

Phoenix Farm Open Door Project

Annual Report 2021-2022



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www.thearkgedling.org.uk

theark@thearkgedling.org.uk
Registered Charity: 1098333

Chair of Trustees Report

The Ark has steadily got back into top gear as life has gradually opened up following the pandemic restrictions. The Friendship Group is attracting new members from wider afield and the development of the Thursday Afternoon Craft Group is amazing with people of all ages discovering and rediscovering sometimes rusty talents. The introduction of a Tuesday afternoon art class has given the opportunity for people to focus on specific fine art skills. We are always happy to explore new activities and if you've got a skill that you'd like to share with others, please contact us at The Ark. The mission of The Ark would be impossible without the dedication of our wonderful volunteers, and I thank them all on behalf of myself and the trustees.

Supporting the community is all about partnership and we are delighted to have many local friends. Working together during the pandemic has brought us even closer to colleagues at Nottinghamshire County Council and Gedling Borough Council. The initiative and coordination of their Community Engagement Team has enabled joined up voluntary sector support for the community through the Gedling Community Hubs and Partners Network of which we are delighted to be a member. Local County and Gedling Council elected members continue their excellent support for The Ark, and I would particularly like to thank them all for their hard work on our behalf. Our Member of Parliament, Tom Randall, has been invaluable in his support for us, particularly during the grant funding process and we are delighted to have the continued support of Vernon, now Lord Coaker.



We continue to explore new sources of revenue to help us meet the increasing needs of the local community in this challenging time. Many thanks to all who have helped fund our services this year, national, regional, and local grant making bodies and trusts, our partner churches and in particular all those individuals who maintain a generous, regular, and dependable flow of giving. Our ongoing refurbishment gives us the chance to explore new ways of providing greater financial self-reliance. A self-generated income stream would also enable us to apply for financial support from 'seed funders,' opportunities for new volunteers, and even greater chances for engagement with the Gedling community.

The excellent support of our five partner churches does not just focus on finance. Most importantly it is the spiritual, pastoral, and personal Christian support that we, and indeed the local community most benefit from. We warmly welcome Reverend Mike Forsyth, Vicar of St James Church, and Reverend James Pate of Westdale Lane Baptist Church to The Ark fellowship.

Trustees have a vital role to play in the life and well-being of The Ark and I would like to personally thank them and our manager Joel for their invaluable support over a particularly challenging year for me, especially Adam for acting as Chair during my leave of absence. I also warmly welcome our newly appointed trustee, Su Panter, a member of the St James Church congregation.

The final words I leave to St Paul from his Second Letter to the Corinthians:

'Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.'

John Tattersfield - Chair of Trustees

LOCAL CHURCHES THAT SUPPORT THE ARK

Phoenix Farm Methodist Church, Wollaton Avenue, Gedling.	Gedling Road Methodist Church, Gedling Road,	Westdale Lane Baptist Church, 368 Westdale Lane	All Hallows Church of England, Rectory Drive, Gedling	St James' Church of England, Marshall Hill Drive,
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Project Manager's Report



It's always difficult to know exactly what to write in the annual report. I think that's especially true this year because the people at the Ark have had in many ways a very demanding year. Coming fully out of lockdown and the Covid restrictions has been challenging as we all readjust to a very different world with a huge array of problems that did not exist before. Society's challenges have almost certainly grown, and unrest can be seen all over. The level of referrals to our service has risen, and the individual needs in those appointments have become more systemic and less personalised; therefore harder to combat. Furthermore, many of our own team, especially the volunteers, have experienced incredibly tough personal circumstances; such as bereavement, ill health, family problems and, of course, the cost-of-living concerns many of us share. Despite their circumstances, our team have valiantly and heroically supported the people who are using our service.

I can only say thank you to our team; volunteers, staff, and the board of trustees. Their fortitude and sacrifice has been and continues to be admirable and inspiring. The whole team has worked so hard to put together a service that, I believe, is of great benefit to the residents of Gedling which is consistently being affirmed by the high demand for The Ark.

As a child, I watched Charlie Chaplin movies and I enjoyed them for their slapstick and the humour. Since becoming an adult I have watched some of these movies again and, whilst still laughing, I've seen that, often, there is a touch of meaning; a social commentary; an important point being made in the film that I had not explicitly understood as a child. The finest example of this is surely "The Great Dictator". At the end of this film, Chaplin's character gives a marvellous speech, in which he says,

"I'm sorry, but I don't want to be an emperor
That's not my business
I don't want to rule or conquer anyone
I should like to help everyone if possible
We all want to help one another, human beings are like that
We want to live by each other's happiness, not by each other's misery
We don't want to hate and despise one another.
And this world has room for everyone, and the good Earth is rich and can provide for everyone
The way of life can be free and beautiful, but we have lost the way."

