

A FOLK CAMP - WHAT WE DO (and have been doing for over 50 years)

The Camp

Normally our main summer hall camp consists of two consecutive week-long camps in late July / August. During the period of the camp we need exclusive use of the hall. We will also need the hall, although not exclusively, on the day before the camp begins, to carry out the set up. This is supervised by our Equipment Manager. We will arrange with the suppliers of gas cylinders, skip and hired toilets (where required) to collect these as soon as possible after the camp ends. We will leave the hall in a clean, tidy and decent condition and the camping field in good order and litter-free.

The Hall

The hall is the focus of our camp. We cook and eat communally. We use the hall for three meals each day – a simple breakfast, a cold lunch and a cooked dinner. The hall is also used for workshops and the evening entertainment. As a general rule, all the musical instruments on camp are acoustic, not amplified. We do use a PA system within the hall, normally with 3 microphones (one for the caller and two for the band). We do not make excessive noise.

Furniture and Equipment

Wherever possible we use the hall's furniture. If necessary we hire in additional tables and chairs. We may use the hall cooker but we also bring a large cooking range which runs on LPG (Propane). This may be sited in the kitchen or, if too large, will be housed in a separate tented annexe. We have our own cooking pots and utensils, and campers bring their own crockery and cutlery, so we do not use any of the hall's kitchen equipment/crockery. We bring an additional fridge, if necessary. We supply all toilet requirements such as toilet paper, soap, towels, disinfectant, lavatory brushes, etc. In short, we are extremely resourceful and self-sufficient.

Camp Life and Activities

Every morning there is a large 'band workshop' which involves up to half the campers. It lasts about 90 minutes and caters for all skill levels. During the day, there will be smaller workshops covering all kinds of music, dance and song – and sometimes other activities e.g. craft, theatre. In the evening, after dinner, the hall will house children's games, a sing-around and a social dance. Many campers tend to leave the site during the afternoon to go sight-seeing, walking or to visit local attractions or the beach, returning for dinner at about 6 o'clock. We often extend an invitation to local residents to join us for the dance on Thursday evenings. Each Friday night is party night when we have a special meal followed by dancing, interspersed by turns.

The Staff

There are no paid workers, but each weekly camp has four volunteer 'members of staff'. These are Folk Campers themselves, who ensure that the camp runs smoothly and is successful. The Leader is the organiser and facilitator, responsible for the entertainment and workshop programme. His/her function is to make sure that the camp runs harmoniously and that everybody has an enjoyable, stimulating and enriching creative experience. The Musician runs the daily band workshop, leads the band for evening dancing and ensures that all workshops are provided with the musicians they need. The Caterer orders the food, supervises the daily cooks' team and has overall responsibility for the communal catering including food hygiene. The Warden is responsible for the logistics in camp. He/she assigns duties to campers, buys non-food supplies, and looks after the hall, the lavatories and the shower tent. He/she is the camp's Health and Safety Officer. This is an area we take very seriously and we have a printed Health and Safety policy which is subject to frequent and regular review.

Camping Arrangements

The field will be used for camping. Again we ask for exclusive use. The great majority of campers will have tents. There will be a small number of modest caravans and camper vans. Most campers arrive by car and normally park their vehicle by their tent but we can use a field edge parking arrangement where required, particularly during very wet periods.

The Campers

Most campers will be in family groups. All ages from babes-in-arms to senior citizens will normally be present. Every camper will be pre-booked and every camper aged 18 or over must be or become a member of the Folk Camps Society. We never accept bookings on site. In fact, most camps are fully booked early in the year with a waiting list of people hoping for cancellations. Many campers book for both weeks.

The number of campers on each week is normally capped at 100 although for smaller halls we can go as low as 80. An age balancing exercise ensures that each camp has a minimum of 60% adults to guarantee an adequate number to carry out the 'adults-only' duties on the camp (mainly cooking). Everyone, teenagers included, has a duty: cooking, toilet-cleaning, hall-cleaning, table-hygiene, litter, recycling, etc. etc.

Fuel

We will use and pay for electricity from the hall at cost. We use propane gas cylinders (various sizes) for our own cooker and for heating shower water, if necessary.

Water, waste and lavatories

We tap into the hall's cold water supply for campers' personal washing-up and clothes washing and, if the hall has no showers, for our shower tent. We can usually take the supply from a tap but if, with permission, we need to carry out a simple plumbing exercise to access a supply, we will reinstate afterwards. Using poly-piping, we distribute water to 3 or 4 standpipe taps. If necessary, we enhance the hall's toilet provision by hiring in two or three "Tardis" lavatories. We recycle what waste we can – glass and bottles, aluminium and tin cans, newspapers, cardboard boxes. Other kitchen and campers' waste is put into sealed bin bags and deposited in a closed skip which is replaced when full.

Planning

Folk Camps Society is what is known as an "exempted organisation" meaning that we have been recognised by DEFRA as a fit and responsible organisation and awarded an "exemption certificate". Our events are thereby exempted from any requirement to apply for planning consent under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960.

Insurance

We hold all necessary insurances and are happy to provide copies

References

We can supply references from halls we have used previously.

Website

Our website is at <http://www.folkcamps.co.uk/>