



# The Breeze

## Upper Rissington's Newsletter

### Summer 2020

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Welcome to a rather different edition of the *Breeze*! I think it's safe to say that, when we put the last issue together, no-one had any idea just how different life was going to be and how many of the activities we were looking forward to would have to be cancelled. But - Upper Rissington being the community it is - so many amazing things have taken their place. I have to confess that, as a non-resident, I'm really rather envious of all that's been going on! I hope you enjoy reading about it as much as I've enjoyed putting it all together.

One thing that is missing this edition is the advertising section - for obvious reasons. But we would still like to say a big 'Thank You' to everyone who has advertised in the *Breeze* in the past, without whose support we would not have had the funds to have this printed. Many thanks also to the volunteers who deliver the *Breeze* every quarter and to everyone who contributes.

Hopefully by the time it comes to putting the next issue together things will have moved on enough for us to be planning things for the Autumn. Do let us know if you would like anything included or if you have any stories to share. In the meantime - stay safe, stay positive, and help everyone to keep this community somewhere to be proud to belong.

Sue Handy (editor)

# Village News

## SOCIAL COMMITTEE UPDATE

### And Pause....

Under the circumstances you'd fairly anticipate that a group whose purpose it is to bring the village together in fun and social environments might find itself finger-twiddling for the next few months. A number of planned events such as the Easter Egg Hunt and the Summer Fete have had to be cancelled this year. However, it doesn't mean we're not still plotting and scheming for the next opportunity to share events as a community. The next few may not be great handshaking and hugging events, but there will be things we can organise at some stage in the future, which will allow us to safely gather.

### Hunt the Easter Egg Hunt

We'd already bought most of the Easter Eggs for the Easter Egg Hunt. When it became clear that it wouldn't be safe to hold the event we thought through how we might distribute the eggs in a fun and entertaining way. However, with the speed of progress towards lockdown and the opportunity for any contact rapidly diminishing we had to quickly find a way to make sure that at least some children got the benefit of the eggs. We took the decision to donate the eggs to the Rissington School as this was just about the last route open to us for getting eggs to the children. The feedback we received from the School was lovely, it brightened up so many little faces when they received the eggs. We wish we could have got those smiles to every child in the village but some joy from the eggs was better than none. We always have a great Easter Egg Hunt and next year we look forward to its return, bigger and better.



Easter Egg Hunt

### Summer Fete Fate

The Summer Fete is always the first Saturday of July but obviously we won't be able to run it this year. Instead, we will be looking at ideas for something a little later in the year. Something that observes the requirements for Social Distancing but uses the masses of space we have in the village to give us a distance-socialising opportunity. One idea at the early stages of discussion is a Teddy Bears' Picnic later in the Summer. It may be possible, legal and most importantly safe to allocate picnic sites on the field and have everyone bring their own refreshments while we supply music and a few atmospheric additions. We will advertise if and when we feel we can safely run



such an event. The idea will be to bring all those wonderfully entertaining bears to one place to enjoy a picnic as a thanks for the fun and entertainment they've provided during this uniquely challenging time. We won't go ahead until we feel it safe and we can ensure that Bob, Swiss Moo and Winston will comply with their orders to Socially Distance from friends.

### Committee News

We've a great team of people on the Social Committee, drawn

together by their desire to support the development of our community. We run regular events for the community and we always welcome new committee members or on-the-day support. If you'd like to help the committee in the organisation, management or support of events, please get in touch at [ursc@btinternet.com](mailto:ursc@btinternet.com).

## Thanks

Thanks this quarter to the Secretary of our Social Committee, Kath Finch. Kath is always an enthusiastic driver of the group but in this time of less Social Committee activity she's dedicated herself to the coordination of the village volunteer effort and the daily preparation of Bob the Bear, Winston and Swiss Moo. Our Treasurer, David Harrison hasn't been idle either. His daily updates on the lives of the Pots and Planter families must take an enormous amount of effort and imagination, we have to thank him and all of those in the community who work to bring us a daily smile.

**\*\* Stay safe \*\***

# e PIONEERS

on the inbox to read through the latest email Pioneer compilation. So what has everyone been getting up to?

"Well I'm doing much napping ... or should that be Much Napping as in the village of Great Snoring in Norfolk?" writes one Pioneer, while another tells us that "My house has never been so clean and tidy and our biggest decision of our days is 'what's for dinner?!'"

