

Annual Report 2023-24

New Ark Play Association

Registered charity number: 1026751



**A safe, caring, adventurous environment
for everyone developing skills for life**



Adventure Playground • Eco Centre • City Farm
Parent & Toddler Group • Preschool (from 2 years)
Afterschool & Holiday Play Sessions • Additional Childcare
Play Support Service • Birthday Parties • Family & Group Visits
Duke of Edinburgh & Prince's Trust Placements
Animal Care Student Placements • Animal Care Courses
Group & 1:1 Educational Sessions • Volunteering • Venue Hire
Corporate Sponsorship Opportunities • Adult Social Mornings
Corporate Social Responsibility Projects



Managers, Staff & Committee

Management Committee

Jo Curphey (Chair)
Rob Brown (Treasurer)
Steve Milford
Ruth Scotten
Lisa Sachse

Playgroup

Sam Brown (Manager)
Denise Jinks (Supervisor)
Jen Faunt
Nikki Miller
Lauren Shiels
Chloe Charnley
Nicole Davis

Administration

Sally-Anne Miller-Molson

Cleaning

Laura Bellamy
Sophie Portlock

Play Support Service

Sam Brown (Manager)
Laura Bellamy
Jen Faunt
Karen Maycock

Playground

Sam Brown (Manager)
Laura Bellamy
Denise Jinks
Karen Maycock
Abigail Curphey (Relief)
Chelsea Miller (Relief)
Chloe Davey (Relief)

Farm

Carolyn Bellamy (Manager)
James Wallace



Welcome to New Ark Play !

We are an independent charity, registered with Ofsted, officially called **Newark Play Association Ltd.** We provide stimulating play opportunities for children of all ages and our facilities include a traditional **Adventure Playground, Eco Centre and City Farm.**



At New Ark **we believe very strongly in children's right to play.** 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, and **having enough time and space for play increases children's health and happiness.** Play makes life exciting, interesting and fun and this is why **play is at the heart of everything we do at New Ark!**

Our talented and dedicated team take pride in delivering the highest standards of care to the children, young people and adults who benefit from our services. Our Management Committee which oversees the running of New Ark is made up of a group of committed local volunteers, who each bring unique skills and experience to benefit New Ark.

We also have a dedicated group of volunteers who support our fundraising events, and help with a variety of essential tasks around the site - especially on our farm. We are extremely thankful to everyone who contributes their time and expertise to help make New Ark such a special place. **If you would like to get involved, please get in touch.**

Although it has been necessary to increase our prices to manage rising costs, we continue to keep all charges as low as possible so that as many people as possible can enjoy our wonderful facilities.

New Ark has been bringing joy to children for 50 years and we are continually seeking ways to add value to our local community and increase our sustainability, as we want to secure our future for many years to come. We were proud to launch our new business plan this year which sets out our key strategic priorities - a copy is available on our website.

A heartfelt thank you to our wonderful staff, managers, committee, volunteers, children, young people, parents, families, visitors, work parties, supporters and everyone who has shown their love for New Ark by giving us your time, money, care, expertise and resources - **you are all New Ark heroes!!**

I hope you enjoy reading our Annual Report.

Jo Curphey, Committee Chair



Opening Times

Toddler Group : Wednesday 1.00pm–2.30pm (Term Time)

Our weekly toddler group is for children aged 0-4 years and their parents / carers, and provides an opportunity to explore our Eco Centre and City Farm.

Preschool : Monday to Friday 9.00am–12:00pm & 12:00 or 12:30–3:00pm (Term Time)

We offer morning, afternoon and all day sessions for children from age 2 years, plus extended hours by arrangement. Our children attending New Ark Preschool learn through play using our fantastic facilities, which includes an Adventure Playground, City Farm and Eco Centre.

Play Support Service : Monday to Friday 9:00am–3:00pm (Term Time)

In our Play Support Service we accept referrals from primary and secondary schools to provide specialist support and an alternative outdoor curriculum for children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties who are on a reduced timetable and/or at risk of exclusion from school.

After-school Club : Monday to Friday 3.45–6:00pm (Term Time) After-school session starts at 3pm for children joining school walkover from Newark Hill Academy

Holiday Club 8:30am–5:30pm (School Holidays)

Our After School Club is all about adventure play with activities such as digging, building, ball games, swinging and climbing; and a range of creative arts and crafts. The children also have the opportunity to visit the farm.

