Lower Compton Liaison Committee Meeting

Minutes of the Liaison Committee meeting held in person at Benson Hall, Compton Bassett on 07 October 2026 at 18.00.

PRESENT

Hills Waste Solutions
Simon Allen (SA)
Henry Newbery (HN)

Hills Group Communications Team
Chris Waddell (CW)

Environment Agency
Phil Bacon (PB)
Ben Shayler (BS)

Calne Town Council
Councillor Sam Pearce-Kearney (also Wiltshire Council) (SPK)
Councillor Mike Sankey (also Wiltshire Council) (MS)
Councillor Tom Rounds

Cherhill Parish Council
Councillor Charlie Oram (CO)
Councillor David Grafton (DG)
Councillor Rob Pooley (RP)

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 1
Carla Marygold (CM)

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	Action
1. Apologies	
Introductions made and one apology given from Tom Fowler (EA) **CW** requested that all invitees respond to future invites for certainty.	All to RSVP meeting invites, please.
2. Minutes of the last meeting & matters arising	
PS reminded Hills that Peter Barnett was to be removed from the invitees. **CW** updated MS on status of Regents Park Housing development in Calne and that the development would now commence on a date to be confirmed in 2027 rather than October 2026. Minutes were approved.	

3. Landfill action plan update	
SA said that the EA's agreed action plan to deal with odours was completed over the summer within timescales. This included bringing forward permanent capping of the cell, and pin wells and gas wells. This combined with other measures has led to a reduction in complaints from 700 in August to 90 in September and just a handful to date in October. The company had confidence that this work had a positive impact on odour control. There has been an agreed reduction in fines to 25% of all inputs and that those fines are no longer used for permanent cover. The fines are used for daily cover. **SPK** said that residents are still reporting issues to him although the odours may be less pungent, they were still apparent during cold mornings and evenings. SPK suggested some residents may be fatigued with the complaints process. **SA** said that Hills own monitoring indicated significantly fewer issues and that there had been some concerns related to sewage issues on a new housing estate over the summer. SA accepted that cold mornings could present a challenge for potential landfill gas migration **SA** said that inputs to the site had increased over the summer to the extent that it was possible the current cell would be completed sooner ie by next summer. **SA** said that the next cell would be further from Calne itself and that the commitment to fewer fines as a percentage of inputs, remained with new cells. SA also said that he accepted SPK's comments that the issue was not completely gone. **BS** agreed that there had been a significant reduction in odour issues from the EA's point of view although low level issues could persist. There were some issues with gas engines and smaller maintenance issues. The larger problems have been resolved. **SPK** asked if the issues with the filters have now been resolved. **HN** said this was an issue that affected the landfill gas engines. In hot weather the filters were being blocked up with particulates, requiring filters to be replaced much more frequently. Tests have been undertaken to try and identify the cause and prevent any reoccurrence. The cause could be due to very high temperatures experienced this summer causing compounds to build up/crystalise in pipework such as sulphur. However, these issues have gone away now we are seeing cooler temperatures. **PS** asked if the current cell being worked was cell 27? **SA** said the current cell was 26D due for completion next summer. **PS** said that according to planning cell 27 was due to start in July 2023. **SA** confirmed that had been the plan and that he accepted that cell 26D had been open longer than anticipated. Hills wouldn't normally engineer a cell intending it to be open for five years. **PS** said he was concerned that planning ran out in 2042. **SA** confirmed it did and said Lower Compton planning ran until 2042 with the Low Lane part of the site currently limited to 2028 although Hills would need to apply for an extension for probably two years for the low lane extension of the site **SA** said it was difficult to accurately predict future tonnages which although low in	

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recent years have significantly increased this year with fewer available landfill facilities nationwide, making any long-term extensions unlikely.

SA said there was currently no intention to go beyond 2042.

PS asked about mineral extraction at Freeth Farm and whether planning had run out.

SA said Freeth Farm was still a possibility, and some mineral was still available but wasn't sure whether further extraction was financially viable due to the planning restrictions.

PS asked if there would be a landfill at Freeth Farm

SA said there was no permission for a landfill site at Freeth Farm.

CO asked what 'fines' were and what material they consisted of.

