**File:** **P7\_GMT20210806-125651\_Recording.m4a**  
**Duration:** **0:64:50**  
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**Typist:** **1012**

START AUDIO

[0:17:40]

Ian: So, that’s great. Right. Can I just go back, I could hear you a little bit? I asked you what you thought the villages had in common, and you started talking about you mentioned a community spirit, that was shared. Then you started talking about how community action things tend to happen in individual villages, is that what you were saying?

Respondent: Yes, yes. I think so, I think the villages are very separate. There is not a lot of crossover between community groups and people. I am probably one of the few that, like, I live in [REDACTED PLACE NAME] but my mum lives in [REDACTED PLACE NAME].

I am one the few people who see both what is going on in two different villages, because my mum she volunteers in [REDACTED PLACE NAME], and I do some volunteer work here in [REDACTED PLACE NAME]. But on the whole, the groups don’t cross over at all.

Ian: Yes. You just mentioned there that you do volunteering in [REDACTED PLACE NAME]?

Respondent: Yes.

Ian: What does that look like on a weekly, or daily basis? What kind of things do you do?

Respondent: Right, well, I haven’t done a lot for a while to be honest. I do do the admin the local [REDACTED PLACE NAME] and [REDACTED PLACE NAME] Facebook page, I do the admin for that. That is just constant, I just, you know, keep a check. I just volunteer for that and I just keep a check on it, to make sure that things that people post on it are appropriate. I do that, that is an ongoing thing.

Then obviously during the pandemic, I just volunteered to help with neighbours, and if anyone needed any help within the community. If anyone needed any shopping, or any errands run and things, but that was very- I started off just doing it anyway with neighbours. Then a bigger group was set up, and it became more organised, and I took a step back from that in the end.

I have done things over the years. I helped organise children’s galas, I don’t know if you know what a children’s gala is? A village sports day type thing. I have done that in the past, but I haven’t for a few years because my children are grown up, and it was mainly around them.

Ian: Yes, that makes sense. Okay, good. I want to talk about being the admin for that page, but before that, you said, because that is in my order of questions, but I don’t want to miss out things that you mentioned, that might be helpful. During the pandemic you said you made yourself available to support, and help people in the community?

Respondent: Yes.

Ian: First of all, just so I get a good idea- so I am thinking of the right thing. What sort of things would that have been?

Respondent: Very early on before we really had a very good understanding of what was going on with COVID, just put little notes through my neighbours with my contact details on, because I live in a street where there are quite a few elderly people. They were higher risk. If anyone needed any help getting shopping or anything, if anyone was isolating. Or anyone

struggling not wanting to use public transport. Just made myself available really.

Ian: Great. Then you said there was some attempt to centralise that sort of stuff, and organise it?

Respondent: Yes, one lady within the village, she was much more proactive than me in that. Obviously, a few people like me who contacted their immediate neighbours. She tried to- she brought everybody together, and made that much more organised, and she set up another, a specific COVID type Facebook support page that people used during the pandemic.

At that point I just took- other than sharing information on the other general village site, I took a backseat from that because she was very good at it, and she just took off and did it. I continued working throughout the pandemic at that point, so I didn’t have as much time on my hands to do stuff. I was a name for them if needed.

Ian: What was that group that was set up? Was that the- yes you just tell me, I get mixed up with all the groups.

Respondent: (Laughter) I am not quite sure what it actually ended up being called. It was just the village support COVID group.

Ian: Yes, it was the COVID support group that covered all of-? [Crosstalk 0:22:49] Yes.

Respondent: Yes. It was Kesha Gair, I don’t know if you have been in touch with her, but she set it up yes.

Ian: No, I haven’t spoken to her, but a couple of people have mentioned-

Respondent: Yes, she has done a lot of work. She took over. I think a lot of people were thinking we should do- individually we were thinking, they should do something to help the neighbours, and then she co-ordinated it, and took over with it. She has been very outstanding really in what she ended up achieving.

Ian: Then you mentioned you are an admin for [REDACTED PLACE NAME] & [REDACTED PLACE NAME] Facebook page?

Respondent: Yes.

Ian: Which one is that?

Respondent: I think it is called [REDACTED PLACE NAME] and [REDACTED PLACE NAME] News and Views, but I can’t be 100% sure. I can confirm that with you. Yes, is that what you have got me down as? (Laughter)

Ian: To be honest, [ANON] has told me about all the groups, and then I have said can you speak to- but I am not, I am purposely, before I speak to people, not looking at any information [ANON] has said. I don’t want it to influence what I ask and speak about.

Respondent: Right, because there are a couple of [REDACTED PLACE NAME], because there was a breakaway group, that was more for buying and selling, you know. There have been a few different ones over the years. Yes, you are probably going to ask me this, I just sort of ended up, I didn’t like, put my hand up and say, “I want to be admin for this page.” I sort of ended up with it through some other stuff I did years ago. A lot of people left, admin left the page and I ended up doing it. (Laughter)

Ian: Yes so, the group existed already? And other admins moved on?