The children at our Holiday Club also have the opportunity to do baking, outdoor cooking, den building, water slides, messy play and more.

Our Holiday Club includes the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme, which provides free supervised play sessions and a hot lunch for children from low income families. (As a guide New Ark follows Newark Hill Academy's term timetable)

City Farm : Monday to Friday group visits by arrangement between 10:00am–12:00pm and 2.00pm–4.00pm Open for public visits from 4.00pm–5.30pm. (Term Time)

Monday to Friday 10:00am–12:00pm and 2.00pm–4.30pm (School Holidays)

During session times the children attending our Toddler Group, Preschool, Play Support Service, After School Club and Holiday Club can visit our City Farm and help to care for our animals. This includes feeding, watering, grooming, and cleaning out our small animal hutches. We also welcome family and group visits and visitors during term times and school holidays.

Price List

Toddler Group	Adult and Child	£5.00		Term time : Wednesday Includes drink
	Additional Adult	£1.50		
	Additional Child	£1.50		
Preschool	Hourly fee (If not funded)	Per child	£6.00	Term time : Monday–Friday 9am–12pm & 12 or 12.30–3pm Morning, afternoon, and all day sessions are available, plus extended hours by arrangement
After School Club	Daily Charge	Per child	£8.00	Term time : Monday–Friday 3.45–6pm (from 3pm if child joining school walkover) Includes light snack and drink Places must be booked and paid for in advance
	Walkover Fee from Newark Hill Academy	Per child	£1.00	
Holiday Club	All Day	Per child	£25.00	School holidays : Monday–Friday 8.30am–5.30pm Places must be booked and paid for in advance
	Afternoon play session 2-4.30pm	Per child	£8.00	
School & Group Visits	Per child	£6.00		Monday–Friday Morning or afternoon Adult supervision needed
Adult Social Mornings	Per adult	£6.00 (Carers are free)		Wednesday & Friday 10am–12pm Includes hot or cold drink
Family Visits	Child	£5.00		School Holidays : Monday–Friday 10am–12pm and 2–5pm Term time : Monday–Friday 4–5.30pm Children must be supervised by parent/carers at all times
	Adult	£1.50		
Birthday Parties	Up to 10 Children £150.00	£8 per additional child		Saturdays (Times vary by arrangement) Maximum 30 children £50 deposit to book Adult supervision required

Preschool Report

New Ark Preschool is unique as it's the only preschool in the city where children regularly visit a city farm as well as having the opportunity to participate in onsite Eco sessions.

Here are just a few of the highlights from our busy year.

We started a 'My Smile' campaign to promote healthy teeth. The children brushed their teeth twice a day at pre-school as well as completing other activities.



We also transformed our home corner into a doctor's surgery where the children made the baby dolls (and us adults!) better using lots of bandages.

At Christmas, we held our own Christmas party with children enjoying food, playing party games and making Christmas crafts.



In Spring the children enjoyed learning about life cycles at the Eco Centre by watching frogspawn develop into tadpoles before becoming frogs. We hatched caterpillars and closely observed them turn into butterflies before setting them free into the wild in our garden.



We cheered England on in the Euros by painting flags and practicing our football skills outside – maybe next year it will come home!

The children also learnt about child safety week in June. We drew our own road map on the playground and taught the children how to cross roads safely by using traffic lights or zebra crossings.



Lauren Shiels – Preschool

We run morning, afternoon and all day sessions between 9.00am-3.00pm with additional hours available on request. We take 15hr, 30hr, 2yrs and 3yrs funding . To find out more please call us on 01733 340605 to arrange a visit and collect a registration form.

What Ofsted say about New Ark



Ofsted have praised New Ark's unique provision and applauded the fact that our team work hard to ensure our children's feelings, voices and choices are respected and they are encouraged to think critically and use their imagination as they enjoy playing and exploring our wide range of activities.

'Children are confident, articulate and friendly. They enjoy participating in a wide range of activities available to them at this unique provision. For example, they learn about animal care at the on-site farm, on play equipment in the extensive outdoor area. Parents also appreciate how much these activities benefit all aspects of their children's development.'