SA explained that fines are materials filtered through a trommel and therefore smaller than 20mm in diameter and that some of these materials could contain sources of sulphates. These materials could include:

- Brick dust
- Wood chip
- Stone
- Concrete

SA said there was nowhere else other than landfill for these materials to be disposed of.

HN said that the materials were subject to pre-acceptance testing before they are received at the site. Hills then take further test to ensure the material meets the standards for fines

CO asked if fines waste came from Lower Compton

SA said fines could come from any commercial transfer station and only a small amount came from the transfer station at Lower Compton. SA reiterated that fines were only used for daily cover and not for intermediate or permanent capping.

CM asked about the location of the next landfill cell.

SA said that the new cell would be closer to Lower Compton rather than Calne and clarified the location details.

BS said that discussions on fines were relevant and that inputs will be variable due to commercial and governmental changes. BS confirmed that the EA worked with waste producers to analyse sulphate content because of the theory that sulphates contributed to landfill site odour issues generally. BS also said Hills' recent engineering works would help odour matters locally on top of the reduction in fines.

MS asked if concrete could be crushed and used as fines as there would be no contamination and it would be cheaper to dispose of.

SA said he didn't know what HIlls Quarry's intentions were for concrete waste and that landfill is taxed regardless of material and it is unlikely that it was financially cheaper to dispose of concrete waste into landfill. SA said the point of landfill tax at £130/tonne was to disincentivise landfill.

MS asked if landfill tax was payable on fines.

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SA said it was at the lower rate at £8.65/tonne.

SPK asked if Hills could choose not to accept fines.

SA said in theory, as a commercial business Hills could refuse to take any waste stream but that this then left nowhere for fines to go.

TR asked who paid the tax.

SA explained that Hills collected landfill tax from waste producers on behalf of the Government and paid it to government and that by coincidence HMRC were on site this month doing an audit.

TR asked if Wiltshire Council paid this tax.

SA said that whoever the third party was would pay landfill tax whether this was Wiltshire Council or a third-party customer.

TR asked about sulphates being the cause of the odour issues in Calne and how this was caused by the fines.

SA agreed that it is likely to have contributed to odour issues and that construction materials were the most likely culprit with the biggest problem coming from plasterboard. The trommel process will inevitably lead to some sulphate material, probably from plasterboard being present in the fines

SA said that limited amounts plasterboard were separated at its waste transfer station so it wouldn't go on to become fines and that Hills audited third party transfer stations to check that separation of plasterboard was being undertaken but couldn't guarantee this was always the case at other transfer stations
TR asked if sulphate issues happened at other landfills.

SA confirmed that it was an industry-wide issue.

BS confirmed SA's view that the issue was industry-wide and that there would always be low levels of plasterboard making its way into sites from unscrupulous waste producers. BS said that it was a constant battle and that sampling was a small part of the EA's solution when dealing with operators and their processes.

CO asked about tonnages of fines used as cover and whether fines were stockpiled in the yard.

SA said fines inputs were dependent on total inputs but typically it could be 60 tonnes used as daily cover. SA said that fines formed a small part of varying overall waste tonnages between 400 tonnes and 1,000 tonnes per day and tonnages not used for daily cover would be buried in the landfill. There were no longer any stockpiles of fines at the landfill

HN emphasised that fines were limited to 25% of overall tonnages.

SA said that fines were not stockpiled but either used for daily cover or buried completely within cells. SA said that the 25% was an average across a month so if there was a period when fines were excessive then they would be reduced at other times to balance out the overall figures.

SA added that given suspicions over fines causing odour issues that fines inputs were much more tightly controlled on site.

