

Special Feature

Shop Talk

Here in the Wychwoods we are so lucky to have a choice of local shops right on our doorsteps. If we are to retain the excellent service offered by these shops we must play our part and support them whenever we can.

Coming

Shipton Post office changed hands in November, a difficult time with the busy Christmas period so close, but the village is pleased to welcome Chirag Patel, or Chris as he is known, his wife Vedika and baby

son Rishi to the Wychwoods. Moving from Battersea could be a 'shock to the system' for some but Chris feels up to the challenge, particularly as shop-keeping is in his blood. Chris grew up helping his father with his two shops in London and his sister has recently taken over a shop in Birmingham. After gaining a degree in Computer Sciences Chris took the decision to stay with what he knew best and has spent the last year looking for the right shop for him and his young family. He hopes that customers will introduce themselves to him so that he can start to put names to faces.

He is planning a few changes in the shop, which will stay under the SPAR banner for now. The first of these will be fresh bread baked on the premises.

With the closure of Costcutters, Chris is hoping to take over their home-delivery service so will be expanding his stock to ensure that he can cover orders. If there is anything that you would like to see on the shelves please let him know. He is also hoping to take over paper deliveries in Milton when the Post Office Stores move to smaller premises.



Vedika and Chirag Patel

Moving

John and Edna Naish are hoping to move into their new premises in Rawlins old shop (next to the deli!) sometime in March, as soon as the shopfitting has taken place.

Although they will no longer be selling newspapers and flowers you will still be able to take your dry-cleaning in there, have your photo taken for passports, driver's licences etc. They will still carry an extensive selection of greetings cards and stationery and of course they will still be offering all the usual Post Office services as well as continuing to run weekly offices at Ascott, Fifield and Churchill.

Expanding

Mark and Claudia at our village deli 'Wychwood Fine Foods' are already having to re-plan their premises to make more space. It is a joy to see such a selection of cheeses, fresh and cooked meats, breads and vegetables on sale, as far as possible locally-sourced.

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But the delights do not stop there – just take a look at all the jars and packets on the well-stocked shelves, the choice is endless, from first-class ingredients to pep-up your home-cooking to luxury chocolates, jams and pickles; you are sure to find something that you fancy.

Celebrating

‘Ivy’s’ flower shop on the Green in Shipton will soon be celebrating its first anniversary. It has taken us a while to get used to having the luxury of a flower shop on our doorstep but Elaine is very happy with the way things are going. As well as local deliveries, Elaine can arrange for bouquets and plants to be delivered nationally and internationally. The shop stocks a good range of cards and gift items as well lovely fresh flowers and potted plants. If there is anything that you need for a special occasion pop in and have a chat – Elaine will be only too happy to order it for you.

Closing

Everyone is very sad that Costcutters in Shipton is to close; the site will eventually be redeveloped for housing, but how much are we all to blame for this sad demise? The Colledge and Schofield families have worked hard running the shop for 14 years now and Rob and Mandy had planned to carry on after Keith and Jean retired. Sadly, with changes to shops in surrounding villages in the last couple of years, trade has dropped away dramatically until it is no longer a viable proposition. Rob gives his farewell on page 59.

Thriving

Thanks to all the readers of The Wychwood who have supported Ascott Village Shop in the past two years since

it opened - they are very much appreciated.

For those readers who are new to the Wychwoods, Ascott Village Shop is a community shop run mainly by volunteers. In addition to everyday necessities, the shelves are bulging with some wonderful luxury goodies and speciality foods. There is also a small range of products catering for special dietary needs. Where possible the shop sources products locally. Suggestions are always welcome from customers for new products to stock.

2005 culminated in Ascott Village Shop winning the runners up prize for Oxfordshire’s Village Shop of the Year Competition 2005. This took the form of over 80 nominations by customers followed by a visit from a mystery shopper.

Community Store

By the village green in Milton is the Co-op Community store, our own 8to8 mini-supermarket, stocking most of our day-to-day needs. The shop, which was expanded and refitted in 2004, carries a good supply of fresh, frozen and packet foods, freshly baked bread, newspapers and drinks, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic! The staff are friendly and helpful and there is always a good ‘buzz’ about the place.

If you value your local, independent shops you have to use them; without customers they can’t survive. Remember, it is **YOU** who will miss them if they disappear!

With so much on offer between all the shops do we need to travel further afield?

Editor