



Wirral Churches' Ark Project

ANNUAL REPORT 2007/2008

Supporting homeless people in Wirral

Company No: 3896833 Registered Charity No: 1079070

Wirral Churches' Ark Project

DIRECTORS

- Rev'd Robert Nelson – Chairman
- Jacky Turner
- Father John Hovington
- Ian Cubbin
- Barry McDonald
- John Roach

Registered Office

Mary Cole House
6, Sandford Street
Birkenhead
Wirral
CH41 1BN
0151 649 0111

Supportive Organisations

Birkenhead High School
Birkenhead 6th Form College
Birkenhead & Wallasey PCT
Blakes Benevolent Trust
J Cubbin & Sons
Eastham Brownies
HSBC Bank
Inner Wheel Hoyle
Lever Faberge
Beatrice Laing Trust
Marks & Spencer PLC
Mersey Docks & Harbour Co. Char Fnd.
Metropolitan Borough of Wirral

Neston Music Festival
Oxton Churches' Men's Dinner
Col. W Pilkington Charitable Trust
Rotary Club of Heswall
St. Albans
St. Johns
St. Albans Primary School
J A Shone Memorial Trust
Soroptomists Int., Bebington
Unilever
Wallasey Inner Wheel
Wirral Grammar School for Girls
Wirral Investment Network

Auditor

Guild Appleton & Co
Union House
21, Victoria Street
Liverpool L1 6BD

Main Banker

Barclays Bank plc
2 Liscard Village
Wallasey
Wirral CH45 4JS

Chairman's Report

Once again it is my pleasure and my privilege, as Chairman of Wirral Churches' Ark Project, to introduce our Annual Report.

2007 was characterised by expansion of our services, bringing fully into operation the sixth house (the third we had purchased) of our Arkangel project and, within Mary Cole House (MCH) strengthening key working with our residents.

During the year we also began planning and applying for grant funding for our MCH Extension project. This has started to crystallise from a vision to a reality, and the concept has developed to the stage whereby this year we should actually begin to build.

We have also had to respond to ever increasing expectations of positive outcomes in our work with residents on the part of our principal funder, the Supporting People programme. We must be seen to be well managed and staffed in the increasingly competitive world of applying for and securing the continuation of funding. Caring for homeless people is becoming more and more a target-driven sector, and it is important that we can demonstrate the required strength in depth of our organisational structure, proving in so far as it is possible, that we are delivering real and enduring benefit in the lives of those we are here to help.

These demands, with the increasing scope of our operations, have created considerably more work for our staff, and the decision has been taken to employ an additional senior manager to oversee the entire scope of our operations, leaving Bob Jarvis free to concentrate on the development of the extension, and the financial and business side of the Ark's operations. We warmly welcome Anne O'Marah as our new CEO, and have every confidence that she will lead the Ark well through the challenging times ahead.

The pressure of demand for our service remains intense. MCH is usually full, and we cannot accommodate everyone who seeks a bed. That is why it is important that our residents take full

advantage of their time with us, and that anyone who is disinclined to accept the help we offer makes way for someone who is in desperate need out on the streets.

We remain only too well aware that for some of our residents there will never be a time when they become able to live fully independently, but we endeavour to ensure that each one is given ample opportunity to acquire basic life-skills, and to address their therapeutic needs – whether it be for help with alcohol or substance abuse, or in terms of mental health, or improving their ability to interact socially.

We try our best to help people move on, some to Arkangel (sadly, a minority both because the places available are very limited and also because we have to be confident that only those likely to be able to sustain their tenancy are offered what places there are), others to supported housing, or into rehabilitation. But several leave us without any clear plan being accepted by them.

I make the plea yet again: can Wirral wake up to the demand on the doorstep? More provision is needed, whether in MCH or in other projects, for direct access accommodation. At present we are limited by political and funding realities in what we can achieve. We are certainly not limited in our desire to achieve a considerable improvement in the number of people helped, and in the help they receive.

I thank most sincerely all our staff for their hard and demanding work for our residents, and also our volunteers, whose service in supporting our residents is invaluable, and who are largely responsible for maintaining the Ark's Christian ethos.

Thank you to all our supporters who donate money and gifts in kind for the benefit of our residents, and to all who regularly pray for our work. Such forms of help remain vital in helping us in our service to those who are homeless.

Robert Nelson - Chairman

Hostel Manager's Report

The last 12 months have seen us face a number of challenges and questions as we continue to provide a service to 25 residents. More than ever our attention is focused on the future.

