

THE PAST & THE PATH TO THE FUTURE

This document is adapted from our submission to the **Charity Awards 2007**. It lays out some of our history, our thoughts for the future, and some lessons learned. It may be of interest to anyone interested in the Ark project or others who are considering following a similar path.

One major aspect shines through, the major contribution of a very large number of individuals. It was written by Ingrid Carding, our Charity Administrator, to whom we owe a huge debt for all her contributions, commitment and hard work.

I hope you find it enlightening; if nothing else it may explain how we came to be this way!

Graham Plant

Chairman - North Hampshire Medical Education Trust (The Ark)

NOMINATION SUMMARY

Establishing a £5million independent medical education centre, embracing clinicians, community and business. Achieving national impact through unsurpassed audio-visual links and innovative partnerships, enabling the sharing of best practice e.g. colorectal and liver cancer surgery, orthopaedic, gynaecological and cardiac interventions. Locally, providing community education and a sanctuary for 15 support groups.

THE NEED

During the 1980s and 90's Basingstoke Hospital became internationally renowned for its pioneering colorectal and liver cancer surgery. Inadequate and outdated hospital teaching facilities coupled with the need to share life-enhancing expertise with a wider audience, led a group of consultants to set up the North Hampshire Medical Education Trust (NHMET) in 1994. The Trustees pioneered the idea that a new facility should be multi-disciplinary, advocating this ethos long before it became accepted practice. They also championed the vision that it be accessible to outside users including carers, the lay public and business community. Advice indicated that a medical education centre capable of accommodating groups of up to 180 delegates would help fill a regional gap in provision.

PLANNING

1994~1998 EARLY PLANNING & FUNDRAISING

The Trustees consulted NHS professionals, fundraising experts, other charities, prospective partners, building, legal, accounting, finance, architectural, conferencing and educational experts, to develop initial ARK plans. The project was launched by a commitment of £1million from the Dinwoodie 1968 Settlement, provision of leasehold land at a peppercorn rent by the North Hampshire Hospital, a major donation from the Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council and a substantial contribution covenanted by local doctors.

1998~2002 PUBLIC FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN ~ The ARK Appeal

Masterminded by Trustee Mr Merv Rees, fundraising targets were set and achieved – firstly the initial build target of £3.6million to enable contracts to be signed in Feb 2001 and then

the later fit-out target. To offset the absence of a professional fundraiser, an Appeals Co-ordinator and Office was generously funded by the Hospital from 1998.

2001~2002 BUILDING THE ARK

The subsidiary company 'ARK Conference Centre Limited' (ACCL) had been established by the charity in 1998 to address the VAT issue, manage the building project and subsequently day-to-day Centre operations. The Directors compiled an ARK Conference Centre Business Plan in Jan 2001 for the future operation of the Centre.

IMPLEMENTATION

1994-2002: DESIGN & BUILD

Devising a viable centre took longer than first envisaged, due to the complexities of the project and magnitude of the fundraising challenge. With no textbook for such a major independent charitable venture, 'bolted on' to an NHS hospital, it required original thinking and vision by all involved. The Trustees considered several building options and centre operational formats, eventually agreeing on a 3-storey facility in 2001. In consultation with the NHMET Trustees, the charity's subsidiary company's three volunteer Directors managed the practical planning and project construction. The £5million+ARK Centre was completed on time and on budget in Sept 2002.

THE CHARITY'S NEW ROLE

2002~2007

With the Centre built, NHMET plans were made to establish a Community Sponsorship Programme and NHMET Training Programme. Application procedures, Approval and Steering Committees were formed and budgets prepared. Performance versus budget was reported regularly to the NHMET Board. A new programme of fundraising was devised to support these ventures, and also to repay the building loans and start-up costs.

Once the Centre was operational the NHMET Trustees focused on overseeing the management of the Centre. The ARK Appeals Co-ordinator broadened her role to that of Charity Administrator, establishing a programme of sponsored community use of the ARK and running specific medical training courses. Fundraising remained a priority however, to: repay the two major building loans (achieved by 2007), support free use of the Centre, keep the building equipped to the highest standard and look to future expansion.