Respondent: I didn’t set it up. I was involved in doing some work with the children in the village years ago. It was actually, I got involved around the time of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, which is probably about 5, 7 years ago, I am not sure. We did some stuff in the village for that. It was through that, that one of the other admins added me to the admin. Over time, admin had left and I have just stayed with it.

Ian: Yes, are you the only admin then, or is there somebody new?

Respondent: No, there is another lady that does admin, who is probably the head person. I just like to be in the background, just checking it. I work from home a lot, so my phone is on a lot. It is easier for me to do it. It is not an overly active page so it is quite easy for me to keep an eye on it.

But she is more- if something does go wrong on it. If anyone in the village is having an argument, or a debate, or she thinks there is something, you know, she is more active in challenging stuff, and doing things. Like I say, I just support her really.

Ian: You say the group isn’t that active. Is it a page, or a group sorry?

Respondent: It is just a page, anybody can ask to join, it is a membership group. They fill in a little form to say that they want to be a member, but to be honest it is very hard to police that. You have just got to go look at what they say, and hope that they are genuine people. Then people can post. Anyone can post on it but it comes to admin. All posts, all original posts come through to admin, and comments are only by people in the group.

Ian: Okay, so I could ask to be a member of your page, and then if I posted something, say I said, “Has anyone seen my dog, it went missing?” You, or the other admin, would have to approve that.

Respondent: I would approve that, or the other lady yes, yes.

Ian: So, it is very proactive rather than reactive?

Respondent: Yes, but comments can be quite- when people within the group. We have had a few issues with, I don’t know, children, teenagers, having a bit of fun and they are writing a few inappropriate comments and stuff. Sometimes we have to turn the comments off on posts, and things like that.

Ian: Okay, so you don’t have that over comments, just original posts?

Respondent: No, no. I soon realised if something inappropriate has been there, because want I find is, I get loads of membership requests. My phone starts beeping, and I think, “There must be something on the page that people are interested in.” (Laughter) I will go and look and there will be some idiot has put something on a post, and they are sharing it. Then I would go and turn the comments off, and challenge it. People can obviously highlight there is an issue as well. They can send us a- that they are concerned with something that has gone on the page.

Ian: Okay. So, your response is if something inappropriate was on, would be to just remove, turn comments off?

Respondent: Yes, well it depends what it is. If it is totally inappropriate, we will remove the comment and contact the person who has made it. We might end the person’s membership if they have broken our membership agreement. Yes, that is basically it.

Ian: What would be an example of something- that thing seems really intriguing. All of a sudden you get loads of people asking to be members, and you think, “What is going on here?” What would be an example of something like that, where you then went and thought, “Oh that is not appropriate for this group.”

Respondent: I am trying to think from the past what we have had. We have had somebody complaining about children moving things like, you know, the- trying to think of the word, a fence around a building site, you know temporary? Say somebody building- mending a hole in the road, and they put up a temporary safety barrier? Some children removed a bit of that to make a den with in the woods, and someone complained about it. There was a debate between people in the village, “Children will be children.” As opposed to, “These are hooligans, these are bad children.” There was a bit of a debate and it got a bit heated. That is the sort of thing we turn the comments off and just say we think this has got a bit out of hand. Something like that.

Ian: Okay, so it is not necessarily the original post is offensive or inappropriate?

Respondent: No.

Ian: Just the reaction it gets?

Respondent: Yes. We are pretty good at policing the original posts. A couple have slipped the net that I just hadn’t thought about. Or the other lady hadn’t, you know, that it caused a reaction that people weren’t happy with them.

There was somebody put a post once about they had seen some smoke in the village, and did anyone know where the smoke was coming from? I thought, “Well that’s alright.” But apparently someone had had a house fire, and then someone notified me, and said “I think it is a bit inappropriate because this person might not know yet that their home has been damaged.” Do you know what I mean? That sort of thing, we have that, so then I just turned that off. Then lots of people wanted to know, because lots of people wanted to know where the smoke was coming from, and who’s house it was, and things like that.

Sometimes I have made a little error of judgement. I have left something go through and I thought, actually when someone has questioned it with me, I thought, “No probably I shouldn’t have put that. I shouldn’t have let that post that that person wanted to put on could be approved.” Then we have stopped it.

Ian: Okay. How many people follow the page?

Respondent: Off the top of my head, I am saying around about 500, but I can confirm that with Sue. I can go and look, and I can confirm that.

Ian: I think I might be able to see that if I check, even if I am not a member of the group, yes. How many, would you say, active people you have? If you don’t know any of these questions, just say you don’t know, obviously. How many would you say are active people that, I guess, engage with the group, at least once a week or more?

Respondent: I don’t think there are that many that are regular people. We have- there is probably a handful of local businesses that post weekly. Like the local pub, and the local village institute, and there is a café that do meals, and they will put an advert up.