Food does seem to still be a bit of a feature. "I have realised that, for me, a lot of lockdown is about creating projects! Like Project jigsaw (I completed two while it was raining last week). Or, having found some yeast that was 6 months old – Project bread-making. Happily spent a whole day tending to and making a loaf, enjoying the kneading of it and then the lovely smells ... But it was a 2lb loaf and I have had it eat it all! Sunday was Project pancakes ... but the mixture made 12! My waistline is increasing as it is!!" Others are keeping the chocolate companies in business and developing Rubenesque figures, while cream teas via WhatsApp sound very interesting!

It appears that lots of cupboard sorting and gardening is going on ... and what's wrong with "going cross-eyed with all the books read in between"? Perhaps a more telling comment is the following: "Highlight of my week going to Tesco to do a shop, what a thrill!" Or, "Very pleased the binmen took my 50l bag of shredding, still loads to do!" Hmm.

Craft projects, too, are popular (some discovered during the cupboard sorting!), though one Pioneer knitting a 10-colour cardigan warns "If you are passing and there is moaning, groaning and swearing you will know that all it not going well and I have tied myself in knots with all the different colours."

Life isn't always such fun though. "I went through a week or so of feeling really down," was one comment, while another wrote "Like many of you we are missing the children in our lives and it is difficult for their families coping with them at home with the restrictions." It's good to have a group like the Pioneers where we can share both the ups and the downs. I'm sure we're all looking forward

# VILLAGE HALL UPDATE



## **Management Update**

Well the brakes were put on some aspects of the Village Hall's development this quarter. As an ambition, 'the vibrant hub of the community' is temporarily countered by our desire for the health and wellbeing of our community. It doesn't mean that the Management Committee has been sitting on its hands though; we have to be prepared for the time when things progress towards normality. It's unlikely that we will be throwing the doors open in the coming quarter, but we have to be alert to the short-term usefulness of the Hall and the long-term development. Consequently, our meetings have continued to discuss the maintenance and development of the Hall. The meetings now take place as video-conferencing sessions and we're gradually honing the technology. Like many of you, I suspect, we found the first meeting was taken up trying to ensure a full attendance as some of us had to become au fait with the underlying technology. These days it couldn't be simpler, according to the average ten-year-old, and in many respects they are right (though I did see a video of a couple of teens trying to operate an old rotary-dial telephone and I felt a certain Karma). However, we're now up and running and managing the Hall in a safe and expeditious manner.

The Hall is still checked daily by volunteer caretakers as we need to be on top of issues as they develop, such as water leaks and keeping mechanisms like the heating system working and so on. For example, the water is run thoroughly at least once a week to ensure that we don't introduce something like Legionnaires disease into the village.

## **Activities over the Last Quarter**

You may have noticed a new beech hedge around the Hall. We wanted an organic solution to the boundary that would blend in over time with the surrounds and a beech hedge seemed to fit the bill perfectly. As it matures it will help define the boundary and add to the aesthetics of that area of walkway.

You may also have seen the odd sight of David Harrison crawling over the flat roof while the Hall is closed. The regular inspection routines have to carry on and inspections that we can carry out are being performed. Those that need subject expertise, such as fire or lightning protection for example, are still being commissioned from third parties as that's work that can safely go ahead.

Our Secretary Andrew Mitchell, along with other things, has been developing our proposals for the future of the kitchen at the Village Hall. His proposals are in draft form while we seek feedback from community users and aim to find grant funding when the focus of organisations returns to managing everyday issues.

We have proposals for video and audio for the Hall, again these will wait until we can ensure finance for the more ambitious aspects of the proposals.

As you would expect, the finances of the Hall are being tested by this time of no income and ongoing expenses. However, our prudent approach to building reserves and developing capital for the major projects means that we are comfortably able to weather the current storm.

We've saved money where we can without risking future problems. So for example we keep the heating at a level where it will occasionally run and flush through the system as well as making sure that a snap frost doesn't threaten the Hall.

We had a request to use the car park on a Thursday for the distribution and sale of local produce. After discussion and drafting an agreement we approved its use until such time as the Hall is back open for use by the community. Our reasoning for approving use at this time was that it supports local producers and may provide a benefit to the community at a difficult time. There are other considerations for the car park when the Hall is back in full usage so any use after we reopen will be subject to a different agreement.

