

New Ark Play



Adventure Playground,
City Farm & Eco Centre

Annual Report 2013-14

Newark Play Association

Registered charity number: 1026751



**Holiday and Afterschool Play Sessions • Additional Childcare
Play Support Service • Preschool Playgroup • Group Visits
Parent & Toddler Group • Birthday Parties • Volunteering**

**At New Ark we learn how to manage risk.
We don't mind getting messy.
We value our world.**



Educational and group farm visits



- Care for domestic and farm animals on our city farm.
- Group teaching spaces outdoors or under shelter.
- Explore our woodland/sensory play area or adventure playground.
- £3.50 per child in term-time (2 hour visit) or £6.50 in holidays (4-5 hour visit).
- Ideal for schools, preschools, special needs groups, holiday clubs, parent and toddler groups, cubs and brownies and other children's groups.



**Find out more at www.newarkplay.co.uk
or call Carolyn 10am-12pm on 340605**

Introduction to New Ark Play

New Ark is a special place where children of all ages are encouraged to play in ways that are creative, adventurous and explore the world

We are an independent charity, officially called Newark Play Association. We aim to provide stimulating play opportunities for all children no matter what their age and background. Our facilities include a traditional adventure playground, an eco garden and a city farm.

We are run by a Management Council of local volunteers. Many are parents whose children play at New Ark; some are local businesspeople with valuable management skills.

We employ professional play and child care workers, several of whom are Forest School trained. About 100 volunteers help with all kinds of jobs in the adventure playground, eco centre and city farm, plus admin and fundraising.

We are registered with Ofsted and were rated "outstanding" in our last two inspections, most recently in May 2013.

We keep charges as low as possible and try to ensure that lack of money does not prevent children from enjoying our facilities. We are partially grant-aided by Peterborough City Council. We are also supported by grants, fundraising events and appeals. We hope you enjoy reading our Annual report and seeing the photographs and children's artwork which is scattered throughout these pages.



Our playground puts recycled building and industrial materials to good use

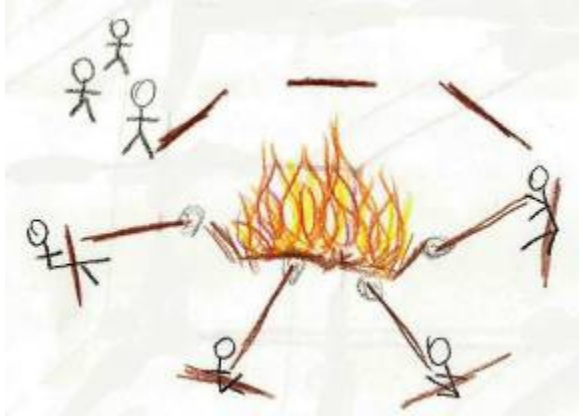
We support the right to play, which is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Play is a child's natural way of learning about the world, themselves and other people. Children need play opportunities that encourage exploration, adventure and enterprise. Having enough time and space for play increases health and happiness. Play makes life more interesting and fun!

Outdoor facilities at New Ark

At New Ark Play children can enjoy all kinds of play, safely under adult supervision, indoors and out, all year round. Our outdoor facilities include...

Adventure Playground

Many of the structures in our traditional adventure playground are handmade on site, using traditional building materials and discarded industrial parts. Children can ride our aerial runway, swing on a tyre, and play tag on our huge American swing. Alternatively they can climb frames, roll down our hill, or join a den-building team.

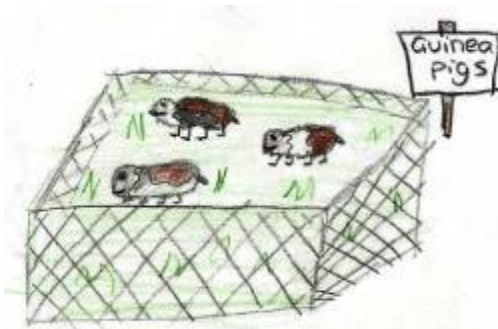


Cooking dampers in the playground

Playground-goers explore risk in a controlled environment while supervised by professional playworkers, who know when to help and encourage and when to step back to let children work things out for themselves. They get heaps of exercise, fresh air, contact with the natural world and all the benefits of play!

City Farm

New Ark is the only City Farm in the Eastern Counties. Children can see, touch and help to care for small pets, poultry and some larger farm animals. They learn about nature and enjoy the responsibility of caring for animals. Many of our animals were rescued from owners who could no longer care for them, and we try to rehome some of them.

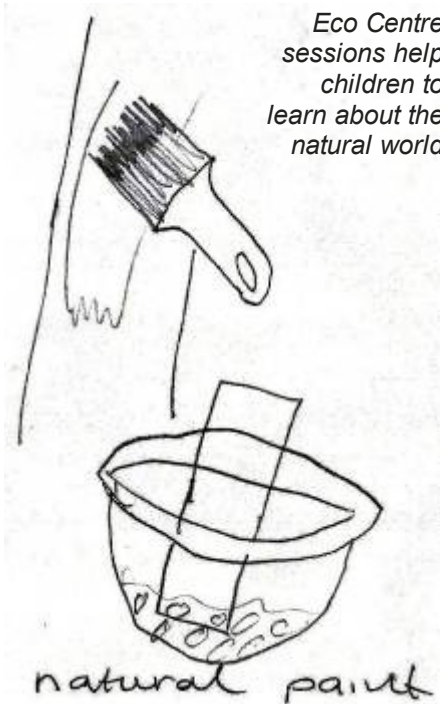


Small animals on New Ark Farm

We receive no Government funding and rely on donations to help us pay for food, bedding and veterinary care. We encourage families to sponsor an animal and/ or volunteer for animal care duties outside of our normal opening hours.

