

## Notes from a Lush Garden, 30 June

Such a confusing month now the certainties of lockdown are no more, and for many life is returning to a sort of normality. But nothing has really changed out there except that the NHS is no longer overstretched, so I'm going by what feels right for me and my family. I've been officially told by HMG that I needn't shield any more – not that I ever did – but we over-70s are still supposed to be self-isolating while the rest of the country gets ready to go down the pub.

I'm now in my elder son's 'bubble', so when he and granddaughter arrived on the doorstep and gave me a big hug I nearly burst into tears.

In a determined effort not to get institutionalised I'm venturing out into some shops, armed with sanitiser, mask and gloves. Masks are a huge problem if you wear specs as I do – you quickly steam up! Haircut booked (great relief!), and a big birthday treat coming up – a meal in a pub with all my family.

The Covid archive keeps me busy: it will be so interesting, looking back, to read what was concerning us individually and as a community in these weird and unsettling times. At Skype PC meetings we wrestle with opening the play areas safely and discuss the idea of supporting pubs and cafes who want to have tables and seating outside. The idea of a continental-style café culture instead of cars in the Market Place does appeal.

I've lost faith in the government's ability to come up with a coherent strategy to deal with this pandemic. With no vaccine in sight, and no effective track and trace system in place, will it be like this until next spring? Are they stress-testing the system to see how it copes before the expected second spike happens and/or the bad weather starts? Watch this space ...

Rereading this it all sounds a bit gloomy. It shouldn't be as I'm content with my newly mapped out life. We've had some glorious weather to sit outside and enjoy the garden which is lush and full, with roses and clematis blooming like never before. But I find it difficult to feel cheerful with what's going on in the world right now. Sorry to sound like a miserable old crone – must try harder ...

*Mary Robinson*