



# vital link

The Newsletter for Through the Roof

## God Grows our Gifts

Our Wheels for the World mission transformed 200 lives in Elburgon, Kenya. First-time team-member, Mishy Holt, shares her experience.



Pastor Davis visits the UK from Kenya

Pesi Enole knows all about growing. She plants crops on her small plot of land. Having both legs amputated in her 30s made Pesi's life so much harder. However, God changed her life when I fitted this remarkable lady with her very own wheelchair. "Having a wheelchair will make it a lot easier to plant and harvest my crops", Pesi smiles. In turn, the harvest she reaps will provide for her family, and feed some of her community in rural Elburgon – so the blessing is multiplied!

Although not far from Nairobi, Elburgon seems a world away. It is a very poor town where families support themselves by working the land. Sadly, this year, the maize crop has failed due to the drought, and already there is anxiety about food for next year.

Our Wheels for the World project, working closely with our partners, the Hope of Glory Church, brings hope as well as physical and spiritual freedom for the local people. God multiplies the impact of every seed sown – and every wheelchair given.

Before I set out on the trip to Elburgon, I waited with nervousness but excitement at Heathrow airport. Following a turbulent few years in my own life, I was meeting a group of strangers to go to Kenya to do... I knew not exactly what! Fortunately, from the moment we landed at Nairobi, **this became the most life-affirming, humbling, exhausting but also energising ten days.**

We arrived as a small UK team – just three therapists and one technician, plus our team

Pesi receiving her wheelchair and Bible.



leader from the UK. Soon we became a much bigger team, with the wonderful willingness of the local volunteers, led by Pastor Davis, TTR's partner in Kenya. Pastor Davis and his wife Ruth have such positivity and passion for breaking down disability discrimination. Volunteers from their church, their family and the surrounding communities became our interpreters, our technician helpers, our wheelchair organisers, our cooks and our friends.

Sunday fell in the middle of our stay and what a treat that was, for us to be involved felt very special. So different from our church at home: we danced and we sang! We were very lucky to have a special dance performed by men from the Masai Mara who travelled far to bring disabled members of their community for our help.

Other days we worked from 8am to 7pm as a continual stream of disabled people brought by their families or friends to receive a wheelchair or mobility aid and Bible. As time went on, we had to be more and more resourceful as our equipment dwindled. In this, the technician team were of vital importance, with their interesting **continued on page 2**



Emily Owen's online retreat



Online group: Together @ Home



Small number, large impact





# "You have saved many people"

## Contact Details

Through the Roof, Alpha House, Alpha Place, Garth Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4TQ

**Phone:**  
01372 749955

**Email:**  
info@throughtheroof.org

**Web:**  
www.throughtheroof.org

## Our Vision

*'... is all people enjoying life together, mutually giving and receiving, as God intended'*

## Our Mission

*'... is transforming lives through Jesus with disabled people'*

*Through the Roof Charitable Trust Ltd is a UK Registered Company number 04201510 with offices at Alpha House, Alpha Place, Garth Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4TQ. It is also a Registered Charity Number 1087788.*

*Quotes are sometimes edited for clarity and length.*

Vital Link is designed and printed by PDC Design & Print  
[www.pdc-kingston.co.uk](http://www.pdc-kingston.co.uk)

"I wish you could see the value of how much you have assisted our people", said Pastor Davis, Kenyan church leader and partner of Through the Roof (TTR), to the gathered group of staff, volunteers and supporters. Speaking during a rare visit to the UK, he thanked all those who enable our Wheels for the World wheelchair distributions to happen in his home town of Elburgon, in rural Kenya. "Those with wheelchairs could escape the violence," he explained (referring to tribal raids on nearby villages). "You have saved many people. We have found people who are hopeless and we give hope. We are anchors of hope. My vision is the vision of TTR. We give God all the glory!"

This is such an important reminder of how much difference a wheelchair and a Bible can make in a culture that is so different to the UK. In a country with only 13 doctors for every 100,000 people, being disabled usually means you are permanently stuck at home, hidden away because of shame and lack of opportunities. Others are forced to beg, unable to find employment. So many people need a wheelchair to give them mobility, freedom and access to school, work, friends and community. Sadly, most can never afford to buy one.