Eco Centre

With its woodland area, sensory garden and small orchard, children can observe the life cycles of wild creatures. They also learn to appreciate the colours, shapes and scents of plants. The area contains both purpose-built and loose natural play structures, which are generally suitable for younger children. We run a weekly toddler group in the eco centre and playgroup children attend a session every week. Sessions for older children are offered in school holidays.



Eco Centre sessions help children to learn about the natural world

Support Garden

The garden behind our play support building contains a vegetable patch and provides an ideal enclosed area for gentler outdoor activities. It is often used by small groups of children.

What's on

At New Ark there is something for children of all ages

Afterschool playground Alongside adventure play – such as digging, building, ball games, swinging and climbing – we provide a wide range of creative art and craft activities. The children visit the City Farm and help to care for our animals.

Holiday playground Similar activities to afterschool activities plus baking, outdoor cooking, den-building, water slides, messy play and more. By prior arrangement we can offer childcare between 8.30am-6pm. During summer holidays we run forest school sessions for under 8s.

One-off visits We welcome a limited number of visitors - contact us first.

Play Support Service Specialist support for individuals and small groups with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Parent and Toddler Group Weekly sessions for children aged 0-4 to explore our eco centre and city farm.

Preschool Playgroups Children develop through play, using both the adventure playground, farm and eco centre. In the summer term we offer Eco Baby sessions for children due to start preschool in September.

Group visits and parties Schools, clubs and community groups can organise visits to our city farm during the week, and at weekends we are available to hire for birthday parties.

We believe that....

Play is the child's natural way of learning.
Play makes life exciting, interesting and fun.

So we...

Provide stimulating and exciting play opportunities for children of all ages, at affordable prices, always meeting Ofsted requirements.

Here we are in action...



Experiencing the joy of getting mucky



Exploring nature in the eco centre



Enabling children to test their limits and explore risk



Encouraging responsibility and caring on the city farm

A review of 2013-14 at New Ark

By Bill Purdon, chair of the Management Council 2013-14

2013-14 saw another year where New Ark Play has provided excellent opportunities for children to experience its special outdoor-focused play opportunities.

As ever, we have had a very limited supply of money and have depended on our hard working and committed volunteers and staff who keep on going that extra mile. We are proud of what we provide for the children who visit, and we are proud that we achieved Ofsted's "outstanding" rating for the second time in a row at our inspection in May 2013.

2013-14 saw our first year of operating a new way of charging parents whose children use the playground facilities: with separate registrations for holidays and term time rather than a single annual payment. It was felt that this is a fairer way of charging and means that our service is still affordable as payments are spread out. This appears to have gone well and the numbers of registered families has increased.

Money continues to be tight and we need to make difficult decisions about where to spend. However our finances are in more reasonable health than previous years, and we are working to adopt a more planned approach to spending. Our fundraising committee is always trying to keep up with the money we spend and has come up with the goods with many events and innovative ideas, but we always need more.



Denbuilding has always been one of our most popular playground activities

Last year we recognised that we need clear plans for the future, especially at a time when funding is more and more precarious. In particular, we wanted to improve fundraising and grant applications, our accounting system, look at developing services in the playground and support services and monitor the new fee and registration system. Our staff have worked hard on both billing and grant applications, and been successful in obtaining payments due to us promptly — as well as grants to undertake much needed works.

We have felt that - rather than a piecemeal approach to planning - we should engage in a more holistic look at the ways New Ark should develop. We are currently working closely with Cummins Business Services to make these plans. We started with a strategy day where all workers were asked to join in a process to examine our work and plan future priorities. A group representing the various parts of New

Ark is currently being mentored through the planning process by them. This process should soon crystallise into a clear strategy for funding, how we manage staff and volunteers, our operations and resources. See page 17 for more details on the valuable help that Cummins have given New Ark this year.



Volunteers are key during our repairs and maintenance weeks

interested in joining us.

Finally, the great time that children have at New Ark is only made possible by the support and dedication of many individuals and organisations. I like to see it as a strength of the organisation in its community, that individuals, other organisations and commercial bodies can

The Management

Council is keen to expand so that it can better represent the people who use New Ark, and also to share the committee work among a wider group.

Please do make contact if you might be

come together in this way. I would like to extend our thanks to all of those who have made it work.

Bill Purdon

Financial summary 2013-14

By Paul Raymond, Treasurer 2013-14

Income from Peterborough City Council increased to £113,681 during this financial year. Overall, the majority of funding continues to come from the council, which the trustees must consider carefully to secure a long term future for New Ark.

The Play Support Service income has increased by nearly £10k. Further expansion of this service is expected in 2014-15. Outstanding invoices remain a concern, as this makes up a considerable aspect of the revenue for the Play Support Service.

Fundraising has been very successful this year, raising nearly £13k through

	2013	2014	Year on year
Income	£240,664	£266,187	Up £25,523
Expenditure	£232,133	£262,013	Up £29,880
Year end	+£8,531	+4,174	

general fundraising and £6k via one-off grants.

The trustees should continue to engage in applications for local and national grants, as these may become increasingly important for New Ark in future times.

Expenditure has seen a significant increase due to urgent maintenance work, including an electrical overhaul. Further maintenance work will be required during 2014-15.