Chaplin puts forward some reasons as to why people have "lost the way". He highlights "greed which has poisoned men's souls"; "knowledge that makes us cynical; cleverness that makes us hard and unkind" and "thinking too much and feeling too little." So, to answer this, he says we "need humanity, kindness and gentleness"; that we should use all our power to bring people closer together, for brotherhood, unity, and liberty. Chaplin finishes his speech with a formidable crescendo "You, the people have the power – the power to create happiness! You, the people, have the power to make this life free and beautiful, to make this life a wonderful adventure".

This year I have seen the team at The Ark act with feeling, kindness, gentleness, and humanity. I have seen them use their skills, abilities, and innate powers to create happiness and, for that, I will always be a grateful witness; making the challenge of this year worth it. Still, we look forward to the next step on the adventure and we thank you for all your support along the way.

Joel Baldry

Project Manager

The Activities at the Ark

Provide an advice service open to all.

Provide basic skills training.

Provide a meeting place with café facilities with a safe friendly environment.

Undertake social activities, and support activities of other organisations, to increase a sense of community.

The Aims of the Ark

To prevent hardship and distress.

To increase the feeling of community in the area and decrease social isolation.

Enable people to take more control of their lives.

Enable people to find employment.

The Ark's 2021 –2022 Activities



Welfare rights service

We are able to give advice on a variety of social issues, including employment related benefits like universal credit or disability benefits such as Disability Living Allowance or PIP. These services help to protect the people who are unemployed, or likely to become unemployed and those on the lowest income (or no income at all) from the most severe financial hardships.

Disability benefit support

Frequently people contact The Ark enquiring about disability benefits. An enquiry could be a new claim, an appeal against a benefit decision or just general advice around entitlement and how to manage a claim. Local GP surgeries and mental health teams refer many people to The Ark, although people are free to self-refer.

Universal Credit

Applying for universal credit can be a daunting process and one that often people do not feel capable of undertaking alone, even if they have access to technology. Through our service we are able to walk people through the application process, including assessing their eligibility and payment rates.

Advocacy service

There are times when advice and assistance is not enough to ensure that people's rights are protected and they are supported in the way that is most correct. In these times a person will sometimes need a third party with more expertise to take up their case.

Employment Coach + Job Club

Each week Jenni, our employment coach, supports dozens of job seekers in their search for work. Jenni provides advice and assistance with CV writing, job searches, applications and interview skills. Jenni has also developed good contacts with a network of agencies so she is often amongst the first to hear about opportunities in the area. We are delighted to say that this role has already seen multiple job seekers find employment and training opportunities. As part of her role every Friday afternoon Jenni runs a job club at The Ark. Assisted by volunteers advice, support and encouragement is given as well as help using computers.

Linking Lives

The Ark is a member of the 'Linking Lives - Two's Company' telephone befriending scheme. This scheme is a support for people who are lonely, isolated or housebound. The scheme also takes referrals from social prescribers easing pressure on statutory services whilst maintaining support for the individuals who need it.

Foodbank

If a person comes to us in state of emergency and will not be able to provide their next meal. We are a referring agent for all the local foodbanks (as well as those further across Nottingham) and through this avenue we can meet their immediate need and we can then help them find more stability in the long term.

ACTS435

Acts 435 is an online giving charity, directly connecting those who want to give with those who are in genuine need of their help, through a network of local churches and charities. In the last year through this initiative we have been able to provide cookers, beds, washing machines, fridge freezers and other essential items to people who due to unfortunate circumstances could not afford them otherwise.

The Ark's 2021-2022 activities



Community Café

We provide a community café, staffed by volunteers which provides tea and coffee free of charge (taking only donations), and gives away a significant volume of biscuits each year. The main aim is to provide a warm and welcoming environment and by encouraging people to use the café we have a significant impact in overcoming social isolation for people. The Café is part of a national initiative known as "places of welcome" (www.placesofwelcome.org). Volunteers have also been giving computer assistance to people who are not computer literate.

Friendship Group

We have a group that meets every Monday afternoon for friendship, games, laughter and learning. During these times the café area is a hive of activity and liveliness with many cakes and biscuits consumed as well as plenty of thoughtful conversation topics discussed and debated.

From time to time specialists in their field come to enlighten and inform the group. At other times the group will arrange for somebody to come and teach them a specific skill. It is open to all and everyone is welcome.

Art Group

On a Thursday afternoon we are host to an art group. Open to anybody the group provides an outlet for people's creativity and an opportunity to experiment with different artistic approaches. This group attracts total novices to experienced painters for what is a relaxing and therapeutic afternoon. Examples of the art produced are proudly on display in the Ark.