### **The Trust and The Management Team**

We are still looking to add strength to our Management Team. We would be particularly interested if you have book-keeping capabilities, organisational ability or time to help late at night with daily caretaking duties.

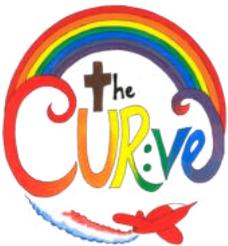
We currently have four Trustees and six Management Team members. We need people who have a sense of community and can focus on making the Hall a great community asset. We like to focus our time in a positive and constructive way. We want to work with people who either have skills that support the management of the Hall or attitudes and creativity that support the appropriate development of the Hall for the community. Enthusiasm is as important as management experience. Please get in touch for an informal chat to see if working with the Management Team is for you. Call 01451 821820 and leave a message or email [secretary@urvh.org](mailto:secretary@urvh.org).

### **Thanks This Quarter**

Let's all give ourselves a big thank you this quarter. Maintaining a positive attitude, helping out those who need a bit of practical and moral support, finding innovative ways of entertaining ourselves and our community, looking out for our neighbours and yes, Gary Black, deciding the night before to practice the Last Post and touching so many people on the morning of VE Day. It's great to manage a facility for a community, but it's particularly good to be part of a community that's come together at the time it's most needed. Keep Safe.

A massive thanks to Jackie Oliver (ably assisted by our Chairman David Oliver) for the hard work and skill they donated this quarter to plant the new beech hedge on the Wellington Road front of the Hall. As always they have been enormously generous with their time and hard work. Thank you.

Please visit [URVH.org](http://URVH.org) regularly to check out the Hall calendar.



Like many groups, CUR:ve isn't able to meet physically during at the moment, but we continue to stay in touch. Rev Tudor Griffiths has been sending a daily email, and Monday evenings provide an opportunity to meet on Zoom to share news and to pray together. Various local churches are also putting services online that we can watch and feel we are still connected.

If you want more details – or if you just want someone to chat to – do get in touch by emailing [sendtocurve@gmail.com](mailto:sendtocurve@gmail.com).

# Cakes for Keyworkers

*We heard of a tremendous amount of effort one member of our community is putting into creating imaginative and thoughtful 'thank you' gifts for key workers. It's a cause for pride that Kate (of Cakes by Desire) has made such an effort and received such great support. We thought it would be nice to share and Kate has kindly written a piece for us to explain what's been happening.*

After two days of cake orders being put on hold and rearranging my baking supplies, my partner Craig suggested I bake some cakes with what flour I had to go to keyworkers. I think I was driving him crazy! Back in my happy place I posted on Facebook asking for keyworker nominations and quickly realised that while not earning anything myself I couldn't sustain the number that was flooding in! I asked the Facebook community for support and before I knew it I was receiving donations of ingredients and money to keep baking! I even had a substantial donation from a friend in America – as she said, "We're all in it together!" The support has been overwhelming, from heartfelt messages, precious bags of flour etc left at my door during the continuing Great Flour Shortage, a local company donating a substantial



sum and even a lemon drizzle cake made for me by a lovely resident of Upper Rissington. Craig has been kept busy too delivering cakes between emergency plumbing jobs, working out which keyworkers can be reached depending on where he was driving to already.

When the total reached £572 within a week I had to pull in help from my daughters who set up a Facebook donations page, donation button on my website and spreadsheet to keep track of it all! I've now baked over 100 loaf cakes, dozens of cookies, cupcakes, brownies and flapjacks. The lemon drizzle seems to have taken on a celebrity of its own and I'm sure I could make it in my sleep! It's all pretty exhausting, especially as regular cake orders have also escalated, but it's so rewarding to be a conduit for the general public to show their admiration and thanks for the keyworkers. Five weeks later the donations have totalled over £1400 and still rising and my order books are also filling up. 6 inch cakes are more popular than 8 inch these days but there's just as much scope for imagination and creativity.



Each Keyworker cake goes out with a note telling them where the cake is from, who funded it and why it is being sent, also thanking them and saying that they **are** appreciated. I ask for a photo if possible to spread some good news and keep everyone informed about where the donations are going. Sometimes one can't be sent eg vulnerable children's homes, prisons etc but many have been received and posted.