As we continue to move forward, we are mindful of the future and its changing demands. We need to be looking at our existing provision and how we may adopt a flexible position which will allow us to respond, operationally, to overall strategic requirements. We need to remain aware that our delivery of service is shaped, not just by our service users and their perceived needs, but by a host of other factors outside of our direct control. How our future service is delivered will arguably be influenced and moulded by a number of factors including politics, economics, outside strategic planning,

and issues surrounding value judgements. How we fit into, and how valuable we are to, the overall local strategy will very much depend upon our ability to shape and position a service that fits the requirements of a bigger picture.

Operational demands are constantly changing. We must be prepared to meet this change. A difficulty we face, and will continue to face in the coming 12 months, is how we deliver a cost effective service that is flexible, effective and delivers what is required at all levels. The next 12 months will, without doubt, see this hostel face some difficult issues as we answer questions that will challenge our direct access status, access criteria and original ethos.

Kevin Hogan - Hostel Manager

Duty Officer's Report

Duty officers are now in the process of obtaining NVQ level 3 in Health and Social Care. We currently have 6 Duty Officers already qualified, and a further 2 in the process of obtaining their qualification. The remainder of the Duty Officer team will then be enrolled on the course as part of our commitment to providing the best available service for our residents.

We continue to run the resident workshops, and have now introduced a twice monthly Resident's House Meeting to keep residents informed of any changes and obtain feedback. These meetings are also to address any issues or complaints the residents may have.

As a team, the Duty Officers continue to contribute to the support needs and well being of all our residents, staff, volunteers and visitors. We are grateful for the help given by our volunteers in providing meals and befriending residents.

We pride ourselves on the fact that we still provide the Direct Access Hostel in Wirral, a service which is in constant demand, as we extremely rarely have a room empty for more than 24 hours.

Brenda Wood – Duty Officer

Hostel Resident and ArkAngel Tenant Perspectives

Since I became homeless, and came to the Ark, my planned future of having my own place became clearer. If I was still on the streets, I would have no chance at all.

The staff are very helpful and always there to help with literally any problem or issue I have on my mind. The meals are brilliant and the volunteers are very helpful and work hard.

It is a happy house, and we, who live here, muck in with jobs, i.e. each one of us has a household task, just as if we all had our own place.

The keyworkers are also very helpful with getting us placements in new homes. Altogether I can say you would have to come and see for yourself.

John A hostel resident

I have been at the Ark for seven weeks as I'm homeless, due to family problems. The ark provided me with a bed and support, and the ability to help myself.

I'm looking forward to gaining my own accommodation and independence, and hopefully get back to work.

The staff have treated me very well and their support has been exemplary. I will hopefully get back on my feet and volunteer at the project and give a little something back.

Geoff A hostel resident

I moved to the Ark in November 2007, and feel that the hostel saved me from continuing using drugs. I got clean a few weeks after moving into the Ark Hostel. I got plenty of help and opportunities to take my mind off the drugs, like going to the workshops and days out, and to The Lodge. I'm proud of the success I've achieved during my stay at the hostel, and went on a methadone script of 80 mls daily. I'm reduced now to 40 mls a day due to me wanting to cut down on it.

I'm now living in an Arkangel house, and it's a great opportunity to help me get back on the straight and narrow way of a happy and normal life. I'm starting an assertive course in June for three weeks, plus I'm offering to do voluntary work. I have been totally clear of street drugs now for seven months.

Wendy An Arkangel Tenant

I arrived at the Ark on 29th January '07. I had found myself homeless, but always felt it would be easy to get back on my feet. Reality was, it was very difficult, and I struggled!! I was now faced with a disability and feeling very vulnerable.

I was now feeling low, and in previous circumstances I would turn to drink. However, the Ark helped me to realise that I didn't have to take this path. I enrolled on all available courses, and took part in positive days out. I am indebted to Sue who made me feel a valuable member of the Ark reading group.

I was sceptical about Arkangel, but after listening to other people's experiences of Arkangel, I realised I wanted to give it a go, and see what else I could achieve, now and in the future.

My progress continues to this day. I attend other courses e.g. I have just completed my RISE programme (Resources in Seeking Employment). This was alongside other disabled people, and it made me aware of my own limitations, and also the struggles other people face who have a disability.

I am now ready for my own home. It has been hard work, but the rewards are there if you are willing to put in the effort.