Planning ahead for the year 2014-15

By Charlotte Griggs, Operations Manager

Here are a selection of our plans for the financial year 2014-15

New Ark Action Group

The role of the Action Group is to develop ideas that came out of our February 2014 Strategy Day, and also to plan ahead for our long term future. It is supported by charity partner Cummins Engineering and members are drawn from amongst staff and trustees. This year the intention is decide our Mission and Vision statements, review current site facilities and review the organisation's operational structure.

Playground

We secured funding through Children In Need to recruit an additional Playworker for a period of one year to work more closely with the children that need more one-to-one support. Bobbie Day has now joined us, bringing with her a wealth of knowledge and experience of working with children.

Playgroup

We continue to review the feasibility of introducing places for 2 year old children to attend Playgroup sessions. We hope to offer more places in 2015.

Play Support Service

We have welcomed Ceneta Miller to the Play Support Service. She will work closely with Manager Sam Brown to review the sessions we currently offer and how we can expand these in 2015.

Administration

The accounting software change has been placed on hold whilst we set up



Play makes life interesting and fun

better IT infrastructure. We have recruited a new staff member to support the back office processes and managers. This will free up my time to focus on planning and operations.

Funding

New Ark was privileged to receive several grants in the past year. We now have a project management system and are applying for funding related to this. The Action Group will influence future funding applications.

Fundraising

The fundraising committee continues to meet regularly. We estimate we need to raise at least £15k a year to continue offering our current services and are organising several fundraising events. For the latest information like us on Facebook or subscribe to our newsletter at www.newarkplay.co.uk

The fundraising committee wants to recruit volunteers to help organise and run fundraising events and activities. If you can help please contact Charlotte on 01733 340605.

Summary of recent fundraising

A snapshot of fundraising events from 2013-14

In the financial year 2013-14 we raised an amazing £19,951. Thank you so much everyone who helped us reach this - here's how we did it...

The year got off to a great start when playgroup mum **Sharon Hall**, raised £923 by running the London Marathon for New Ark. Our delayed (due to snow) **Race Night** brought in a further £674, and we were given £133 by **NCT Peterborough** who used our adventure playground for their 30 year reunion.

The **summer fete and history day** in June, which celebrated the launch of our history trail, funded by Vivacity, raised £2,437 from the sale of refreshments, raffle and stalls. Also in June a further raffle at the **Greyhounds Track** raised £251 for us.

The summer months are usually a little quieter for our fundraising as everyone is so very busy during the 6 week summer holiday period. But during this year our fundraising was given a huge boost when several staff members and friends did a **sponsored skydive** in early September, which raised £1,250.



Our annual Teddy Bear's Picnic netted £60.81 through the sale of donated cakes, and a Sunday morning **car boot stall** raised £41.80. We also provided bag packing services at **Asda Rivergate** and took part in their green tokens scheme, which between them brought in a further £209.87. Finally, local firm **Cummins** held a staff fun day to raise money on our behalf, and donated the resulting £204 to us.



An annual event, our **October Open Day** raised £316 through the sale of refreshments, cakes, and the raffle of the wonderful ark cake pictured above. A fun **Halloween Party** for our playground children raised £31.

We were delighted to raise £2,166 at a record breaking **Christmas Bazaar in November 2013** - beating our previous record from December 2012 by £32! Of course we are now hoping to break the record again in 2014.

They did it! Here are our brave skydivers before making their jump for New Ark at Sibson Airfield



Farm fun at our Christmas Bazaar

The winter continued apace with a **Playgroup pyjama day** (raising £31), a **Name a Teddy competition** organised by playgroup mum Dawn Schmidt-Rieche (raising £113), and a donation from local company **BGL** of £100. These smaller events all made a valuable contribution towards the overall fundraising total of New Ark, and we are grateful to the parents and staff who organise them on our behalf.

Our community **Bingo** raised £77 just before Christmas, and generous punters at **Peterborough Greyhounds** finished off 2013 by buying £352 worth of raffle tickets from us.

January 2014 saw a donation of £338 made by **Cummins**, following their office furniture sale and family fun day. In February we added a further £1,322 to the pot with a wonderful **Pamper Evening** held at the Posh ground. Finally in the last financial year, our children held a **playground cake sale** and raised a very respectable £53.

We continue to receive donations through the **Local Giving** website. We encourage all parents who are taxpayers to donate to us through this

online facility - it is easy for you to do, saves us time and gives us more money if you remember to tick the Gift Aid button. This year donations through this method have raised £304.

We continue to receive generous **donations** from families with young children who visit the farm during the holidays, and who hold their children's birthday parties here at weekends. Farm fundraising totalled £5,368 last year. Of this £1,509 came from school and playgroup **visits**, and £780 was from the **parties**. The rest came from animal sponsorship, egg and straw sales, and individual donations.

We applied for and received many grants in the financial year 2013/14:

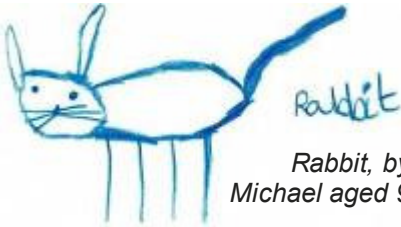
- £6,000 from the **Big Lottery Fund** to replace our heating system – this work was completed in April 2014.
- £550 from **The Wakeham Trust** which is being used towards weekend openings in the summer.
- £1,000 from the **Anglia Cooperative Community Fund** for art & craft materials and food supplies.
- £200 from Charities Aid Foundation.
- Tesco Charity Trust gave £1,261 towards playgroup equipment.
- We gained a **BIFFA** award of £7,160 which will be used to replace our external doors.



