WHY DO WE NEED AN ARK?

Because you’re here, reading these words, I already know that you are part of the solution, and will understand and even expand the reasons listed below.

• Species loss.

We are losing 150 to 200 species to extinction every single day. Each species lost, is lost FOREVER.

Biodiversity is short for: “Biological diversity.”

Biodiversity is “the variety of all living things, and the systems which connect them.” This includes all the planet’s different plants, animals and micro-organisms, plus the genetic information they contain and the ecosystems of which they are a part.”

The loss of biodiversity is even more threatening than climate change because it is rapidly reducing the ability of the earth to maintain clean air and water and to provide food and habitat for all her creatures – including us. “According to the UN Environment Programme, the Earth is in the midst of a rapid, mass extinction of life. The current rate of extinction is nearly 1,000 times the “natural” or “background” rate and, say many biologists, is greater than anything the world has experienced since the
vanishing of the dinosaurs nearly 65m years ago.” See a link to the extracted article here about the warning from UN Biodiversity chief Ahmed Djoghlaf who says nations risk economic collapse and loss of culture if it does not protect the natural world.

**Humanity has wiped out 60% of mammals, birds, fish and reptiles since 1970.**

**Humans – just 0.01% of all life – have destroyed 83% of wild mammals.**

Since the industrial and agricultural revolutions, we find ourselves in the middle of a growing extinction event. Through and because of our (sometimes well intentioned) scientific advances we have consumed our planets diversity and pushed life to the edges – and now the creatures we share this planet with have nowhere left to go.

All creatures play a vital role in the circle of life. That is, every creature other than us. When a gap appears in that circle or a strand of that web disappears, the system gets weaker and closer to collapse. We rely upon their presence for our clean air and water, healthy foods, and beautiful environments, what’s not so obvious is how many of these species form the basis of the earth’s immune system and indeed our own continued protection from disease and sickness. Each moment of our lives is dependent on this web of life remaining intact.

It is a reality that we must consume life to survive here on earth. For millennia, this was understood, and all life, plant, animal, mineral and beyond, was treated with gratitude, ritual, reverence and respect. We were natural and wild, existing in harmony with the world around us, acting in lifelong service to the earth in return for the life we took. It is our job to ensure the web of life on earth remains intact, if not for any reason other than our own survival.
• Trees for life.

It is estimated that 36 football fields of trees are cut down worldwide every single minute.

Trees are the lungs of the earth and it takes thirty years for the average tree to become a full-blown oxygen machine. They are the habitat for most terrestrial species, they clean our water, protect our soils, shelter us from drying winds and burning sun and they provide us with so many resources and supports in our lives. If you understood that 80% of the documented species in the world can be found in forests, then it’s pretty easy to understand that chopping down native woods puts the main share of the earth’s biodiversity at risk. Dead and dying trees are consistently tidied up and cut away, when deadwood is actually a vital resource for a multitude of species, and therefore a vital resource for the whole system.

Trees are the drivers of the health of the whole planetary ecosystem, but we treat them with no respect and little understanding.

The current commonplace, destructive treatment of hedgerows and our precious few remaining trees in agricultural and urban landscapes is shocking to say the least. There is an attack on nature stemming from a lack of understanding and a scarcity of positive leadership.

EVERY SINGLE TREE COUNTS!

Every tree is an Ark in itself.

• Ancient woodland destruction.

In Ireland, the last remaining scraps of our ancient woods are consistently demolished
to make way for commercial crops of poisoned spruce or to make room for other modern farming practices, such as grass growing. This has left us with a miniscule 0.02% of our native ancient woods intact and all our old growth hedgerow systems are being systemically destroyed or reduced by agricultural practices. This is just a reflection of what is happening worldwide.

These remnants of ancient woods contain the seeds to restore the planet back to health. Without these old, diverse woodlands with relatively intact ecosystems, we are doomed. They are our last hope and there is little or no understanding of this outside of a few frustrated voices.

There is a rising need for safe havens, where nature can develop the mechanisms to digest, counteract and disassemble the toxins we have soaked her with.

**The catastrophic loss of insects.**

You may remember what it was like to drive at night time up until recently? Any trip in a car resulted in a windscreen covered in dead insects that hit the windscreen. At night time, moths would always be part of the view from the front window, as they were attracted to the headlights of the car. If you left a window open in your house at night, your light bulbs would quickly be surrounded with a swirling flock of dancing moths.

