

Churchill and Sarsden **ROUNDAABOUT** AUGUST 2026



William Smith Close celebrates thirty joyful years with a street party, and welcomes new neighbours.

VILLAGE HALL NEWS

VILLAGE BARBEQUE ON THE GREEN

Saturday 29th August - 5pm start

Join us on the Green for a community get-together at the Village BBQ. Last year was a fabulous village get together and a great success but we hope for better weather this time!

Cost will be £12 for adults for a steak baguette and £6 child under 12. Please book your tickets in plenty of time so that we can ensure we have enough BBQ supplies. Tickets are available from John Arnott on 07795 388261 or email arnottjohn@aol.com. This will be a bring your own drinks event.

COMMUNITY CAFE AND VILLAGE HALL ACTIVITIES

The **Cafe** will take a break over the summer with the last cafe on Tuesday 28th July and restart on Tuesday 8th September, from 10am - 12 midday as before. Many thanks to the volunteers who run the cafe or bake cakes as well as everyone who enjoy the drinks, cakes and a chat.

The **Post Office** has restarted in the committee room on Tuesday mornings and runs on a weekly basis from 10am - 12 midday. Melissa or her colleague will be running the session.

The **Crafting Group** continues to meet on Wednesday afternoons from 2.30pm and all are welcome, no matter what craft you like to do.

FUND RAISING AND REFURBISHMENT

We were thrilled to receive a donation of £15,000 from the very successful Car Show and many thanks to the Events committee for their support towards further refurbishment. The Parish Council has also generously given the hall £20,000 which is greatly appreciated and will ensure the 2nd phase can now take place. The 2nd phase includes the entrance hall, decoration of the main hall, back entrance and committee room and some external work. We have also applied to other funding foundations and await the results. Should we be successful, the storerooms could also be repaired, updated and properly insulated.

COUNTRYSTYLE CALENDER 2027

Please don't forget that we need village photos for the next edition of the calendar! People and landscapes will be very welcome - further details next month.



Update from Thrive OX7

It's been a busy few months - providing and running teas at the NGS open gardens at Sarsden Glebe and The Old Rectory, Churchill and volunteering on one of the busy entry points at the recent Churchill Car

Show whilst also running our highly popular Tombola!

Examples of our recent work includes funding for life-guarding courses at the Chippy Lido, swim passes during the summer holidays and education and support for dental health especially for young children in the form of our 'Don't Forget Your Toothbrush' campaign. Thrive OX7 has delivered toothbrush kits comprising toothbrushes, paste and two minute timers to the pre school settings in OX7. This is all happening alongside the provision of school uniform and shoe vouchers for the new school year, to primaries and Chipping Norton School for those in financial hardship.

All referrals to Thrive OX7 are via professionals, such as a Health Visitor, Vicar, Pupil Support Advisor, or Social Worker.

We rely solely on fundraising, grants and donations, no matter how small, and these can be made via our website: www.thrive-ox7.org or get in touch with us at contact@thrive-ox7.org.

Instagram: @Thrive_OX7. Facebook: Thrive North Oxfordshire

Andrea Ratcliffe
Trustee & Co-Founder

Churchill & Sarsden Luncheon Club

Please note there will be no luncheon club in August. The lunch returns on 22nd September. We look forward to seeing you all again but in the meantime enjoy the lovely summer weather.

Please contact Pam Wickham on 07706 156002 or email pam@repton-house.co.uk for any further information.

CELEBRATING FIFTY YEARS AT CONDUIT FARM **STEPHEN WRIGHT**



One evening aged 17, Stephen Wright was sitting in his parents' home in Colchester. He had left school at 15 but seeing magnificent great shire horses on television made him think "what about horses as a job?" So his father wrote to the National Stud in Newmarket and they wrote back to say that a job with the Sweetings at Conduit Farm might be just the ticket. That was fifty years ago in 1975 and he hasn't looked back. In fact I don't think he has had time to. It's an all day job for much of the year and during the January to June breeding season he is up for 3-4 hours a night as well.

Chris and Jane Sweeting had bought Conduit from the family of chef Rick Stein, and Stephen worked with Chris for 50 years. But he wasn't just handling horses. He also built houses, chopped down trees, trimmed horses' feet, rasped their top teeth and looked after every aspect of their 'wellbeing' - decades before Daylesford got in on the wellness act.

Many horses were sent to Conduit specifically to calm them down as Sweeting was an early 'horse whisperer' whose dictum was to 'keep as close to Mother Nature as you can'. One stallion called Petoski had been transferred to them from the National Stud due to his temperamental behaviour and soon lifted Chris up by the back of his Levis, ripping them all along the seam and exposing his ex-rugger player's figure. Stephen had a similar experience with a mare who crushed his arm during the night; so he bound it inside a plastic gutter to keep it from more damage till the morning. They're not made like that any more.

There have been many high points in his first 50 years at Conduit: winning the Stable Staff of the Year Award in 2006 must be up there, beating big studs like Sheik Maktoum's Godolphin stud in Newmarket. And as the late Queen Mother's Sunny Boy was based at Conduit, he was once amused to watch King Charles riding the great horse around the farm with his nervous detectives following on steadier hunters. Michael Watkins of Sidings Road, the farrier, made excellent horseshoes for the stud and Roger Seidel was brilliant at mending or making anything from metalwork. It was a real village team.