

Small wildlife. Massive opinions.



WELCOME TO THE PATCH

Meet six very opinionated neighbours, Hope and Faith, and a committee nobody asked for.

Created by Hope. Developed with Dad.
Adventures featuring Hope and Faith.

Everyone thinks they're the sensible one.

At the edge of a British village, a stream runs past a meadow, a pond and an old hedge. Tucked beneath the branches is a battered watering can. Someone has turned it into a clubhouse. Someone else has appointed himself manager.

This is the Patch. It has six wildlife regulars, two human visitors and more opinions than chairs.

Hope knows the way in. Faith has already found something to investigate. Inside, a hedgehog wants order, a water vole wants people to be useful, a dormouse would like to question the premise, a curlew has prepared a speech, a toad is withholding approval and a butterfly has breaking news.

They argue. They make mistakes. They look out for one another. And, when something really matters, they can usually stop talking long enough to help.

A note for the person who imagined it

Hope, this world began with your idea. These are the first faces and adventures waiting inside it. There is room for your favourite jokes, your next character and whatever you imagine next.

A group with qualifications. Mostly self-awarded.



Bramble

European hedgehog

Head of being in charge



Banks

European water vole

Engineer. Apparently everyone's engineer.



Moss

Hazel dormouse

Resident expert in technically everything



Nell

Eurasian curlew

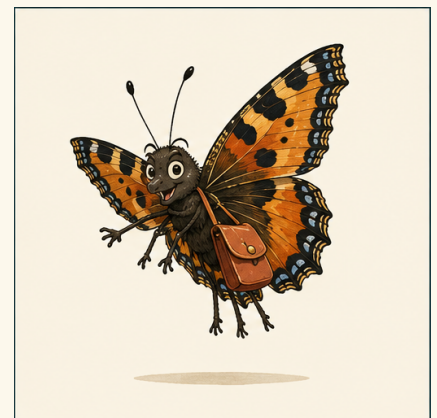
Communications. All of them. At volume.



Boggs

Common toad

Standards, complaints and a very important cup



Flick

Small tortoiseshell butterfly

Breaking news. Occasionally breaking facts.

Bramble

Head of being in charge



“Democracy was taking too long.”

Bramble has appointed himself manager of the Patch. Nobody remembers applying for a manager. He has a clipboard, though, which makes the situation surprisingly difficult to challenge.

WHAT MATTERS

To be the person everyone can rely on.

ACTUALLY GOOD AT

Brave, persistent and excellent at noticing when somebody has been left out. When things go properly wrong, he turns up.

COMPLICATIONS

Confuses being useful with being in charge. A small problem becomes a strategic initiative before breakfast.

THE VOICE

Brisk declarations, invented job titles and spectacularly premature confidence.

THE FRIENDSHIPS

Banks is his favourite colleague and most frequent reality check. Hope can defeat an entire speech with one raised eyebrow.

AN ADVENTURE WAITING TO HAPPEN

Bramble introduces a permit system for using the shortcut. Then discovers he has not issued himself a permit.

Banks

Engineer. Apparently everyone's engineer.



“That is a label. The problem is still underneath it.”

Banks fixes things while the others discuss whose department things belong to. She is practical, inventive and beginning to suspect that competence was a serious tactical error.

WHAT MATTERS

To build something that lasts, and occasionally finish her own project.

ACTUALLY GOOD AT

Spots how things connect, makes useful plans and keeps going when the glamorous solution falls apart.

COMPLICATIONS

Would rather redo everybody's work than explain how to help. Her perfectionism can become another form of control.

THE VOICE

Short, specific observations. Leaves a tiny pause for the nonsense to collapse by itself.

THE FRIENDSHIPS

Bramble needs her more than he admits. Flick supplies bold ideas; Banks supplies the very necessary word 'how'.

AN ADVENTURE WAITING TO HAPPEN

Banks makes the perfect meeting table. It is so perfect nobody can move it out of the doorway.

Moss

Resident expert in technically everything



**“I’m not avoiding the task.
I’m questioning its
premise.”**

Moss can turn ‘I don’t fancy doing that’ into a surprisingly persuasive lecture. Usually the quietest person in the meeting, and somehow the one everyone ends up arguing with.

WHAT MATTERS

To be taken seriously without having to audition for attention.