ARK CENTRE START-UP & OPERATION

2002~2007

Conferencing experts forecast it would take at least three years for the Centre to reach profitability. NHMET Trustees were appraised bi-monthly of ACCL targets and achievements. By March 2006 a breakeven result (before depreciation) was recorded and the Centre was attracting around 80,000 delegate visits a year.

WHAT DID WE ACHIEVE?

A £5million flagship medical education centre, housing some of the most technically advanced audio-visual lecture theatre and teaching facilities in the UK. During 2006 the ARK Centre accommodated 80,000 delegate visits, encompassing the whole spectrum of healthcare training and support. Thus the centre has facilitated:

1. ADVANCED SURGICAL TRAINING

Live-links to Basingstoke hospital's operating theatres have enabled colorectal, knee arthroscopy and gynaecological surgical training for large audiences. With SONY's latest 'high definition' projectors installed, the ARK is now at the forefront of audio-visual surgical training capability in the U.K.

2. **PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PELICAN CANCER FOUNDATION** on the 1st floor of the ARK. Pelican is now a recognised leading world authority for precision surgery for colorectal cancers and tumours of the liver. Its expanding role will include other pelvic region cancers, particularly prostate, bladder and kidney cancers as well as pseudomyxoma peritonei. In 2006, Pelican in the ARK completed a three-year national colorectal surgery (TME) training programme. Over 180 English Teams (2,000 clinicians) attended including radiologists, oncologists, surgeons, pathologists and specialist nurses. These multi-disciplinary courses feature 'live-links' to operating theatres, of a standard unsurpassed elsewhere in the U.K.

3. **RESEARCH OFFICES:** for Colorectal and Liver Cancer and Cardiology projects. Key research underway includes the MERCURY MRI Project and also projects focussing on improving outcomes for cancer patients and addressing quality of life issues after surgery.

4. **ARTHRITIS** two rooms in the ARK house a successful partnership with the Basingstoke Rheumatology Team, encompassing ongoing research, continuing patient education and help-line services.

5. **NURSING EDUCATION** One hundred pre & post registration nursing students now have the ARK as their learning base, with three dedicated classrooms and support.

6. **COMMUNITY GROUPS** The ARK Charity provides encouragement and a base for many patient self-help and carer support groups: fourteen meeting regularly in 2006. The Basingstoke Breast Cancer Self-Help Group is a notable example, helping over 200 sufferers since 2003.

7. **COMMUNITY HEALTH** The Charity also supports one-off education events and forums, especially where funding or sponsorship has been difficult. Carer support and disability have been a particular focus, but each year the mix is different.

8. **CORPORATE INVOLVEMENT** The ARK has embraced the business community with around 30% of use now corporate. Their involvement contributes to the profitability and vibrancy of the Centre. With the creation of an 'ARK Ambassadors Club' in 2006, an educational and social forum for the sharing of ideas and mutual support has been formed.

LEARNING FROM THE INITIATIVE

We have learned:

1. That inspired leadership was the main factor in the ARK Project's success. Early advice was that medical education would be 'hard to market' to the general public, alongside the sheer magnitude of the fundraising task. Both were conquered largely through the exceptional abilities of Mr Merv Rees DL, Consultant Surgeon & Chairman ARK Appeals.

2. That managing a 'partnership project' is initially complex and time-consuming, but ultimately provides an efficient and mutually rewarding way of sharing ever more scarce resources.

3. The importance of having a small, trusted group managing key aspects of the project.

4. The indispensability of a solid volunteer base.

5. The need to keep major funders to the project informed through an on-going programme of events, presentations, newsletters, correspondence, networking, website and publicity.

6. That administration costs can be kept to a minimum and a professional fundraiser was inappropriate for this project. (Our main charitable funder insisted upon this latter point.)

7. The importance of maintaining the support of the local and regional community, including businesses, newspapers and councils.

8. That fundraising events above all had to be 'fun.' Large donations often came as a result of an event and often from the least expected sources. We learned to keep going with grant applications and that steady application and focussed efforts eventually produce results.

9. That apparently insurmountable complexities are usually resolvable. For the ARK this included accounting, VAT, practical and NHS legal and organisational challenges – with no 'handbook' to guide. Negotiation, compromise and vision coupled with the support of talented professional advisors finally ensured success.