**Now there are almost none.**

Do you remember when we were young, if you lifted a rock or a dead piece of wood, it was teeming with insects’ underneath.

**Now there are almost none.**

This might not strike you as important? But what does it mean? The decline in insect populations affects whole terrestrial ecosystems. Birds, amphibians, freshwater fish,
reptiles, bats and so on, they have lost their main food source. Flowers will not be pollinated any more, leading to food shortages for humans and a breakdown in the food chain in general.

The populations of insects all over the world has plunged by 75% in the last 25 years. **Insectageddon** is upon us and we need to support these small but vitally important creatures as they are essential workers in the daily web of life.

Without them, everything falls apart. And without native plants, woodlands, copses and hedgerows these important creatures themselves have no homes and no food.

Native plants and “weeds” support the web of life in more ways than we understand. There are thousands of species of insect that are important pollinators. We often hear about the bees and the butterflies, but we also need to support the beetles, spiders, moths, flies and the wiggly creatures that do not have the ‘cute’ effect, but are very important service providers. Insects can be picky eaters and have not adapted to garden centre sanctioned plants. Instead they need their plant partners, the ones they had for millennia before we came along and decided what was acceptable.

For example, woodlice, tiny armoured insects that seem to freak a lot of people out, are vital for cleaning soil, they chelate heavy metals, they clean up our poisons… see article here.

Let’s return our land and water to its true wild nature and do our part to restore balance in our lives and our world.

**STOP & THINK!** Ask yourself why are you spraying and trying to kill all the early flowers that are a vital source of food for pollinators? Are they really so bad or disruptive to your life that they have to be nuked at first sign? Could you
change your thought processes and at the very least let them do their job before you mow them down and never use counterintuitive chemicals? Better still, let nature take over and make an ARK!

• Soil loss

The UN announced in 2012 that if we continue to farm intensively we will run out of topsoil very soon. A major part of the reason is chemical driven industrial farming and consequent stripping of needed natural and protective vegetation which is most visible as deforestation, but equally destructive on the local scale in the removal of each small copse or hedge-row. In 2012 those same scientists considered that there were only 60 harvests left in the world based on the rate we were losing our soil. This rate of loss has not slowed down since.

Without the nurturing web of plants, insects and microbes, the topsoil is de-stabilised and 75% of it has disappeared over the last 50 years. Bare earth in agricultural practices has been blown away by winds or washed away by the rain into streams and rivers causing massive flooding problems (alongside deforestation) further downstream and the soil finally finds its way washed into the sea where it is lost. Our topsoil losses over the last 50 years are colossal and we are dangerously close to losing the very basis of our food system.

Lose the soil and we all starve. Change is choice.

We need to support reform in agriculture through our food choices and through how we spend our money. Let me note carefully here that these industrial farmers are not the source of the problem, they are just part of a well-established economic system that is the problem. We can change this system from the ground up by not supporting
Growing our own food on our land if possible and supporting local, organic food producers is the key.

• **Broken systems.**

Most of humanity has ignored the consequences of our actions for too long. Our leaders are not leading, they are instead following the money.

Politicians are caught in the middle of multiple tug of wars and they are so busy trying to keep everyone happy that they have lost sight of the fact that we are in a planetary crisis. We live in a crazy system of constant expectations of economic growth in a world with finite resources.

**This ship is sinking and they are all still fighting over what colour the lightbulbs should be.**

But there is hope, these systems can change, but only from the ground up. The direction our world is heading is not controlled by people so much as systems of behaviour that are established and adopted over many years. If we all wake up and fight for our home, for our lives, they will too. Together we can build new systems that lead to different outcomes. Our network of Arks is one such system that will establish a life of its own, with benefits beyond what we can envision today. It is not a centralized system and hence it cannot be controlled, it will spread naturally like the wild thing it is.

**THE TIME IS NOW!**

We need to alleviate the unjustifiable stress on the individual plants and animals and other life forms we share our planet with and we must take direct action to reverse the damage that human greed and ignorance cause. These Ark building actions are within our control and will
move our lives back towards balance and expand our sense of well-being.

If not us, who?

If not now, when?

If not here, where?

Even the tiniest postage stamp patch of land matters!

It’s time to approach life with a new attitude and be inclusive and caring of all our companions.

It’s time to step forward and be the powerful, intelligent, beneficial beings we have the potential to become.

It’s time to build an Ark for them.

For them and for us.