Pastor Davis leads the Abundant Hope of Glory Church. His UK visit included a few days with one of our Trustees, preaching and teaching at Dovercourt church, Essex, as well as time in fellowship, prayer and fasting. During his presentation to TTR, he told us, "I have become a missionary in Africa to disabled people". Not only does he and his church partner with us to give the gospel and wheelchairs to disabled people, he also



**Pastor Davis and his wife Ruth, speaking during their visit to the UK.**

gives food parcels, offers skills training, and provides medical check-ups and counselling. His nickname in the local community is the 'Pastor of Disabled People'. A natural evangelist, he asks people, 'Will you accept the Lord Jesus?' His very next question is, "Will you go to the villages and bring out those who are disabled?"

Davis and his church recently hosted a wheelchair distribution, which you can read more about elsewhere in this newsletter. He is also passing on the message of Through the Roof by raising up others in East Africa to become Roofbreaker disability champions in their own communities.

## continued from page 1

inventiveness in adapting wheelchairs as the days went on.

Our last day was very emotional as we still had many people who came hoping for our help and we had precious little left to offer, but no one was turned away. Then at the end of the last day, the full team joined together to pray, to give thanks and to share gifts – and cake! We had to say goodbye to our wonderful new colleagues. I am so, so honoured to have been on that trip. It was a blessing to see every person who arrived, often with anxiety on their face, and then left with a smile, a Bible, a prayer and a photo!



**Ai Lian Lim, a UK volunteer, enjoying the sunset over fields in Elburgon.**

# Autism support video

One of our Roofbreakers, Triona Brading, has made a fantastic video for Through the Roof called 'Supporting Autistic Individuals in our churches'. It has received excellent feedback and within the first month alone was viewed on YouTube over 600 times.

Triona is autistic herself and is able to use her own knowledge and experience to give others an understanding of what some of the challenges can be, and also what can be helpful.

Having worked in a variety of special educational needs roles over the last 11 years, Triona has also gained experience in a wide range of situations. She has a heart for making church a place where everyone can belong.

We are thrilled that Triona is making more videos! There will be a whole series about autism and neurodiversity, including 'Understanding meltdowns and shutdowns', 'Fidgets and calm down spaces – where do I start?' and also a video about ADHD.

These are all such important areas for churches to be aware of, so we hope the videos will reach far and wide... encouraging churches, Christian ministries and individuals to be able to grow in understanding and offer a truly accessible welcome for autistic and neurodivergent people.



**Roofbreaker Triona Brading, presenting the video.**

Do make sure you watch Triona's video. We are sure you will find it helpful. It's on the Through the Roof social media channels @TTRChangesLives and also on our website under news releases.

To encourage Triona's videos to be seen by an even wider audience, please do click 'like' and add comments too. This encourages social media platforms to share them even more widely.

Thank you Triona for sharing your own personal experience to reach so many people and demonstrating your heart to make church a place where everyone can belong.

## Online retreat: 'Finding Jesus'

We are delighted that Emily Owen, a disabled Christian author, will be speaking at an online event for us:

**Through the Roof online retreat  
from 27th Nov – 1st Dec.  
(afternoons)**



**Emily Owen, author of 'Still Emily' about her lived experience of disability.**

The theme will be taking a look at the 'ups and downs' of the journeys of Mary, the shepherds and the wise men, and how they relate to our own journeys in finding Jesus. Please pray that this will be a blessed time of preparation as we begin advent.

Emily is an award-winning author and speaker, with several books to her name. She lost her hearing overnight aged 21 and has

had numerous surgeries. Emily knows what it is to be broken, and she knows what it is to meet God there.

The retreat will be particularly suitable for disabled people and will include opportunities for 1:1 prayer or a chat with Emily.

If you, or anyone you know, may be interested, please contact **together@throughtheroof.org**.

Full details are on our website.



# "Come, you thankful people, come!"

By Dr Mike Townsend, TTR Chair of Trustees

Are we thankful people? I've just been to a harvest thanksgiving service and I've been reflecting on this Bible account.

Jesus met ten lepers who said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." Jesus told them to go and show themselves to the priests, and said while they went, they would be healed. One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Jesus said, "Weren't ten lepers cleansed; where are the other nine?" (Luke 17).