In 2014-15 our fundraising target is again £15,000. We have made a slower start to fundraising so far and have lots of work to do if we are to achieve our target by April 2015:

- £858.13 from our Good Friday event
- £1,945 at our Summer Festival
- £400 donation from Amazon

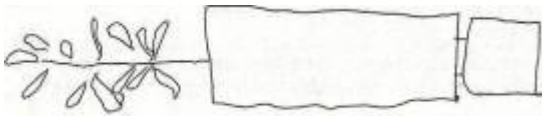
Children draw their favourite things...



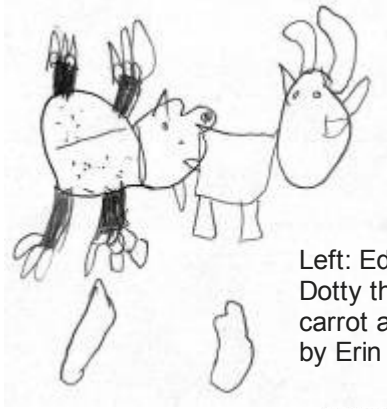
Rabbit, by Michael aged 9



Tyre swing, by Gracie aged 14

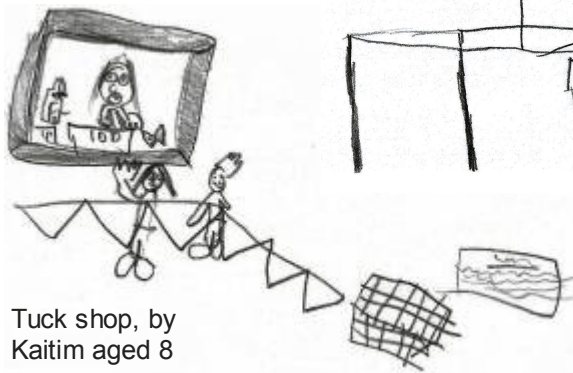
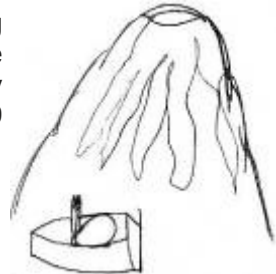


Water fight, by Nicolas aged 7

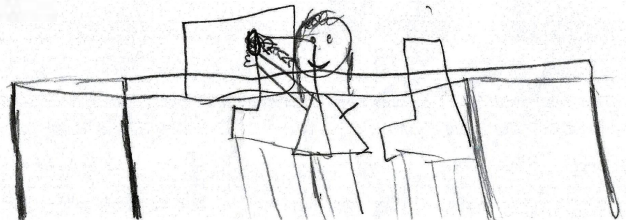


Left: Eddie the goat and Dotty the rabbit eating carrot and potato peelings, by Erin aged 5

Right: making volcanoes in the eco centre, by Fernano aged 9



Tuck shop, by Kaitim aged 8



Making loom bands, by Kaitlyn aged 7

Trustees, volunteers and employees

Board of Trustees

Rob Brown, Chair
Bill Purdon, Vice Chair
Lisa Sachse, Treasurer
Dave Flanigan
Simon Murray
Lisa Carter
Kim Martin
Jamie-Lee Fox



Volunteers and staff who together keep our city farm running 7 days a week, 365 days of the year.

Thank you to Ioannis Dermitzakis and Paul Raymond who were on the board of trustees in 2013-14

Employees

Playgroup

Nikki Anderson, Manager
Linda Fisher, Supervisor
Linda Wilson, Supervisor
Abbie Braines
Denise Jinks
Heidi Johnson
Jayne Davey
Jen Faunt
Jodie Watson
Lisa Paterson

Playgroup - Eco

Elisabeth Buck, Manager
Debbie Knighton, Supervisor
Sonia Hannon
Kirsty Dickinson

Playground

Sheri Gill, Manager
Abbie Braines
Bobbie Day
Jodie Watson
Kirsty Dickinson
Laura Bellamy

Play Support Service

Sam Brown, Manager
Laura Bellamy
Ceneta Miller
Kirsty Dickinson

Farm

Carolyn Bellamy,
Manager

Relief workers

Hope Elkins
Monica Fincham
Nikki Miller

Administration

Charlotte Griggs,
Manager
Natalia Marfeld

Maintenance/cleaning

Geoff Griggs
Kelly Martin
Laura Bellamy

Regular volunteers

Abigail & Jo Curphey
Anne Mountford
Carol, George & Tracey Hallett
Charlotte Mass
Dawn Schmidt-Rieche
Donne Buck
Gemma Payn
Hannah Mirthwaite
Helen Moles
Jane Carpenter
Janice Marshall
Lawry Randell
Melanie Murray
Rachel Phillips
Ron & Christine Welch
Sam & Mark Brader
Sandra Caller
Sharon, Jacob & Christopher Raymond
Vanessa Priestly



Staff and volunteers fundraising together

Volunteering at New Ark

We have more than 100 volunteers who work in all kinds of areas at New Ark, from management to mucking out the animals. Here we introduce you to a few of them, and explain more about how you can get involved...



Simon Murray **Trustee**

From observing both my boys accessing New Ark, I was excited to see the unique services it offers; it was this that inspired

me to become a trustee. My area of interest is human resources, and I am trying to develop New Ark to match best practice within this field. Exciting times are ahead and I would encourage anyone with practical business skills to consider joining our team, and share in the rewarding satisfaction of helping this worthwhile charity.