We have rules that we try and cut down the amount of advert type things, but if it is happening in the villages then it is alright. They are regular posts, other than that it is just basically things that just happen rarely that someone will post about. Their cat has gone missing, or they are asking about something that has happened in the village.

I think a lot of people follow the posts on it, but not that many people actually regularly contribute to it. It is just as and when something occurs to somebody, and they want information. People will ask things like recommendations for a decorator, or an electrician. It is not often.

Ian: You said you have rules about, for example, pubs putting on too many posts promoting things, and things like that. Do you just have a public set of rules that you make available to everyone?

Respondent: Yes, they are there on the sky. We don’t want have the whole newsfeed to just be blocked by adverts. If someone has already had an advert out to say, “You know, we are doing Sunday dinners.” Or whatever, and they are posting it every few hours or something, we don’t, we just put one, because otherwise other things get lost because the adverts are just coming up.

Ian: Yes. What sort of posts do you think are the most useful, and the most appropriate, for a Facebook page like yours?

Respondent: I think things like sharing information about what is actually happening within the village. If there is a new group starting, or if times of something has changed, or something has been cancelled. If someone is trying to deal with an issue within the village, and they are trying to get likeminded people together, like a litter pick or something like that.

The whole basis is- the reason I got involved, was because I was doing some events for children around the Queen’s Jubilee and a gala, like an old-fashioned kid’s gala, so it was advertising that, and that is how I got linked into it, in the first place. It is sharing information really about what is happening.

Ian: I guess the other side of that then, what sort of information do you think is, not completely inappropriate, but less appropriate, or less useful?

Respondent: People debating things. People having- as I said, debating. People have very different opinions on certain things. I don’t know, say kids that have got dirt bikes, and stuff, some people are pro the kids in the village, villagers going around the back lanes on these dirt bikes, around fields and things, and other people are totally against it.

So, they have little debates, which sometimes debates are useful because it shares perspectives, or insight into it. I don’t think it is always positive and constructive, it can be quite, you know, it can cause friction within the villages, or the community. I don’t think that is very helpful.

Or any sort of advertising for things outside of the village, because you have people that join the group because they want to advertise something going on somewhere else. Sometimes it is useful if we haven’t got that particular thing happening. It is in the nearest town, or whatever, I think that is useful, but it is not useful if it is taken away from the local groups.

Ian: Yes. Is this just something that you and the other admin would address on a case-by-case basis?

Respondent: Yes, I think so, because you never know what you are going to get. As I say, I am not a professional admin person, I just do it by default really. I would say, winging it with a bit of common sense, if there is such a thing as common sense?

Ian: Yes. That is a good way to describe how adults do a lot of things isn’t it?

Respondent: Yes. As I say occasionally, I make a mistake and I think, “Oh that is alright to be shared.” Then someone says- there was one, someone had shown some CCTV of a couple of kids that had been a nuisance to this person, and it was just the backs of their heads, you couldn’t really see who the children are, but if they had been my children, I would know they were mine.

Ian: Yes.

Respondent: I think I shared that, and then my friend, I mean, I work in children services, and my friend messaged me, and said, “I don’t think you should share that”. I thought, “You know what? Yes.” Kids to me you couldn’t be, but I thought, “No, yes, you are right.” So, I didn’t allow that. I put it up and then quickly put it down when she contacted me. It is difficult really, to have the insight into different posts, and what is appropriate, and what isn’t. Most of the time it just a bit of common sense.

Ian: Yes absolutely. Would you say it is a lot of work, between the two of you?

Respondent: I thought that during the pandemic it was getting a bit much. I don’t really know the other lady who does it, that is the other thing, we don’t really know each other. Occasionally, we will have a little conversation over something that is on the page, and debate something ourselves, but we don’t really know each other.

Somebody contacted me who has a local business, and asked if they could become admin for the page, and me and her had a little debate and thought that actually it probably wasn’t very wise, because they had their own business, and they might have ulterior motives for wanting to do it, and make sure their posts were put up there.

That made me and her have a discussion about, is it too much for us to do it? At the time, she felt that it was alright for her she was managing it, and I just said, “Well I will continue with it. Because as I say I just ended up doing it by default really, and give you a little bit of back-up.” But we did say at some point the future, because the membership has grown a lot, we might need to look at opening it up to other admin.

Ian: The person I spoke to this morning runs a Facebook group, as opposed to a page.

Respondent: Right.

Ian: From what I understood from that conversation is, the groups are a bit more open where anyone can post anything.

Respondent: Right, yes.

Ian: I know you didn’t set up the page, but do you feel as a community thing, having a page which has got a lot more control from admins, is a better model?

Respondent: Well, it safeguards from inappropriate things being put up, doesn’t it? Because, we haven’t had a lot of inappropriate stuff come through us, but it does happen. If there was no- I think if you can do it and have somebody in control of admin, I think it is always better because the internet, people use it for all sorts of things these days, don’t they?