A message that particularly touched me was one that was sent privately saying that the note was as gratefully received as the cake during a time when those keyworkers were, quite simply, on their knees. From proud firefighters and police officers, smiling nurses, midwives and care-workers, teachers, shop workers, postal workers and refuse collectors to name but a few – they're all there on the **Cakes for Keyworkers** page (<https://www.facebook.com/donate/916043445522046/>)

I can't tell you how good it feels to know some spirits have been lifted during these crazy times. From the people who support in whatever way they can to the recipients of well-deserved treats and readers of the posts on social media – it makes everyone feel good and that's why I'll keep baking cakes as fast as I can to reach as many of our fantastic, hardworking key workers as possible and hopefully put a smile on their faces and cake in their tummies!

[cakesbydesire.co.uk](http://cakesbydesire.co.uk)



## Rissingtons Local History Society

Although we haven't met since March, I felt it would be nice to say we are hoping to meet in the Autumn dependent on the progress of containing the spread of Covid 19. We did however manage to hold our **March** event with social distancing - an excellent talk by Bill King on *The River Thames at War*. We had a reasonable turnout loyally supporting us.

### Forthcoming events:

We have many talks and events planned for our new programme, but the visit planned in **June** to walk the Blanket Trail in Witney and visit the small museum has had to be cancelled unfortunately. Details of the forthcoming events will be in the next issue – it would be wonderful if we could all meet again and share our enjoyment of History. The AGM which should have been held in May has now been postponed till October.

In the meantime, keep safe and well and we look forward to the future. Any queries, do feel free to contact me:

Sue Brown 01451 820233/[spsb@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:spsb@hotmail.co.uk)

## Just for fun

The Covid-19 pandemic definitely isn't much fun, but here's a trackword to help pass the time, you'll find the nine-letter word appears in a few of this quarter's articles. Usual rules apply ...

H	C	E
O	A	T
C	O	L

# “Dead Slow Ahead” at Rotary in the Rissingtons

The term “dead slow ahead” is not a phrase we use when referring to Rotary in the Rissingtons. As some of you will know, I am an old (Yorkshire) sailor and *dead slow ahead* on a ship is one speed above *stop*.



As you know we worked hard last year creating Rotary Corner at the Upper Rissy School and we had great plans for spring and early summer. Whilst we have not achieved all of them – for obvious reasons – I wanted to share our plans with you so you can see what might be in store for the future.

We had arranged to hold a Comedy night in the village hall in April and plans were on *full ahead* to make this happen. We teamed up with Flock Comedy, a professional theatre company and winner of the Oxford Prestige Awards, to manage a “pop-up” comedy club. Four top professional comedians would have provided us with a fantastic evening’s entertainment and then IT struck and the village hall had to close. Are we downhearted? ... well, yes! But, the event will return and we are targeting Saturday 21 November so watch out for further news.

We were also arranging a “Tool Amnesty” in conjunction with CUR:ve. We are asking you to search through your garage, garden shed, loft, anywhere where old hand and power tools of any condition may be hiding and bring them along to the village hall on a Sunday morning. There we will collect them and pass them on to a professional company who can refurbish them and pass them on directly to Africa or sell them in the UK to provide funds for charities in Africa. Before this got off the ground, IT struck, but we will return with this initiative as soon as we can.



From the above it may sound as if we had stopped but not



so! Our work has started at Great Rissy School where a curtain of netting has been strung across the playground to prevent balls being kicked across the road. We shall be returning soon to begin work on replacing the seats around the trees, wash and clean the decking areas and hopefully back to *full ahead*.

**Rotary in the Rissingtons** meets at 7.30pm on the second and fourth Thursday of the month at Upper Rissington Village Hall and during IT we have been meeting online using Zoom. With an emphasis on informality and flexibility, new members are made very welcome. For further information please contact Andrew at [andrew.mitchell42@btopenworld.com](mailto:andrew.mitchell42@btopenworld.com) or follow the club on Facebook.