10. What has been achieved with the ARK could be replicated throughout the country. The importance of creating an uplifting environment, encouraging the sharing of ideas between nurses, doctors and allied healthcare professionals has now been established. Community and business participation is helping break down external barriers and empower the public to take greater responsibility for their well-being.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DID WE MAKE TO THE COMMUNITY

The focus has always been on sharing and partnership with the ultimate goal of improving healthcare. Innovative and mutually beneficial partnerships have evolved with:

- 1. PELICAN CANCER FOUNDATION. With the ARK dedicated to providing the exceptional training facilities, Pelican management have devoted their energies to establishing vital training and research programmes, securing the first ever national NHS cancer-training contract by a charity. Other Pelican colorectal, liver and prostate cancer teaching and research initiatives have also flourished. The relationship has been characterised by mutual support, co-operation and shared benefit.**

"The Foundation strives for better treatment, improved long term survival and quality of life for patients, and the partnership with the ARK is fundamental to the Foundation's success."

23rd May 2006 Chris Beagley CBE, Chief Executive, Pelican Cancer Foundation

- 2. RENOWNED MEDICAL SPECIALISTS, who regularly use the ARK to share their medical expertise with a wider audience. Basingstoke Surgeons in particular have convened major advanced courses on knee arthroscopy, ano-rectal and gynaecological surgery training, benefiting from the audio visual live-link to operating theatres. Basingstoke Cardiologists have pioneered safe coronary angioplasty in a district general hospital setting. They now regularly use the ARK to discuss the problems and issues with large groups from other UK hospitals hoping set up similar services. Basingstoke's Head of Midwifery independently organised a 'Fetal Monitoring in Labour (CTG) Seminar' in 2006, for 70 midwives and doctors from all over the South, who spent a day with an authority on the subject, Professor S Arulkumaran. Another is planned for 2007.**

"The participants consisted of thirty Cardiologists and approximately 100 Cardiac Nurses, Technicians and Radiographers..... The feedback we had from the day was uniformly positive. The facilities were quite clearly a world apart from those the participants were used to. The meeting itself was a great success and we hope to run it on an annual basis, next time probably including the whole of England rather than just the Southern half!"

Dr Carl Brookes FRCP, 'PCI in Non-Surgical Hospitals Day' 27th Sept 2005

"I wanted to give you feedback about the above two day course at the ARK, which included lectures, a live surgery link with theatres and workshops. All were experienced surgeons and I was heartened to hear that they considered this one of the best venues and the course one of the best courses that they had attended."

Mr Neil P Thomas FRCS, 'STRYKER Advanced Knee Arthroplasty Course' 7th & 8th April 2006

3. **NHMET TRAINING, (the ARK Charity's own training initiative) which has organised several courses in the ARK to fill gaps in national training provision, since 2005. One-day seminars by Basingstoke's Dr Cliff Reid aimed at A & E Specialist Registrars and Consultants include: 'Paediatric Emergency Medicine,' 'Critical Care for Emergency Physicians' and 'Acute Medicine in the Emergency Department.' Formal course feedback illustrates the acclaim these courses have met with:**

"More than value for money. Lives will be saved."
Delegate Feedback: Critical Care Course 13th Sept 2005

"Concise focus on practical aspects of caring for child in an acute setting. Good technique/style and appropriate draw on personal experience + human. Good venue/content/facilities/catering. Good to go beyond ATLS principles" **Delegate Feedback: Paediatric Emergency Course 20th Oct 2006**

"I really admire the hard work, Cliff has put in, to prepare for this day and I am amazed at his clear understanding in Emergency Medicine. Well done Cliff."

Delegate Feedback: Acute Medicine Course 24th July 2006

"Best acute revision course I've attended. 5 Star."
Delegate Feedback Acute Medicine Course 9th Oct 2006

"Excellent workbook. Very well described in good simple explanations. V. much appreciated. Logical + methodical. Well delivered. Please do me courses on everything!. Good venue + facilities + food."