Children demonstrate a positive attitude to learning, which will support them well when they move on to school. They are eager to interact with each other and adults. Consequently, they develop their communication and language skills well.

Staff have a clear knowledge about what each child can do and what they need to learn next. The curriculum is planned so that each child enjoys rich learning opportunities and makes good progress in their learning and development. This is testified by parents.

Children show good physical skills as they navigate the obstacle course outside. They are able to balance on wooden blocks, climb, slide, and jump a given number of times on the small trampoline.



Play Support Service Report

The Play Support Service is a unique provision which provides support to children who are experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and are at risk of exclusion from school.

Our nurturing and therapeutic approach is provided in New Ark's unique setting, which includes our Eco Centre, City Farm and Adventure Playground. These resources give us many great opportunities to support children in the development of their life skills, and we place particular emphasis upon social, emotional development and communication skills. Our planned outcomes are to see happy children, accessing appropriate education and reaching their full potential.

Throughout the year we've worked with both individual children and groups who have been referred to us by local schools or the City Council. Many of the children we've met have been out of school for a long time, and have lacked the confidence to return. Through providing a range of activities, tailored to their individual needs, we have achieved some great results.

Here at New Ark we are lucky enough to have a variety of stimulating resources. Our farm, eco forest and garden, cabin and adventure playground are all areas used by the Support Service to provide our children with fun, achievable tasks and activities designed to develop their skills.

Jake's story : Jake joined our Support Service in January, having been out of school for some time.

Jake enjoys feeding and handling our animals, climbing on the Adventure Playground and imaginative play in our Eco Garden. He ends his sessions in our Cabin with social time, which includes feasting on his delicious homemade cakes!

Jake's mum says "His sessions have helped decrease his anxiety. They have also increased his confidence and given him a sense of belonging"

Jake's growth in confidence allowed him to start at a new school.



"New Ark makes me feel better because it's just an amazing place No one shouts and it makes me feel calm."

Jake



Working with the animals on our farm has once again been the activity most enjoyed by our children this year. With additional support from Carolyn and James, we've provided the children with a wealth of hands-on experiences, including; feeding all of our animals; collecting and testing eggs; cleaning hutches/enclosures; grooming and animal handling (having a cuddle).

The children love to interact with the animals and gain so much from caring for them.

We find that these activities provide our children with a sense of accomplishment, which in turn develops their self-confidence and self-esteem and allows them to feel valued. Many children also tell us that being with the animals makes them feel calmer/more relaxed, and therefore better able to cope with their anxieties about school.

Knox's story : Knox was referred to our Support Service by a local school. He visited us for a look around, and decided that he'd like to join us for weekly Support sessions. Knox tells us that he loves coming to New Ark and looks forward to his, now, twice weekly visits.



We have been supporting Knox with his confidence and self-esteem ... helping him to appreciate what an absolutely fantastic boy, he is. Knox is chatty, kind and very helpful. He is extremely enthusiastic and works so hard on the Farm that we have trouble keeping up with him! Knox *"likes being in with the birds best"*.

"Coming is helping me, and it sort of makes the week better."

Knox

In the bird pen amongst the chickens and ducks, he can wander about, and can often be found digging up worms for them. Our chickens seem to flock around him, waiting for tasty morsels!

Knox's mum told us that he *"absolutely loves coming - he was really excited to come twice a week"*.

As in previous years we have also supported Carolyn with one-off visits from local schools and playgroups, many who return to us every year. These groups of up to 30 children get to use and explore our eco forest and garden and enjoy Eco-themed activities such as bug hunts and craft activities, interact with and learn about our farm animals, and enjoy our Adventure Playground.

A group of lovely students from Thomas Deacon Academy joined us for Support Service sessions. The team spent the majority of their time on the Farm, where they got stuck-in with feeding, cleaning, filling water vessels and providing cuddles for our small animals.



Their Teaching Assistant William recognised the brilliant progress they made. He told us "New Ark has helped our students form strong bonds as a group and formed new social ties between the students."

The students were chosen for their high level of Social and Emotional needs and in just 3 weeks they formed friendships and have grown to trust the adults who bring them. They are learning vital animal care skills that will help them in later life; forming bonds with the animals and learning to care for their wellbeing.