I think if you want to try and prevent people getting offended, or any sort of online abuse or anything, you do need some sort of control over what is being posted. Because people don’t tend to adhere to rules. I suppose if you had a specific group around like an activity, like, I don’t know, a yoga group or the village hall or something, and it was only members of the village hall, that would be fine. If you are doing it for the whole of the village, I think you do need some sort of policing on it. Some sort of- somebody just checking what is going on.

Ian: Yes. It is interesting you mention really specific groups, like the ones you have just mentioned about the village hall or whatever. Because they would have a specific reason to be members of that group, for obvious reasons. What do you think is the role of the news and views group?

Respondent: I think ideally it is open to anybody in the village or in the surrounding area. Even somebody who used to live here, or has got an interest in the village, so it is sharing information about what is happening in the village really. It is non-specific, it is general, so everyone can contribute if they need to.

Ian: Yes, it makes sense.

Respondent: We get a lot of posts about somebody has seen a dog running around the field, or something. They seem quite successful in getting the owner and the dog reunited very quickly. Then people might not be, like, it is just a wider audience really than a specific targeted audience, who has a specific hobby or interest I suppose.

Ian: Yes, that makes sense.

Respondent: Or something new starts up, like I don’t know, a new sports or leisure group or something. Even something that is already existing. Just so people who move into the village know it exists really. If something you have never done before but you might just see it and think, “Oh I might try that.” Where you might not specifically be looking for the page on that, or that interest, but you might just see it. It is just letting people know what there is.

Ian: Yes.

Respondent: Yes. Sorry, the bowling club at [REDACTED PLACE NAME], they have started putting a weekly thing on to say, anyone who wants to join the bowling club come down on the Sunday morning, and we will let you have a practice. It is things like that, it is targeting a wider- it is keeping everyone informed isn’t it about what is going on.

Ian: Do the admins of the group ever post things as the group?

Respondent: The only thing that we have ever done is, the other lady, she sometimes put a housekeeping type message on, if she feels people are trying post too many adverts, or things have gone a little bit out of hand. She might put something like that, but no I don’t really post as the group at all. I have shared things to it for other people before, like put my own post directly on it. Not very often, only occasionally.

Ian: Do you do that as you, rather than as the group?

Respondent: Yes, as me. Yes, yes.

Ian: I might have got in contact with you and said, “I am starting a new club, can you put it in the group, and you would post that for me from your personal thing in the group?”

Respondent: Yes, I can put a message on- yes post a link. My mum she is in her late 70s, and she was doing a Macmillan Coffee morning once, and she had a paper little poster type thing (Laughter) and she was going to put it in the local shop window, and I just photographed it and stuck it on the page for her, so people knew what she was doing. That type of thing.

Ian: Yes, that is really interesting. What about the other way around, is there anything that you are asked to post, or see on the group, and think, “You know there are people that aren’t on Facebook that would be interested in this.” And do things the other way around?

Respondent: Yes, I would do actually. I find that Facebook tends to reach the older generation, as opposed to other social media. Because I have got neighbours next door to me who, well the gentleman who lives next door to me, he is in his 80s and his wife is late 70s and they are on Facebook. There is another lady in the next door down who is 80, yes, I will let her know that things are happening if I see it on the page and I think, “She might want to take her grandchild there.” Yes, I will do.

Ian: That would be primarily-?

Respondent: Just people I know, yes. Yes. My mum, because she is not on Facebook or anything, so I will say, “Such and such is happening.” I will share information, but I don’t go out of my way to it, is just in general conversation really, if I see something or I see somebody, yes.

Ian: I am going to take a change of direction now. Do you think it is important to know what is going on in the other villages?

Respondent: Yes, I do, yes. Because in an ideal world we would use the facilities of each village. Yes, I think it is really important. Yes.

Ian: How do you generally find out what is happening in the other villages?

Respondent: Word of mouth, or sometimes through Facebook or friends, personal posts that people put on, on the page itself. Still word of mouth, because as I said, my mum lives in the other village and she does a lot of community volunteering.

Ian: Is that a word-of-mouth thing, and keeping in touch with people, is that the way you prefer to find out what is happening?

Respondent: I think a nice combination of both isn’t it? Because sometimes you don’t see people, so you miss out if you have not seen somebody to talk to. I think it is nice to have a bit of both. To have a page you can refer back to or look at. You don’t want to be totally isolated from real people as well, so it is nice to have those conversations in the street as well.

Ian: Yes. Just thinking about Facebook specifically, I know you are an admin of this Facebook group, but do you use Facebook to keep in touch with family and friends and stuff as well?

Respondent: Yes definitely, because I went to university in Manchester, and I don’t see the friends that I made then very often, we have all gone off and done our own thing. It is just nice if they put posts about what they are up to, their family holidays, their kids, or whatever. It just prompts you sometimes to say hello to people. I am not very good at keeping in touch, so it is a good aid to keep friendships going yes.

Ian: What about the other local groups, do you follow all of the groups from [REDACTED PLACE NAME], and [REDACTED PLACE NAME], and any other?

