

## **Will we, won't we?**

It's a bit like the hokey-cokey, one foot in, one foot out! As a country, in May and June we made considerable progress towards a sort of normality. And at the same time it brought more uncertainty, more causes for concern, and a greater need to do a personal risk assessment over every decision. Should I hug the family (yes), meet a friend in a pub for lunch (another yes); venture back to the pub (I did and met friends of my age outdoors, all double-jabbed); whether to go to an indoor exhibition (I did and in general people were very wary, moving cautiously round each other). And whether to take the family to the circus – that's a yes again. Family groups sat in bubbles with gaps between them and everyone wore a mask throughout the performance. We're going to have to live with social distancing and masks for some time yet, I fear.

No thoughts of a holiday yet, though I might try the Northumberland coast in September. The cost of UK holidays has gone through the roof this year – and maybe next year too as I found when I came to book a holiday house in Cornwall in 2022 for my 80th and eldest granddaughter leaving school and off to university. In the earlier waves of Covid us oldies were impacted worst, but it's been tough for the youngsters too, with disrupted schooling, online learning, exams cancelled and replaced with teacher assessments, and little social contact with their friends. All for something that didn't affect them – at least until the recent Delta 'scariant' (as I've heard a 'variant of concern' named recently).

The June Parish Council meeting, the first where we were obliged to go back to face-to-face, was a bit of a disaster, not just for me but for others too. I thought our church had a good acoustic – it does for music but the spoken word is a bit of a challenge unless you speak **VERY SLOWLY** and **VERY CLEARLY** ... . And as I guessed, I couldn't see – either with glasses on and steamed up, or off. We got through it but it wasn't great for what is grandly known as the democratic process. By the next meeting we are promised that all restrictions will be lifted – we shall see.

At least my garden is taking off after a cold and sometimes exceedingly wet spring. Wild swings in temperature from 28° mid-June to 12° the following week. I indulged in an air-conditioning unit last year to the great amusement of my family – but I've told myself it will be a good investment. We need to be prepared for more unpredictable weather as the effects of climate change become clearer.

I very much hope that my July ramblings will be the final ones. We won't be done with Covid but maybe we've come to a point where we can live with it. So a look back at the last 18 months, what was bad, what good and whether we and the world are any different at the end of it.