## UPPER RISSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

With the onset of Covid-19 the Parish Council (PC) identified the urgent need to set up and run a village volunteer group to support those residents who would be unable, for whatever reason, to go shopping, collect prescriptions and walk their dogs. Within days a full plan was put together, with detailed procedures on what to do and how to do it, a risk assessment, and a full-colour flyer was produced under the United Rissington banner. The alert was sent out and as always the villagers rose to the challenge. A number of volunteers, at really short notice, helped distribute the flyers, which led to 73 DBS-checked volunteers all available to help. The volunteers are organised by 16 street volunteers who report to 5 area wardens and one co-ordinator to bring it all together under the PC umbrella. Well done to all those involved. We've received many messages of thanks from those receiving help from you.



The village Co-op have been a superb support and have arranged a system where villagers can email their shopping order through to the store. The shopping is picked, payment taken over the phone and then the village volunteers deliver. It has made a huge difference to lots of people and has run really smoothly. A big thank you to all the staff there.

Should anyone need further information about shopping or receiving support during the crisis please email [Covid-help@upperrissington-pc.gov.uk](mailto:Covid-help@upperrissington-pc.gov.uk). There are even online exercise classes and a range of other support available by phone/internet.

With the lockdown announcement Bovis Homes closed the site down and this work is still on hold. However we have been able to get the new Barrington Road footpath completed. This is another vital link for the village which helps to safely join the village together. It is part of a wider scheme of works in this area which will include a pedestrian crossing to the Sandy Lane/South Gate Court developments. This is a link which I identified as being needed and have championed and driven forward since January 2019. It has been strongly supported also from the outset by our County Councillor Nigel Moor who, with the Highways Agency, contributed substantial funds to get this completed. Well done and thanks to them. Bovis Homes have also removed two trees which were badly damaged after recent storms, one behind the Officers' Mess and one on Cadet Close.



There was an issue recently with a private contractor burning rubbish and waste on the site of the old watchtower, which was causing a lot of distress for the local residents in this area. I'm pleased to advise that after quick action was taken this has stopped and the contractor has agreed not to do so again.

Finally and most importantly on behalf of the PC, I want to wish everyone continued good health during these unusual times. I also want you all to know that the PC is here and ready to help continually to ensure that every villager is well cared for during this time. If there is any need please just contact us. Keep safe, be kind and let us all look after each other.

**Declan Torris**  
**Chairman, Upper Rissington Parish Council**

# Gardening on a Hill

Well there is no doubt that if you are lucky enough to have a garden then you will be making good use of it at the moment. Not only has the weather been inviting us out there but just having more time available to spend in our gardens has been rewarding for us all. This is a very strange time we are all in at the moment and is taking its toll on many of us, but if you can find some escape from it all for a short time then we will all get through it and possibly learn a few things about ourselves at the same time.

I believe having green spaces to sit in quietly relaxing can be so rewarding and gardening itself can be so beneficial for mental health and well being. Studies have found that the mental health benefits of gardening are extensive. Not only can regular gardening reduce mental health problems like depression and anxiety, but it can also reduce stress. I am lucky enough to spend my days working in gardens. Creating spaces for people to enjoy is one of the pleasures of my job and to top it I get to enjoy the space too. Yes its hard work and the heat can be unbearable at times but the benefits outweigh that ten fold.

The weather has been such a benefit to us all at this difficult time allowing us to get outside and exercise; however it has its down side in the garden. Apart from the obvious lack of rain water, early summer flowering plants can go over too quickly and we can find our garden borders bare for a time. This is the plants way of making sure it sets seed in the anticipation of a drought. Watering your plants regularly will not only prolong the flowering but help the plant grow strong enough to cope with the stresses later on.

Ideally collect rain water over the winter months to water your garden. Water plants early in the morning, to avoid evaporation loss during the day. On warm summer days, evening watering is also likely to be effective, the dry soil soaking it in readily and low humidity at night reducing evaporation. It is better to water the garden before drought really sets in, to keep the soil moisture levels even and avoid soil moisture deficits building up which can stress plants.

## **Mulching**

Use deep organic mulches such as compost, leaf mould, bark or wood chip to keep moisture in and help smother weeds around plants. To be effective, keep them topped up to a minimum depth of 10-15cm (4-6in) to smother established annual weeds. Keep the woody stems of shrubs clear of mulch to prevent rotting. Ground cover or landscaping fabrics can be laid over recently cleared soil to suppress re-growth of old weeds and prevent moisture loss.