Respondent: Yes, there is a Creswell Lifetimes one that I follow. I dip in and out of it to be honest.

Ian: What would be the kind of- if we use that- [REDACTED PLACE NAME] is not your village so if we use that one as an example. What would motivate you to think, “I will check what is happening on the [REDACTED PLACE NAME] group, or the [REDACTED PLACE NAME] group, for example? What kind of thing?

Respondent: Right, well I foster children, so if I have got a child come to me, a new child, or a respite child, and I am looking for some activity or something for the child to do, or I am checking the times of an activity, I vaguely know there is something, but I can’t remember the times because it is while since I been, or whatever, I might check and look at the pages for that. Opening hours of the café. Anything really. Just-

Ian: Yes, I know some of these questions are quite annoying. I can slightly get an idea of the kind of crossover between-

Respondent: To be honest some things just come up in your news feed don’t they on Facebook? Like a photograph of something somebody has done or, and you think, “Oh that is interesting.” So, you read that, and there might be a link or something, and it takes to their page and you have a bit of a read of that. Sometimes it is just on the spur of the moment. Something just triggers you to look at it.

Ian: Yes. So, sometimes, for example, there is stuff on the [REDACTED PLACE NAME] page, might just come up on your newsfeed?

Respondent: Yes.

Ian: And then you will be like, “Oh.” And that might prompt you to go to the group, and see what else is happening, and just have a look at that?

Respondent: There has been some work done by Heritage Trust on [REDACTED PLACE NAME], so I will be keeping an eye on that because I am interested in what they are doing, and when it is going to be open, well it is open to the public, but you know the progress on that.

I go to [REDACTED PLACE NAME] a lot because I walk, I like going to the beach you know. People put posts on their page about problems with traffic and parking. Sometimes if that comes up on a nice day it will put me off going to [REDACTED PLACE NAME] that day, I think, “Oh well I will head to the coast today, or go where it is quieter.” So that type of thing.

Ian: That is interesting, so you would-

Respondent: I would go if it was too busy no. (Laughter)

Ian: Yes, in a sense use, for example the [REDACTED PLACE NAME] group, to find out how busy it is in [REDACTED PLACE NAME], just by what people are talking about?

Respondent: Yes. (Laughter) If there are people on it complaining about parking I think, “Oh it must be bad there today.” Or litter, litter is a good one. I will think, “Oh I won’t go today because I like going when it is quiet.” I tend to go later in the evening anyway for a walk when there is no one about.

Ian: Is it easy to get from your village to [REDACTED PLACE NAME]? Would you drive over there?

Respondent: Well, I walk it, it is a mile’s walk.

Ian: There is a proper path? I am getting mixed up between them, but between [REDACTED PLACE NAME] and [REDACTED PLACE NAME], there is a single path isn’t there that links them?

Respondent: Well, yes there is. There is a straight road basically that goes from [REDACTED PLACE NAME]. I live on that road so I am at the bit of [REDACTED PLACE NAME] that is on [REDACTED PLACE NAME] Road really. There is a mile road straight down to [REDACTED PLACE NAME], but that is not how I walk there, I walk across the fields. Because I like the more scenic sort of walk. There are a few ways of walking that aren’t proper footpaths, they are just public rights of way.

Ian: Yes, I live up in Northumberland these days, and I am becoming more used to finding those sorts of rights of way and bridal paths and stuff, when I am out with the dog.

Respondent: Yes, that is what I do. I prefer walking across the field than down the main road with all the traffic.

Ian: Speaking about fields and traffic and stuff, do you consider where you live to be rural?

Respondent: Yes, I do. Yes, yes.

Ian: What makes it rural to you, basically? What makes it rural?

Respondent: Having open space around the village. Having wooded areas and fields and being near the beach. Having lots of unbuilt on land around the village. Not being in the city, being you know, it is not even a town, it is a village, even though it is getting a larger village, but it is still in the countryside.

Ian: So, being in the countryside?

Respondent: Yes, having the open spaces around, farmer’s fields.

Ian: Yes, there is a lot of farming, is that farming-?

Respondent: Yes, surrounding the whole village there are cornfields, and open space. You don’t go straight from one village into the next. There are fields in between them.

Ian: Obviously you have at least, for some time, lived in Manchester, or I guess around Manchester?

Respondent: Yes.

Ian: What does being part of a rural community mean to you, now?

Respondent: It is really important to me now. I mean, it is just quieter, and I feel safer. It is prettier. It is more relaxing. You can get away from people. You can go for a walk, and only see a few people and chill out a bit more, than having loads of people and traffic and pollution. Yes, it is very important to me.

Ian: I know you touched on it there, and it is almost, this is a similar question in a way, but how does living in a rural area affect your life?

Respondent: I think it gives you better mental health and wellbeing. If you make use of it, and sometimes people don’t make use of it, they can live in a village, and never really venture outside their garden, or their house. If you make use of the countryside around you, I think it is really, I mean personally, really positive for my mental health.