Only one leper came back to thank Jesus. Why? Do you think the other lepers were not thankful? They were probably so excited that they didn't think.

When I was a boy, I loved buses. At Christmas my parents asked me what I would like. "Please, a bus!" On Christmas morning beside my bed was an enormous toy bus. I was so pleased! My birthday is in January. My parents asked, "Mickey, what would you like for your birthday?" I replied, "A bus please!" They said, "Mickey, we've already given you the best bus we could ever find." But I was adamant.

On my birthday, at breakfast, there was a small parcel. Inside was a tiny bus – a matchbox toy. I was not impressed and was grumpy all morning.

Party-time: Surprise! We went to the local bus depot. My birthday party was on an open-top double-decker bus. We had bus drivers and conductors playing games with us and giving us lovely food. My friends were impressed. At the end, I was ready to run home, happy! My dad tapped me on the shoulder. "Mickey! Have you forgotten something? How about saying 'thank you'?" Little Mickey got up on the open-top deck of the bus and made a little speech of thanks.

The word "thank" comes from the same old-English root as the word "think".

Recently many voices are saying that disabled people are miserable. Struggles of living with disabilities can get us down. A new government campaign "Ask don't assume" <https://askdontassume.campaign.gov.uk/> has generated angry outburst from many disabled people.



**Mike and grandson Rio, with his old Matchbox bus toy.**

Jesus often asked disabled people what they wanted from him. However, many people are feeling free to "ask" disabled people anything! "How do you go to the loo?" Very intrusive! Oops! The government has oversimplified the message. It is not bad advice in the right context. In TTR training, we also say "Ask, don't assume", but we make it clear we specifically mean "Ask disabled people if they need anything in place to fully access church."

I don't mind talking to people about my disability. I'm glad that they talk! Surveys have shown nearly 70 per cent of people find it hard to open a conversation with disabled people. They are frightened they might get things wrong. I praise God that, generally, God gives me the grace to be polite and cheerful – this is because of my deep gratitude to God for what he has given me in Jesus.

A church friend of mine called Martin struggles with mobility because of arthritis. At the harvest service, I asked him about his week. "Ups and downs, but more ups!" Martin said. When Martin came back to church a year ago, he had felt miserable. "It's great there are more ups now," I said. He replied, "Jesus has made me think about things differently."

Jesus-thinking makes all the difference. We think, and so we thank.

# Accessible adventures!

“It was very fun!” – the words of Sarah, one of the holidaymakers who came on Through the Roof’s holiday to the amazing Calvert Trust accessible activity centre in Devon this year. Sarah loved the holiday and is already looking forward to going again next year.

What did Sarah like best? **Everything!** The range of activities is amazing. From horse riding and carriage driving to accessible climbing and abseiling, canoeing and cycling. All these activities taking place within Calvert Trust’s own 44 acres on the edge of Exmoor National Park. Possibly Sarah’s favourite activity was the canoeing. “I liked the boat a lot!” says Sarah. She also loved the climbing... “I was high up. I waved to a lady. It’s fun!”

Through the Roof holidays are more than just the activities. Sarah mentions other things that were important to her: “I played games with lots of people. We did some praying and singing. I made some friends.”

The friendships and fellowship of the holidays are an important factor. Jesus is at the centre of all that we do at Through the Roof, and it’s great to be able to enjoy time with others, sharing experiences and sharing Christian fellowship too.

Sarah summed up what was felt by everyone who joined us for the holiday this year: “I would like to go again because I enjoy it. I am looking forward to meeting them next time, and meeting new friends.”

We’re pleased to say that Through the Roof will again be organising a holiday to the Calvert Trust centre **from 24th to 28th June 2024**. Why not join us for accessible activities, fun and fellowship? Further information is on the TTR website.



Sarah (in pink T-shirt) side-by-side cycling on the Calvert Trust holiday. Below: Sarah carriage driving at the activity centre on Exmoor.



## Disability diaries

In the last issue, we asked you to share your stories with us of lives transformed through disability inclusion. Thank you to those who did. Some of these stories were used (with permission) to form a series called Disability Diaries on social media. We’ve also shared them on our website – you can read them at <https://bit.ly/46YNRRX>. Here is one story from Alison who is a wheelchair user.