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4. Planning	
SA said that the application to put a new building on the concrete pad next to the current building had gone in on 03 September. **CO** asked about the height of the new building. **SA** said that although he had been hopeful the building would be no higher than adjacent buildings it was going to be approximately 1m higher to accommodate one of the loading machines intended for use within the building. **SA** said that everyone should support the application as the new building would reduce odour, birds scavenging, pests and wind-blown litter at the site. **RP** asked if the building would accommodate solar and netting to prevent problematic seagulls. **SA** said solar was being costed but that netting came with the risk of trapping and killing birdlife so was doubtful. **HN** said the building offered a more controlled environment for the transfer of waste and would reduce impact on neighbours. **CM** asked about the introduction of food waste collections. **AH** said food waste collections would be introduced in the summer of 2027. **SA** said this was a legal obligation for the council. **DG** asked if the food waste would be handled by Hills. **SA** said Hills would transfer food waste to a third party but that while at the transfer station food waste added to the need for a covered facility.	
5. Garden waste and wood chipping	
SA said this agenda item covered everything handled at the concrete pad and that not much had changed there with green waste going to our composting facility in Purton and residual waste going to either Lakeside in Slough or Hills Northacre plant in Westbury. **CO** asked if any compost was made at Lower Compton. **SA** said that none had been made on site since 2012 this was now being done at Purton	
6. Quarry and aggregates	
SA said there have been brief discussion about quarrying at Old Camp Farm and that the concrete plant was still on site but other than that no changes. **CW** said given that Hills Quarry was concentrating on setting up its new quarry at Airfield in Down Ampney there would be no imminent changes. **MS** asked about the Down Ampney quarry and preservation of airfield history.	

CW said this was not a matter for this committee, but that Hills had fulfilled legal and moral obligations with archaeologists on that site for over a year.	
7. Transport	
SA confirmed that as of 01 August 2026 Hills was no longer running the white collection vehicles on behalf of Wiltshire Council and that a small part of its mostly red commercial fleet was still being run out of Lower Compton. **HN** said that blue and white information signsthat had been erected to confirm no access to Hills via Sands Farm in order to discourage HGVs remain in place **CM** brought up a persistent issue around HGVs idling before 6am waiting for access to Hills' site. **RP** brought up similar issues and mentioned excessive speeds including those of RORO vehicles which clattered noisily around roundabouts and over speed bumps. RP also mentioned idling and parking up on approach roads including in the Cherhill laybys. **SA** agreed to speak to remind drivers and operators about being more considerate. **RP** mentioned previous litter collecting on roads surrounding the Hills site and asked if the new collections company would keep that up. **SA** said that Hills was still committed to being a good neighbour as litter could reflect poorly on Hills regardless of cause. SA confirmed that the landfill team would continue collecting litter. **AH** said litter was monitored and enforced by the Highways Team at Wiltshire Council. **CM** asked who was responsible for clearing litter in ditches towards Compton Bassett. **AH** said if it was on the highway, the council was responsible, otherwise it was up to private landowners. **CM** asked if Hills was obliged to clear anything. **SA** reiterated that it would clear rubbish regardless of whose responsibility it was. **CM** showed photographic evidence of the ongoing issue and said it was a tiny fraction of the total. **SA** said the benefit of the current planning application to manage waste in a new building and also agreed to provide photographic evidence of any Hills clear ups by the next meeting.	SA / HN to confirm litter picking and provide evidence at next meeting
8. AOB	
SA suggested agenda item regarding garden waste and wood chipping to be changed to 'Concrete Pad and HRCs' to be more relevant. **SA** said that the new HRC booking system was being trialled at Honeyball (Lower Compton) HRC and had started on 14 September. **AH** confirmed this and added that the Council would be monitoring the test at all sites for its effect on fly-tipping, site safety, traffic and accessibility.	

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AH said that this data would have a three-month lag so the council would know the full impacts by next April. **SPK** requested that initial data be brought along to the next liaison in January. **AH** agreed to bring available data and KPIs. **CM** said that from a customer's point of view the booking system worked well. **BS** confirmed a similarly positive experience as a resident. **RP** expressed concern about the nuisance of vehicles waiting near the HRC when arriving early for their time slots and that some vehicles blocked access to nearby homes and garages including his own property. **HN** agreed he'd seen cars waiting and that he would encourage people to go in when he'd seen them. HN said so far, the trial was going well and that only one person had been refused access to date for being abusive to staff after turning up without a booking or a van and trailer permit. **AH** acknowledged that there would always be positives and negatives and that experience on social media indicated that anyone expressing a positive or negative view of the changes would always provoke those of an opposite view.	AH to bring data to next meeting if available.
10. Date of next meeting	
Quarterly meetings were agreed with the next to be in January/February avoiding council meeting dates and in person at Benson Hall due to ongoing concerns with accessibility to online/Teams meetings.	CW to organise

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