Delegate Feedback: Critical Care Course 31st July 2006

4. **COMMUNITY GROUPS – free use of the building has now been facilitated for:**

- **North Hampshire Menieres Support Group**
- **Basingstoke Breast Cancer Self-Help Group**
- **Basingstoke Prostate Cancer Support Group**
- **Basingstoke Lymphoedema Support Group**
- **Basingstoke Fibromyalgia Group**
- **Basingstoke Young Diabetics Group**
- **Basingstoke Alzheimer's Society Meetings**
- **OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disease) Support Group**
- **Cruse Bereavement Volunteer Training**
- **Learning to Live with Cancer Courses**
- **Nat. Assocn. of Colitis & Crohn's Disease (Basingstoke Group)**
- **Receptions for Baby Loss**
- **Basingstoke Cancer User Group Meetings**
- **Arthritis Support Group**
- **PBC (Primary Biliary Cirrhosis) Support Group, Hampshire**

"Being able to hold our meetings in the ARK has made such a difference to the professionalism we offer in the standards of care to our clients locally...The surroundings are impressive and provide the high quality environment which we believe helps in the learning process.

8th Dec 2006 Dorothy Bates MBE, Chair Client Services, Cruse Bereavement Care, Basingstoke Branch

"The ARK has given a focus to the group in giving women the opportunity to meet other women who have suffered from breast cancer and to offer help, friendship and support....We are most grateful for your continued support, which has been a major factor in the success of the group, the first in this area."

8th May 2006 Angela Bennett, Founder Basingstoke Breast Cancer Self Help Group

5. **COMMUNITY HEALTH INITIATIVES recently sponsored by the ARK Charity:**

- **Basingstoke Carers' Consultation Event – 27th April 2005**
- **Death & Bereavement in Schools Study Day – 30th Oct 2005**
- **Dysphasia Support Volunteers Day - 13th March 2006**
- **Disability Forum for Basingstoke - 4th April 2006**
- **Macmillan & Samaritans AGMs – 13th June & 26th June 2006**
- **Hampshire Deaf Association Forum – 28th June 2006**
- **Independent Age Lecture – 4th Sept 2006**
- **Mind Body & Soul Evening – 18th Oct 2006**

- **The Importance of Dietary & Environmental Factors on Prevention & Control of Breast & Prostate Cancers - Lecture by Prof Jane Plant CBE – 31st Oct 2006**
- **Teenage Diabetic Study Day – 3rd March 2007**
- **Basingstoke Employee Voluntary Network Day – 11th May 2007**
- **6th Form Science Renaissance Lecture - 22 Sept 07**
- **Basingstoke Breast Cancer Fashion Show in the ARK – 28th Oct 2007**

"We had a good audience of 60, both professionals and volunteers working with older and disabled people...Please thank all the staff involved who helped make the day such a success. I was so impressed with their friendliness, professionalism and their keenness to be helpful. The theatre was a great venue with superb facilities..." **4th Sept 2006**
Independent Age Lecture, Jane O'Kelly, Area Rep South,

"I know that I speak on behalf of all the delegates to the Disability Forum when I say that the facility and service provided by the staff was absolutely first class in every respect.... I have never had so many e-mails after a conference saying how much the participants had enjoyed the event..." The event itself achieved its aims. We had 111 people attend..."
4th April 2006 Disability Forum for Basingstoke, Bob Carr, Dep. Chief Officer, Basingstoke Voluntary Services

6. **CORPORATE INVOLVEMENT in the ARK is mutually beneficial and many faceted:**
- The ARK Appeal benefited from many generous corporate donations.**
 - Corporate sponsorship of medical training events is now the accepted norm.**
 - External business hire of the Centre generates funds to underpin the financial strength of the Project as well as, in time, enabling us to divert profits to supporting community projects for improved healthcare.**
 - Businesses benefit from access to a five-star conferencing facility with exception AV & IT whilst at the same time contributing to a healthcare charity.**

"Lilly has supported The ARK since its inception and we now use it both for employee conferences and smaller meetings. We get great service and at the same time get to put something back into the community."
Andrew Hotchkiss, UK MD, Eli Lilly, 18 March 2005 , Basingstoke Gazette

"The ARK is a five-star conference centre at Tesco prices..."
Mr Kerry Richardson, Director HSA , 26th May 2006 ARK Ambassadors Dinner Speech,

"The day was a great success, the patients are very well. We were sponsored by Gynecare, who were most impressed with the organisation of the day and, like everybody, found the ARK to be marvellous."
Mr Tim Sayer FRCOG, GYNECARE TVM Surgery Day, 27th March 2006