Ian: I mean, I think I agree with you completely. Do you think living in a rural area affects then how people might use technology, or access technology? Do you see that in terms of your experience of living in a rural area?

Respondent: I can’t really compare it to when I lived in Manchester, mind you, I am a member of the local group then, yes possibly. I think technology is right across the spectrum now, isn’t it? Even if you are living in a city like Manchester, possibly that little community in Manchester, the area, the district of Manchester, probably has their own Facebook page. I don’t know how they use that.

I mean I use, not social media, but I use the internet more now for shopping than I ever would. Because you don’t have to physically go to the shops anymore, do you? Things like online grocery shopping, if necessary, or ordering things. I think it is more useful [ \_\_\_ 0:58:16]. Is that answering your question, or is it more about social media that you are thinking?

Ian: No, no I was thinking just generally about technology. You actually just cut out for the last 10 seconds.

Respondent: Right. I think technology has been really important during the pandemic, hasn’t it? People can work from home as well.

Ian: Yes. Have you had to adapt anything that you have done during the pandemic, and use technology in new or different ways?

Respondent: Yes, I have had to. Very reluctantly at times, because I am not a great fan. Yes, I have had to- as I say I am a foster carer. Usually, I would take the children that I look after to their birth families, and they would have to face-to-face contact and time with their birth families. During the pandemic they weren’t allowed to cross over, at times during the pandemic, we weren’t allowed to do that, because of the high risk of cross-infection.

Some of the families have got risky lifestyles, so it was all risk-assessed. Instead of that I have had do this type of call, like, Zoom type calls, and WhatsApp calls. Video, send videos and photographs a lot more than I have ever done, so the children get to see their parents or grandparents.

Ian: What did you use? I mean obviously, did you use anything apart from WhatsApp to do those sorts of things?

Respondent: Yes, we used- there have been lots of different things. There has been Zoom, there has been, I think it was Microsoft, is it Teams?

Ian: Yes, yes, yes.

Respondent: Yes, Teams we would use, WhatsApp. WhatsApp, I found the easiest one to use, to be fair. That was approved by the local authority to use that. We have had- some of the calls that I do depending on the family and the circumstances. Some I could do directly through WhatsApp on a very casual ad hoc basis, but some were very structured, and had to be observed. Those ones came mainly through Microsoft Teams. Or there is a Google one as well, I think?

Ian: Yes, I mean I don’t want to dwell too much on that stuff, because it is not really what we are talking about, what I need to focus on-

Respondent: It is a way of keeping families together really, so I suppose the fact that the children were looked after is irrelevant, it is keeping in touch with people really isn’t it, that don’t live locally.

Ian: The ones that were supervised though I guess that would have involved, in some shape or form, public authorities, local councils, or whatever?

Respondent: Yes, it would have a paid worker observing.

Ian: Would the technology change due to that then? For example, just if children’s services in Northumberland County Council were observing one of these calls, would they be like, “Use Teams because that is what we use.”

Respondent: Yes.

Ian: If we are looking in, so that would have been forced by the institutions involved?

Respondent: Yes, it is what everyone that actual group uses. They use different depending on which department that you are working with at that time. Whether it is a social worker who works in a certain office, and uses a certain type of software, or a contract worker, a person who is just paid- just works taking children to see families. They were using different software. Depending on who was doing the calling, for what reason, would depend on what software and what method we used.

Ian: Yes, it completely makes sense. You just keep adapting?

Respondent: Yes, the best I can but as you can tell today, I am not very good at it. I have had a bit of a break, because we are back to face-to-face stuff now. (Laughter)

Ian: I know, well actually on that note, what I was going to ask was, I know I have opinions about this, but are there any aspects of how things have changed, because of the pandemic, using technology specifically? That you thought, “Oh actually you should have done it like this all along.”

Respondent: No, and with this bit about work, I am quite adamant about it because I don’t like it at all. I think I much prefer to see people in person. Yes.

Ian: I mean with your sort of work, that seems really important actually. I think that makes sense.

Respondent: Yes. It is much more natural to see people in person, for children to see their families. There has been talk of mixing it and having face-to-face contact, but keeping the video contact. I found doing the video contact with the children, I found it a real ordeal to be honest. I really disliked doing it, because if anyone has ever tried to get a 2-year-old to do a video call with their mum and dad, it is really, really difficult.

They are running around, and you are chasing them with the phone. Then it is very intrusive. People are seeing inside your home, and all your professional boundaries and everything are getting distorted, and I didn’t like it at all.

Ian: Yes. I had those exact scenarios. I can picture right now we had- our child was one when this lockdown first happened, so we were trying to do a lot of calls to, kind of, grandparents.

Respondent: Grandparents. Yes, it is really difficult. I work with children that have got varying backgrounds and things, and behaviour issues. Then there are all the other things going on with families. It wasn’t good. (Laughter)

Ian: Yes, yes, I guess, like you say, you are losing any sense of kind of control and boundaries, and formality that you need.

