

WOODLARKS Camp Site



Camping Holidays for all Abilities

2023 - 2024

Woodlarks

Charity number 306148

- The great outdoors on a small scale.
- Where disabled and volunteer helpers enjoy camping together.
- Camping with indoor alternatives for the not so hardy.

Woodlarks exists so that anyone, whatever their disability, can have the fun and fellowship of affordable camping in a glorious setting – 12 acres of field and woodland, plus good accessible support buildings with state-of-the-art showers and toilets.

Our facilities include;

- Outdoor heated swimming pool with accessible changing rooms
- Zipwire with special seat, Wheelchair swing, Bird hide, BBQ sites and Woodland trails



Patron Vacancy **President** Vacancy

Trustees Lynne Cooper MBE | Graham Curtis | Dave Gill | David Dawson

Secretary Sarah Lane | **Hon Treasurer** David Gill

Hon Warden Nick Richards | **Group Secretary** Julia Cooley

Management Committee: Angus Berry | Tim Dicker | Philip Drew | Alison Colville-Foley

Sarah Lane | Adam Meyers | Amy Meyers | Trish Nice | Nick Richards

Volunteers: Over 600 a year

Honorary Treasurer's Report

2023 saw Woodlarks Camp Site open for the second summer season since the Covid-19 pandemic. Thankfully, the number of campers and helpers was greater than the tentative return in 2022, a sign that confidence is returning. The concerns of overcrowding in buildings and for fewer persons sleeping in bunkhouse tents, have subsided. This is fantastic news and indicates that life as we knew it appears to be returning to normal after several worrying years.

Camp Fees

In 2021, the Trust made the difficult decision to gradually increase camp fees incrementally over four years (between 2022 and 2025) to a level where they provide for 50% of the cost of running Woodlarks. The 2024 season will see a penultimate increase of fees to £105 per person for a week at Woodlarks, which will hopefully provide the Trust with 46% of our running costs. The 2025 season will see the final increase bring contributions up to 50%. Every camper will need to pay this fee, plus any camp fees charged by the camp(s) they attend. Increases in future years will be determined by the prevailing cost of running the site, affected by such things as utility costs and inflationary costs.

I am sure everyone will agree that a few hundred pounds represents incredible value for a fun-packed, week-long holiday in beautiful surroundings with amazing facilities.

It is important to explain that running costs do NOT include funds for projects or development work undertaken by the Trust (for example, the Swimming Pool refurbishment and the completely rebuilt Cookhouse). Projects such as these are funded through specific donations, grant applications and the occasional legacy.

Camp fees for day visitors, or people camping for fewer nights than the whole week, pay a pro rata fee depending on the number of nights for the whole camp. For example:

Camps On-Site for 8 Days (7 nights) e.g. 1400hrs Saturday to 1200hrs Saturday	
Camping Fees per week	£105.00 per person
Day visitor Fees (overnight stay)	£15 per person per 24 hours
Day Visitor Fees (no overnight stay)	£8.00 per person per day

Camps On-Site for 5 Days (4 nights) e.g. 1400hrs Monday to 1200hrs Friday	
Camping Fees per week	£105.00 per person
Day visitor Fees (overnight stay)	£26.25 per person per 24 hours
Day Visitor Fees (no overnight stay)	£14.00 per person per day

Any questions regarding camp fees, please contact secretary@woodlarks.org.uk or treasurer@woodlarks.org.uk.

In Memoriam

Sadly since the end of last season our President, Patron, and other 'Woodlarkers' have passed away. We cannot mention them all but our thoughts are with their families and friends at this sad time.

In loving memory of President Ken Lockett - May 1936 - November 2023.



My Dad's involvement with Woodlarks camp site spanned over forty years.

My earliest recollection of this was in 1980, when I was sixteen, I carried out some work experience with his building company, Bourne Valley Homes. Dad had me helping out at Woodlarks with some remedial work around the swimming pool. I was tasked with concreting the rear of the diving board, which had become loose.

Dad's company was responsible for many further projects on site, including the old pantry and cooking area. He would have been so pleased to see the new replacement buildings that are just about finished. He was always interested in new ideas, building methods and any new buildings that were erected around the campsite.

