

Mission Connect Article for October 2019 Herald

Investigating the potential

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I've been serving as a community outreach worker in Donabate Presbyterian Church in County Dublin for the last three years.

My role initially involved doing community work and youth ministry in Donabate while spending one day a week investigating the potential for Donabate to plant a church in one of the neighbouring towns. Three years ago, I had barely heard of Balbriggan, but since June 2019, my wife and I have been living in Balbriggan and now feel very at home here. Once a town that was famous for making hosiery for Queen Victoria, Balbriggan can now claim the status of Ireland's youngest and most ethnically diverse town with 138 different nationalities represented. It's very exciting to be working in such a culturally diverse place where the Irish pub is sandwiched between an Afro-Caribbean barber shop and a Polish deli.

Over the past three years, we've seen God bring a core group of local Christians together along with some people beginning a relationship with Jesus for the first time. We've been meeting for home group (Bible study) in each other's houses on Wednesday nights for two years. As well as this, we have been sharing the good news of Jesus in the community through our annual summer kids' club and an Alpha course that we ran in a local pub in spring 2019.

The opportunity to move to Balbriggan came miraculously, a few months ago, when a man approached me in the local Costa coffee shop, after seeing a Bible on my table. After scoping me out to make sure I wasn't a member of a cult, he suggested that we move into the flat attached to his house! The move has opened up great opportunities to meet new people. Kathryn and I have joined the local sports clubs and community groups to provide opportunities to build relationships with people.

The focus of my role is now almost entirely on outreach and discipleship in Balbriggan. On the last Sunday in August we launched the first of our monthly evening worship services at 4.30pm in a local community hall. This was a very exciting evening and it was great to see the local Christians take ownership of their new church. It was encouraging to welcome some families to church for the first time after meeting at the kids' club the week before. We hope, God-willing, to run monthly services until Christmas and then weekly in the new year.

Please pray:

- Pray for us as we continue to try to grow Christian community in this town.
- Pray for our monthly services, that they would attract people from the town and that the good news of Jesus would be proclaimed throughout Balbriggan.

- Pray for godly leaders to develop among our home group and for growth in our faith.
- Pray for protection and unity among us.