Respondent: And also, the side of it, professionals doing video calls with families, I don’t think you can assess the family home and get a feel for what is going on, just doing it by video call. I think some professions you need to be there. You lose all your senses when you are in that environment. They pick up on what is actually happening in people’s homes and stuff.

Ian: Absolutely. Yes, I think some of these questions are just- I realise to different people, some of the questions that really become very different when you ask certain people, depending on their experiences, and what they do-

Respondent: And what their experience is. I think-

Ian: Your context there is so specific. I have never- obviously when I have been speaking to people about these issues, you don’t even imagine them in more unique, or different contexts like that. Where you think, as I say, I was thinking it is hard enough with my own family, and the pandemic, but when you imagine in those other- yes, it is just-

Respondent: Some of the phone calls, it has been really, really difficult. I have had babies- you can’t have set times, if you have got a one-year-old you will understand. You know, you can’t predict when they are going to cry. You can’t predict when they are going to sleep sometimes. You have got a call set up, and it has been really difficult to adhere to it.

Ian: As you say, back to some kind of normal way of working now. Hopefully things are getting easier.

Respondent: Yes, there are still calls going on, it has infiltrated the system. It is cheaper, isn’t it? (Laughter)

Ian: Yes.

Respondent: There are some politics at play. It is cheaper to do that, than pay workers, and pay mileage.

Ian: Of course, other people have said, people that are doing office jobs, they have been like, “Yes I have not missed doing face-to-face meetings at all. It is much better doing them online.” It doesn’t work in every context. There is never going to be, “Oh yes, all meetings should be online.” Because it helps- 80% of people it makes sense for them. The interesting thing about speaking to people is you think about technology in these completely different contexts that you might never imagine.

Respondent: Think about. Team meetings, because we obviously have team meetings, and care team meetings and things, they can sometimes be done quite well on a Zoom call, or similar. It just depends on the dynamics of the team really. I still like face-to-face to be honest. I think people need to meet up, and spend time with other people, as opposed to, you know, personally. Although sometimes it is a bit more convenient just to switch your phone on your laptop and do a meeting. I still think we need face-to-face. I think we need human contact.

Ian: Absolutely. We have been an hour just now, so I have just got a couple more questions if that’s okay?

Respondent: Yes, that is fine, yes.

Ian: These are just a couple of summing up general kind of things, that I like to know about. Do you feel that being a member of a local Facebook group is a good way to participate in your community? This isn’t you individually, I mean, does it enable someone to participate in their community?

Respondent: Yes, I do yes, because people can be quite isolated, or are quite shy and reserved in doing things. It can be an opening for you can’t it, to get involved or keep you in the loop. You can read things, you don’t have to contribute if you are not that sociable a person or you don’t want to be putting yourself out there, but you still know what is happening. I think that is important to include people. Yes, I think it is useful.

Ian: Is there anything you would change about the Facebook page, and Facebook group, to make it more useful for your area, if you could change something about it?

Respondent: I suppose if it was a professionally-run group, it would be better than just being run by you, but at least we know the village, so it is like, you know, if it was to be done professionally it would need to be somebody that possibly lived within the village, and knew what was happening. It seems to serve its purpose, as it is. As the village grows, and our lives all change, as I say, we might need to get more admin.

Ian: Yes. This is the last question, and it is probably, for some people, the weirdest question, but I think- anyway. If we were to create a new group, this doesn’t have to be on Facebook. If we were to create a new online space for the village, from scratch, without any restrictions, technological restrictions or anything, what would be the most important three things? Values, or characteristics, or requirements? What for you would be the three most important things for a good local online group?

Respondent: It would have to be relevant, because quite often pages and things are set up and are not kept up-to-date, and relevant are they to what is actually going on. If that makes sense? It has got to be relevant to the people in the village, at that time. It would have to be respectful. It would have to be a positive thing not a forum for, like, people just to disrespect each other.

Ian: Yes.

Respondent: What else? (Laughter) Accessible really, so everybody could access it, because there is no point in having something that is just for a certain- if it is for all the villages, it has got to be something that everyone can access.

Ian: So, for example, would that mean people that don’t have Facebook accounts, or people that don’t have smartphones?

Respondent: Possibly, yes. I don’t know the statistics on that. I don’t know how many people there are that haven’t, or how workable that is because what form could you use? I haven’t got the answer for that.

Ian: I know. There is no answer to that, believe me. People having been thinking about it for many, many years.

Respondent: My mum, I keep saying to her, “You would benefit, you would benefit from this and that.” But she is set in her ways. It is useful but at the same time, I don’t know how you could do it.

Ian: Yes, that is the whole point of this last question. I think it is, like, you don’t have to think about how it would work, it is just so it 3-

Respondent: Ideally it would reach people who weren’t on Facebook. Because there are people who aren’t on Facebook for various reasons. I mean even myself, with fostering, I have to be very, very careful what I post on any social media. It is that sort of, I have got to keep a step back from, I do a lot of things anonymously.