### My Green Wheelchair

Moving to a new church was a massive thing, after years of becoming less and less confident, my confidence was just about zero. I sat right at the back, trying not to be 'in the way'. Or leave track marks, or oil. But the Lord, as per usual, had other plans! A lovely Christian friend dumped me in it and informed the people in leadership that I could sing, and play. Thanks!

So, Christmas came, and the Lord had a few of us, including a group of refugees, singing a new Christmas song. Previously, I'd always been terrified of being judged 'imperfect', but here it was different... the joy of actually feeling wanted, and of actual value was so wonderful, it was like a glimpse of heaven!

This church has been so accommodating, but the joy is that now the bright green wheelchair I use when I play the grand piano is placed right by it at the front of the church. It is telling anyone who feels they have no worth left that here (the church) is a place that accepts you as you are, and the Lord find a place for all who seek. He is a Lord who leads a church that isn't ashamed to have a green wheelchair right by the platform and on show to everyone.



Alison in her green wheelchair.

# Together @ Home

We are pleased to announce the launch of a new online group (via Zoom), called Together @ Home. We're blessed to have two wonderful volunteers, Anne and Alex Paton, with their own experience of living with disability, who feel that God is calling them to reach out to provide online support for people, offering them opportunity to come together online and share a time of fellowship and prayer.

If you would like to come together with others to share a time of fellowship, you would be very welcome to join Together @ Home. The group will be meeting on the first and third Thursday afternoons of each month via Zoom.

One of the particular benefits of meeting online is that it enables Christian fellowship to be accessible to people wherever they live and including people who aren't able to leave the house. Please spread the news and invite anyone you think would benefit.

Full details and the Zoom link are available from Through the Roof via: [together@throughtheroof.org](mailto:together@throughtheroof.org) or 01372 749955.



**Pastors Anne and Alex have counselling skills and experience of living with disability.**

## On the air on UCB radio

We have been blessed three times in recent months with coverage of Through the Roof (TTR) on UCB radio (Universal Christian Broadcasters).

First Katie Mobbs was invited for an interview to give a reaction to the UK government launching its Disability Action Plan 2023-24 consultation, which has now closed. We were able to say how important it is for disabled people's voices to be heard – both in society generally and in the church.

UCB also interviewed Triona Brading who produced the fantastic new video for us about Supporting autistic individuals in our churches. Triona reflected on her own experience as an autistic person in church. In the UCB radio interview, Triona shared her hope that "In years to come, churches could be known as somewhere really safe and welcoming to autistic people and people of all neurologies." There is more on Triona's new video series elsewhere in this issue.

Finally, we were invited to feature prayers about disability inclusion on the UCB1 show Talking Point, to be shared during their lunchtime Hour of Prayer. We were able to ask five disabled people from around the UK to write and record short prayers to be played on the show. One prayer was aired on UCB1 each day for five days in the lead up to 17th September Disability Awareness Sunday. You can read some of the prayers in the Disability Awareness Sunday article, also in this issue.



### Thank you, anonymous donors

Thank you to everyone who gives anonymously to the work of Through the Roof. Without an address, we're often unable to thank those donors directly, but we appreciate every gift!

If you're expecting a response to a donation and haven't had one, please get in touch so we can join up all the information and properly acknowledge your gift. If you'd like to financially support Through the Roof (anonymously or otherwise) please visit our website at [www.throughtheroof.org](http://www.throughtheroof.org) for a donate link or contact the office on 01372 749955.

# Disability Awareness Sunday Success!

God planted many seeds around the country on Disability Awareness Sunday this year. The day was officially Sunday 17 September – but other dates were used, as any Sunday can be Disability Awareness Sunday. All over the UK, congregations shared the Gospel message and showed that disability inclusion is central, not an add-on, to the message of Jesus.

Roofbreakers in different parts of the UK have shared how their church celebrated:

“We celebrated Disability Awareness Sunday at Cwmbran Salvation Army in South Wales, using the theme of inclusion and giving me the opportunity to talk about being a Roofbreaker. A blessed day.”