Rachel Phillips **Fundraising team**

A friend told me that New Ark was looking for admin volunteers. I'm taking bookings and payments for a fundraising event, and also writing to companies to ask for help. It keeps my admin skills current and I enjoy using my brain in a different way outside of family life. It's easy to manage as a full-time mum, because my children come and play in the playground and make new friends while I am helping out in the office. I love the friendly atmosphere here.



Donne Buck **Playground Volunteer**

I have a special interest in the value of play in child development and have been involved with New Ark from the start. I volunteer all over the site, reporting maintenance work to staff or dealing with it myself if possible, doing arts and crafts projects with the children, running fires during the holiday sessions, and supporting staff where I can, for example by making them a cup of tea or helping in the office.



Right... Donne Buck receives his volunteering award from PCVS in January 2014, after being nominated by the staff at New Ark

Jo Curphey with daughter Abigail Farm volunteers

I volunteer on the city farm with Abigail, my 16 year old daughter. We started volunteering at New Ark because she wanted



to get some work experience for her CV; I had intended to accompany her for just a couple of weeks but I enjoyed it so much that we now volunteer together every Friday afternoon. We mostly help to clean out the small animal cages, and put the chickens and ducks away for the night. I love that we make a real difference to the farm - we donated the storage boxes to keep the brushes, gloves and other equipment tidy. We also helped to redo some of the information posters and we help out on open days.

Dawn Schmidt-Rieche Office volunteer

I help out in the office and with marketing activities. There is always so much to do all year round, from photocopying and taking enquiries to designing leaflets and posting them through people's doors. Time flies at New Ark! Sometimes I help at extra busy times such as during playground registrations or fundraising events. My two sons have so much fun at New Ark that it's a real pleasure for me to help out the great staff that run it.



Could you help out at New Ark?

As an independent charity, New Ark needs support from the local community. Without help from volunteers we would not exist! Here are some of the things you could do as a volunteer at New Ark:

- Help at teatime, to make toast or sell tuck for playground children.
- Bake cakes for fundraisers.
- Spare a few hours per week to help with office admin.
- Do craft activities with our children.
- Join the fundraising team and help to organise a fundraising event.
- Ask local businesses to donate raffle prizes.
- Make cups of tea for parents at our toddler group on Wednesday afternoons.
- Join our Management Council. We are seeking new trustees with enthusiasm and/or business experience, especially in HR, IT, marketing and fundraising.
- Put up posters for events in your local shop/café/community centre.
- Provide some on-call IT support.
- Repair play equipment, buildings, animal housing, etc.
- Gardening and site maintenance.
- Help during our 2015 repairs and maintenance weeks, planned for 22-26 April and 1-5 September.

For a no-obligation chat about volunteering for New Ark please get in touch with Charlotte on info@newarkplay.co.uk or call us on 01733 340605.

Thank you....

...to all the businesses and individuals who have supported us with your time, donations, fundraising and loan of equipment during the financial year 2013-14. We've listed as many of you as we can.

Organisations

ACCF Anglia Cooperative * Acorn Landscaping * African Heritage Centre * Amazon * ACCF * Asda Rivergate * BGL Group * Biffa * Big Lottery Fund * Birchtree Preschool * The Body Shop * Cambridgeshire Community Foundation * Children in Need * Copass * Cummins Generator Technologies * Darling Princess Parties * Dogsthorpe School * Eastlands * The Entertainer * Florence House * The Game Store * Great Northern Hotel * Hegarty Solicitors * Helping Hands * Helwaite * Hummingbird Hair * John Lewis Partnership * Larna * Marshfields * Masteroast * Nationwide Building Society * Oundle School * NCT Peterborough * Newark Hill Academy * Pengelly & Mizen Vets * Peterborough Greyhounds * Peterborough Regional College * Peterborough United Football Club * Somersby Farm Shop * Stamford College * Sunday's * Symmetry Salon * Thera East Anglia * Thomas Deacon Academy * Thomas Moore Nursery * The Wakeham Trust * Virgin Active * Westcombe * Youngs Veterinary Partnership

Individuals

Ady Bruce * Andre Newman * Angie Abbott * Clare Duffy * Charlotte Milliner * Claire Turner * Claudia Butler * Emily Bradfield * Darren Jackson * Dave Wilson * Geoff Griggs * Gemma Jackson * Glen Smith * Jamie Paterson * Jane Carpenter * Jessica Lite * Kate Hall * Kelly White * Laura Barnard * Mark Harding * Marshall Mass * Mary Kemp * Mike and Julia Greene * The Pallister Family * Paul Archer * Paul Riddell * Rob Polson * Rosemary Ascott-Atieh * Sally Walker * Sean Elliot * Sharon Hall * Steve Walton * Toby Wood

Plus the parents who donate items and support fundraising events, and the schools, shops and venues who display our event posters. The names are endless and too many to mention here, but thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Our events rely on volunteer help with cake donations



Raise free funds for us at

easyfundraising
.org.uk

www.easyfundraising.org.uk/newark

**Every time you shop, you'll earn a donation for
New Ark Play and it won't cost you a penny!**

Corporate Social Responsibility

New Ark's partnership with Cummins Generator Technologies By Charlotte Griggs, Operations Manager

In January 2013, Cummins Business Services adopted New Ark as Community Partner, providing support by fundraising and volunteering during our repairs and maintenance weeks. Later that year Cummins Generator Technologies (CGT) relocated from Stamford to Peterborough and also adopted New Ark as their Community Partner. This strengthened the existing relationship and a number of initiatives have progressed as a result.