Chris An Arkangel Tenant

Outgoing Chief Executive's Report incorporating Finance Report

A year of steady progress and some consolidation sums up the past 15 months. In February '07 we bought our 6th Arkangel supported housing house, having bought 2 houses in February '06, so that we now own 3 and manage a further 3 others. Following this rapid expansion in the previous 12 months, Arkangel settled into looking after 12 tenants and their properties.

The other major development is that we plan to build an extension to the hostel, and enlarge the car park. The extension will be used for training and resident activities, and be a modest 'day centre'. We have recently heard that our bid to Central Government CLG was unsuccessful, so we must seek alternative funding. The training extension is our response to increasing pressure from Local and Central Government to do more than meeting the physical needs of our homeless residents. We have an obligation to ensure that we equip them, as best as we are able, to rejoin mainstream society.

We are becoming target driven, and need to demonstrate that the outcomes our hostel residents and Arkangel tenants attain are as high as possible. We undertake activities to do this – witness our twice weekly workshops, trip for 9 residents to an outward bound weekend, weekly art/performance activities, weekly reading and outdoor activities, and our allotment. Planned additional activities include a third weekly workshop, and the restarting of numeracy and literacy classes. We now employ 2 full time key workers who work closely with hostel residents to ensure they address underlying issues, help them find permanent accommodation, and ensure they engage in meaningful activity whilst with us.

Becoming smoke free on 1st July was interesting, as the vast majority of homeless people smoke. We switched smoking to bedrooms only, and this has worked well. Other changes have been the staff rota change in April, which again went

relatively smoothly, and the welcoming onto the Ark's board of John Roach, who works for Wirral Partnership Homes.

Wirral reviewed its Homeless Strategy during the year and the outcome was somewhat disappointing. The main concentration was on prevention, and little on relieving the front line pressure that we feel daily – as witnessed by our hostel occupation rate of 98%, and turning away 4 people a day because we are full. In 2007 we moved 58 people successfully on from Mary Cole House. Corresponding figures for Arkangel are 92% occupancy and 9 people moved on successfully.

On the financial front, income matched expenses, and we increased borrowing (by £45k) to purchase our third Arkangel house (£84k). There are 10 year mortgages on all 3 houses, being fixed rate for the first 5 years. Works are about to begin on one of our houses, under the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy, where we pay only 25% of the cost of improvement works (totalling over £11k), including a new roof.

We took the decision to strengthen the management team, and are fortunate to have recruited Anne O'Marah as our new Chief Executive, so that we can improve our quality of service and leaving me free to concentrate on finances, particularly the planned extension.

The most interesting fundraiser we had was our sponsored "Sleepout" in late September, when 13 of us 'rough slept' in the grounds of St. Saviour's Oxtan. We were blessed with a fine night, and some of us even managed a few hours sleep before rising and joining in the Sunday morning Service. Donations resulting from our supporters fundraising, and donations of food and other goods, continued through the year, and we continue to be most grateful for this support. Thank you.
Bob Jarvis – Chief Executive (outgoing)

Incoming Chief Executive's Report

At the time of writing I have been at the Ark for three weeks. They say time flies when you are enjoying yourself, and in this case that is certainly true.

I feel truly blessed to have been given the opportunity to lead the Ark as we develop the already excellent service that is offered to our often chaotic residents as we attempt to assist them to move on in their lives.

The welcome I have been given has been enthusiastic and positive from all staff, and with such a team we can only move steadily upwards to become a beacon service and a shining light in the gloom that many of our residents find themselves in.

Anne O'Marah – Chief Executive
(incoming)

ArkAngel Manager's Report

Within my AGM report for 2006-07 I highlighted the difficulties in finding appropriate move-on accommodation. I can report that we continue to make positive relationships with other housing providers, and thanks to the staff approach of demanding a good service with best practice for our tenants, we have had some favourable outcomes.

The Local Authority Supporting People Team have also put together a Housing Priority Panel which has opened up another avenue designed to enhance access to Wirralhomes housing.

We are responsible for the management of 3 Riverside Housing Association properties within the Arkangel project. We have approached Riverside to obtain a more secure tenure for our tenants, i.e. an Assured Shorthold Tenancy instead of the existing Licence Agreement. Whilst in the early stages, we hope to be successful.

In the first quarter of 2008, we have achieved 94% occupancy, which is a testament to all the hard work from the staff team over the last 12 months. Thanks are due to Ray for all his work and support, and to Steve for his flexibility and adaptability –

stepping in at a moment's notice. This year would not have been successful without them both.

