

FOLK CAMPS SOCIETY - MARQUEE CAMPS - OUR REQUIREMENTS

ESSENTIAL

Field

- Grassland: pasture, meadow, parkland, sports/recreational area.
- Absolute minimum 3 acres. We prefer 5+.
- Pleasant rural setting.
- Exclusive use.
- Well draining and not susceptible to flooding.
- Flat area approximately 30m x 20m for marquee and kitchen tent.
- Remainder reasonably flat but gentle undulations/slight slopes/different levels acceptable.
- Field surface fairly smooth and suitable for camping, i.e. not too tussocky or very stony or badly poached by animal hooves or heavily ridged from crop growing.
- Grass not too long and no fresh animal manure.
- No obvious hazards for young children, e.g. unfenced ponds / slurry pits; unfenced/unhedged boundary with public road; old farm machinery; electricity pylons or sub-stations. Temporary measures can be taken to mitigate some hazards.
- No crop-spraying in adjacent fields immediately before or during duration of camp.

Access

- Immediate site access road should not be busy ('A' roads and many 'B' roads are normally too busy)
- Good firm entrance to site. Minimum width 3.5m.
- Entrance not likely to become boggy.
- Field must be accessible for suppliers' vehicles: marquee, mobile lavatory and skip contractors, sludge gulper, butcher, baker, milkman etc.

Water

- Provision of reliable drinking water supply with good pressure laid to field edge. We will consider non-mains water providing we can be given satisfactory assurances about quality, continuity of supply and pressure.

Camp dates

- The summer camp normally runs for 4 weeks beginning in late July or early August. We are interested in possible sites for the next two to three years. Camps normally begin on a Saturday.

DESIRABLE (not essential)

Field

- Field and setting as beautiful and peaceful as possible.
- More than 3 acres to allow recreational space for games: rounders, cricket, football etc.
- Field boundaries of hedges and/or trees rather than mere fences.
- Off the beaten track, away from the public gaze.
- No close neighbours.
- No electricity supply or phone cables running over field.
- No public footpaths across or alongside field.
- Nice pub within reasonable walking distance (1 mile).
- Beach/coast within 20-30 minutes' drive (unless clearly an inland site).
- Somewhere reasonably close to house two electric freezers.

WHAT WE DO (and have been doing for nearly 50 years)

The Camp

We will run four consecutive week-long camps (4 x 7 days) on the field. We need two full days beforehand and one full day afterwards to complete the setup and strike. This is supervised by our Equipment Manager. We will organise with the suppliers to collect the gas cylinders, skip and toilets as soon as possible after the camp ends. We will leave the field in good order and completely litter-free.

The Marquee

The marquee is the focus of our camp. We normally hire a 2-pole traditional marquee (60' x 40') with an attached kitchen tent (20' x 20'). Both have a wooden floor. We cook and eat communally. We use the marquee for three meals each day - breakfast, lunch and dinner. The marquee is also used for workshops and the evening entertainment. As a general rule, all the instruments on camp are acoustic. We do have a PA system within the marquee, normally with 3 microphones (one for the caller and two for the band). We do not make any excessive noise.

Camp Life and Activities

Every morning there is a large 'band workshop' which can involve 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 marquee will house children's games, a sing-around and a social dance. Many campers tend to leave the site during the day to go sight-seeing, walking or to the beach and return for dinner at about 6 o'clock. Each week, 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 'members of staff'. These are volunteers, Folk Campers themselves, who ensure that the camp runs smoothly and is successful. The Leader is the organiser and facilitator who oversees all the entertainment and the workshops. His/her function is to make sure that the camp runs harmoniously and that everybody has an enjoyable, stimulating and enriching creative and social 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 marquee, the lavatories and the shower tents. He/she is the camp's Health and Safety Officer. This is a matter we take very seriously and our Health and Safety policy is subject to frequent and regular review.

Camping Arrangements

The field will be used for camping. The vast majority of campers will bring tents. There will be a small number of modest caravans and camper vans, no more than half a dozen of each. Most campers arrive by car and normally park their vehicle next to their tent.

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 by March with a waiting list of people hoping for cancellations. Many campers book for 2 consecutive weeks.

The number of campers on each week is capped at 125. 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, marquee-cleaning, table-scrubbing, litter, recycling, etc. etc.

Fuel

We use LPG (Propane) gas cylinders of various sizes for all our fuel needs on camp. They provide the fuel for cooking, water heating, some refrigeration and electricity generation (marquee lighting and PA system).

Water, showers, waste and lavatories

We only require that the water supply is laid to the field edge. Using poly-piping, we distribute the water to the requisite points. We usually set up 6 taps: one in the kitchen tent, one at an outside sink for food preparation and rinsing pots and pans, one in the communal dish washing area outside the marquee, one beside the 2 hot water boilers in the marquee, one for the hot water boiler which serves the showers and one by the toilets for the toilet cleaners..

We have 2 shower tents on the field each with 2 shower cubicles. These have a dedicated gas-heated boiler. A shower is achieved using a large garden spray unit.

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 as required.

We hire a lavatory trailer with ladies, gents and disabled facilities. The waste goes into 1,000 gallon tanks which are emptied regularly. Sometimes, for the 'grey' (hand-washing) water from the lavatories, we dig a soakaway pit (3m x 2m x 2m deep). For kitchen water waste (mainly dish- and vegetable-washing water) we have another soakaway pit (2m x 2m x 2m). We carry out the digging and back-filling of these pits during the camp setup/strike periods. We therefore need to be made aware of any underground service runs: gas, electricity, water etc.

Planning

There will be no planning issues for the landowner. Folk Camps Society is what is known as an "exempted organisation". This means 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. Furthermore, our camping exemption certificate under the Public Health Act 1936, allows us to mix tents and caravans. We hold equivalent Welsh and Scottish certificates.

Insurance

We hold all necessary insurances and are happy to provide copies.

References

We can supply references from landowners whose land we have used previously.

Website

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