

MAYOR'S BUSINESS CLIMATE CHALLENGE

ARK Coworking



Fast Facts on ARK

Building type: Historic church
Built: Late 1930s; 1960s extension
Size: 306 m²
Typical Occupancy: 25-30
Tenure: Leasehold
Sector: Real Estate
Use: Mixed-use, including commercial office space

ARK – A local coworking space

Based in Islington, ARK offers coworking space for writers, artists, social enterprises, and startups. The business was founded out of an old Victorian apartment building in 2016, but moved in 2022 to a restored church hall in the heart of King's Cross. The Islington Sustainability Network connected ARK to the Business Climate Challenge (BCC), which offered its leaders a pathway to pursue their business's environmental goals as they restored their new building. ARK was excited to participate to identify high-impact energy saving measures and build support for grant funding applications to undertake those improvements.

Sustainability – A core tenet of ARK's business



Before joining the BCC, ARK had taken action on environmentally-friendly business practices. For example, the company collaborated with the Zero Emissions Network to make workspace improvements including LED lightbulbs, radiator reflectors, and draught proofing. ARK also conducted a travel survey and initiated a pool bike system to encourage members to walk and cycle to work. In 2019, ARK became B Corp-Certified, signifying the business had met high standards of environmental performance. ARK had also previously disconnected their gas supply and moved to exclusively using electric energy.

ARK's Business Climate Challenge journey

*"We had done small things in the past like LED light bulbs, but installing solar panels is the first really big thing we've done. We're so proud that we managed to do it with such a tiny organization, and we're so grateful to the BCC."
– Gavin Turnbull, Co-Founder*

ARK found several aspects of the BCC valuable, particularly knowledge sharing, the energy audit and recommendations, and guidance on smart heat sensors and half hourly meters.

ARK's report has already driven action. Guided by the audit and with support from the BCC team, ARK applied for funding through the Islington Community Energy Fund and London Community Energy Fund to install 54 solar panels. The panels will generate 60-70% of ARK's annual energy consumption, and the business will be able to feed back to the grid in the summer. Gavin Turnbull, ARK's co-founder,

said that input from the BCC and the report's specifics on expected carbon and cost savings helped their applications stand out in a very competitive funding cycle. "It wasn't just us saying we needed solar," Turnbull said. "We put everything the [BCC experts] said in that application...explaining that [solar] offered the biggest potential impact, and that it was going to save tons of CO2."

Priority BCC Recommendations

1. Align HVAC and other controls to usage patterns
2. Install sensors for low-occupancy spaces
3. Add secondary glazing to single-glazed windows
4. Insulate roof
5. Install rooftop solar PV array
6. Infuse sustainability into procurement policies

Total Potential Energy Savings: 97%

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What's next for ARK?

- Implementing BCC audit report recommendations to **upgrade windows** and add **secondary glazing**.
- **Reviewing their gas and electricity contract** to potentially shift to a more environmentally-conscious supplier.
- Leveraging the BCC experience and network to **attract environmentally-minded customers to their space**.
- Expanding their footprint by repurposing churches in older buildings with plans to **make energy efficiency improvements to those structures**.

"It's such a win-win that you almost feel guilty. You get to do something for the environment that's really positive and impactful – and we get to save that percentage of our energy." - Gavin Turnbull

Want to learn more?

- Check out information on the **Mayor's Business Climate Challenge** and actions you can take to improve energy efficiency in your workplace: <https://www.io-gen.com/bcc>
 - Find out more about **ARK Coworking**: arkcoworking.com
 - Learn about the work of the **Islington Sustainability Network**: <https://islingtonsustainability.network/>
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Solar panels installed on the roof of ARK's coworking space in King's Cross, London