



Lower Compton and Sands Farm Liaison Committee Meeting

Minutes of the Liaison Committee meeting held in person at Sands Farm on 03 June 2026 at 18.00.

PRESENT

Hills Waste Solutions

Simon Allen (SA)
Henry Newbery (HN)

Hills Group Communications Team

Chris Waddell (CW)

Calne Town Council

Councillor Sam Pearce-Kearney (also Wiltshire Council) (SPK)
Councillor Mike Sankey (also Wiltshire Council) (MS)

Cherhill Parish Council

Councillor Charlie Oram (CO)
Councillor David Grafton (DG)

Wiltshire Council Officers

Adrian Hampton – Head of Highway Operations (AH)
Dean Thomas – Planning Enforcement (DT)

Compton Bassett Parish Council

Councillor Rod Lloyd-Davies (RLD)
Councillor Peter Szczesiak (PS)

Compton Bassett Residents Association

Carla Marygold (CM)

	Action
1. Apologies	
<p>Steve Burns with a note that his role would be transferred to one of the new LATCOs - Ubico from 01 August.</p> <p>Environment Agency indicated that they were unable to attend and that they intend to hold a separate community engagement event to be announced.</p> <p>Tom Rounds – Calne Town Council.</p> <p>Invited: Councillor Augusta Urquhart-Nicholls (Calne Town Council) Clerk Dianne Zeitzen (Compton Bassett Parish Council) Councillor Ashley O'Neill (Wiltshire Council) Tom Bennell (Wiltshire Council) Phil Bacon (EA) Ben Shayler (EA) Linley Hunter (EA) Tom Fowler (EA) Nick White (Cherhill Parish Council) Peter Barnett (Compton Bassett Parish Council) Peter Szczesiak (Compton Bassett Parish Council)</p>	

<p>2. Minutes of the last meeting & matters arising</p>	
<p>Minutes accepted from last meeting.</p> <p>CW apologised on Hills behalf about the previous failed Teams meetings and issues with email invites.</p> <p>SA confirmed that until CW and SA had confidence in our IT, that meetings would likely continue in person (see AOB below).</p>	
<p>3. Landfill action plan update (see also photos on last page of minutes)</p>	
<p>SA acknowledged the ongoing issues with the landfill.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints became more significant in February/March 2026. • Infrastructure and capping improvements in late 2025 seemed to make a difference as during weather conditions when we might have expected complaints we received very few. • We now have an action plan agreed with Environment Agency (EA). • Regular updates on website and EA have put out regular comms on the issue. <p>SA showed live feed of active cell defining areas as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A commitment to put 100mm of soil on active areas of landfill • Areas which are at final level are being capped with 1m of clay. • Jones Brothers are placing the final cap on site and with recent good weather the project is now ahead of schedule with a projected completion date of mid-July. • The contractor is working until 19:00 daily and over weekends, again, when weather permits. • Once final capping is in place the permanent gas extraction system will be installed and remain in place for the life of the site. This system should be installed and operational by the end of July. • In areas of intermediate soil cover there will be temporary gas infrastructure with 6m deep pin wells installed. The commitment is to install temporary wells in a timely manner over coming months although it is difficult to be sure of timings as this is dependent on tonnages tipped. • It is therefore difficult to give a completion date for the overall cell but it is likely to be this time next year at which point more permanent capping will take place followed by permanent gas extraction infrastructure. <p>SA invited questions.</p> <p>CO asked if soil cover was added each night?</p> <p>SA confirmed daily cover was added each night which will be covered the next day with newly tipped waste. SA also confirmed that hills is putting additional, intermediate daily cover on where areas might remain uncovered for longer periods than expected.</p> <p>SA pointed out this was more than industry standard.</p>	

SA explained that Hills can't cap off cells unfinished because of planning and environmental issues – gas and leachate control would be impossible. Finishing a cell is only possible once the cell is filled with waste which is dependent on tonnages coming into site.

CM said smell from landfill has not been eliminated and that smell was detected when walking at 06:00 at Freeth Farm.

CM asked about deodorising sprays and understood their need but expressed health concerns about then undetected gasses still released in the environment.

SA explained that gas is always generated on landfill and that deodorisers were there for the benefit of our neighbours. SA referred the committee to the UKHSA (UK Health and Security Agency) who say that although unpleasant, the hydrogen sulphide smell is low level and is low risk in health terms.

SA added that one of Hills obligations is to employees working directly on the site and that they are routinely monitored and have health screening, and that people who've worked on the site for decades have presented with no adverse health issues.

