



Changing lives
within our
community

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issue

Welcome to our **AUTUMN 2021 NEWSLETTER** which aims to keep you up-to-date with all the exciting news and developments at ARK at Egwood CIC.

After a bumpy ride to be in a position to open our gates, we have finally got into 'our groove' and are starting to see the fruits of our labours. Every day we are getting more enquiries and those that are coming are benefiting from being around people and in the great outdoors.



Our vegetable and flower patches have rewarded us with plenty of produce and we have learnt many lessons in our first full season of growing as to what has worked and what hasn't.

New members of the ARK team

We have in fact become so busy that in addition to Simon and Sam, we have now recruited some more members to the ARK team. Matt, a qualified Social Worker has joined us full-time, will focus on our youth provision and Jemma, a qualified teacher, has initially joined us part-time to support all facets of ARK. Josh has joined us via the government Kickstart Scheme, so we all geared up to provide a fabulous service to one and all.



Jemma



Sam, Matt, Nigel, Simon



Josh

Site Developments

Our car park is now finished, which has made a huge difference to the parking on site. We would like to thank the Thatchers Foundation for enabling this project to go ahead.

With the support of The Rotary Club of Crewkerne, we have also almost completed our field kitchen, with its 4-oven solid fuel Aga. We have also put a tarpaulin up in our woods so that we don't all get soaked on wet days! This will give us an invaluable additional space in our enchanted woodland.

We have two new residents - pygmy goats Buddy and Charlie..



Health & Wellbeing Courses

In May we started providing 6-week Health and Wellbeing courses, in partnership with Somerset Skills and Learning. We held weekly sessions, from 10am 'til 3pm and offered a range of taster activities for people to enjoy, alongside a delicious wholesome lunch. Activities included: African drumming, relaxation & mindfulness, wood whittling, horticulture, willow weaving and a number of other crafts.

Many of our learners found that not only did they learn new skills, but they also became less anxious and more socially integrated in our safe and nurturing outdoor environment.

Due to the success of these courses, we will be running four more over the next year, where we will undertake seasonal activities from chutney-making and juicing to willow wreath making; the first of which will start in October.

If you think you may be interested in any of these courses, please contact us on 01460 391974/ 07974 658782 or email office@arkategwood.com.



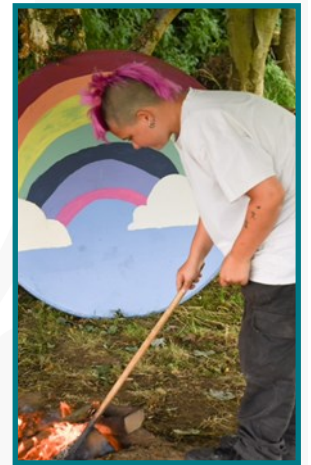
Goings on at ARK

Over the summer months, ARK, in conjunction with the RSPCA, the Royal British Legion, Cultivate and Somerset Works, hosted a number of activity days. The RSPCA courses were attended by school leavers; these young people enjoyed spending their time with our animals and the other activities in our outside space.

In partnership with Cultivate and the Royal British Legion, ARK organised some family days, around the woodland, pond and field space providing a range of activities. We have also hosted ad-hoc workshops in batik, felting, soapmaking and willow-craft.

ARK has been partnering with the Cultivate project for Take Art alongside Somerset Art Works and Culturally Chard. The banners project for Chard has allowed us to combine art workshops with the food we grow here at ARK, the plants, animals and woodland area. Families from Chard were welcomed to a creative workshop with SAW artist Jenny Mellings to produce artwork for banners for the Chard high street. The work included drawing, vegetable printing and cyanotypes, all inspired by the wildlife, kitchen garden and animals that they saw at ARK.

On Mondays we hold **Tai Chi** and **Baby Rhyme Time** for local residents.



More goings on

Armed Forces Community Project

The Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund is supporting us to socially engage with local members of our armed forces community, including veterans, serving personnel and their families. Coffee mornings are held each Wednesday from 11am. The activities at ARK are supported by other local military organisations including the Royal British Legion, SSAFA and RNAS Yeovilton. We also held a series of family mornings and on the 18th August, we held an evening with a presentation by Stephan Van Niekerk on his experiences in Afghanistan and how he has built resilience following his life-changing injuries.



Corporate Day

On a very sunny day in June, Harmony Fire Ltd of Sherborne, joined us for the day to help us to make our pond more wildlife friendly and to start our small animal area. A very young and enthusiastic group worked really hard, lifting and shifting soil and putting in fence posts before stopping for a leisurely lunch. Their help not only enabled us to make some progress on our bio-diversity plan, but also gave these colleagues, the opportunity to engage and socialise with each other, in some instances for the first time since joining the company.

If you think your company could benefit from some team-building, whilst enjoying the outside space and helping a charitable cause, please get in contact with us.



Community Lunches at Merriott Village Hall

On Tuesday 14th September, we held our first community lunch; the first offering was cottage pie and fruit crumble, which was enjoyed by all those attending. The next lunch will be at 12pm for 12.30 on **Tuesday October 12th** and will be held fortnightly thereafter.

Pre-booking is essential, so if you are interested, please call 01460 391974 / 07974 658782 or email office@arkategwood.com



Our Open Day

After 3 postponements our Open Day finally went ahead on Saturday 28th August. Initially we were worried that the road closure would have an impact on our day, but those worries were unfounded. The volunteers and attendees went to work on making posters, chutneys & pickles, wooden boards & other crafts, recipe books and cakes in preparation for the big day. The sun shone and well over a thousand people visited



Volunteers' Evening

We wanted to thank all our fabulous volunteers for their help, support and expertise, as without doubt, we would not still be here without them, so we held a lovely informal celebratory evening on site – we did establish on the night that we don't have any suitable evening lighting, so it was out with the i-phone torches! Next year hopefully we shall be a bit more prepared!

Coming soon ...

Health Walks from ARK – please keep an eye out on social media for Health Walks from Egwood – these will be fortnightly, relatively easy walks from our site.

Recent Funders

We have been very fortunate to receive lots of support from other organisations who believe in us and as such, we have received funding from:

- * [The Watch Project](#) (small animal area)
- * [Persimmon Homes Community Fund](#)
- * [Arnold Clark Foundation](#)
- * [Somerset Community Foundation](#) (strimmer & rotovator)
- * [Horseshoes & Handprints](#) (animal-based therapy)
- * [Cooper Associates](#)
- * [Open Mental Health](#)
- * [Medlock Charitable Trust](#)
- * [RIX-Thompson Rothenberg Foundation](#) (therapeutic volunteer scheme)
- * [Sasha Foundation](#) (young person's support)

We are currently one of the three organisations supported in several [Tesco](#) stores with their blue token scheme.

[Branstons](#) has kindly offered to provide us with potatoes for our lunches; [Lefkro](#) has donated some of their tinned and dried goods and [Hinton St George & Shepton stores](#) are still supporting our flower selling.

Here's to another successful few months.

If you would like more information about our services, activities or volunteering, please get in touch - contact details are below.

How to contact us

Email: office@arkategwood.com

Tel: 01460 391974 or 07974 658 782

www.arkategwood.com



ARK at Egwood

ARK at Egwood, Merriott, Somerset TA16 5QN