Whilst the number of children struggling to remain in education continues to increase, this year we have unfortunately seen a decrease in the number of Support Service referrals from schools. We understand that this may be due to pressures on budgets, and schools choosing to deliver 'in-house' provisions.



However, we truly believe that our unique and diverse range of resources, available activities, and knowledgeable staff offer children the best support for their continued education and wellbeing, and we look forward to continuing to work with them next year and in the future.

Jen Faunt – Play Support Service

Referrals can be made to us by Schools or External Agencies.

**For further information please contact our Support Service
Tel: 01733 340605. Email: newarkplay8.alternativeservice@gmail.com**



Children's Parties with a sense of adventure at New Ark!

When you book a party at New Ark Play....



You can ;

- Decorate our party room with your own theme
- Bring party food and cake
- Play party games

Your guests can ;

- Feed & groom animals on our City Farm
- Take part in a Treasure Hunt in our Woodland Garden
- Explore our traditional Adventure Playground

The cost is ;

- £150 for 10 children
- £8 per additional child

Thank you so much for hosting Indigo's 5th birthday party. What an incredible time we all had, adults and children alike. Can't thank you enough for everything you did to help make the day so perfect."



"Had my son's 6th birthday party here today and I couldn't have wished for anything better for him! In his words 'it was the best day, and best party ever' Staff were so kind, laid back, organised and helpful which honestly made the day a breeze! Will be recommending this place to everyone! Thankyou x"

To discuss your requirements
telephone
Carolyn or Sam
weekdays between
10am-12pm
on 01733 340605



Playground Report

Our Holiday Club and After School Club are based around children making their own play choices, and they can choose to engage with a range of games, toys, imaginary play and arts activities inside, explore our enormous outdoor area and fabulous adventure playground and visit our wonderful city farm. Regardless of the weather, our children enjoy all the different seasons playing outdoors in a fun and safe environment.



Play is an important part of a child's learning and development. At New Ark children thrive, develop their confidence and self esteem, improve their gross and fine motor skills, and learn important life skills through the many different activities that we offer.

It is always lovely to get children involved in the daily activities by listening to their ideas, finding out what they enjoy and then providing the resources to support and encourage children to develop these further. Some of the children's ideas during holiday club included kite making, a train show with the children exchanging facts about the many different trains we travel on, and a talent show. Children made their own tickets for the shows and distributed these to the staff and all the children inviting those not taking part to watch!!

At Easter time children took part in a treasure hunt and all received an easter egg to take home. We had lots of Easter activities with children enjoying cutting, sticking and using glitter to create a variety of different pictures to display.

During the summer holidays we had another visit from Jason Fenn - Magic Man and the children loved his fabulous magic show.



We were also lucky to see some hot weather which meant we could have the water slide out and lots of water activities. The children set up some challenging fun physical activities using their planning skills. This included an obstacle course and the children timed one another to see who was the quickest.



During the summer we encouraged the children to taste and experiment with new ingredients and they were involved in making an array of different foods including pizza baguettes and a variety of pasta dishes. They learnt a lot of new skills and were excited to find out what the new recipe was going to be each day - and best of all they really enjoyed eating their wonderful creations!



Our children have loved visiting the farm throughout the year, helping to look after all the animals, cleaning out rabbit hutches, sweeping, hosing and petting the smaller animals.

In December the afterschool children were invited to the Burghley Club for a disco, and enjoyed party games and party food, card making activities and meeting Santa. Pupils from Kings School facilitated the evening, arranged the activities and even provided the music for children to dance to. There were lots of gifts given out to the children which were donated by the organisers, who also provided transport on the day.

HAF (Holiday Activities and Food) Programme

We have continued to deliver the HAF Programme during the school holidays at Easter, Summer and Christmas.

The HAF Programme is funded by the Department for Education and is aimed at families in receipt of benefit related free school meals. In addition to offering a wide range of fun and creative activities, we provided hot and cold meals for the children during four weeks of the summer holidays.

Thank you to all the staff for their hard work to make our setting such a special and unique place for all of our children. Thank you also to our committee members for all their hard work and the voluntary hours they provide in helping to support New Ark.

Samantha Brown, New Ark Manager

To find out more about our After School and Holiday Clubs - including our HAF Programme - please call us on 01733 340605.