ACTUALLY GOOD AT

Sees the assumption everybody else has missed. A patient observer with a secret streak of generosity.

COMPLICATIONS

Uses cleverness to stay safely on the sidelines. Being technically correct is easier than trying something that might fail.

THE VOICE

Precise, dry and slightly too pleased with an elegant distinction. Occasionally uses a long word wrongly; Banks notices.

THE FRIENDSHIPS

Hope is a favourite sparring partner. Boggs and Moss agree that standards matter, then disagree about every standard.

AN ADVENTURE WAITING TO HAPPEN

Moss proves that a job should not exist. Unfortunately, somebody still needs to do it.

EURASIAN CURLEW

Nell

Communications. All of them. At volume.



“It wasn’t a scene. It was a public-facing moment.”

Nell treats every announcement as an opening night. She has presence, projection and absolutely no instinct for whether an audience has somewhere else to be.

WHAT MATTERS

To matter to the group, even when she is not entertaining them.

ACTUALLY GOOD AT

Can rally a discouraged crowd, remember everybody’s name and make a lonely newcomer feel included.

COMPLICATIONS

Turns ordinary setbacks into productions. Sometimes performs confidence instead of saying she is worried.

THE VOICE

Grand entrances, dramatic pauses and the occasional devastatingly plain sentence.

THE FRIENDSHIPS

Flick delivers news faster; Nell insists news needs presentation. Banks is the only audience member willing to interrupt.

AN ADVENTURE WAITING TO HAPPEN

Nell advertises a silent evening by making announcements about it all afternoon.

COMMON TOAD

Boggs

Standards, complaints and a very important cup



“‘Common’ is a distribution category. Kindly adjust your tone.”

Boggs has standards. Nobody asked for them, but they have arrived in writing. He regards his pebble as an institution and his leaf cup as an heirloom of considerable cultural significance.

WHAT MATTERS

A dependable place in a world that keeps changing the arrangements.

ACTUALLY GOOD AT

Remembers the Patch’s history, keeps promises and quietly makes room for someone with nowhere to sit.

COMPLICATIONS

Mistakes familiar for fair. Defends a rule most fiercely when it happens to benefit him.

THE VOICE

Formal objections, fussy distinctions and sarcasm served at room temperature.

THE FRIENDSHIPS

Bramble gives him titles; Hope asks what the titles actually do. Banks understands his sentimental attachment to broken objects.

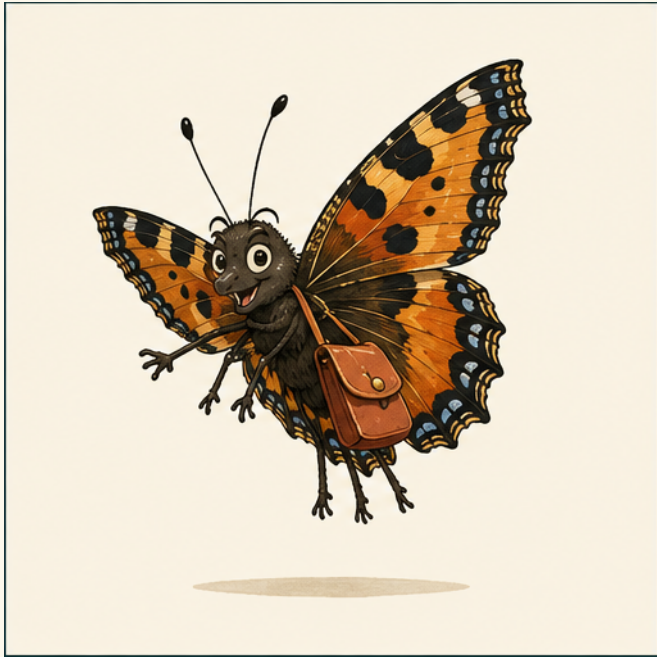
AN ADVENTURE WAITING TO HAPPEN

Boggs campaigns against change until the group restores something he thought was gone for good.

SMALL TORTOISESHELL BUTTERFLY

Flick

Breaking news. Occasionally breaking facts.



“I said it was breaking news. I didn’t say it was finished.”

Flick knows everything three minutes before everyone else. Unfortunately, the explanation tends to arrive four minutes later. Fast, charming and dangerously enthusiastic about a headline.