CM appreciated difficulties with an odour issue which is transient and can go from detectable to undetectable within 5m.

PS reminded committee of site visit last year where the odour was detectable in pockets.

SA appreciated comments but emphasised that Hills needs to make sure odours are not coming from the site. SA explained landfill gas was denser than air and that usually the issue was worse in winter but that cold mornings and warm daytime temperatures in the spring months may not have helped. From September to January Hills and EA had very few complaints compared to current levels.

SA explained that weather conditions were just one theory and that EA has seen this issue across the whole of the country. Another theory relates to transfer station fines causing many of the issues and Hills has restricted the import of these materials. However much of this is conjecture on the part of the industry and the EA.

MS Raised residents' questions:

- Any disturbance to old Viridor landfill?
- Are any foot and mouth carcasses from 2001 in any areas of Hills' landfill?

SA couldn't comment on Viridor site and established that foot and mouth carcasses would be nowhere near current working cells.

MS asked about possibility of using plastic membranes for final capping.

SA explained that High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) is a synthetic equivalent to Hills 1m clay capping method with the same porosity and that as Hills has stocks of clay on site and that there is little difference in installation time that Hills hasn't used HDPE synthetic liners as it is preferred to have a natural barrier.

SPK thanked Hills for regular updates and FAQs on the website. SPK asked again about trommel fines.

SA whilst there is a lot of debate around the use of fines in landfill, Hills has reduced the import of fines and is no longer using fines for daily cover which stopped in March 2026.

SPK asked what can stop odours in future?

SA said the issue of fines was inconclusive because there were periods of fines being imported when odour was not an issue. Reducing fines is however a reasonable plan.

SA emphasised that Hills really didn't want to be at the centre of the odour issue and that Hills wanted to sort out the issues. SA also said that any future cells would be made smaller than the current active cell, and the additional measures employed recently would continue into the next cells.

SPK asked if UKHSA should be invited to committee in future?

SA said that was a matter for the EA who could not attend this committee.

SPK disappointed that EA couldn't attend.

PS asked if unusual for them not to attend.

SA understanding is that EA intends to do a community event at which they intend to invite UKHSA. SA said that EA reduced attendance at meeting where there were no issues but as there were issues at Lower Compton, he was surprised they couldn't attend.

4. Vandalism and breaks in at Lower Compton

SA expanded on local reports that break ins and vandalism had occurred at Lower Compton in 2025 and once so far in 2026:

- Likely to be breaking in via Sands Farm end of site
- Damage to CCTV
- Damage to windows and fire suppression systems in vehicles
- Concerns over safety issues for the person(s) involved and regarding infrastructure e.g. gas collection infrastructure
- Not youths but older individual(s) involved
- Cost to Hills so far c.£50,000
- Police involved

SA explained that current engineering contractors living on site is adding a temporary level of security and asked if local representatives could ask for more information in the community.

CO asked if municipal vehicles had been damaged?

SA said that commercial fleet rather than municipal had been damaged.

MS said he was aware of franchisee concrete vehicles being damaged on the Hills Quarry site adjacent to landfill.

SA expressed concern about future criminal activity given strength of feeling in Calne over odour issues.

5. HRC contract update (and additional business of fly-tipping)

HN Hills now agreed with Wiltshire Council a 1 + 1 + 1 annual contract extension for Lower Compton HRC which takes Hills beyond original end date of 31 July 2026.

- In discussions with Wiltshire Council about a trial HRC booking system which will affect Purton and Lower Compton HRCs.
- Additional staff to be employed to help with booking system trial.

AH confirmed six sites out of nine will be involved in the trial and that some sites had issues with traffic management especially Stanton St Quinton.

HN the six sites are:

- Purton
- Stanton St Quinton
- Lower Compton
- Melksham
- Warminster
- Salisbury

PS expressed that the previous booking system during Covid were problematic and not very popular.

AH said there will be improvement in IT and there will be a grace period where people will be allowed on site without bookings.

PS said main issues were weekends as they were busiest period.

AH said that signs encouraging weekday use are already in place and that there will be more communications and that there have been lessons learnt from Covid booking systems.

CM asked about changes to opening times and **AH** responded that there are no plans to change opening times at present.

CM then asked about block booking as happens in Swindon

AH said that Wiltshire have talked with other local authorities about that issue and that data would be captured to help prevent this and that there has been considerable investment in IT. Additional staff will be there to make decisions in the event of IT breakdowns.

HN talked about real time bookings being an improvement over previous booking systems to allow more flexibility and opportunity for visits.