## **Watering**

Types of watering may include sprinklers but these have limited use in gardens, mainly to water the lawn when essential. Hoses and watering cans are the most effective ways of watering; they should be aimed specifically at the stem bases beneath the foliage canopy, leaving the surrounding soil dry. This helps to limit weed problems and ensures all the water goes where it is needed. Seep hoses are hoses or pipes with holes in them, which deliver water accurately to established plants and plants in rows. They can be hidden beneath soil or mulch, which also avoids evaporation losses. They work best on heavy soil where the water spreads further sideways as it sinks than on lighter soils.



Established trees and shrubs do not generally need watering, as they have such wide-ranging roots that spread through the soil. However here in Rissy the soil is so shallow their growth may be improved by watering when they are under drought-stress. Trees and shrubs planted less than five years ago have increased water requirements and may suffer drought-stress without watering. Newly sown or newly planted areas are very vulnerable to water-stress, and watering these should be a high priority.

Herbaceous perennials often need watering to boost their performance in hot, dry spells. Plant choice is crucial if you want to achieve a drought-proof border.

### **Flower borders**

If you have gaps in your flower border, there's still time to fill them with quick-growing annuals grown from seed. You can also buy flowers in pots from garden centres, but they will need to be watered in well and kept moist once planted.

It is less work in the long run to opt for perennials that will flower year after year, or wild flowers. Foxgloves are one of our most spectacular native wild flowers; red campion is a similar shade and makes an ideal companion, while ragged robin is an even deeper pink with delicately cut petals that will brighten up damper corners.



### **Wildlife in the garden**

If your garden has dense cover, such as thick hedges, you may attract summer visitors, such as the willow warbler and chiffchaff, which breed from May to July. All the warblers are shy birds and can be difficult to spot but we have lots of other visitors to our gardens that are less shy.

If you get tiny pests such as aphids on your plants, it's best to avoid spraying, as pesticides will also kill ladybirds and other helpful insects. Many birds, such as the blue tits, will make a good meal out of insect pests.

It is also a good idea to have some water available to the wildlife that visit your garden. Bird baths are useful but you must remember to fill them each day. A turned up bin lid or small pond will make a hot day bearable for birds and other wildlife that visit the garden.



### **Jobs to do now**

- Prune spring flowering shrubs such as lilac, spiraea, forsythia and broom as soon as they have finished flowering.
- Trim box or privet if it is growing rapidly, but first check there are no nesting birds.

**Weeds** can be controlled whenever they are troublesome, which is usually in the spring and summer months. This may be done by running a hoe over a bed or between rows to kill most weed seedlings. For maximum effectiveness, choose a dry day with a light wind, so that the seedlings will dry out on the surface of the bed rather than re-rooting into moist soil. Alternatively, try hand-pulling or hand-weeding with a fork. Pull up annual weeds by hand before they set seed. Perennial weeds should be dug out with as much root (or bulb) as possible, using a hand or border fork. Hand weeding is easiest on lighter soils and should only be attempted where it will not disturb the roots of garden plants. Further pulling may be necessary with persistent weeds such as bindweed or couch grass where small root sections left behind can re-grow into new plants.

***Happy gardening and keep safe..***

# Lockdown Potty?

Many of you will have smiled and laughed at the antics of *The Pots* and the *Planter* families, the imaginative creations of Jill and David Harrison. They've been entertaining us daily with their antics on their Facebook Pages. We asked David to give us a bit of background to the brilliant pot based-families and the following is ...

## A Potted history of the Pots

It all started with getting an allotment. Jill, for a bit of fun, wanted a scarecrow for the allotment but one made out of old plant pots. Where do you start, what sort of size, how many plant pots and how would you construct it?

Size was determined by what plant pots we had and what would make a reasonably-proportioned plant-pot person. Jill did a lot of experimenting with different materials for holding the pots together, but it came down to strong wire and cable ties, with a method of spacing the pots out. And then with the finishing touches, the original Mr Pots was born.



*Down on the allotment 15<sup>th</sup> October 2019*

Jill liked it so much, she decided to build another one for the allotment, keeping the original Mr Pots at home with us. This second pot-person was built quite quickly, as she'd learnt what needed to be done on the original. Now the allotment had a pot-person scarecrow, Mr Planter.

With plant pots to spare, Jill started on another idea for a plant-pot dog for the allotment! Here the issues were a little different, as this pot-dog needed to be self-supporting and did we have enough small plant pots? Soon Potty was born and joined Mr Planter down at the allotment.