Here are some of the many ways in which Cummins have supported us...

- In February 2014, Ali Baynes facilitated our strategy day where New Ark staff, trustees and volunteers reviewed current operations and planned for the future.
- A team of Cummins' Graduates, working alongside New Ark Managers, have used ideas from the strategy day and are aiming to help us become more financially sustainable.
- In August Justin McKay, Cummins' Global Facilities Leader, carried out a site needs assessment for New Ark, mapping the premises. Justin will be supporting New Ark in the future with site developments.
- In September Stephen Layton, Regional IT Network & Telecom Manager, carried out an IT Infrastructure assessment and will be assisting with implementing new IT and telecom systems.
- During repairs and maintenance weeks in September 2013, April and

September 2014, Cummins sent teams to New Ark to help with tasks such as gardening, painting, and cleaning and tidying our premises and grounds. We made significant improvements with their support.



One of the Cummin's teams who helped at our most recent R&M week

- New Ark is being supported in the process of HR management services with help from Fiona Watkins. John Hutcheson and Leighton Walker are planning a project to help further.
- Polly Davison will be holding a workshop to help New Ark establish a vision and mission statement.
- Mark Hudson is going to help to provide advice on training.
- New Ark Manager Nikki Anderson will be doing a project management course provided by Cummins to enable New Ark to plan better.

There are many Cummins employees behind the scenes, such as Jenny Buffrey, Nino Lobozzo and Stephen Connolly, who have helped and continue to support us. On behalf of New Ark I would like to thank all Cummins employees. We look forward to continuing to work together to create the long term sustainability of New Ark.

New Ark Eco Centre report

By Elisabeth Buck MBE, Eco Manager



Numbers and letters are hidden in the eco garden

Playgroup children search for bugs in eco sessions

Families enjoying our Saturday Forest School

Our Forest School trained Eco Centre staff have had another busy year running activities for toddlers, preschoolers and school aged children.

All of New Ark's preschool children who are in their final year in playgroup have a session every week in the Eco Centre garden and forest. By the time they leave us to go to school, the children are confident and very knowledgeable about the environment and changing seasons. They have gained good skills. They are curious and love to explore and experiment with natural materials. This year they have especially enjoyed exploring the properties of mud!

During the summer holidays 2013 we were again able to provide Eco Sessions for school-aged children, thanks to funding from Cambridgeshire Community Foundation. We have just run these sessions during the summer holidays 2014 - this is the third year in a row - with funding from Comic Relief. These Eco Sessions have proved so

popular that we have been trialling them at weekends for children with their parents. The first of these in May 2014 was popular with both sessions being fully booked. We are planning to run more of them in the future.

Toddler group runs in the Eco Centre every Wednesday afternoon.

1-3pm termtime

2-4pm summer holidays

This year numbers have risen enormously and we are usually very busy. It is good to see so many under 5s playing inside, but mostly outside in the garden and forest. Also to see the mums (and sometimes dads, grandparents, aunties and childminders) making friends while they drink tea and coffee). At 2pm they have the opportunity to visit our city farm to see the animals. Many of the toddler group children will be graduating to playgroup in September 2014, and I hope that new families will continue to arrive at Toddler Group.

New Ark Playgroup report

By Nikki Anderson, Playgroup Manager

In a year that started with being rated outstanding by Ofsted for the second time in a row, we've had lots more positive things happen. Building on the Ofsted success, we've introduced a new, paper-based tracking system for all children in playgroup, as well as regular supervisions with the staff. This is working nicely, enabling us to identify needs of the children earlier.

We have taken on a relief member of staff, Nikki Miller, who we are also helping to mentor through her level 3 childcare training.

Also we have 4 members of staff who are currently developing skills towards their childcare qualification: Jen Faunt, Lisa Paterson, Charlotte Griggs and Laura Bellamy. There have a lot of challenges with this as the training agency haven't always supported the staff as much as we expected, and so they are supporting each other and achieving high standards.

Some of our experienced staff are mentoring students from Peterborough Regional College who are studying childcare and health and social care. Additionally, both Thomas Deacon Academy and Oundle School have sent their students to us on a regular basis, which benefits both the students and our children.

Topics covered in the last year in playgroup included:

- Seasons and changes in the weather
- Food, including baking and Chinese banquets (for celebrating Chinese new year)
- Treasure hunts for pirate week
- National book week and rhyme week—for both of these the children dressed up and parents took part in helping.

- Seasonal celebrations such as pancake day, an Easter Egg hunt, a mother's day tea party, Christmas celebrations

• People who help us, including how the post works, bakers who came in to show the children how to make bread, and builders who showed the children construction materials.

- Looking at colours: mixing to create different shades and asking parents to complete a colour

wheel with their child with everyone's favourite colours on it.



Staff put a lot of effort into the children's Learning Journals

Thank you to Mel Murray, a parent who has been helping regularly on Thursday and Friday to run our borrowing library for the older playgroup children.

We have some challenges coming up as well. In the next couple of months I am looking into a new electronic system to help us track all children.

This hopefully will make it easier for the staff and identify the gaps we have, if any, in developing each child.

I have been looking at the possibility of offering places at New Ark to children younger than our current minimum age, which is two years and 9 months. To this end our eco playworker Sonia has been on the two year old training course, and we will be carefully examining the funding availability and considering how we can meet the very different needs of this age group.



