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# Brian's on the ball with the Credit Union



Tyrone footballer **Brian McGuigan** has had a busy few weeks, what with the team preparations for the final of the Ulster Senior Football Championship against Monaghan, and the very welcome arrival of his baby daughter, Cara, on July 5...

With a collection of Ulster titles, All-Ireland titles and an All-stars medal under his belt, Brian has shown how hard work and commitment can pay off.

And it seems that his attitude of commitment and loyalty has benefited him off the pitch too, with his local Credit Union.

Brian has been a member of Ardboe Credit Union Ltd since the age of 16 – some 14 years which have seen him travel the world, recover from serious sports injuries, get married and start a family. But he's the first to admit that he's relied on a little help along the way...

"I'd been saving on and off with the Credit Union for a few years," explained Brian. "It's been a god-send to family and friends over the years when they've needed help, and I've been brought up with

it as part of our way of life. "Myself and Jennifer decided we wanted to go travelling and we planned a trip to Australia in 2005. So I went in and spoke to the Credit Union about a loan to help towards the trip.

"As it happens, I ended up home earlier than expected, having been called up to the Tyrone squad. Not too long after I was home, I was playing a club match against Dromore and after landing badly, I broke my leg in two places."

The horrific injury left Brian out of action for almost a year – both on and off the pitch. A joiner by trade, he was unable to work in the months it took for his leg to heal.

"It was tough not playing, but even harder being out of work for so long. My family and friends were lifesavers in those



few months; I don't know how we'd have got through it without them.

"I went into the Credit Union to speak to them about the loan repayments, given that I knew I was going to be out of work – and pocket – for a while.

"They were great – so sympathetic to our circumstances. They were able to adjust the repayments, which really took the pressure off.

"Once I was back on my feet again, and back to work, I was able to get the loan paid off. Thankfully, I haven't needed their help again since, but knowing that they're there if we do need them is very reassuring.

"And with the arrival of our baby girl Cara, who knows – I'm told children are an expensive investment! But very worthwhile!

"We plan to open an account for her at some point, and can teach her the benefits of using the Credit Union.

Hopefully, she'll never need their help, but that's what they're there for!"

## Questions...

**Q.** Does the Credit Union have an account to pay household bills on a monthly basis? Breege, Lurgan.

**A.** Some Credit Unions may offer a budget account, which allows members to save and budget for weekly and monthly expenses, such as household bills. This may include the direct payment from the account by Direct Debit. Check with your local Credit Union to see what services it provides.

**Q.** Is it possible to alter your repayments if you are in a position to pay more at a later stage, and is there a penalty for this? Is it possible to pay it off in full also? Clare, Portaferry.

**A.** Your Credit Union is very flexible – you can increase loan repayments, make additional repayments, or repay in full at any time, without any penalties or additional charges.

If you have any questions that need answering email us at [cumoney@irishnews.com](mailto:cumoney@irishnews.com).

## Meet your local Credit Union...

## Ballinascreen Credit Union Limited

The town of **Draperstown** might seem like a rural backwater to those who do not regularly visit there, but to the local people it is a vibrant commercial centre for the large rural hinterland.

A short walk through the town will also highlight its dual identity, with locals referring to it as Ballinascreen, its Parish name.

Ballinascreen Credit Union Ltd, which has invested heavily into the local community, is at the very heart of the town, its people and their parish.

From humble beginnings in March 1968, the Credit Union has seen a dramatic increase in its membership to over 3,600 adult and 1,000 junior members today – with combined savings of £9 million.

This has been achieved through the provision of high quality, efficient and easy accessible services, and the continued dedication of its staff. Each week, the Credit Union offers its members 46 opening hours over a six day period, including late opening on a Thursday.

Ballinascreen Credit Union Ltd recently received approval to extend its common bond beyond the parish



boundary, thus enabling it to offer its services to those residing or working within a six mile radius of the office.

Services offered by the Credit Union include savings accounts, including savings schemes in the local primary schools, loans at competitive interest rates, life savings, loan protection and death benefit insurances, and foreign exchange.

In 2009 the Credit Union introduced a Christmas Savings Scheme, which attracted over 800 savers and accumulated savings of £600,000. This was returned to savers prior to Christmas, and a high per-

centage of this sum was spent in the local community.

Ballinascreen Credit Union Ltd is always looking to expand its services, and the introduction of a Credit Union Prepaid Debit Card is imminent, making Ballinascreen the first Credit Union in County Derry to introduce this service.

The prepaid card will provide members with convenient access to money that has already been loaded onto their cards and can be used at any outlet that accepts MasterCard payments, including shopping online or by phone.

The newly refurbished, centrally-located office in Ballinascreen boasts a community window, which is reserved for local voluntary organisations and clubs so that they can showcase their groups and celebrate memorable events.

There is a very high level of community spirit in Draperstown, and the Credit Union plays a significant part in harnessing it. In addition, the range of services available provide members with the means to make Ballinascreen Credit Union their primary, non-mortgage, financial services provider.

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### How do I join?

Log onto [www.creditunionni.co.uk](http://www.creditunionni.co.uk) to find your local Credit Union. You are eligible to join, provided you form part of its 'common bond', for example, if you live or work within a Credit Union's geographical area, or you are employed by a particular employer.

You can request an application form in person, by phone, or by downloading one from the Credit Union's website (if applicable).

Return the completed form to the Credit Union, and don't forget to take your ID with you – photographic ID and proof of address are required to open an account. There is a joining fee of no more than £1.

Some Credit Unions ask new members to attend a meeting so that they can learn about the benefits of membership. Others can process your application immediately.

And then you can start saving... It's as simple as that!



if you have any questions that need answering email us at [cumoney@irishnews.com](mailto:cumoney@irishnews.com)

**CU AT YOUR PLACE**



[creditunionni.co.uk](http://creditunionni.co.uk)