“We marked Disability Awareness Sunday with an all-age meeting. We looked at key verses that talk about how everyone is welcome, how God has a part to play for everyone. Those who lead community groups with additional needs shared how they support the families who attend. It was such a great morning and we’ve had lots of great feedback from the church.”

“Kinross Parish Church played Ashleigh Milroy’s video from the Disability Awareness Sunday resource pack. I want to say a huge thank you for Ashleigh’s very sincere presentation. Many found it very moving. It came over so well.”

Thank you to everyone who marked Disability Awareness Sunday this year. Resources for the 2023 service are still available on our website so it’s not too late. Next year we will be celebrating on **Sunday 22nd September 2024** – get the date in your church diary now!

We’re also very grateful to those who wrote prayers for Disability Awareness Sunday. Resource pack prayers were from Ashleigh Milroy, Emily Owen and James Carter. UCB radio prayers were from Jonathan Bryan, John Garrett, Lynda Herbert, Ashleigh Milroy and Deena Nimick. Thank you too to Mike Townsend, who recorded a brief introduction to our work.

Here are two of the prayers written especially for UCB radio.

From Jonathan Bryan (who wrote the book *Eye Can Write*):

.....  
Heavenly Father,  
Thank you that everyone has a part to play;  
Expand your church’s vision beyond inclusion:  
So that we realise and value each person’s gift,  
and demonstrate your spirit’s way.  
Through your grace, may we be built up  
Into the body of Christ, in order to display  
your love outpoured in service to others.  
In Jesus’ name,  
Amen  
.....

From Deena Nimick (a Roofbreaker who is part of the Vineyard Church in Northern Ireland):

.....  
Father, life is messy and living with a disability can make it even more chaotic and confusing. Sometimes disabilities can be seen by others, but often not. However, Father you see it all and none of it is a surprise to you. Help us to remember this. Also help us remember you can turn mess into blessing because of Jesus – we just need to hand the mess over to you. Thank you for the hope you give us, no matter how big the challenge. Through Paul, you have told us “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, like Paul, help us to boast all the more gladly about how you sustain us. Father, using the gifts you give us through your Spirit may we, your children, continue to be used to build your Kingdom. May we bring light, hope, wisdom and joy because of who you are and all you’ve done for us.  
Amen  
.....



# Small number, large impact

A small but large-hearted church congregation of 30 are making a big difference to the lives of disabled people.

The church fellowship in the rural village of Doveridge, Derbyshire, which has a population of only 1800, raised an incredible £2,745 for the mission and ministry of Through the Roof, as they held a gift day for the work.

Tim Wood, Through the Roof's Chief Executive, visited St Cuthbert's church one Sunday morning to thank them for their generosity. Not only did Tim collect the cheque, but he met someone with the interest and skills to join a wheelchair distribution trip as a seating therapist.

Someone else was keen to support the work, and the Chair of the Inclusion Action Group in the Diocese (Carl) was present. The group works to advance disability inclusion in the 300 churches regionally. Another member of that group is Lynda who led the service, and co-ordinates our rural Roofbreakers network (volunteer disability champions who live in rural areas).

Those who attend St Cuthbert's church – which has witnessed 900 years of Christian worship – clearly model the Kingdom principle of the mustard seed (**Matthew 13: 13-21**).

Through the gifts of money the congregation have generated, they will transform the lives of dozens of people living with disability, giving them mobility, the freedom to belong to their community, and the opportunity to fulfil their potential in God.

Emmanuel is one example of someone whose life the church can change. Emmanuel encountered Jesus



**St Cuthbert's church beautifully illustrates the parable of the mustard seed.**

through our team and Christian partner. He is 11 and lives in Kenya's remote highlands. Born with Macrocephaly, he was left by his mother at home, so his grandmother came to care for him. The wet floor of the mud hut was all he had to sleep on. Now, with a personally-fitted wheelchair, he can sleep off the ground and wants to attend school at the bottom of the hill where he lives.

Tim commented at St Cuthbert's, "I'm humbled by the warmth and generosity of the people of this church and village – making a difference to those in great need, by donating to Through the Roof's work. It shows that God can use us, no matter how small in number."

## Future international mission trips

We're planning the following trips over the next year.

