

HOUSE PROUD

Connecting Community

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When Rita and Keith Oliver settled themselves in Portarlington twenty years ago, the garden was a priority.....and it hasn't stopped being so.



ISOLATION IN THE VEGE PATCH

Keith, a Freemason at the time, joined the Portarlington Lodge and was instrumental in allowing our Neighbourhood House to become a tenant for our first ten wonderful years at Brown St. He joined both the drawing and 'Back to School' classes and has been an active 'student' since that time, only missing classes when Rita had him doing various gardening and carpentry jobs around the house.

Rita became a member of the already established local Garden Club which has since come under the Neighbourhood House umbrella. She also joined the PNH 'Happy Hookers' and has

continued with that group for many years. They crochet and knit, supposedly, but one wonders when all one hears is constant chat and laughter. Rita's main purpose for joining was to learn how to crochet and I have just seen the massive rug she has made, covered in beautifully crocheted animals for an expected great grandchild.

Keith has certainly not been idle throughout this period of 'isolation' either. He has constructed two more wicking beds in their already well established garden that is currently bursting with winter vegetables. The gorgeous chooks, although not laying much at present, continue to provide the garden with valuable nutrients.

The ornamental beds are also looking lovely with little bursts of winter colour. Rita and Keith have outdoor seating placed in various locations around the garden so that they can enjoy the different aspects throughout the day while enjoying a cuppa. They certainly would not need to spend much time away from home as they are almost self-sufficient and are surrounded

by beauty and calm, until Ebony wants a walk. Isolation can be idyllic.

It's great to hear that many other Neighbourhood House groups are remaining active. Some are keeping in contact through zoom and others are connecting through emails and phone contact. Many are visiting each other's homes for 'Dancing in the Dark' or a game of cards, card making or meeting to critique stories or art work, all able to be done within our quarantine restrictions. The bird watching group remains active.

The PNH committee has been meeting, some physically and others via technology, to ensure our establishment meets all requirements before opening the doors to the classes that may be able to return soon, depending on how recent developments pan out.

Updates are being sent out regularly. Stay informed, stay safe and stay well. We hope to see you soon.

Jenny Macaulay
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