Wirral's Supporting People team continue to assess services, and again for a third year, we are ready to meet their expectations. Service user involvement and tenant participation groups are the next areas for development which I look forward to completing. These groups consist of people

who live within our projects, acting in a voluntary capacity to promote and defend the interests of all tenants. Tenant participation is a two way process, in which tenants are able to influence decisions, and take part within the Ark's supported housing.

Dave Harrison
ArkAngel Manager

Statement of Financial Activities
Year ended 31st December 2007

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2007 Total Funds £	2006 Total Funds £
Incoming resources				
Donations & legacies	46,405	19,604	66,009	79,030
Arkangel Income	60,475	55,918	116,393	108,827
Profit on sale freehold property				
		-	-	
Housing benefit	140,581		140,581	131,529
Supporting people		202,124	202,124	199,457
Income from trading activities	3,356		3,356	3,589
Income tax refund/Gift aid	2,279		2,279	3,061
Bank interest received	8,959		8,959	7,239
Sundry Income	1,233		1,233	690
Total Incoming resources	263,288	277,646	540,933	533,422
Costs of generating funds				
Christmas card expenses	2,198		2,198	2,454
Water	14	4	18	12
Light & heat	32	7	39	22
Wages & salaries	4,650		4,650	4,050
Insurance	17		17	18
Subsistence & cleaning	38	3	41	36
Printing, postage & stationery	13		13	10
Repairs & maintenance			-	
Depreciation	25	62	87	70
Sundry expenses	33		33	35
	7,020	76	7,096	6,707
Cost of charitable activities				
Water	3,860	1,196	5,056	3,217
Light & heat	6,566	1,993	8,559	5,679
Resident services	2,833		2,833	777
Wages & salaries	81,124	224,799	305,923	308,791
Training costs	3,746		3,746	7,719
Insurance	4,651		4,651	4,750
Catering	9,071		9,071	8,681
Telephone	1,996	700	2,696	3,246
Printing, postage & stationery	3,546		3,546	2,524
Subsistence & cleaning	10,076	697	10,773	9,378
Advertising				444
Extension		1,820	1,820	
Bank charges	171		171	203
Repairs & maintenance	9,194		9,194	11,560
Other Building Costs	3,915	700	4,615	3,296
Arkangel expenses	62,671	46,548	109,219	88,583
Depreciation	3,426	15,351	18,777	18,465
Criminal records bureau	497		497	280
Auditors remuneration	1,645		1,645	1,645
Computer costs	606		606	5,006
Sundry expenses	8,778		8,778	9,255
Legal & professional	6,326		6,326	
Total resources expended	231,719	293,880	525,599	500,206
Net incoming resources	31,569	(16,234)	15,335	33,216

Balance Sheet

Wirral Churches' Ark Project
Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2007

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2005 Total Funds £	2004 Total Funds £
Tangible Fixed Assets				
Freehold Property				
Mary Cole House	13,606	665,357	678,963	694,663
Arkangel Properties	156,075	56,223	212,298	132,486
Other	<u>12,656</u>	-	<u>12,656</u>	<u>12,080</u>
	182,337	721,580	903,917	839,229
Current assets				
Cash in hand	189	-	189	736
Cash at bank	<u>249,453</u>	<u>5,502</u>	<u>254,955</u>	<u>264,191</u>
	249,643	5,502	255,145	264,927
Current liabilities				
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	28,651	21,032	49,683	39,862
Net Current Assets	<u>220,991</u>	(15,530)	<u>205,462</u>	<u>225,065</u>
Creditors: more than one year	<u>94,310</u>	-	<u>94,310</u>	<u>64,560</u>
Total net assets	<u>309,018</u>	<u>706,051</u>	<u>1,015,069</u>	<u>999,734</u>
Total reserves				
Restricted funds		706,051	706,051	722,285
General funds	<u>309,018</u>	-	<u>309,018</u>	<u>277,449</u>
Total Charity Funds	<u>309,018</u>	<u>706,051</u>	<u>1,015,069</u>	<u>999,734</u>

Nurses' Report

Our work continues, and we strive to improve our service. The delivery of health care has been a bit more difficult with the new legislation on no smoking in public places, as residents tend to spend more time in their rooms, making our access to them limited. However, we do try to make sure every resident has the opportunity to see us when we are on duty.

There are suggestions from management to improve our nursing service by means of

health checks for each resident, and we are exploring ways of doing this for the future. Until we can organise this we will continue to treat minor injuries and ailments, offer health advice to all and refer into appropriate other services when needed.

