

Meet the Tenant

With Hollywood Tenant, Michael McStraw



Q. How long have you been a Habinteg tenant?

A. Around two years now, and I've mostly worked from home, in that time.

Q. What is the best thing about where you live?

A. I live in an apartment at Church View, Hollywood, and the best thing is how central everything is. We are bang in the centre of town and can get to everything easily. Everyone knows each other and I have really got to know my close neighbours.

Q. What is it like where you live?

A. There are so many things to see and do, near-by, even during lockdown. There is the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, just up the road, you can walk along the shore, there's parks and Belfast is conveniently only a few miles away. If you like coffee and shops, there's plenty to choose from. If you have young family there's convenient schools and youth organisations, and there's even loads of different churches depending on your preference.

Q. Have you any advice for other Habinteg tenants?

A. Get to know your neighbours. We have got to know quite a few and there are some great people around us. You know they are there if you need them. Also, get to know what's going on in your community, there's probably more than you think.



Michael McStraw
Church View Tenant

Q. Do you have any hopes or aspirations for the coming year?

A. I hope it's as good as last year, now we have found our forever home. I just want some good weather so I can sit outside and enjoy.



Au Revoir Ciaran

Community Involvement Officer, Ciaran McLarnon, recently moved on from Habinteg to take up an exciting Environmental Officer post. Our tenant member of the Newsletter Editorial Panel, Cavell Moore, caught up with Ciaran to find out about his time with Habinteg, and to see how he was settling into his new role.



Q. How long did you work with Habinteg?

A. For three fantastic years.

Q. What was your favourite role within Habinteg?

A. I really enjoyed working in an area where Habinteg had little community involvement opportunities. I relished the challenge of building connections from the ground up with the support of my colleagues within the different services. There was never two days the same, and working on the ground each day was always a fresh start. Mostly though, I enjoyed interacting with local people and loved the banter, it really made my day.

Q. Tell us a little about the challenges of the Community Involvement Officers role?

A. I feel that the biggest challenge for me was the COVID pandemic. We all had to move activities from face-to-face to Zoom and it was challenging. We had to learn new ways of interacting with all our tenants and the wider community. Never did I consider that I would use the phrase "you're on mute" more than I would be saying good morning to people.

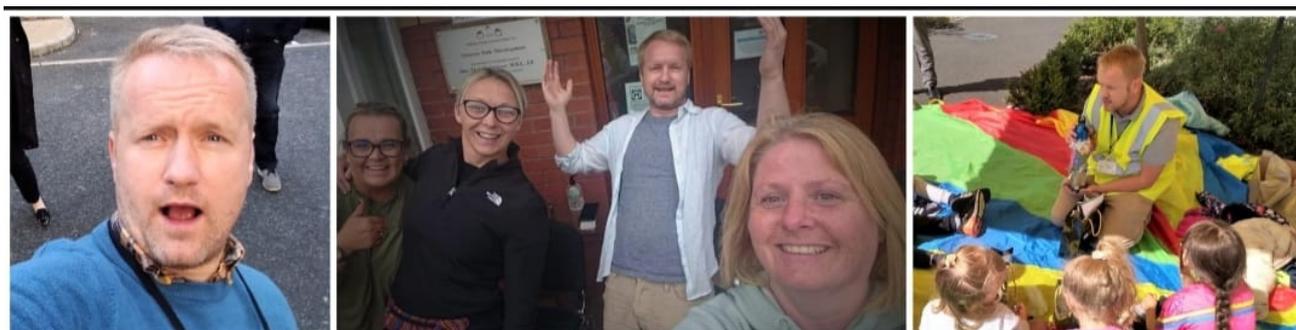
Q. What is your new line of work?

A. I'm the Climate Development Manager with the ACRE Project (Active Communities Restoring the Earth). My role is to support local communities on a range of environmental restoration projects across Northern Ireland. A unique opportunity that has me pinching myself everyday I'm in work!



"Q. How did you get into this?"

A. Long story Cavell, the short answer is that I have been fortunate enough to live in different countries. I've been given a unique perspective on what's happening globally and I felt compelled to turn that concern into action. I want to leave our Earth a little bit better for the next generation. There is no more important job that I feel I could be doing with my life. I have hit the ground running supporting a project owned by Barcroft Community Gardens based in Newry . I'm supporting them on their journey to install a pocket forest on their grounds in a small patch of unused green space.



Q. Whats a Pocket Forest?

A. It's a small self-sustaining ecosystem that is installed in such a manner as not to disturb the ground. However, it does bring all the life back that would normally be found in a forest such as soil microbes, worms, undergrowth and bugs of-course. It's a particular method that grows fast, stores more carbon and most importantly creates an island for nature to thrive.

Q. Wow, anything else you want to add?

Thanks for chatting to me today Cavell, my advice to anyone concerned about our future and the environment would be to speak out and get involved with local activities.

Ciaran was interviewed by a tenant member of the Newsletter Editorial Panel, Cavell Moore. If you have a relevant skill, or would just like to get involved in producing future tenant-led editions, please get in touch by email: newsletter@habinteg-ulster.co.uk