Art Workshop

This is a group where an artist provides training and direction to anyone who is looking to explore the finer points of art. At the same time people of all ages are welcome to bring along their own craft activities and do it in conjunction and community with others.

Community Garden

The community garden is a reflective space in which people can enjoy a spot of tranquility and peace. It is maintained by volunteers.

Away From it All - Mothers Union Holidays

A Holiday scheme primarily funded by members of Mothers' Union, to help people who wouldn't otherwise be able to have a holiday. The Ark has been able to refer a number of local families for their first holiday in years.

Main Street Methodist Church/ Hope Community Café

We have been working for sometime with HOPE Nottingham on providing welfare rights advice at their community café on Main Street Methodist Church. This provision will be starting for two days a week very soon as we have secured funding to begin the work.



Member of

advice UK



Finance



Treasurer Report

I would like to extend my gratitude to all of the people who have helped provide funds for the work of The Ark in 2021. Whether as private individuals, members of Churches, trustees of charitable trusts or foundations, or as part of Gedling Borough Council: it is your donations and grants that have enabled The Ark to provide services this year. I very much hope that you feel you are getting good value for your money – I certainly do.

We the Trustees are grateful for donations of all sizes and all kinds – it takes many kinds of contributions for a project such as ours to function well. All are valued. I have listed the names of the largest donors in an appendix which can be produced at request.

My thanks to all of the people who have volunteered their help to The Ark over the course of what has been another strange and challenging year. You have enabled so many things to happen which otherwise would have been impossible. Give yourselves a hearty pat on the back! I remain grateful to Denise Mear for her ongoing support with the online banking.

I record my grateful thanks to M Paula Powditch ACA for her Independent Examination of the Accounts for 2021. Turning to these Accounts we can see broadly that this has been a period in which costs (£48,260.83) have been well-controlled and that we have been in receipt of an unusually large amount of income (£60,606.87). At the year-end (30th December 2021) we carried forward a very healthy balance of £61,819.39. I can assure you that cost control remains as tight as you would wish, even with a full treasury.

My especial thanks to Joel and Jenni for their commitment and flexibility – and what they each brought as individuals – in 2021. I feel we are blessed as an organisation to have both Joel and Jenni. Well done both of you..and please keep up the good work!

In keeping with the Christian values of The Ark we have now set up ethical bank accounts with Unity Trust Bank. We are shortly to hold the vast majority of our funds in these accounts.

Adam Corbett

Treasurer

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Registered Charity: 1098333

Donations

Bank Transfer: Donations can be made by bank transfer to;

Phoenix Farm Open Door Project
Account Number: 20453378
Sort Code: 608301

Just giving: Just giving is a quick and easy way of making donations towards the work of The Ark. Donations can be made as one off payments or set up as longer term standing orders. If you would like to donate please visit;

<https://www.justgiving.com/phoenixfarmopendoorproject>

Thank you.

Finance — Account Statement



The Ark Annual Accounts for the year ended 30 December 2021			
2020		2021	
£		£	£
	Receipts		
34862.00	Charities and foundations	28566.00	
5030.00	Church donations/collections	25700.59	
10,000.00	COVID Grant	—	
2726.00	Regular standing orders	2981.00	
12,336.30	Irregular individual gifts	650.00	
908.61	Fund Raising	870.50	
438.99	Shop takings	347.66	
1831.82	Sundries (furlough, interest, gifts and refunds)	1491.12	
68,133.32	Total Receipts	60,606.87	
	Payments		
6,423.96	Rent, utilities, phone and internet	7,155.84	
1,790.00	Repairs and building costs	700.58	
1447.78	Equipment, fixtures and fittings	657.98	
23,185.70	Salaries and personnel costs (before furlough refund)	30,676.95	
574.84	Insurances	546.08	
2,203.63	Sundries	3993.60	
	Training	273.00	
	Food Voucher Project	4256.80	
35,625.91	Total Payments		48,260.83
32,507.41	Excess of Receipts (Payments) for the year		12,346.04
	Balance brought forward at 1 January		
12,354.62	Barclays Bank Current Account	49,252.09	
120.17	Barclays Bank Business Premium Account	120.26	
4,307.54	COIF Charities Deposit Fund	—	
369.82	Cash in hand	186.21	
17,152.15			49,558.56
	Balance carried forward at 30 December		
49,252.09	Barclays Bank Current Account	49,353.09	
120.26	Barclays Bank Business Premium Account	120.26	
—	COIF Charities Deposit Fund	—	
186.21	Cash in hand	—	
49,558.56			£61819.39
	A C Corbett	P Powditch	
	Hon Treasurer	Accounts Examiner	