Patsy Dodd BA (Hons) RGN
Nurse Co-ordinator Ark

Key Worker Report

The past year has seen many changes to the Keyworker's role. Eileen Hughes retired from the Keyworking team; and we welcomed Tony Skillen on a full time basis.

We are working towards maximising the benefits for the residents so that they can go on to live independent lives. This has been put into action and supported through our funders Supporting People. We can now do referrals for the High Priority Housing Panel to help residents get support with accommodation. They also offer ongoing support once the resident has taken up the tenancy. For some residents this has already been achieved, as some have moved into their own accommodation. Some have found tenancies through private landlords and Housing Associations. Because of independent living and receiving ongoing support from the Keyworking team, they have learnt skills such as budgeting and cooking. Some have gone on to enrol at College, which has improved their confidence greatly.

Since the last report we are still encouraging residents to participate in training courses or get involved with programmes out in the community, such as Wirral Alcohol, which address the issues they face. We still run art and reading classes but, unfortunately, we no

longer are able to run the Maths and English classes due to Wirral Met's funding and criteria restrictions.

We now operate an outreach service for residents who have moved into their own accommodation. We offer support for the first 3 months, but this can be extended if necessary. To help with resettlement into their own place we help as much as possible by collecting unwanted furniture from the public and passing it on to those starting out. This has been a great success, and made a real difference to the success of the tenancy. Over the past year we have successfully furnished nine properties for ex-Ark residents. We are grateful for the help and support of those members of the public who have helped. We now have storage so that we can put things aside for the next resident to move.

The Ark still runs 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This is done by a skilled staff team of Duty Officers,, Volunteer Co-ordinator, Hostel Manager, Art Teachers, Reading Group Teachers and volunteers. They all work hard to make the Ark a success. I thank them all for their input and support. They do a difficult job, and they do it well.

Val Formston
Senior Keyworker

Volunteer Representative's Report

We have 90 volunteers on our database. Not all are active at the same time, but work as part of a team on a rota. This has proved to be a very effective way of organising cover for set times during the week. (A great legacy from Esther Lambert of St. Winifride's in Neston).

Our wonderful Ark volunteers continue to cook, befriend, buddy, sell Christmas cards and raise funds for the Ark and Arkangel projects. They are wonderful people who give so generously of their time and energy in helping the Ark residents. I thank them all so very much for all that they do.

I have been your representative since the last AGM, but sadly Jeff Hurst had to resign because of work commitments. If there is another volunteer who might be able to take on the vacancy, please contact me.

My number is 327 6354, and I shall be happy to hear from anyone with suggestions or queries about being an Ark volunteer.

Diane Hopwood
Volunteer Representative

ARK STATISTICAL SUMMARY FOR THE 12 MONTHS TO 31 DEC '07

Residents

	Male	Female	Total
Number of residents	232	50	282
Average number of residents per night	19.65	4.85	24.5
Total bedspaces occupied	7169	1770	8939
Average number of nights stayed by residents	31	35	32

Many residents were successfully moved on:-

- 7 were housed by a Housing Association
- 21 were housed in a supported housing scheme
- 18 were housed in private accommodation
- 2 were housed in sheltered housing
- 6 returned to their family, or home
- 4 moved in with friends

<u>How Long Residents Stayed</u>					<u>Age of Residents</u>				
No. of days	Male	Female	Total	% of Total	Age	Male	Female	Tot	%
1-10	74	14	88	31	18-25	54	19	73	26
11-20	45	7	52	18	26-35	82	12	94	34
21-30	36	12	48	17	36-45	47	13	60	21
31-40	21	3	24	8	46-55	37	3	40	14
41-50	11	3	14	5	56-65	11	3	14	5
51-60	7	1	8	3	65+	1	0	21	
61-70	10	1	11	4	Totals	232	50	282	100
71-80	9	1	10	4					
81-90	7	3	10	4					
91-100	3	0	3	1					
101 +	9	5	14	5					
Totals	232	50	282	100					

We captured 'underlying problem' data residents gave to us when registering on their first night.

Underlying problem information

	<u>Male</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
No problem with drugs, alcohol or mental health	71	30	16	32	87	31
Drug only problem	32	14	8	16	40	14
Alcohol only problem	55	24	7	14	62	22
Mental health only problem	22	9	5	10	27	9
Multiple problems	<u>52</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>24</u>
Totals	<u>232</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>282</u>	<u>100</u>

Underlying problem additional information

Drug problem (with or without other problems)	70	30	14	28	84	30
Alcohol problem (with or without other problems)	96	41	19	38	115	41
Mental health (with or without other problems)	56	24	17	34	73	26