

Ark Conference & Events



Founders Sandra Fell, Chairman and Merv Rees, Director



The Ark is the South of England's premier conference and events centre with state-of-the-art facilities in a contemporary environment. We are a unique venue – more of a communications hub, with an extremely diverse range of clients and events. These range from defence and security conferences to record album launches; from masterclasses in precision surgical procedures to motivational roadshows; and from small bespoke IT training to large financial breakfast meetings attracting national and international delegates and speakers.

FACTS ABOUT ARK CONFERENCE & EVENTS

- » Innovative communications hub
- » Attended by 50,000+ delegates every year
- » Home to three world-leading cancer research and teaching teams
- » Worldwide customers include VISA, General Motors and medical specialists Arthrex and AO Foundation
- » Based in Basingstoke, Hampshire and established in 2002
- » Built by charitable donations and grants

Contemporary spaces

Our building was designed to be spacious and inspiring. The main atrium is flooded with light from a large glazed roof above the central stairwell, an immediately uplifting experience that also features a statue of the goddess Nike by sculptor Johannes von Stumm. The aesthetics created by the natural light and marble water wall are carried through into a variety of networking and informal meeting spaces. These areas also play host to changing exhibitions of contemporary sculpture and painting. It's a calming atmosphere that we believe supports the learning experience.

Our formal meeting rooms and research offices are distributed across three levels. The meeting rooms are flexible spaces that can be opened up into larger event areas or divided into smaller group sessions. Although used primarily for conferences, these spaces have also lent themselves to fashion shows, private dining and album launches.

Our main theatre is the perfect example of this flexibility, specifically designed for giving presentations from either the stage or a podium. The auditorium itself splits into two with the aid of a sealed partition. A drop-down projection screen lit with a High Definition (HD) projector can then supply separate content to the upper theatre. These changes can often be made between sessions.

Our restaurant, the BlueCafeBar, provides a more relaxed setting; it's open to the public for sit-in or takeaway service and is an oasis of calm where you can meet colleagues or catch up with friends. There's also access to outdoor spaces with a patio and permanent pavilion. The professional kitchen serves freshly-prepared food and beverages throughout the working day, while also providing outstanding catering options for our events.

A modern communications hub

Advancing technology, particularly in mobile devices and tablets, means that almost anywhere can become a meeting space and many venues now try to offer this service but few venues are yet able to offer the built-in communications facilities that will be needed for the future. High speed WiFi coverage is now essential but in addition to that the Ark has also invested in fibre broadband capacity that is vital for streaming larger

“One of only two venues in the country with the specialist AV technology capable of delivering our events”

– Mark Taylor,
Product Manager, Arthrex

amounts of data, IT training courses and video conferencing.

This allows us to deliver complex events such as live video links from hospital operating theatres. The main auditorium can broadcast content to other parts of the building through built in audio and video feed keeping satellite rooms and refreshment areas up to date on key content. The Squire Theatre features a four-person panel desk that is perfect for question and answer sessions, aided by comprehensive audio coverage which includes fixed podium, hand-held and lapel microphones. The main display wall is lit by ceiling-mounted HD projectors, fed with content from the built-in audiovisual control room.

To engage a large audience we offer technical advice on integrating social media channels. Live video and audio recording can be another way to post content and continue interactions after the event.

There is a increasing gap between those clients who are still using older equipment and those able to embrace the latest technology. It's important for us to keep up to date with those innovations, while still supporting earlier software and devices. So, if clients arrive with their own computer, each room has ceiling-mounted projectors and screens with plug-and-play facilities for all devices.

The Squire Theatre



“The Ark in Basingstoke was a great choice for our meeting. It was excellent from start to finish. An outstanding venue with great food, fantastic AV facilities and extremely helpful staff”

– Paul Bradford, CEO,
Southern Communications

» MEDICAL MASTERCLASS

We have hosted many medical masterclasses which have streamed live video from the hospital operating theatre into the main auditorium: an opportunity for hundreds of delegates to be present during complicated surgical procedures.



“We are the largest group in the world for treatment and research on peritoneal disease. Being based in the Ark has provided us with state-of-the-art conference facilities, adaptable office space and – most of all – an accommodating friendly team. The Ark has helped our group to continue to thrive and expand”

– Tom Cecil, Clinical Director,
Peritoneal Malignancy Institute

» RESEARCH TEAMS

- » The Liver Research Team
- » The Pelican Cancer Foundation
- » The Peritoneal Malignancy Institute

Dedicated teams

You need a professional team of enthusiastic people to run a modern venue. We have a small group of 20 full-time employees who deliver excellent customer service at the essence of everything we do.

On-site experience in all our departments is the only way to ensure events run smoothly. Dedicated audio visual support, catering staff and event coordinators can be called upon to make decisions quickly, responding to the changing needs of our clients.

Spotting potential in our employees has allowed us to promote from within the company. Encouraging staff to develop their skills, careers and to build on their experience. Both our current Assistant General Manager and our Operations Manager started working with us in our hospitality department. We think a knowledge of those different departments has led to a multi-skilled workforce.

Customer service is our key selling point. Our staff develop understanding of our clients' businesses and their needs. We review our performance on the day and after the event with every client to make sure we meet their expectations and encourage repeat business.

The future

The Ark has developed a niche role in an extremely competitive environment and excellent customer service has been vital to our success. This is led by our staff, who have confidence in our flexible approach to clients' needs and pride in the inspiring venue we've created.

“We must remain forward-thinking, with a watchful eye on industry trends, but we believe in the strength of our team to respond to the changing needs of our clients and the challenges ahead”

– Sandra Fell, Chairman, Ark Conference & Events