Fill in the gaps with the words from the box:

| plunge | backwater | outdoorsy | in the sticks | the icing on the cake | idyll | derelict |
| the backbone | few and far | for all intents and purposes | dismal | at one with |

Heather Long

A couple of years ago, I took the 1) _____ and moved from London to a tiny village in the heart of the countryside, and it's been one of the best decisions I've ever made. I've found my rural idyll.

I've always been a(n) 2) _____ type, so living in the country suits me perfectly. I love going for long walks in the woods, especially at this time of year when the leaves are changing colour and there's a nip in the air. And in the summer, a swim in the river is 3) _____. I'm also lucky enough to have a garden, and I spend hours pottering around, planting flowers, and growing vegetables. There's nothing quite like feeling 4) _____ nature.

Another thing I love about living in the countryside is the sense of community. In a small village like mine, everyone knows everyone else and people often pop round for a cup of tea and a chat. When they ask "How are you?", they genuinely mean it. No one cares what brand of clothing you are wearing, or how much money you make. You are accepted for who you are, not for what you do. The local pub is 5) _____ of social life here and it's where everyone gathers to catch up on the latest news and gossip. 6) _____, it's the village living room.

Of course, country life isn't without its challenges. The nearest shop is a good ten miles away, so you have to be organized and plan your shopping trips carefully. But for me, the benefits far outweigh the drawbacks.