Playgroup children learning about people who help us in the community

Give a little... get a lot!



Raise 3 times your registration fee, and we will give you next year's registration for free!

Example: raise £120 during 2013-14 and we will waive your £40 fee for one child's holiday playground registration for 2014-15.

Start your fundraising now for 2014-15 registration!

Ask us for a fundraising pack, which includes ideas for small events and explains what to do next. Contact Charlotte on: info@newarkplay.co.uk or **01733 340605**.

Offer applies to all New Ark fees.

New Ark Play Support Services

By Sam Brown, Play Support Services and Playground Manager

New Ark's Play Support Service supports children with emotional, behavioural and social needs. A group of dedicated staff encourages children to engage in a varied curriculum which is focused mainly on play-led, outdoor-focused activities using the eco garden, farm and adventure playground. This environment proves to be therapeutic for all our children attending.

Our aims are to encourage children to engage in positive learning experiences that will help them develop strategies to cope with the many challenges that life may throw at them. A tutor works closely with individual children, to help support and engage them in a school curriculum until they are able to return full time to a classroom environment.

Throughout the last academic year we have worked with more children than ever before, who are increasingly being referred from all over Peterborough. Our children have all been amazing and have displayed many positive outcomes. They have put in a lot of hard work to achieve the goals set and make a difference to the everyday demands they face.

The adventure playground forms an important part of our planning. We have seen an increased level of physical development in the children as a result of promoting a much healthier programme.

During the last year we have also continued to support the city farm with the good care of animals and day to day running of the farm. Children love the animals and learn how to nurture in a calming and gentle way.

The children's placements are funded through schools, agencies or the local authorities. However I have also been approached by parents who are not in a position where their child can be funded in this way, so we are currently looking at ways to raise funds to enable these children to access our service.

Many thanks for all the support and help I have received over the last year, especially from our great team of staff who have worked hard to help the children achieve. We have developed a good rapport and continually receive positive feedback from those that use the service.

Our Play Support Centre aims to create a environment where children feel safe to engage with learning again



New Ark playground report

By Sheri Gill, Playground Manager

Since our last annual report there has been an increase in the number of playground registrations. We believe this is due to a change in our registration, so that families who only use New Ark during the school holidays pay less than they did previously, while those who use us all year round pay more. However, it is important to us that no child is excluded from New Ark due to money, and so we encourage parents to speak with a manager in confidence if our registration fees mean that you cannot afford for your child to come to New Ark; there are a number of ways that we can assist you.

We have also increased our marketing to tell more people about New Ark and how they can visit the playground. As a result we have had more one off visitors, many of whom later fully register at New Ark.

During the 2013 summer holidays the children had lots of fun with fabric painting, decorating sheet to complete our tepee. We gained funding to run activities for small groups, and this was put to good use running crafts that required more adult support such as weaving and woolcraft. Nail painting was very much the trend of the summer, assisted by volunteers who enjoyed it so much they are still helping out! Our twice-weekly eco session for younger playground members was popular. Also we ran weekly baking sessions, fires, and all the usual den building and water slides that make a New Ark summer. We have had even higher numbers during the summer holidays 2014!

During October 2013 half term we ran messy play activities which the children enjoyed especially when staff joined in

Fires at New Ark

In 2013 Cambridgeshire Fire Service gave us funding to train more people to run fire sessions. Fires are always popular at New Ark—the children love cooking and eating what they’ve made. This is usually dampers with chocolate spread or jam, but we also make hot chocolate, popcorn, toast, pancakes, potatoes, and have experimented with sausages & eggs and soup.



We find the children are calm and sociable round a fire. They are responsible, learn the fire rules fast and look out for each other. We believe that if they are introduced to fire lighting and cooking early on, children will be less likely to experiment with fire or be arsonists. All New Ark children, from 3 years upwards, are very used to cooking on fires, and now we have 10 staff and volunteers able to run a fire session!

and got messy! Our New Year disco was great fun, and in February half term we ran seasonal pancake, valentines and craft activities. Over the Easter 2014 break our playground children got into loom bands in a big way - New Ark seems to have been a trend setter in this!



Spray painting our mural

We have made changes to our playground admin systems and hope that parents are finding them easier, for example:

- You can now put forms/payments in an envelope and hand to a manager, saving time for staff and parents.

- The front door is open during sessions and the interior door locked. This reduces congestion in the lobby and means that we can talk to parents when their children are collected.

- We now have an information board in the lobby with the day's plans/notices on it, and also the signing in/out folder for children aged 8 and under.

We were sad to say goodbye to Stuart who left New Ark this spring. We have since been joined by two new members of staff, including a specialist playworker who has the task of designing playground activities for children with additional needs.

Your pet's home from home...

New Ark Play



Adventure Playground,
City Farm & Eco Centre

Going away on holiday or a short break?



For a small daily fee, New Ark can board your animals while you are away. We can care for guinea pigs, rabbits, chickens and other animals by negotiation. We regret we cannot care for cats and dogs.

Email info@newarkplay.co.uk or call Carolyn between 10am-12pm any weekday on **01733 340605**.

New Ark farm report

By Carolyn Bellamy, Farm Manager

The animals on the city farm are an important part of New Ark's play-focused work. Most visiting children choose to spend time here, learning while helping to care for the animals and enjoying the calming effect of being with them. They may gain a sense of responsibility or calmness from their freely-chosen purposeful play - they enjoy being useful and trusted. And of course the city farm is part of what attracts many visitors to New Ark and we are always bustling on our weekend open days.

