

Woodcraft Folk

cooperation & big ideas since 1925



The Cambridge District of The Woodcraft Folk

Registered charity No. 1148195

Woodcraft Folk is a parent-led cooperative voluntary youth organisation which is a registered educational charity. We are a unique progressive movement for children and young people-both boys and girls - designed to develop self-confidence and participation in society, with the aim of building a world based on equality, peace, social justice and co-operation. We are open to all, a typical cost for a group night is less than £2 but we have a policy of ensuring no child is excluded because their parents can't afford it. Through our activities we try to give our members an understanding of important issues such as the environment, world debt and global conflict-a key focus in recent years being sustainable development.



Woodcraft Folk started in 1925 in south east London. We are called Woodcraft because the word was used by the writer and naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton at the turn of the 20th century. Woodcraft in this context meant the skill of living in the open air, next to nature.

We do not have a set uniform; although our members often wear T-shirts or 'woodie hoodies' designed by our own youth groups. We are open to all. The Cambridge District has several Woodcraft groups split according to age and location:

Woodchips (under 6 years)

Woodchips is where the Woodcraft Folk starts, with our youngest members who are under six. At Woodchips we play games, tell stories, sing songs and make things, and in warmer weather we go camping. We try to choose activities that help our youngest members begin to absorb some of the ethos of the Woodcraft Folk - equality, cooperation, peace and friendship. Because we encourage parents and carers to get involved, rather than using Woodchips as a drop-off playgroup, there are usually more men involved than in traditional playgroup settings. Parents help out on a rota basis and are encouraged along with their children to get involved in planning our activities.



Elfins (6-9 years)

What do 6-9 year olds like doing? Making a lot of noise, being physically active, and having a lot of fun-and that is just what they do on Elfin Group Nights.

A typical Elfin evening consists of some quieter times too, when we listen to each other's news or get involved in craft activities. Through the experience of working co-operatively and problem solving together the young people learn how this can work for them in practice-parachute games don't work if only one person is holding the parachute. Common activities for Elfin groups include cooking, drama, going swimming, singing, country dancing and a wide variety of games.



Pioneers (10 – 12 years)

From the time our members become Pioneers they will address the big issues of our World today, whether through discussion, role play or cooperative games - environmental and sustainability issues, social issues in society, the nature of cooperation and democracy and personal and social responsibility. A typical Pioneer evening is similar to an Elfin one, but somewhat noisier and wilder! We do lots of



outdoor activities which include night walks, orienteering, nature conservancy, overnight bivouacs as well as semi-social events and some political and social discussions along with our games and crafts.

Venturers (13 – 15 years)

We take young people who have grown through the Pioneer groups and also have several members new to Woodcraft. The group at the moment is large and our members are an exciting mix. The Venturers have a hand in organising their weekly programme of activities. Favourites include speakers from other organisations, cooking, an annual trip to London for a Midnight Skate at Alexandra Palace, and collecting money for a charity they have chosen.



District Fellows (DFs)

Our older teenagers and young adults organise their own activities and are known as District Fellows. DFs can take part in the national organisation as well as help out locally with groups for younger children.

DFs arrange and benefit from regular opportunities each year to meet up with other DFs from across the country. This happens at the DF only camp that they organise and run every summer, and at other planned gatherings. An annual general meeting is held by, and for, DFs to plan the next year's events. The DFs also play a crucial role in organising a large camp for Venturers from across the country which takes place every 3 years.



Camping

Camping defines Woodcraft Folk. It is where we can establish a cooperative community, putting into practice our Aims and Principles, and live in harmony with the natural world. Camping is for many members the best part of being a 'woodie'. Each year as a district we organise several camps, which normally include:-

Spring camp for all ages, sometimes with groups from other towns.

Elfin camp, a weekend in early summer.

Pioneer camp, a different weekend in early summer.

Summer camp for all ages, a week in summer.

We also organise weekends at Woodcraft owned outdoor activity centres, such as **Lockerbrook** in Derbyshire and **Darsham** station in Suffolk.



Membership and policies

The national Woodcraft organisation has only a small permanent staff and our activities rely on parent volunteers. Children can come along on a trial basis without any commitment to join the Woodcraft organisation, but it is our policy that all adults attending our main camps should become members. All potential adult members are Disclosure and Barring Service (**DBS**) checked and it is our policy to have at least three, adult members present at all activities. Child safety and child protection are of the utmost importance. We have a local Child Protection Policy based on the national Woodcraft Folk Policy which can be found on our Cambridge website under resources. It clearly explains required child:adult ratios and the need for full adult membership and DBS checking for regular volunteers. In addition we have local policies on activities such as hill walking, or sea swimming which can be viewed on request.



Further information

For further information about our activities, including contact details of Woodcraft groups, <http://www.woodcraft.org.uk/where> and local information please visit our web page at:

<http://www.cambridge-woodcraft.org.uk>

General information is also available on the national webpage at: <http://www.woodcraft.org.uk>