"I'm grateful for the HAF program, I wouldn't have been able to afford the sessions had they not have been free. Also, I would not have signed them up for any other provider other than New Ark. Staff at New Ark are passionate about what they do, every one of them was approachable and friendly. They get why play is so important, which gave my children these opportunities instead of sitting through the holidays behind a screen."

Farm Report

Our city farm is home to Cheddar the pig, Cyrano the pony, and Summer the sheep, as well as lots of birds and small animals. It is a wonderfully friendly and therapeutic safe haven, where children, young people and adults of all ages and abilities can spend quality time.



We have welcomed many visitors to our farm this year, including school groups from local primary and secondary schools such as Lime Academy, St John Fisher and the Beeches, who have enjoyed learning about our animals and having the chance to handle them. St Thomas Moore primary school brought 50 children for their end of term celebrations, all of whom had great fun exploring our adventure playground and eco garden and meeting our animals. We also provided a week of work experience to students from Nene Park Hub and regular animal care sessions for students from Marshfields special school.

We have continued to work closely with our Play Support Service colleagues to provide farm tasks and activities for their children, which is an invaluable resource in children's development and wellbeing.

Our birthday parties have proven to be very popular again this year and have raised valuable funds for the farm.

In addition to the support provided by our regular volunteers we have been hugely grateful for the brilliant work undertaken by fabulous work parties from BGL, Caterpillar and the Food Standards Agency.





We were also bowled over by the generosity of organisations such as the McLaren Construction Group, who donated gravel, wheelbarrows, brushes, picnic tables and rabbit hutches, and Caterpillar who donated £500 for materials.

And we continue to be immensely grateful for the invaluable ongoing weekly support from the local Probation Community Payback team who, in addition to working hard on the farm, have also built all manner of

wonderful things from scratch, including bespoke duck houses, chicken coops, ornamental wishing well and a picnic bench!

New Ark Social Community Hub

In addition to proving animal care, we have become a social prescribing venue/hub. We work closely with local organisations and groups who promote wellbeing and positive mental health, and provide support to adults with a range of neurodiversity and additional needs.

The sessions we provide have proved very popular and our visitors, who have a variety of different abilities, all enjoy both the social side (having a cup of tea with friends) as well as the opportunity to interact with our animals, which is great for building their confidence and self-esteem and enabling them to feel valued.

Once again this year I would like to give thanks to our wonderful and generous volunteers who give so much time and effort to enabling our farm to flourish and grow. They work through all seasons and weathers, week in, week out, and many also sponsor our animals, which is invaluable in helping us to provide food, hay, straw, and pay vet bills.



Our animals play a vital role in our provision of therapeutic support to improve individuals' wellbeing and we look forward to continuing to provide our unique service to our community for many years to come.

Carolyn Bellamy, Farm Manager

To find out more about farm visits, volunteering opportunities and the community hub sessions please call us on 01733 340605.



Volunteer Stories

"My name is Carol and I have been volunteering on the farm with my daughters Tracey and Tina for nearly 20 years. My granddaughter Lily who is 14 has been coming to New Ark since she was little.



Tracey has learning difficulties and being at the farm has helped her so much. She loves being hands-on, especially cleaning out the pig, sheep and pony.



She finds it very calming and therapeutic and looks forward to going to the farm.

It's a great place to help at, Carolyn is a great manager and has become a good friend. She has been a great support to our family.



"I have been volunteering at New Ark since 2017 and opening the farm up every Sunday since 2019 - including all through the winter! I feed all of the animals and have adopted 2 rabbits and 2 guinea pigs in this time.

My daughter Chloe also did her college NVQ placement at New Ark as well as a 4 month work placement. She also still helps me on some Sundays.

The farm is a very special place. It helps unwanted animals as well as improving the mental health of humans!"



Treasurer's Report

We have continued to work within a tight budget this year and have seen ongoing rising costs of our utility bills, which continuously impact us. We have had to search for new providers who are able to still offer quality services at reduced costs.

In Spring we had another successful Easter event that gave us the opportunity to meet both new and existing families. We strive to put in place fundraisers to help raise funds which we desperately need to bridge the gap in our finances to help with our daily running costs. We are continually having to re-prioritise our wish list as what little surplus revenue we have is used on mandatory costs.

