

## A Chatterbox in Need

Posted on 12:00pm Monday 14th Sep 2020

I haven't been out and about much. I do my shopping, that's about it. I've been careful but also my back is playing up. I've had a bad back for years and usually have bad days and worse days, but now the tablets are giving me the shakes. I've called the doctor and he said he's "thinking about it". The tablets don't even work at all for the pain, and it's not the same talking to the doctor on the phone to get my point across. I don't like the phone. I've got one of these mobile things and I take it with me if I am out, but I can't be bothered with it much. I'm a face-to-face person.



Jubilee Court, where I live, it's a sheltered housing place, about 30 flats and most of them are 1-bed flats, so a lot of us live alone. There are some of them that won't come out, the rabbit hutches I call them. But I like seeing other people and a few of us have been meeting in the shared garden during lockdown.

Some are getting their shopping delivered because they're sheltering, they haven't stepped outside Jubilee Court, and it's nice for us all to sit and chat in the garden. We were doing it already, we've just carried on, but social distanced round the table, catching the sun when it's out. It's good to chat, keeps us going, talking to different people; you just go down the garden and who knows who will be there today – it's a nice surprise!

All the social things I used to do stopped in lockdown, the Friday Friends Gardening group, the Bridge the Gap 50+ social group. The *Bevy* pub and *Gladrags* have got Chatterboxes going instead. We just had our first one last week to round off July nicely. The pub cooks us a lunch and the Gladrags people chat with us all... some of us don't need help with that! I have my own chatterbox at Jubilee Court, my friend who's come along to this too.

It was really, really nice to see all these folk who we haven't seen for a while and see how everyone is doing; I needed Chatterboxes to happen. A new lady, Louisa came along. She's 92 and walked half a mile from her home to get here. She said she'd been told by the NHS to stay indoors but she has been going across the road to the park every day to feed the birds. She looks really well on it.

I love gardening and have kept myself busy with it in this strange time. I used to sell flowers years ago when I ran the hardware store with my mum. That's when my back went though, jumping off the back of the flower lorry, carrying great boxes of flowers. I grow in the greenhouse now. It's for everyone to use but it's only me that goes in there now. No-one else seems interested. I've grown all sorts and get free seeds in my gardening magazine, "Garden News". I've got a lot of tomatoes on the go just now; some of the others will have them when they're ripe, I don't need them all, I just enjoy watching them grow, making them grow. Lockdown has been very still. At least plants are moving on.

By Patrick, August 2020