year with Covid-19 and having to hold our meetings remotely via Zoom. I thank on behalf of the parish council, all the volunteers who stepped up during lockdown, also Councillors Laurie Waite and Julian Barlow who set up the system for the volunteers.

The council has started to use online banking which, thanks to our Clerk sorting out teething problems, is now fully operational.

Superfast Broadband should now be available to all residents!

The phone box is now in its new position and fitted with the defibrillator, moved from the White Horse Inn. It has taken longer than expected due to lockdowns etc. Thank you to the councillors whose hard work got it finally ready. The next project is to clean and paint the bus shelter.

The Freeth Farm planning application concerning the conditions for sand extraction and raised conveyor to move the sand is still undecided.

We had a few planning applications in the last year, mainly tree removal etc, and one application for house building work, which was refused.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the councillors for their support this last year and a special thanks to Diane, our parish clerk, for hers.

Pete Szczesiak - Chairman

Parish Steward

Don't forget that the Parish Steward comes to the village 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). Our next visits from the parish steward will be on July 27th and August 24th.



Wiltshire land drainage team

The sewer crew from Wiltshire Council have informed us that they are planning a visit to the village week commencing 6th September to clear a blocked gully near 35 Compton Bassett. If you suspect there is a blocked gully on the highway near you, please inform us and we will arrange for a jet clearance.

Domestic septic tank clearance

The same team also will empty domestic septic tanks. Although this service is chargeable, we are assured that it is carried out at comparable cost with other companies.

Clement Walker-Heneage VC – The Right Stuff!

Born at Compton Bassett House on 6 March 1831, Clement was educated at Eton College and, like his father, went on to Christ Church, Oxford, after which he was commissioned into the 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars in August 1851. He became a Lieutenant in September 1854 and the next month was involved in the Battle of Balaclava and one of the most infamous of military blunders, the Charge of the Light Brigade.

A dreadful mix-up resulted in 670 soldiers on horseback armed with only sabres and lances to make a disastrous attack on Russian forces which comprised 20 battalions of infantry supported by over 50 artillery pieces. Lord Raglan had issued an order only for the Light Brigade to retrieve several British 12-pounder naval guns up on the Causeway Heights which were in danger of falling into Russian hands. Instead, from their position all they could only see was a Russian heavy artillery battery at the end of a valley. Despite expressing concern about the orders and outnumbered 11 to 1, they galloped over a mile through artillery fire from three sides, suffering dreadful losses. Many of the doomed British Light Cavalry actually reached the Russian lines and began to attack the gunners. Walker-Heneage was fortunate to survive the carnage and make it back to safety. In the aftermath, only 195 were still with their horses after regrouping later on.

He held strong views about where the blame lay, *"It is wonderful to observe the way that fool the 'British public' kicks a man directly he is down, as in the instance of unlucky Lucan. I always hated him, and so did the whole Cavalry Division, but for heaven's sake let a man have fair play. Here is this unfortunate man catching it over the head and ears, merely because he obeyed an order given by the thick headed Raglan, through his still more stupid quartermaster General Airey, who is about the worst of the whole headquarters staff"*.



Clement Walker-Heneage 1856

Returning to England, Walker-Heneage was promoted to Captain and embarked with the 8th Hussars to India on the SS Great Britain in October 1857, to quell the Indian Mutiny in Rajputana. For this he was rewarded with the Victoria Cross, one of the first recipients of the highest award for gallantry. His citation reads:

"8th Hussars, Captain Clement Walker Heneage. Selected for the Victoria Cross by their companions in the gallant charge made by a squadron of the Regiment at Gwalior, on 17th June 1858, when, supported by a division of the Bombay Horse Artillery, and Her Majesty's 95th Regiment, they routed the enemy, who were advancing against Brigadier Smith's position, charged through the rebel camp into two batteries, capturing and bringing into their camp two of the enemy's guns, under heavy and converging fire from the Fort and Town. (Field Force Orders by Major-General Sir Hugh Henry Rose, G.C.B., Commanding Central India Field Force, Gwalior, 28th June, 1858."