*Tools of the 'trade' and work in progress*

Summer, Autumn and Winter went by, but just as Spring was starting, lockdown began and ideas for supporting and entertaining people started in our village. It was seeing Bob's scenes that led us to do something ourselves with our current Pots family. And so, on April 9<sup>th</sup>, it began – the story of the Pots.



Jill is the main creator, but I do have ideas myself. I usually hear "I have an idea," and I ask, "Is it more pots or another scene?" One time Jill said, "It's a horse." "What, a horse!?" I said. My main job was scene-setting for a photograph and then touching it up on the computer ready for the next story. From ideas and enjoying the creation of the Pots, thoughts led to making more plant-pot people and animals, and it's still going on!

*Mr Pots challenged Mr Planter to a game of Polo*

It's amazing what you can find round the house that can be repurposed for a Pots scene. Some scenes are quick and easy but others have taken a few days thought, or building something – for example, the treasure chest from the Pirates scene was home-made from scrap wood.

We have a lot of trees round the edge of our garden which are very handy to suspend pot-people from for a scene, or we use a garden stand with a birdfeeder pole which has hooks on the top. Failing that, we can use long metal fence pins with gaffa tape to hold them in place. Besides gaffa tape, lots of small clips and cable ties are used to help set the scene, holding things in place.



*A simpler scene setup but with attention to the detail*



*The Pirate scene, a lot more work involved*



*Treasure chest built, ready for the finishing touches*

The Pots family and Friends have taken over our lives somewhat but we do enjoy it, and especially seeing the lovely comments people leave on our postings. They have now been seen over a wide area, from (so far) Plymouth (UK) to Washington State to the Czech Republic, and have been featured in a family zoom weekly get-together!



*Before - Setting the scene for the portrait shot*



*After – scene complete and computer tweaks done*

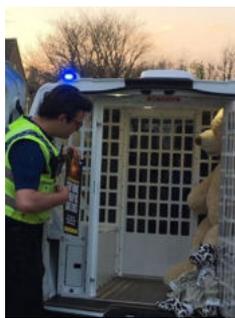
# Bob the Bear and Friends

*One of the positive outcomes of the lockdown has been the way the community has come together to identify and help where it can and where it's wanted. One of the key drivers of our village plan to make sure that everyone has a number they can call for a chat or to get supplies is Kath Finch. But Kath doesn't confine her activities to the serious and essential, Kath and her family have developed the legend that is Bob the Bear, together with his accomplices the frivolous Swiss Moo and the curmudgeonly Winston. We asked Kath about the inspiration for Bob and how they keep the ideas coming ...*

Early on in the lockdown, villagers' rainbows and teddy bears started to appear in windows, providing some fun and diversion for the children as they went about their daily walks. We wanted to join in, but as can easily be seen, our bear Bob does not fit in a window. We decided to put him on display outside and that's when the ideas started to flow. My family got 100% behind the idea and using their enthusiasm, imagination and sense of fun we started to develop a whole life for Bob. After a trip to the loft my two teens brought down everything that might be of use and so the spreadsheet was born. This was a list of all of the scenarios we could set up for Bob. His personality started to develop and we have such fun setting up each day.



We've been encouraged by the feedback; Bob has regular visitors and it's so wonderful to hear excited and giggling children come to see what he's up to today. It's as much fun to pick up the smile on some of the adults too, we've seen you pose for pictures with Bob and it quite makes our day.



Quite early on Bob made a couple of friends. Swiss Moo and Winston (provided by friends and neighbours) add tremendously to the fun and soon started to create a stir as their antics got more outrageous and the personalities of the trio started to develop. Perhaps one of the most memorable of their escapades was when we decided to pose them drunk. In itself it was fairly humorous but the intervention of PCSO Charlie Symes was so appropriate and such fun. Bob and Swiss Moo were cautioned, as they should have been, and they were lucky not to be carted off. Bob was tweeted that evening on the Gloucester Constabulary Twitter page. The picture is of the two of them looking sheepish and taking their caution in apologetic mood.

Following the notoriety with the police we had an amazing prop provided by our neighbour: a vintage Silver Ghost Rolls Royce. Who in the world can claim such a prop for a teddy? It even got a mention on radio when the lovely Gracie spoke with Chris Evans on his morning show. He asked her what she had done yesterday that she'd never done before and she told him about Bob in his car. As a car enthusiast we thought Chris would like to see the car so sent him a photo. We can understand why anyone would doubt the story without seeing it for themselves!