We are grateful for the visits from businesses who have organised work parties to contribute with helping maintain New Ark's vast site, including painting, weeding and replacing fences. In addition to help we have received donations of money and items which have been put to very good use.

The Community Payback team continue to help us by looking after our grounds in a variety of ways, including painting, mowing the grass weeding, and undertaking vital repair and maintenance tasks.

There is another tough year ahead of us, and further money to raise to meet the everyday demands impacting our charity. We require help and support with this, and welcome any ideas for our future fundraising.

Again, I am asking for volunteers to help on our committee. If you are interested and would like further information please contact us for a chat on: 01733 340605.

Thank you to all the staff, volunteers and committee members for all their hard work, and thank you to the businesses and community payback for all their support.

Rob Brown, Treasurer



Thank You!

Anne & John Green

Annette Donovan

Arron Patel

Azets

BFG Pest Control

BGL

Caterpillar

Cambridgeshire

Probation Community

Payback Team

Carol, Tina & Tracey

Hallett

Charlotte Moss

Chris Langley

Chris Welch

Clare Duffy

Clive Harbour

Colin Bates

Community Café

Eastwood

Costcutters Eastfield
Road

Daniel Moore

Dave Cox

Dave Stapleton

David Curphey

Derek Portlock

Des Hopwood

Elijah Dawson

Ellyn Godwin

Emily Browett

Emily Paskin

Eminence

Entertainment

Erin Lovett

Evadne Dawson

Everitt & Son

Food Cycle

Food Standards Agency

Gina Cook

Gladwells

Grant Maycock

Hannah Murthwaite

Hayley Gray

Hays Travel

Head Office

Italian Pizza & Kebab

Jan Ruffle

Jane Carpenter

Jason Fenn 'Magic
Man'

Jim Everitt

Jiva's Cuisine

John & Chloe Davey

John Mansfield Campus

- City College

Peterborough

Joshua Tree

Karen Lane

Ken Maggs

Kiley Woolgar

Lauren Carey

Luke & Tony from
Stattoo

Mark & Wendy Smith

Marks & Spencer

McLaren Construction
Group

Michelle Stapleton &
Charlotte

Natalie Guarnori

Nicola Reynolds

Pauline Stapleton

Princes Trust

Rebecca & Elijah Punter

Ramblewood Inn

Sarah Lodhi & family

Shameem Dar

Steve Ellis

Syvita (Premier Store)

Tesco

The National Lottery

The Willow Café

Unite the Union



Show your love for New Ark!

There are lots of different ways you can support us to keep adding value to our community....

Sign up to www.easyfundraising.org.uk (search for **New Ark Play Association Ltd**) – over 4,000 shops and sites will donate to us when you shop with them via easyfundraising – at no extra cost to yourself!

Follow, like and share our social media posts across your networks - **New Ark Adventure Playground** on Facebook; **@NewArkPlay** on Instagram; and **@NewArk_Play** on Twitter

Recommend our services and facilities to your friends, family, school, college, employer, and any clubs and groups you are involved in.

Organise a fund-raising event for us in your neighbourhood, or at your work, school or college (e.g. a coffee morning or a sponsored activity).

Book one of our fabulous **birthday parties!**

Come along to our fundraising events and bring your friends and family along to join in the fun



Ask your employer to sponsor New Ark – many organisations allocate funds for **Corporate Social Responsibility** activities. Could your employer support New Ark with funding, resources or by sending a project team to do some maintenance work? (e.g. painting our playground structures)

Give us your ideas! This is a community effort and all ideas are welcome.

Email newarkplay.office@gmail.com

If you're going on holiday, why not treat your pet to a holiday too?

For a small daily fee of £1.50 per night, you can board your small animals with us while you are away on holiday. We can care for guinea pigs, rabbits and chickens.



Contact Us

Newark Play Association Ltd
Hill Close (off Reeves Way)
Peterborough PE1 5LZ

Phone 01733 340605

Website www.newarkplay.co.uk

Email newarkplay.office@gmail.com

 @NewArkPlay

 @NewArk_Play

 New Ark Adventure Playground



Hi im Cyrano
Find us behind the row
of shops on Hill Close,
off Reeves way (PE1 5LZ)
Come say hi to all
my friends!