7. **BASINGSTOKE HOSPITAL* AND UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON Formal partnerships now ensure first rate undergraduate and postgraduate education for the region's nurses, doctors and dentists. While the ARK Centre is physically attached to the North Hampshire Hospital, it is independent of it and has to be self-funding. Their participation has been central to the financial viability of the ARK.**

*Basingstoke & North Hampshire NHS Foundation Trust

HALLMARKS OF EXCELLENCE

STRATEGIC PLANNING:

The magnitude and timescale of the ARK Project meant strategic planning was essential to remain on course and achieve. Many phases of planning for both the Charity and its subsidiary were undertaken from 1994 through to the present. In particular, the 2001 ARK Conference Centre Business Plan sought to achieve profitability after 3 years. The ARK Centre broke even (before depreciation) by 2006, three years after becoming fully operational in 2003. By early 2007 the two remaining building loans (totaling £700,000) were neutralized enabling the Charity to begin expansion planning.

EFFECTIVE DELIVERY:

1. **FUNDRAISING: The Charity raised over £5million to build an independent medical education centre, despite advice that medical education was a 'hard to market' cause. The ARK's success as a leading edge medical education centre has meant the Charity has already attracted over £200,000 towards a planned expansion.**
2. **MULTI-DISCIPLINARY EDUCATION: 80,000 delegate visits were achieved in 2006. They included: doctors, nurses, dentists, allied healthcare staff, carers as well as lay public and business delegates, fulfilling the original vision of Trustees.**
3. **FIVE-STAR NATIONAL MEDICAL EDUCATION: with the latest high definition projectors and live-links to Basingstoke operating theatres, the ARK is now at the forefront of audio-visual surgical training in the UK. It has achieved national impact in live-link surgical cancer teaching, knee arthroscopy as well as cardiac catheterisation and emergency care training.**
4. **SELF-SUSTAINABILITY: The ARK Centre is independent and charitably owned and has to generate income and profitable activity to survive and move forward. We are on target to achieve our original aim of generating profits, that will be ploughed back into improving medical care through education.**

ACCOUNTABILITY TO STAKEHOLDERS:

1. **TRUSTEES: Bi-monthly NHMET Board meetings (& monthly ACCL Board meetings).**
2. **(NHMET) ARK APPEALS OFFICE STAFF: Daily meetings with Chairman of Appeals and monthly meetings with NHMET Chairman.**
3. **VOLUNTEERS: Three consecutive ARK Volunteer Fundraising Committees met regularly 1998 – 2003. Later, with the ARK Centre built, a committed smaller volunteer group meets to run events, such as our annual ARK Golf Day.**
4. **FUNDERS / PUBLIC:**
 - e. **Regular Newsletters created by the ARK Appeals Co-ordinator, at low cost. Comprehensive 'ARK Reviews' sent to major donors.**
 - f. **All donations are personally thanked in writing, however small.**
 - g. **Hundreds of Fundraising Events & Public Presentations 1998 ~ 2007.**
 - h. **Many ARK Community Educational and Fundraising Events and Presentations held from 2003 in the ARK Centre.**

- i. **Charity Website regularly updated. Design and management donated by Ardeo.**
- j. **Celebrity Support enlisted: the late Helen Rolasson, Willie Carson OBE, Clare Balding, Dr Hilary Jones, Lynn Faulds-Wood, Lara Logan, Cliff Morgan OBE, Anthea Turner, Kerry McFadden (Katona) and Alan Titchmarsh DL.**
- k. **Media support from local and national newspapers, magazines, radio & TV.**

5. MEDICAL BENEFICIARIES:

- l. **ARK 'In-House' Partners: daily communication by Trustees and ARK Staff.**
- m. **Local Medical Audience: regular circulars to Basingstoke Hospital staff and North Hampshire GPs welcoming suggestions for new training and courses, especially where funding is difficult or administrative support needed.**
- n. **National UK Medical Audience: mail shots of 'NHMET Training' courses to all UK Hospitals. Website updated regularly. Regular consultation by medical Trustees with national medical education experts, audio visual industry and conferencing industry experts to ensure the ARK remains at the forefront.**
- p. **Delegate Feedback Forms: used to judge course and centre performance**

7. COMMUNITY/PUBLIC: Lay Steering' Group established in 2003 for identification of community support groups and public education initiatives for support to use the ARK free. All sponsored users provide written feedback.