Upon retirement, around 2000, he maintained his interest on site, advising and helping with projects and events. Not forgetting the most important and magical event every Christmas time, Santa's Grotto. Santa's shed, in the woods, must have been assembled and then dismantled and put away again, for 10 years at least. Testament to a solid timber frame construction, one of Ken's many specialties. In recent years, I have become more involved on site, along with my son Ben. A few summer evenings with Dad on the log splitter, whilst Ben and I were tasked with the heavy lifting. Dad was so happy spending time with family and friends. He found this time at Woodlarks extra special and rewarding.

Dad would use any excuse to visit woodlarks during his retirement years. Maybe just to keep an eye on new building works, advise on new projects or sometimes just for a cuppa at the 11am bell ring. One thing is for sure, when Dad did turn up, he always brought along biscuits or donuts.

Dad was able to communicate and connect with people of any age and background. He was as happy in a committee meeting as he was with his arm round a U-bend, unblocking a drain.

Everyone he met and everything he did, added a little bit to our lives. He loved people and he will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Alan Lockett

Lady Tindle

Our Patron, Lady Tindle, died peacefully at home in January. She leaves behind a legacy of philanthropy, dedication, and unwavering commitment to the town she called home for more than 40 years.



Warren Crawford (1930-2023)

Warren Crawford, who died on 13 November 2023 aged 93, was a long-time supporter of Woodlarks Camp Site. Married as he was to Alexine, in a sense he 'married into' Woodlarks back in 1959, though they preserved her parents' rule of never introducing Woodlarks business into mealtime conversation! His main career was as a civil engineer in the Army and his practical knowledge, skill and ingenuity served many people over the years. In retirement, though a Lt. Col., he preferred to use plain 'Mr' to simplify life and break down barriers.

Warren was never involved on the 'front line' of Woodlarks, but he was there in the background. He supported and encouraged Alexine in her various roles, would provide a wise, practical, and grounded view of her visionary schemes, and of course welcomed Trustees and Committee members to the house whenever she hosted them prior to AGMs or for meetings, enjoying the social interaction. He would joke that he had 'lost Alexine', which generally meant that she had gone over to the camp site and who knew what time she'd be back. He contributed what he was good at, which included meticulous book-keeping, and latterly managed the Gift Aid processing for the Trust before deciding he was too old, and it was time to hand it over.

For some years, Warren taught elderly people to understand their computers better and he readily turned his hand to mending broken machinery (especially vacuum cleaners). If someone wanted to pay for some service he had rendered, he would refuse but point them to making a gift to the Camp Site instead. He lived a full and varied life, generously contributing his skills and knowledge, but always too content to serve out of the limelight. We value, honour, and hope to emulate his example.

How can I help Woodlarks?

Make a Donation - either One-Off, Monthly or Annual. Should anyone wish to make a donation to our funds, or set up a regular monthly/annual payment via their bank account, please use the Trust's bank account details, as follows:
Account Name: Woodlarks Camp Site Trust **Sort Code:** 30.93.20 **Account No:** 00352288
Reference: Donation from [your name]. Any donations will be very gratefully received and make a huge difference.

Gift Aid Your Donations. If you are a UK Tax Payer, please consider completing a Gift Aid Declaration form, allowing Woodlarks to claim 25% of your donation from HMRC. E.g. this will turn your £10 donation into £12.50. Please contact lynne.cooper@woodlarks.org.uk for a form or any other Gift Aid queries.

REMEMBER Woodlarks in your Will. Woodlarks has been incredibly fortunate to have received generous legacies in the past, which help us to undertake larger projects, or to meet our fundraising-targets for running costs each year. A very kind mention in your Will for any amount, large or small, would be a wonderful gift to the Trust.

In the past six years, we received legacies from the Estates of the following wonderful people: Marjorie Littlejohn, Christian Strover, Susanne Blades, Dorothy Othen, Stacey Chambers, Jeremy John Sims, Jackie Ager, Barrie Hillier, Kathy Curnow, June Buckley, Joyce Wilkins, Mrs E Allen, Betty Charles, Gilbert Brown, and Arthur Peter Osbourne.

This has allowed us to rebuild both the swimming pool and the Cookhouse. They total just over £500,000 ranging from £100 - £200,000: If you would like to speak to someone about remembering Woodlarks in your Will, please email treasurer@woodlarks.org.uk.