WHAT MATTERS

To be included in every interesting thing, and trusted with something important.

ACTUALLY GOOD AT

Sees connections between people, finds information and will go back to correct a mistake even when it is embarrassing.

COMPLICATIONS

Confuses being first with being right. Gets excited by a possibility before checking whether it is an actual possibility.

THE VOICE

Rapid updates, confident summaries and increasingly elaborate attempts to clarify the previous summary.

THE FRIENDSHIPS

Nell adds drama to Flick’s speed. Moss asks for evidence; Banks asks Flick to read the bottom half of the sign.

AN ADVENTURE WAITING TO HAPPEN

Flick announces a shortage. The panic creates the shortage. The retraction needs to travel even faster.

Hope knows the way. Faith has a question.



HOPE

Quick-witted, curious and difficult to impress with a clipboard. Hope can spot the flaw in a grand plan, including her own. She belongs in this world because she cares about its inhabitants, even when they are impossible.

“That’s a very long explanation for ‘we forgot’.”

FAITH

An explorer with her own ideas and a talent for the question everybody has avoided. Faith is keen to join the adventure and quite capable of finding a different route into it. Boggs is still adjusting.

“If you’re in charge, why doesn’t anyone listen?”

Created by Hope. Developed with Dad. Adventures featuring Hope and Faith.

A crisis, apparently

By the time Hope and Faith reached the Patch, Bramble had formed a committee. This was rarely a sign that things were going well.

BRAMBLE “I’ve appointed myself leader. Democracy was taking too long.”

MOSS “You were the only candidate.”

BRAMBLE “And yet, a landslide.”

Banks looked up from the little bridge she was drawing. Across the stream, a new notice fluttered on the park gate. Flick had returned from reading some of it.

FLICK “Official inspection. Saturday. This place is about to be judged.”

BANKS “By whom?”

FLICK “Officials. It’s in the name.”

BOGGS “Finally.”

Boggs straightened his waistcoat. He had been waiting for an opportunity to explain what was wrong with everyone’s arrangement of leaves.

NELL “I can prepare a welcome address.”

BANKS “Can you prepare a short one?”

NELL “Let’s not censor the arts before lunch.”

Bramble tapped his clipboard. It contained one word: IMPORTANT. Underlined twice. The second line appeared to be doing most of the work.

Standards have arrived

The committee's first decision was to move the meeting table into the gap beneath the hedge. It was shady there. It was also the route everybody used to reach the next garden. Banks pointed this out. Faith peered into the gap, then looked at the six members of the committee.

- FAITH "If everyone is in charge, who's actually helping?"
- BRAMBLE "A temporary inconvenience in pursuit of long-term efficiency."
- BANKS "You've blocked the shortcut to hold a meeting about improving the shortcut."
- MOSS "There's an elegant circularity to it."
- BANKS "There's a table in it."

Boggs began labelling things. A wonky twig became UNSATISFACTORY. An entirely ordinary stone became HERITAGE. The stone was his.

- BOGGS "These nettles will need a review."
- FLICK "Those are the nursery buffet."
- BOGGS "They look untidy."
- FLICK "So does lunch when someone's eating it."

Nell rehearsed her opening statement. Somewhere during the third introduction, Moss announced that a meaningful assessment of tidiness would require a shared philosophical framework.

- HOPE "Is that dormouse for 'I'm not doing it'?"
- MOSS "It loses some nuance in translation."

Hope sat on the log beside the watering can. In front of her stood a puddle surrounded by four labels.

- HOPE "You've held three meetings about a puddle?"
- BRAMBLE "Four. The first established it was a puddle."
- HOPE "Good. Wouldn't want to rush the science."

A small issue with the evidence

Hope went to look at the notice. Flick came too, for what was described as ‘additional confirmation’. A curled corner had hidden the bottom lines.

HOPE “It says ‘Wildlife survey, Saturday. Please leave the wild margins undisturbed. Keep the footpath clear.’”

FLICK “Yes. That is a much longer version of the information.”

BANKS “You didn’t read all of it.”

FLICK “I read the urgent part.”

MOSS “An exciting new approach to accuracy.”

For a moment, everyone was quiet. Even Nell, who regarded silence as a gap in the programme.

BOGGS “So the untidiness has been independently endorsed?”