8. BUSINESS COMMUNITY: new 'ARK Ambassadors Club' established 2006 by a committee of key local corporate figures, the local M.P. and the Charity. Regular educational and social events held to share knowledge, foster understanding and beneficial support.

INNOVATION:

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY EDUCATION. NHMET Trustees were in the vanguard for this form of medical education and now see their vision fully in action in the ARK.

COMMUNITY USE. The original VAT agreement for the build, prohibited free use of the ARK for 10 years. To comply, the charity therefore resolved to continue fundraising to pay its ACCL subsidiary for the sponsored community use, thereby ensuring they had equal parity with other ARK users.

SUSTAINABILITY:

NHMET established a trading subsidiary ACCL to manage the day-to-day operations of the centre on a profitable basis, enabling it to remain independent and in the longer term to generate profits for the Charity for improved healthcare. Expansion proposals will aim to further enhance profitability.

LEARNING CULTURE:

The NHMET Trustees are constantly looking at new opportunities to develop the impact of the ARK on medical education locally, nationally and internationally.

We have established a 'pump-priming fund' to encourage individuals or groups to develop new ideas when funds are not available, e.g. a Communications Tactics (Deaf Sign Language) Pilot Course for healthcare staff in 2004; nurse-led Dysphasia (Stroke) Support Volunteers Study Days in 2005 and 2006 as well as the expanding number of specialist Emergency Training Seminars held since 2005.

MEASURING ACHIEVEMENT:

Delegates to a medical meeting are asked to provide formal feedback on each lecture/course to ensure that only the best are repeated.

Event organisers are asked to complete an ARK Centre Feedback Form covering hospitality and centre performance. These are then used to improve facilities and service.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT:

THE CHARITY (NHMET)

The three part-time Charity staff have been personally led by the Chairman of Appeals, and supported administratively by Basingstoke Hospital. Their roles have evolved as the Project has developed.

The hard-core team of Fundraising Volunteers is still active and loyal to the Project from their first involvement in 1998 – testimony to the continuing motivation within the team and a reflection of the exceptional leadership shown by the Chairman of Appeals, Mr Rees.

SUSIDIARY COMPANY (ACCL)

Led by Chairman Sandra Fell, the ARK Centre staff have now matured into a highly motivated, professional team committed to five star service and the vision of the charity.

ENTERPRISE:

UNUSUAL EVENTS not billed as fundraising events and intended to be both educational and social, such as: The Annual ARK Lecture & Dinner, 200th ARK Trafalgar Night Anniversary Dinner and ARK Ambassadors Club functions. These have attracted substantial and often unexpected donations primarily through inspiring medical lectures, raising awareness of the work of the Centre.

COST CONTROL The Project has been run on a low administrative budget through:

- donated voluntary expertise e.g. free website redesign and management by Ardeo.
- creating (and often printing) Newsletters, Reviews, Invitations and Programmes in the ARK Appeals Office with minimal professional help and maximum sponsorship.
- sourcing free stationery through 'The Link,' a local corporate recycling organisation.
 - a. agreement that all Volunteers would pay their way at ARK fundraising events.

LEADERSHIP:

This project has been led since inception by the visionary Mr Merv Rees DL Consultant Surgeon & Chairman ARK Appeals. He has been indefatigable in his aspirations for improved medical education across all specialties. A Director of both the NHMET Charity and the subsidiary ACCL he has been involved in the detailed and daily aspects of the project. He has commanded the loyal support of Trustees, Volunteers, lay public, NHS, Institutions and donors alike, achieving a goal beyond the wildest dreams of many. This has all been done in his spare time, alongside his local role as an NHS surgeon and national and international role as a pioneering figure in the fight against liver cancer. Always willing to run the extra mile for patients, colleagues and charity alike, he has been the cement and fuel that has kept the whole ARK Team on target and ensured the Project's success.

From modest beginnings, the ARK Centre is now a beacon of the British medical world and stands as a tribute to the combined vision of the Trustees and key individuals who made it all possible.

The Ark 2007