Bob has done so much in such a short time. Every Thursday we dress him up as a key worker to show support. He's helped out by accompanying Jason Shailer on the North Cotswolds Tri and Run Teddy Bear Challenge, and in the future, we hope to develop a charity calendar with the best of Bob and co featuring each month. He's also been a pretty fortunate bear in that he's been receiving gifts including chocolate and cake (thank you Kate). It's hardly



any surprise that it's getting more and more difficult to fit him in his costumes. We've also had some wonderful cards for him including a lovely picture from Olivia, and a fabulous thank you card from the Robertsons, and from Polly and Rowan. We absolutely love it when he gets these. He's become a bit of a celebrity with family and friends around the world as well. On one rainy day we even had Bob in a zoom meeting with our four year old nephew



in the USA.

While it's been fun placing Bob in his poses, we've been generally amazingly fortunate with the weather. We do however have wet weather plans and the zoom meeting was just one wet weather activity. Some things oughtn't be put on Facebook, but how else would you see what he's up to? That was the judgement behind Bob's appearance in one of his wet weather activities; reading in the confines of the smallest room meant that the room was out of bounds to us for most of the day. What can we say? He's a prolific reader.



We even had Bob join in the VE day celebrations. Unfortunately, his parachuting skills aren't up to much. Which is why the following day visitors will have seen Bob in his wheelchair. It is a challenge coming up with ideas for Bob and we're amazed by some of the gear we get hold of to help dress him and his team up. My husband and children are constantly challenged to add those bits of detail that make the whole thing as much fun for us as it is for those who come and visit Bob. But it does give us an extra motive for wishing an end to the current constraints — what happens if



## Useful Contacts In Upper Rissington

This is a list of people and organisations in Upper Rissington who provide goods or services in the village. Inclusion in this list is not a recommendation. If you would like your business included the cost will be £5 towards the printing costs of 'The Breeze'. Contact [URNEWS@btinternet.com](mailto:URNEWS@btinternet.com) or call 07592 533596 for more details.

Other useful sources of information about the village include the facebook page and the independent website [www.upperrissington.org](http://www.upperrissington.org). Please note that any opinions expressed on these sites are personal to the contributors and are not promoted by 'The Breeze'.

Name	Service	Web/email	Phone
Police	Non-Emergency Number		101
Albion Water	Water Service Emergency Customer Services		0800 917 5819 03300 242020
Parish Council	Clerk	<a href="mailto:clerk@upperrissington-pc.gov.uk">clerk@upperrissington-pc.gov.uk</a>	01451 810839
Little Hurricanes	Baby and Toddler Group	<a href="mailto:littlehurricanes@hotmail.com">littlehurricanes@hotmail.com</a>	
Social Committee	Community Events	<a href="mailto:URSC@btinternet.com">URSC@btinternet.com</a>	07592 533596
Village Hall		<a href="mailto:bookings@urvh.org">bookings@urvh.org</a>	01451 821820
The Breeze	Newsletter	<a href="mailto:URNEWS@btinternet.com">URNEWS@btinternet.com</a>	07592 533596
Rissington Singers	Village Choir	<a href="mailto:rissingtonsingers@gmail.com">rissingtonsingers@gmail.com</a>	
CUR:ve	Church in UR	<a href="mailto:sendtocurve@gmail.com">sendtocurve@gmail.com</a>	
UR Sports	Saturday football	<a href="mailto:blackgary4@aol.com">blackgary4@aol.com</a>	
John Surch	Great Rissington Cricket Club - Seniors	<a href="mailto:surch@gotadsl.co.uk">surch@gotadsl.co.uk</a>	01451 820567 07808 307364
Pete Garrett	Great Rissington Cricket Club - Juniors	<a href="mailto:Petegarratt117@gmail.com">Petegarratt117@gmail.com</a>	07788 896496

The next issue of 'The Breeze' is due to be published in September 2020 Please contact us at [URNEWS@btinternet.com](mailto:URNEWS@btinternet.com) or call 07592 533596 if you would like to contribute articles or news items. The deadline for contributions is Friday 14th August 2020.

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(picture courtesy David Harrison)