HN explained that booking system was a positive for staff on site who can be subject to abuse so the booking system would help hold members of the public to account for their behaviour.

CM expressed that the staff on site were very helpful and that she wanted her appreciation passed on.

HN said that new systems would help prevent users from other local authority addresses where there are booking systems using sites out of area which don't currently have booking systems.

SPK thought this a better comms message.

AH acknowledged that the initial period could be difficult and that the intention was to harmonise the system.

SPK and AH discussed the wider HRC booking system and disparity with leisure services at length and intended to discuss further offline. [Longer discussion not minuted.]

<p>CO asked if council would be monitoring fly-tipping.</p> <p>AH explained that he covered the issue and that every fly-tipping report comes through 'fly-catcher' covering and reporting on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location • Nature of incident • Time <p>AH said the majority of issues are commercial fly-tipping which doesn't relate to HRCs and that there will be monitoring of above stats before and after implementation of HRC booking system. Fines are currently £1,000 per tip and Wiltshire has 100% prosecution rate on provable incidents.</p> <p>CM complained about tyres on Compton Bassett Road not being dealt with if on private land near the road and asked about camera installation.</p> <p>AH explained that council can install overt cameras as a deterrent along with covert cameras but there are GDPR issues and legal processes and in either case the problem can move elsewhere. Drones are also used.</p> <p>Other committee members discussed further detailed issues with fly-tipping in the area repeating some of the above points especially in relation to difficulties on private land. [Longer discussion not minuted.]</p> <p>CO asked if Hills was happy with rolling 1+1+1 contract for the HRC when compared to Purton's three year plus one contract.</p> <p>SA and AH had no further comment other than that which is in the public domain already.</p> <p>CO asked if council could close Lower Compton HRC before building a new facility at Royal Wootton Bassett.</p> <p>AH said these decisions were political and financial and that a yearly review would still happen. Original proposal to close Lower Compton and Purton was already decided but since renegotiated. AH confirmed not currently aware of any closure plans and that other suggestions for other sites have been invited.</p>	
6. Planning applications	
<p>SA As per last minutes the planning application to cover an area of transfer station is going to be submitted imminently and will allow better control of pests and litter et.c and improve the visual appearance.</p> <p>MS asked about Hills Homes planning at Regents Park.</p> <p>CW confirmed no imminent building work and SA confirmed Hills Waste would check with Homes division on status of that application.</p>	<p>CW confirmed breaking ground in October and Hills on site from January 2027 pending final reserved matters being resolved</p>
7. Garden waste and wood chipping	
<p>SA explained no real changes since last minutes and that Hills hasn't chipped wood on site for some time.</p>	

8. Quarry and aggregates	
<u>SA</u> confirmed no significant changes and that tonnages remain as before.	
8. Recycling	
<p><u>HN</u> explained Hills is now eight and a half weeks from transferring the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) to Norse and transferring Collections to Ubico both of which are Local Authority Trading Companies (LATCOs).</p> <p>Operations will remain on site Environmental permits will transfer New signage may appear at entrance No intensification of operations</p>	
9. Transport	
<p><u>HN</u> informed that the routing agreement which diverted landfill HGVs from the A4 through Calne Town Centre to use the internal link road would remain in place.</p> <p><u>HN</u> encouraged reporting of HGV infringements through the usual channels.</p> <p><u>CM</u> asked that HGV drivers slow down as they make a loud noise when crossing speed bumps.</p> <p><u>HN</u> assured that speeds would be checked and explained that empty trucks may sound louder over speed bumps.</p> <p><u>CM</u> also asked that employees arriving on site slow down also.</p> <p><u>SA</u> requested that times and registrations should be taken to help monitor this.</p> <p><u>CO</u> asked about start times.</p> <p><u>HN</u> confirmed Waste vehicles can leave site from 06:00 and weighbridge open from 07:00 but trucks do arrive before 07:00.</p>	
9. Any other business	
<p><u>CW</u> checked and agreed with councillors the relevant attendees for meetings as the list had grown.</p> <p><u>SPK</u> offered that Wiltshire could set up Teams meetings if Hills IT was still an issue.</p> <p><u>SA</u> agreed that meetings could be set up quarterly in response to committee preference.</p> <p><u>CM</u> asked about lots of rubbish blowing along fence line and why agency staff were used.</p> <p><u>SA</u> explained that this task was done as necessary and that agency staff are generally employed to litter pick.</p> <p><u>HA</u> explained that feedback would be garnered from residents once HRC booking was in place around September time.</p>	
10. Date of next meeting	
September avoiding council meeting dates.	ALL