HOPE “It’s somewhere to live, Boggs. It doesn’t have to look like a reception desk.”

Bramble looked at the nettles, the leaves beneath the hedge and the little route now occupied by his committee. His face lost its managerial expression.

BRAMBLE “I thought if we looked organised, they’d know we mattered.”

HOPE “You do matter. The clipboard’s having a less impressive afternoon.”

Banks nudged the table. It did not move. She had built it herself and had, unfortunately, done an excellent job.

BANKS “All right. I need help.”

MOSS “A historic announcement.”

BANKS “You can commemorate it from that end.”

An outbreak of actual activity

With everyone helping, the table came out of the gap. Nell counted them in. Banks directed. Bramble stopped directing long enough to lift. Moss put down the paper. Boggs surrendered his preferred corner.

Hope had an idea for a little map showing the meadow, pond, stream and hedge. Faith found a flat place to draw it. Hope then drew a beautiful line straight through Boggs's seat.

BOGGS "A bold proposal. Have we considered going round the toad?"

HOPE "Fair point. My planning department has been overconfident."

They revised it together. Banks marked the routes; Nell named the meadow; Flick added the nettles and went to correct the inspection story. Twice, because the first correction was also rather dramatic.

At the hedge, Bramble placed his IMPORTANT label above the open gap. For once, everybody agreed with his paperwork.

NELL "Would anyone like to hear my statement now?"

BOGGS "How long is it?"

NELL "Emotionally, very short."

Hope was still laughing when Bramble announced that the committee had achieved its objective and would therefore be dissolved.

MOSS "Excellent."

BRAMBLE "And replaced with a task force."

MOSS "Naturally."

Boggs raised his leaf cup.

BOGGS "I assume my title carries over?"

HOPE "Only if it fits through the gap."

FAITH "I'm going exploring. Does that need a meeting?"

MOSS "Go now. Before he decides it does."

For the first time all afternoon, nobody had anything to add.

THE OPINIONS WILL RETURN.

The Patch is imaginary. The wildlife is real.

These species are found in the UK and have documented declines. Trends differ by place and period; a declining population is not the same as a global extinction category. The linked sources explain the evidence.

BRAMBLE / EUROPEAN HEDGEHOG

A hedgehog needs connected places to forage and shelter. Fences and fragmented habitat can make a small journey a big problem. Rural and urban population trends differ.

[Read the wildlife source](#)

BANKS / EUROPEAN WATER VOLE

Water voles live beside water and use bankside vegetation. Their burrowing and feeding help shape habitat. They have suffered severe declines, with some encouraging local recoveries.

[Read the wildlife source](#)

MOSS / HAZEL DORMOUSE

Hazel dormice use woodland, scrub and connected hedgerows. Monitoring in established British woodlands recorded a major decline between 2000 and 2022.

[Read the wildlife source](#)

NELL / EURASIAN CURLEW

Curlews are long-legged wading birds with long downward-curving bills. Britain's breeding population has declined sharply. Suitable wet feeding areas and breeding habitat matter.

[Read the wildlife source](#)

BOGGS / COMMON TOAD

Common toads spend much of their time on land and return to water to breed. Long-term UK monitoring has documented serious declines. Roads can interrupt their journeys to breeding ponds.

[Read the wildlife source](#)

FLICK / SMALL TORTOISESHELL BUTTERFLY

Small tortoiseshell caterpillars feed on stinging nettles; adults drink nectar. UK monitoring shows a substantial long-term abundance decline, despite variation between years.

[Read the wildlife source](#)

Several adventures. No shortage of opinions.

The Great Biscuit Census

Flick counts the same biscuit three times. Boggs disputes the methodology while eating the evidence.

Quiet, Please

Nell launches a quiet evening. The announcements begin at noon.

Terms and Conditions

Bramble puts the shortcut behind a permit system. Hope discovers that nobody, including Bramble, qualifies.

The Thing About Nettles

A proposal to smarten up the Patch meets some very hungry objections.

An Extremely Important Stone

Faith finds a stone. Boggs has an opinion on its provenance. Moss would like to discuss what finding means.

An original idea by Hope, brought to life with Dad.

This first collection was developed with AI assistance for its writing and illustrations. Character names and story directions can continue to grow with the creator.