Financial Year - October 2022 to September 2023

Total Unrestricted Income:	£334,400
Total Unrestricted Expenditure:	£196,500
Net Gains (losses) on Investments:	£1,820
Net Unrestricted Income:	£139,800
Total Restricted Income:	£78,200
Total Restricted Expenditure:	£26,200
Net increase in Restricted Funds:	£52,000

Unrestricted Income includes all camp fees, legacies and donations made to the General Fund for the day-to-day running of Woodlarks. Restricted Income includes donations and grants made for a specific purpose (e.g. for the Swimming Pool). If there are insufficient funds for the purpose, then funding from elsewhere would be required, e.g. approved unrestricted expenditure or further fundraising to make up the shortfall. Restricted Fund Projects during 2022/23 included the New Swimming Pool and the Pantry/Cookhouse rebuild.

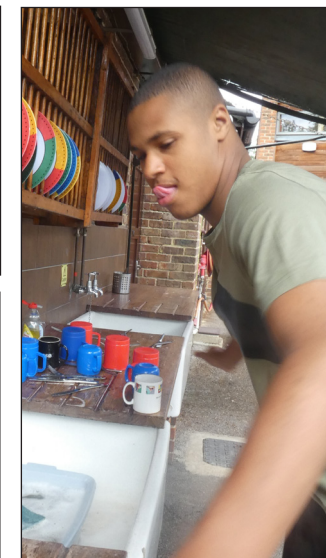
Dave Gill – Trustee (Hon. Treasurer)

Camps 2023

Bensham Manor

A group of Year 10 and Post 16 students from Bensham Manor School have enjoyed their residential trips to Woodlarks Campsite. For many students (and some staff!) it was their first-time camping and they did really well! They also enjoyed swimming in the lovely heated outdoor pool, taking part in a Woodland Treasure Hunt, Bensham Manor Talent Show, and a party in the dark with glo sticks!

A big thank you to our volunteers – Trish and Mick for all their tasty cooking and to William for his lifeguarding duties at the pool.



Linden Lodge

Linden Lodge are delighted to have taken a group of pupils to Woodlarks for a camping trip. Thanks to the dedication and willingness of the staff members who volunteered their time, we were able to take 9 young people on the trip, aged 15 to 19 years old.

The value of residential trips like this is huge and the positive impact on the young people cannot be underestimated. The young people were able to experience a range of activities, gain new skills and self-esteem. The opportunities the young people got through camping and activities include:

- Being more responsible for their independence, developing their confidence away from Home and/or Richley House.
- Making democratic and personal decisions while communicating these effectively. Decisions included choosing activities, how they spend their relaxation time and leading group games and songs.

- Develop life skills and leisure pursuits, including playing games, playing the piano, singing, walking, and reading.
- Experience and learn about different places. Learn camping skills, the impact of the environment including the weather and how this can impact on activities and living conditions. Learn about animals and the habitat of a rural location.
- Develop courage and confidence in new experiences. Taking on responsibility in a range of areas.
- Build vital social skills through working as a team, spending time with peers and making one another happy. Being self-aware of others needs and wishes. Turn-taking in relevant situations and being considerate to others when sharing spaces.
- Develop wider ability to follow and direct instructions.
- Be responsible for personal belongings.
- Develop a sense of personal self-care and hygiene, applying this in a setting out of their usual routine.
- Making choices about what to wear and eat, alongside which activities they would like to do.
- Develop new relationships and communicate with unfamiliar adults and peers. Interact with volunteers and the public appropriately.
- Self-advocate
- Develop the desire to demonstrate appreciation and thanks, while showing awareness of others needs and the value of working together. Show appreciation for the contribution that others make and understand the support given.

- Developed mobility skills in unfamiliar environments.
- New sensory experiences.
- Contribute to everyday chores, such as washing up, sweeping and mopping. Take pride in making the living room clean for themselves and others who use the facility afterwards.
- Develop danger awareness and respond to potential dangers.
- Use a range of new/unfamiliar equipment.
- Build positive memories, self-esteem, and identity.

