

The Salisbury Journal - Best Hamlet 2020

Swallowcliffe



Barry Fitzpatrick, Caroline & Pippin Willis, Sophie & Caolilaa Menage, Chairman of the Parish Council Stephen Banas and Judy Fitzpatrick. Picture by Spencer Mulholland

The village of Swallowcliffe, with a population of less than 500 residents, has been crowned Best Hamlet.

Entering the village in the competition was resident Sophie Menage, 41, who moved to Swallowcliffe from Downton two years ago.

“I couldn’t imagine living anywhere else, I just love it here. It’s such an old-fashioned, community way of life,” she said.

“During lockdown we had to quarantine and the village really came together for us, bringing us parcels of books, puzzles. I love how everybody looks after each other.”

In March, the village lost its pub The Royal Oak. However, former Top Gear presenter James May revealed at the end of last month that he bought half of it.

Sharing the news on Twitter, the TV presenter said the pub would reopen in a Covid-secure way on October 28.

Mr May also confirmed that the venue had taken its first booking for Christmas Day, before joking that they would need more bookings to justify buying a whole turkey.

Ms Menage said she was “totally and utterly pleased” to find out the village had scooped the Best Hamlet award and said it was well-deserved.

Stephen Banas, Chairman of Swallowcliffe Parish Council added: “Although Swallowcliffe has a small population of around 180 it has a big heart with a very strong community spirit where people go out of their way to help each other. During the Covid crisis residents have been able to offer support shopping, fetching prescriptions, sharing jokes and generally lifting spirits on our social media groups.”

1st October 2020