Animal additions to the farm this year include Ellie the pig who is a great attraction and does a star turn drinking juice from a cup. We have hand reared 2 wild ducklings, Douglas and Quackers, who have so far chosen to stay on the farm. Our hand-reared gosling - variously called Gertie, Beaky or Fluffy depending on who you speak to - is so spoiled that she thinks she is human! We have yet to identify her breed.

We also had sad losses, not least Jenny our little black hen who was much loved by the children.

Farm income has been up this year. We receive no Government funding to keep our animals and rely on donations and income from group visits and birthday parties. We have been

delighted with the interest in our weekend birthday parties, and have hosted 10 during the course of the year. Also we have increased the number of school visits this year including primary, secondary and even college-level students. The income

from these groups all contributes towards the costs of running our farm.

The volunteering work that some local schools and colleges undertake on the farm is invaluable. We have built a strong partnership with our neighbours at the City of Peterborough Academy Special School, whose students visit us on a weekly basis to work with the farm animals.



*Ellie the Kune Kune pig
will sit on command*

The New Ark parent and toddler group visits our farm weekly, and it is often very busy here on a Wednesday afternoon with families enjoying the animals and taking our eggs home for their tea.

We have been encouraging sponsorship of feed and vet bills, and now make up activity and certificate packs for each animal. This makes sponsorship a lovely gift for a child who enjoys the farm and has a favourite animal here. Please do pass the word around that we still have animals who require sponsorship - it could be a fun

teambuilding role for a local company to take on the sponsorship of a New Ark animal.

In recent months, following some recommendations from Environmental Health, we have built new fences and enclosures. Expertise provided by local firm Cummins during our April Repairs & Maintenance week was invaluable for this. We are now continuing to work towards fulfilling all of the



Jenny the hen was a firm favourite

recommendations that were made, including double fencing our small paddock.

Finally a thank you to all our farm volunteers, including those staff who volunteer additional hours to help. We hope we have remembered to include everyone's name on our Thank You page. But we would like to say a special thanks to Jane Carpenter, who has now been volunteering on and sponsoring our farm for over 10 years!

If you pay tax please donate online

- 1) Quick and easy for you
- 2) It saves us time
- 3) We get more money if you tick for Gift Aid

Your gift to New Ark can provide:

£5 = bread for children's teas for a week

£10 = nails for den building

£30 = pays a 1:1 worker for a special needs child for 4 hours

www.localgiving.com/newarkplay

The screenshot shows the top of a donation page for New Ark Play Association. At the top, there are three tabs: 'Charity', 'Our supporters 46', and 'Our Fundraisers 5'. Below the tabs is the organization's name 'New Ark Play Association' and its address: 'New Ark Adventure Playground, Hill Close, Reeves Way, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE1 5LZ'. There are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Google+. Below this is a headline: 'NEW ARK ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND IN PETERBOROUGH-a magic place for children of all ages!' followed by a paragraph describing the facility. On the right side, there are two orange buttons: 'Single Donation' and 'Give Monthly'. At the bottom right, there is a photograph of two children, a girl in a blue jacket and a boy in a blue jacket and yellow hat, building a brick wall outdoors.

10 reasons.... why we should let children play in the mud



1. Playing in the mud encourages creative thinking.

2. Playing in the mud helps children to learn and develop.

3. Playing in the mud connects you with nature



4. Playing in the mud helps develop positive dispositions



5. Playing in the mud can make you healthier



6. Playing in the mud can make you happier

7. Playing in the mud can make you smarter

8. Mud play is good for you

9. Mud play welcomes all comers

10. Play with colour, form, shadows, light, space, sound, words, silence, taste, smells



Everywhere is a playground!

We can now reuse your old wood/ metal kitchen utensils in our mud kitchen. We need donations of:

- Spoons and bowls of all sizes
- Teapot/kettle/teacups/plates
- Jugs and measuring utensils
- Saucepans/wok/mess tins
- Trays/baking trays/muffin tins
- Sieve/colander/funnel
- Pestle and mortar
- Ice cream scoop/whisk/tongs
- Anything unusual or quirky
- Herbs eg parsley/chives/mint

Birthday party adventures at New Ark Play

New Ark Play



Adventure Playground,
City Farm & Eco Centre



Your guests can:

- Feed and groom animals on our City Farm
- Take part in a treasure hunt in our woodland garden
- Explore our traditional adventure playground



You can:

- Decorate our function room using your own theme
- Bring party food and cake
- Choose to play party games



£80 for up to 10 children,
additional children £5 each.
Parents free, no hidden charges.



To discuss your requirements
email info@newarkplay.co.uk
or telephone Charlotte or Carolyn
between 10am-12pm weekdays
on **01733 340605**.

www.newarkplay.co.uk

Join in with the fun at New Ark Play



- School holiday play sessions
- All day childcare in holidays
- Eco sessions (Forest School)
- Afterschool play sessions
- Parent and toddler group
- Preschool playgroup
- Children's birthday parties
- School/preschool visits
- Play support service
- Volunteer opportunities for individuals and groups
- Open days and events

Find out more at www.newarkplay.co.uk

Newark Play Association Ltd
Hill Close (off Reeves Way), Peterborough PE1 5LZ
Tel: 01733 340605 Email: info@newarkplay.co.uk
Registered charity no 1026751



**The printing of this annual report has
been kindly sponsored by a donation
made by Tina and Brian Groom**