Both Students and staff had a memorable trip and it was an absolute joy to see the students so happy. Thank you to everyone who supported the pupils on this trip. This includes everyone who dedicated their time and energy to making the trip possible. All the Linden staff who camped and supported the students tirelessly, our parents, the Linden Lodge Trustees for the financial support given and the volunteers at Woodlarks who bought all our food and cooked all our meals. Finally, the biggest thank you to the Woodlarks Camp Site Trust who have created such a wonderful campsite and facilities for our visually impaired students.

Trekkers

Last year Avatar was the theme for Trekkers Camp. There was a Steel Drum Workshop, Bushcraft, Torok making and racing, Archery, Swimming, and a Party Night to name just some of the activities enjoyed. The highlight of the week was going to Farnham Rugby Club where we all had a flight up and over the campsite in a Gazelle Helicopter. – Thanks to many who fundraised the money to facilitate this. A great week was had where friends old and new enjoyed a week of fun and laughter.



Some things never change

I first came to Woodlarks in 1991 when invited to attend the wedding of a friend Gilly. As she and Dale were leaders of Pioneer One camp I came for the week. I was really surprised that many campers had never attended a wedding before. They said when family members had been married, they had been left out as "they would probably feel uncomfortable in the crowded environment."

During my first year the dividers were changed between the sinks and toilets in the old toilet block. Some helpers commented the new panels looked too modern and hospital like for Woodlarks. The campers said how nice and fresh they looked and how they liked having different options available to them. - There are often differing opinions about change, but change is usually brought about by need.

Volunteer helpers come from many different sources.

- Many people first came as a Police Cadet as part of their training, many of those continue to come, two of them are currently Trustees of the Campsite Trust.
- Some came along as members of the scouts or guides, at least one continues to support camp by heading up a working party and serve on the committee.
- Several years ago, an advert was listed on a Metropolitan Police forum which generated 7 or 8 volunteers over different camps, many continue to attend.
- people have come to us via schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award and many more independently or with friends of friends.
- Some companies or organisations still offer support to people volunteering in the form of paid leave. It's worth checking with your employers if they offer support.

But by which ever route new people turn up every year and add to the rich tapestry of Woodlarks Campsite.

Change is often generated by regulations outside of our control such as Care commission or Health and Safety rules but sometimes it's changes in expectation, in self-determination, or even changes in technology. An example is the swimming pool. When I first camped the slide and diving boards at pool side was loved by many. However, rules and times move on and slides and boards at pools are very rare now anywhere. Lifeguards were introduced and the pool needed a fence around it to keep out intruders.

New changing rooms were built and have been lauded by many for the comfort and independence it affords. - The ease of moving people via the ceiling hoists giving safety and comfort via new technologies.

But no matter the year or the rules every year the pool is enjoyed by many.

I was one of the people with reservations when first looking at the plans for what has become the Bradbury Croft building. It seemed far too big and modern. Now I love it for the choices and freedom it affords with its specialised bath and shower rooms with integrated ceiling hoists. I remember the excitement of a young camper when being moved directly from his bed in the Dorm to the Loo and then the Shower while comfortable supported in the sling of the hoist instead of being lifted into and out of his wheelchair several times.

Every year we welcome new campers and helpers, we also have those who love to keep coming back. The improved facilities make this possible for some with more complex needs. - They love Woodlarks and Woodlarks loves them.

Over this last winter, through some appalling weather, a team of three great builders have toiled to demolish and replace the cookhouse. There were many challenges in addition to gales and snow, but the guys, the project manager, and support from others, have kept the build on track. The oven has been put to great use already at Easter with the usual lovely meals and freshly cooked hot cross buns and cinnamon swirls (thank you to all the camp cooks, amazing job).

A big thank you to all involved in any way with keeping Woodlarks functioning. There are many people involved who we never even see during the camping season that are essential to our continued success.

Every day people do things to help us all enjoy Woodlarks, like donating, linking their online shopping to get Woodlarks cashback, sponsored walks and the like. Some provide a presence at local events to publicise Woodlarks. If you want to help protect that future of Woodlarks, please look at the Website for ideas to donate or help out.

Every year we need new helpers / volunteers for camps. Do you know someone that would like to help, a friend, relative or colleague? Look at the website for ideas of different camps that may suit. Good people keep us successful.

