

News for August



One of the nice things about Chiddingly is, after a bit of minor grumbling about a power cut, water outage or slug attack, your neighbours will say things like: 'Well, despite all that, there isn't a better place to live, is there?' or 'Wouldn't give it up for anything. Where else would you find a community like this?'

They're right of course. And nothing sums up the spirit of the village more than its shop and café. Small in size but big in heart, staffed by the friendliest volunteers, managed by the indefatigable Sue: it's unfussy, unpretentious and always good for a chat -- even when a peloton

of cyclists arrive from Lewes or the place is abuzz with the weekly French conversation class. If you want to plug into life in the parish here is a good place to start.

When we first arrived, our landlady suggested it was a handy place to get something for tea, so I was a bit surprised to discover there was really something for breakfast, lunch and dinner as well. In fact, if you can get your act together, unlike me, you could save yourself quite a few journeys to supermarkets if you do the weekly orders for veg, bread and meat. Suddenly confronted with a recipe that demands balsamic vinegar or tomato paste? You'll find them here. The place would give a Notting Hill corner shop a run for its money.

They always buy local where possible: the incomparable Golden Cross cheeses from under a mile away, Chloe's cakes from the Seven Sister's Spice kitchen across the courtyard, Hale Farm eggs, Downsview ice cream, Flint Owl bread from just over the horizon... the list goes on and on. And then local people drop off goodies: There's nothing like exiting the shop with an unexpected bunch of rhubarb or flowers.

It's also sustainable. You can refill your olive oil (really good Sicilian Extra Virgin) washing up liquid and detergent (Ecover) and avoid glass and plastic waste.

In short, a place that gives you a warm feeling about Chiddingly -- and a small miracle!

Oliver 'A Muddles Green Dweller'