Clement married in 1865, Henrietta Vivian, with whom he had one daughter and four sons. Two sons embarked on military careers: his eldest son Godfrey rose to colonel in the army and another son, Algernon became an admiral in the navy. On retirement as a Major from the army in 1868, Clement had seen active service in the battles of Alma, Balaclava, Inkerman, Tchernaiia, the Siege of Sevastopol, the Indian Mutiny, the battles of Kotah ke Serai and Sindwahoo and the captures of Gwalior and of Powree - amongst others!

He lived with his family at Beacon Lodge, Christchurch until succeeding to the family estates in 1875, whereupon he moved into Compton House, after the death of his father George Heneage Walker-Heneage. The following year, on being picked up from Calne Station, horses pulling his carriage bolted in front of the Lansdowne Arms Hotel and the carriage overturned. His footman from Beacon Lodge was thrown off and died at the scene, while the coachman was seriously injured. Remarkably, Walker-Heneage emerged unscathed from the overturned carriage.

Life in the village was strictly controlled under 'Squire Heneage', and it was best not to fall from his favour. No washing was allowed to be hung out on Sundays, and people had to have a good reason to be absent from church. Nearly every house had an espaliered pear or plum tree growing against an end wall and it could only be tended to by an estate gardener. When a baby was born in the village, items of clothing were given and some form of help to the mother, if needed. Wives enjoyed the privilege of belonging to the Squire's coal and clothing fund, to which their husbands contributed. Clothing could well be inspected, in the drawing room of Compton House, and the women told off firmly if they had bought clothes 'above their station'. When Mrs Heneage rode through the village in her carriage, the women and girls were expected to curtsy as she passed by. If it were found that an employee was a member of a union, Squire Heneage was not above evicting them when their tenancy came up for renewal along with the removal of their children from the village school.

Clement suffered from attacks of gout in later life and on 9 December 1901, after joining the family at home for lunch, he retired in the afternoon to his study and reclined on a sofa. He was seen by a footman at dusk and appeared to be asleep, but later when his wife entered the room, she found her husband in a comatose state. His butler George Hickson was summoned and brandy was administered, but after a few gasps Heneage passed away. He is buried in the family vault at St Swithin's Church.

Laurie Waite

May Council Elections: The Returned



Standing where some of us feel safest – l to r: Julian Barlow, Laurie Waite, Charles Reis, Pete Szczesiak and Peter Barnett. The five have just become six, with our latest recruit (see below).

New Parish Councillor



We are delighted to announce the co-option of a new parish councillor, which is now just one short of our full quota. Hailei Spencer was voted on to the council at the most recent meeting on 1st July.

Compton Bassett Parish Councillors

Pete Szczesiak - Chairman. He has served on the parish council for over 30 years.

Fact: I performed the Dance of the Swans from the ballet Swan Lake and received a standing ovation from Prince William, Prince Harry and the Duke of Kent.

Charles Reis - Vice-Chair. Born in the village and has served on the council for four years.

Fact: I once worked as a gaucho on a ranch in Chile.

Julian Barlow - has been a parish councillor for the last five years.

Fact: I lost a rowing competition against 5 time Olympic champion rower Sir Steve Redgrave. Hardly surprising but disappointing, as he only used one arm, having broken the other skiing!

Peter Barnett - a parish councillor for well over 40 years and has lived in the village since 1945.

Fact: I was mistaken for singer and actor Tommy Steele whilst on honeymoon in Portugal.

Hailei Spencer - newly arrived on the parish council but has lived in the village most of her life.

Fact: I made my TV debut in CBBC's *Playdays*, running down Cherhill Downs, flying kites.

Laurie Waite - has served on the council for two years and has lived in the village since 2012.

Fact: On a family holiday in the Norfolk Broads I sank another boat carrying four people in it. Not my fault, honest!

Please contact the Parish Clerk in the first instance.

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