Some things never change

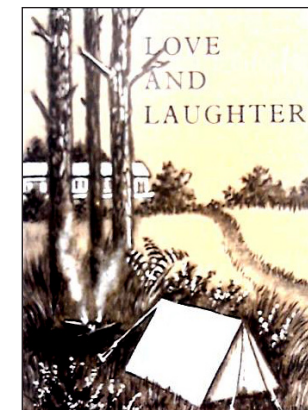
Constantinople became Istanbul, Siam became Thailand, the Spastics Society became Scope, Marathons became Snickers, Bejam became Icelands.

Thanks to Colonel and Mrs Strover back in the 1930s choosing a name that still works we are still Woodlarks Camp Site Trust, and long may that remain.

Several years ago, their daughter Alexine Crawford updated a book about Woodlarks, 'Love and Laughter' written by Dorothea Strover.

When I think of Woodlarks I always think of Love and Laughter.

Some things will never change - Eddy Meyers.



Secretary and Warden update

Hello all, it's yearbook time again and that can only mean one thing- the camping season isn't far away. Before we start getting excited about the summer, we'd like to tell you about what's been going on in the closed season. As usual, the working parties have done us proud in the autumn and spring with lots of work completed. We have planted many hedging trees that were donated by the Woodland Trust through one of their schemes. We have also cleared the area behind the TFT to create a wildflower seeded area. A small group of volunteers worked extremely hard to lift the old dormitory floor which was rotting away. A contractor shall be laying a new floor soon, with more volunteers coming in to put everything back in place in time for the coming season. We are sure it will look very smart when it's finished. The working parties have all got stuck into preparing the site for the summer and have worked hard replacing some of the upright posts that support the Alamo roof. These are only a snippet of what has gone on and we want to say thank you to all of our brilliant volunteers. Without our working parties we couldn't open and would certainly have to pay trades people to do the maintenance which would be a drain on our resources.

Due to the pantry being built, we were unable to run the grotto here at Woodlarks. However, over 200 presents were purchased and delivered to the children who would normally have attended here. Father Christmas and some of his elves were able to deliver their gifts in person. All the schools we visited loved the experience and were so pleased the children got to see Father Christmas. We would like to thank everyone who made this possible either by fund raising, wrapping gifts, and giving up their time, we truly appreciate it as do the schools and hospices we visited.

Nick and Sarah

Fundraising

Throughout 2023 we attended many events to fundraise and promote Woodlarks Camp Site Trust.

Thanks to the many volunteers who have attended these events including Amy and Adam Meyers, members of the Addison family, Nick Richards, Lynne Cooper, Dave Gill

In April, volunteers attended the Farnham Duck Race in Gostrey Meadow. It was a fantastic event where children played Hook-a-duck and adults bought raffle tickets for a chance to win a hamper of goodies.

In June, volunteers attended the Investor show at the QEII in London. Woodlarks were lucky enough to be named the charity connected to the show. We have been a part of the event for many years, and we have built long lasting relationships.

In July, volunteers attended The Bourne Show. We have been going along to the show for many years and its always a lovely family feel event. This year we ran a bottle game (organised by the Drew family) and a teddy tangle. Both games were very popular.

In August, volunteers attended Weyfest.

In November, volunteers attended the Christmas lights turn on in Gostrey Meadow. It was a very muddy event, but it didn't stop the people of Farnham coming out for a wonderful Christmassy fete. We ran a tombola, using all donated prizes collected throughout the year and given to Woodlarks. We also had a Santa pin game, hot chocolate cones and handmade gloves for sale.

In December, volunteers ran a Christmas market stall in Farnham town. It was a great event with music playing and everyone in the festive spirit. They were busy spreading the word about Woodlarks, playing games and selling hot chocolate cones, Callender's and handmade gloves to raise money for the Trust.

In 2023 we asked on social media for any donations of unwanted Christmas presents, gifts, alcohol, chocolates etc, to be used at events throughout the year. We had an astounding number of items gifted to us. A saving to the Trust not spending money on prizes. If you have any unwanted presents, alcohol, gift sets, chocolate/biscuits; please bring them along to site next time you visit.

Amy Meyers managed to get a donation of £6k from her employer, Equiniti, to pay for the new floor in the Old Dorm. The floor had rotted, needing to be replaced. Companies usually have charities they prefer to support, however, don't let that stop you putting Woodlarks forward. You might be surprised once people here about a small charity that doesn't receive any government funding. Any donations to WCST are hugely appreciated.