Ian: Would you say you have a real restricted version of yourself on Facebook because of the job you do?

Respondent: Yes definitely, yes.

Ian: And you just mentioned privacy, would you say, what do you mean by privacy? Is that other people, perhaps strangers, seeing what you do or is that a different? What do you mean by-?

Respondent: I have got a protected address, my house address, because I sometimes have children that are at risk from their parents. There is a risk that parents will come looking for their children. I have a protected home address.

Even though I run a local admin page, I have to be quite careful. I don’t take children that live in our area, but I have to always be mindful of everything that I ever post, about not exposing where I live. I have privacy settings on my personal Facebook account, things like that. I have to be careful. I am not somebody who would just, I don’t know, I mean people do don’t they, they just let anybody by their Facebook friends. I don’t. It has got to be someone I know.

Ian: That is more rooted in the risks related with your job?

Respondent: I am just very risk-aware yes, yes.

Ian: Then that just extends to online, I guess? Yes.

Respondent: Yes, you know, I think everybody should be careful to be fair. But not everybody is.

Ian: Yes. I think I mean I don’t have a Facebook account anymore. I have got my opinions on why, but yes, I think a lot of people-

Respondent: There is a flipside, I haven’t gone into it, but there is a flipside to Facebook isn’t there? It can be quite damaging to your mental health as well, if you feel like you are not getting included on things, or you think everyone has got these wonderful lives, because people just post the good stuff. It is not the best medium, is it? There are some really positive things that come out of it, but there are some really negative things. I think you have got to be very mindful of that.

Ian: Yes absolutely, and it is not just privacy in terms of other people seeing into aspects of your life. There is also the company itself as well.

Respondent: Yes. Then all the cookies and things. Because you know, on your Facebook page, you look at something on Google and the next thing on your Facebook page they are advertising the same thing. A lot of people don’t realise that, the targeted stuff that you get.

Ian: But would you say that those aren’t necessarily your motivations for the way you use Facebook? Yours are more rooted from-?

Respondent: Mine is just keeping in touch with people. Just being a bit nosey.

Ian: Do you mean in terms of- you said you are careful about the way you use it? Is that more based on because of what you do as your job, as opposed to these other things we just talked about?

Respondent: I am not overly concerned about people having my patterns of what I purchase, and things like that. I just think you know I haven’t- I mean it is not ideal in life, but I am not doing anything that I shouldn’t be, or have anything that- if I get an advert, I am a bit, I can see through things. I am a bit wise to why they are sending me an advert on, you know, it doesn’t make me buy things. I think I have got my head around it, but I think some people are much more vulnerable to that, but it doesn’t really affect my use of it, because I think I have sussed, or I would like to think I have got that bit of it sussed.

Ian: Yes. Actually, I think I just said like 10 minutes ago that we were running over time.

Respondent: Right okay.

Ian: I don’t want to keep you any longer, but first of all, thank you very much for spending the time, and just being so open and honest. Have you got any questions or anything for me, or have you got anything else?

Respondent: No that is it, but if you do need anything about- if you email me or anything, if you want any questions, I can check stuff like numbers, and who is on the page and things like that. I have just done this off the top of my head. If you can’t access stuff and you want to, just let me know.

Ian: If we end up going that way, and we are going to do some information about the different groups, that would be good. But I will get in touch if and when. I will speak to [ANON], because it might be interesting to see, just for internal purposes, or other purposes, just what different group’s rules are.

Respondent: Right, because I couldn’t quote them to you now, because I am just like… (Laughter)

Ian: Actually, I think I will, I think I will email you. I am actually on leave at the minute, but I will be back at work next week. If you don’t mind, I will follow up with an email, just if you could send me the group’s rules?

Respondent: Aha.

Ian: Because I think, yes, I would like to see the difference between-

Respondent: It might be relevant.

Ian: Yes, just seeing all the different group’s rules, and seeing if they are all dead similar, or if they are all really different?

Respondent: Some of it is still organic, you make a rule as you go along, after something has happened, I think.

Ian: Yes. It sure is yes.

Respondent: Because we are all amateurs. (Laughter)

Ian: Yes, well. Amateur, people used to say, “Amateur.” As a negative thing you know, like especially in sport, or whatever, “These people are amateurs.” Meaning they are not very good.

Respondent: Good.

Ian: I was always reminded by my old teacher in school, that amateur comes from the French word for love. It means you are doing it for love, which is better than doing it for money.

Respondent: Oh right. That is a good word. That is a nice way of putting it. Yes, I like that.

Ian: You are doing it for love not money. People that do it for money we should be scorning at.

Respondent: Yes, I might use that one.

Ian: Well thanks very much for your time.

Respondent: Alright thank you.

Ian: If you think of any questions or anything for me, again just send me an email, or get in touch with [ANON] anything, but thanks very much.

Respondent: Thank you.

Ian: Enjoy the rest of your day if you can.

Respondent: Okay, cheers. Bye now. Bye.

Ian: Thanks. Bye.