If you're interested in volunteering on one of these, or finding out about all our international opportunities, please contact [shaun@throughtheroof.org](mailto:shaun@throughtheroof.org)

**24th January – 3rd February 2024** India, Kerala. Roofbreaker Church Inclusion trip, partnered with Sathyam Literature Service.

**20th – 30th March 2024** Nigeria, Lagos. A Wheels for the World trip in partnership with Osteogenesis Imperfecta Foundation Nigeria (OIFN).

**17th – 27th April 2024** Uganda, Jinja. Roofbreaker Church Inclusion trip in partnership with Petra Foundation Christ Ministries.

**12th – 22nd June 2024** Rwanda. A Wheels for the World trip in partnership with FH Rwanda (FHR).



**Could you volunteer for a mission, like this one to Uganda?**



# God grows our gifts

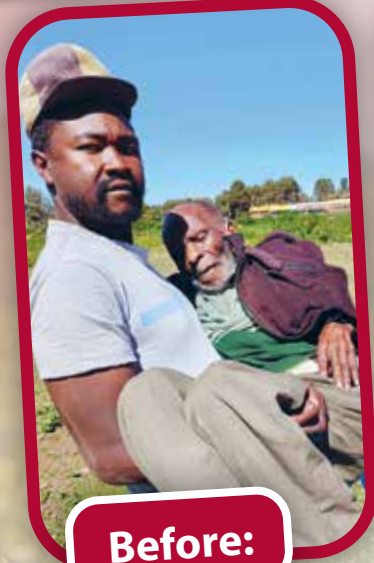


Amputee farmer Pesi says "Having a wheelchair will make it a lot easier to plant and harvest my crops".

Every gift is like a mustard seed: "... it becomes a tree. Birds come and rest in its branches." (Matt. 13:32)

## How your gift sows 'seeds':

- Local churches cultivate understanding with Roofbreaker champions and training.
- Wheelchairs and mobility aids restore freedom to disabled people in developing nations.
- Accessible Christian holidays, retreats, and groups grow community.



Before:



After:

We want to sow more 'seeds' that share God's love for disabled people. Please help us plant more by giving a gift to Through the Roof. Thank you.



Please return this form to:  
Through the Roof, Alpha House, Alpha Place,  
Garth Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4TQ

Through the Roof Charitable Trust Ltd, Registered Charity number 1087788 with registered offices at Alpha House, Alpha Place, Garth Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4TQ. It is also a Registered UK Company number 04201510.

**For all gifts please complete the sections below**



## Your Details

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

Postcode: .....

Telephone No: .....

Email: .....

We take your personal data and privacy very seriously and only use your information to best provide you with the products and services you ask for e.g. sending our newsletter, or accounting for donations. We only hold personal data for as long as it is needed, and it is held securely and never passed on to external organisations. More information can be found in the privacy policy at [www.throughtheroof.org](http://www.throughtheroof.org).

Tick here to receive our Vital Link newsletter by email

Tick here to receive our Vital Link newsletter by post

You can also donate or set up a regular payment online—just visit [www.throughtheroof.org](http://www.throughtheroof.org), and click on the 'Donate' button

## Gift Aid

Gift Aid enables us to make your gift go further without any additional cost to you.

I would like Through the Roof to treat as Gift Aid donations\* all qualifying gifts of money made:

Today  In the past 4 years  In the future

Please tick all boxes you wish to apply.

*giftaid it*

Title: .....

Name:.....

(Please include your title, any middle names, and your full address with postcode to help us in applying for gift aid)

Date:

or

It is not possible for me to Gift Aid my donations.

\* I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Please notify the charity if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address, or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

### Please return this form to:

Through the Roof, Alpha House, Alpha Place, Garth Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4TQ

**I enclose a cheque for £.....made out to Through the Roof**

**OR**

**I would like to make a donation by credit / debit card of (amount): .....**

Card number:

Security Code (Last 3 numbers on back of card):

Issue number (If applicable):  Expiry date:  /

Signature: ..... Date: .....



To donate by bank transfer, please give via **CAF Bank: sort: 40 - 52 - 40, A/C: 0008105**. Let us know if you do this, so we can acknowledge your gift. Contact us on **01372 749955** or email **info@throughtheroof.org**.