In 2024 we expect lots of the same events as they are all in a good location to camp. It's important we raise awareness as a lot of people in Farnham have never heard of us before. A huge thank you to everyone who donated, helped, or supported Woodlarks this last year.

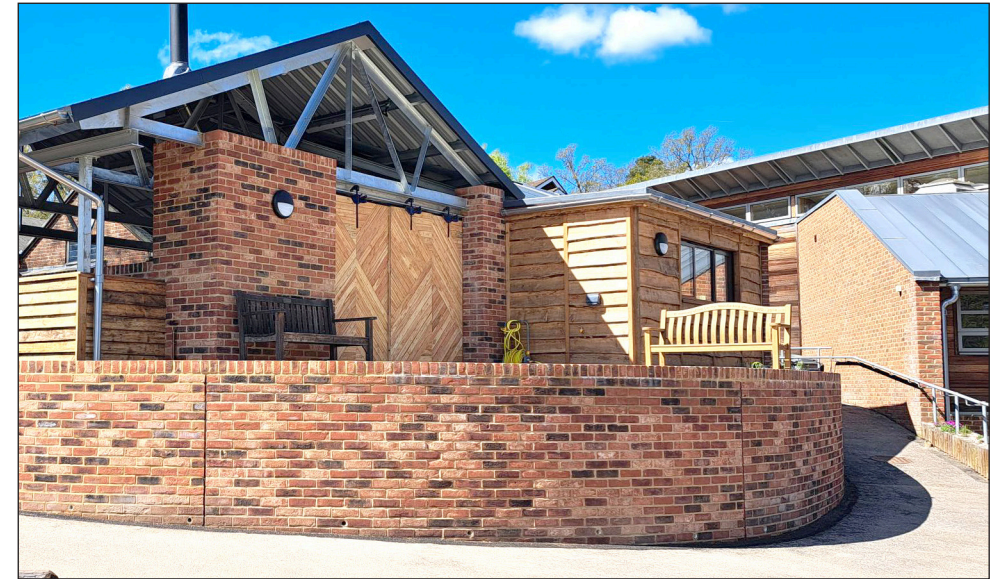
If you want more information about fundraising, please contact:

fundraising@woodlarks.org.uk



Pantry Redevelopment

Woodlarks would like to say a huge thank you to all our fundraisers, sponsors, and grant givers, without whom we would be unable to continue to run.



Camp Dates 2024

The camps listed below welcome disabled campers and volunteer helpers. Genders and ages refer to disabled campers.

Weeks not listed are booked by other organisations with their own campers and helpers. Apply to the relevant addresses for policies and application forms.

25th May - 1st June	Trekkers - for adults over 30 Glenn Cooper, 243 Broadway Lane, Bournemouth BH8 0AE lcooper@talk21.com www.trekkerscamp.org.uk
20th July - 27th July	Seekers - for visually impaired adults. Sean 07710 262069 Isobell 07731 867931 https://seekersvip.wordpress.com
27th July - 3rd August	Adventurers - for boys under 18 Catherine Allen Hamish Newport 07840 330930 adventurerscampwoodlarks@gmail.com
3rd August - 10th August	Explorers - for girls aged 10 - 19 Janet Rae, 33 Farm Lane South, Barton-on-Sea BH25 7BW email@mr-rae.co.uk www.explorerscamp.com
10th August - 17th August	Pioneer Two - for men over 18 Cassandra Simpson and Chloe Scott-Mearns 07789 331725 pioneer.two@gmail.com www.pioneertwo.com
18th August - 23rd August	Pathfinders - for women over 18 Sam Dunn 07401 870474 sam.dunn.pathfinders@gmail.com www.pathfinderscamp.com
24th August - 31st August	Odyssians - for adults under 35 Al Pidgen secretary@odyssians.com www.odyssians.com

For General Enquiries please contact

Hon Secretary, Woodlarks Campsite Trust, Kathleen Marshall House, Tilford Road,
Farnham, Surrey. GU10 3RN.

Tel 01252 716279 secretary@woodlarks.org.uk

www.woodlarks.org.uk