

Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report)
Year Ended 31st March 2023

The 2022-2023 financial year was again an exceptionally busy year in Ark Community Gardens, with many new volunteers joining our team and many significant developments on the site. Whilst it is always encouraging to see the physical developments and improved facilities we, as a Board, are continually reminding ourselves of the core mission of The Ark – “To demonstrate the love of God to our community through the example of Jesus”. As the site gets busier, ensuring that this mission is upheld as the fundamental principal of our organisation drives the decisions taken by the Board. Accordingly, it is most encouraging to hear so many volunteers testify about the fellowship and support they have experienced from being part of our Ark family. It has been very encouraging to see the resumption of the Men’s breakfasts and the Ladies craft groups & outings. We all experience times of challenges, disappointments, health issues, bereavements and relationship difficulties. During such times we can feel very lonely and it is such a reassurance that we have an earthly family within The Ark who genuinely care about those difficult times and a heavenly father who is reaching out to hold our hand.

On the staff front, we had a significant change during the year, when our Director, John Nixon, tendered his resignation to enable him to take up a new post as manager of Castlewellan Castle Christian Conference Centre. The Board would like to thank John for his leadership and loyalty over his 2 ½ years with us and wish him God’s richest blessing in his new role. It is lovely to see him and the family call with us regularly. The Board subsequently appointed Joanna McCall to the position of Director. Joanna was well known to us all as a member of the Board and a very faithful and busy volunteer. She has been very enthusiastically received by staff and volunteers, combining a real care for individuals with a continual desire to expand the work of the organisation.

We have also seen some changes to our Board. Following Joanna’s appointment as Director, she had to resign from the Board, we also finally allowed John Dinnen to retire and would like to thank John for his massive input to our Board over the past few years. He has agreed that we can still use him for a bit of wisdom when required! It is also a joy to report that, since our last report, 3 new Board Members have joined the Board, Jill Hamilton, Peter Barr and Stephen Barthorpe, who have realised that becoming a member of Board does not exempt you from weeding etc on site!

On behalf of the Board, could I again thank our staff team for their hard work, dedication and commitment to the Ark, and for the love and care that they show towards our volunteers. We truly are blessed by the team and the example they exhibit to us all.

On the financial front our accounts show a significant increase in both our income and outgoings, with an overall surplus over the year of just over £2000. As stated in our reports in the past, we are keen to reduce our reliance on external funders – a source of income that can be unpredictable and unreliable. It is with this in mind that we made the big decision to open a coffee shop in our log cabin. As the date of opening falls within the 2023/2024 financial year we will comment more in our next report. Preparations for this new venture did however impact significantly on operations this year, with the redevelopment of the potting shed into a new volunteer meeting room and kitchen. We also plan to construct a new potting shed and glasshouse beside the chicken enclosure.

Joel and his teams have again been exceptionally busy onsite with various projects as follows:

- Construction of new tool shed in the garden field.
 - Extension and renovation of the Men’s Shed facilities.
 - Having taken feedback from our volunteers, we have significantly expanded the items stocked in the farm shop and customer feedback has been very positive.
 - The Children’s Play Area has been completed and fenced in, much to the delight of our younger visitors.
 - We had a very successful Christmas Fair onsite, which again required massive help from all our volunteers.
 - Our growing/harvesting/re-potting teams have again been exceptionally busy and the quality and quantity of our produce continues to develop.
 - The old Pigeon Club building has received a new roof & facelift and our flower exports have developed a beautiful frontage for our customers to enjoy.
-

**Kairos Enterprises
Company Limited by Guarantee**

**Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report)
Year Ended 31st March 2023**

Continued.....

Finally, could we again thank our fantastic team of volunteers for their incredible support during the year. Whilst it is very encouraging to see the developments onsite, we truly do recognise that those who come through our gates are what the Ark is all about. As a Board we were conscious that we were embarking on some fairly major changes to our site and in March we organised a volunteer's coffee morning to provide information on the plans and seek feedback and suggestions. We would encourage all volunteers to provide us with your views on how we can better deliver on our mission.

With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians Ch.4 V2-3

Board of Directors/Trustees
