

Extent – Winter 2025

Welcome to the Folk Camps newsletter. This issue has news from Folk Camps and information about this year's holidays.

Find out more about our holidays including prices, staffing, dates, venues and booking at the website: <http://www.folkcamps.co.uk>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/folkcampsholidays>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/folkcampsholidays/>

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Message From the Chair

There is lots of exciting news for you for our 2026 season, here are some highlights – with more details in this newsletter.

In 2025 we introduced a **new event** for “young adults” – the “Knees-Up Weekender” – (the name was from the camp staff, not from Council!) It was well-received by those who attended, and we will repeat it in 2026. We are open to further ideas for new types of Folk Camps, so if you want something, and think others would also attend it, please let us know, by emailing Council via this email address: bookings@folkcamp.co.uk.

For 2026, our **summer camp** will be at Orcop: a village hall in the middle of nowhere (well: in Herefordshire actually – but it is in the countryside, outside the village and with few neighbours). The summer camps staffing is published on the website. We will return to the popular Rolvenden site in a marquee in 2027.

During the recent Council Working Weekend where we plan your holidays, we thought long and hard about the prices for 2026 Folk Camps, taking into account various increases in costs, planned savings, predicted inflation and much more. Our conclusions were that adult early bird prices for long weekends will increase by just £2, short weekends by only £1, and **early bird prices for summer camps will remain unchanged**. However, the full prices for summer camps will increase, so there is even more incentive for you to book and pay in full early. This also helps with our logistics planning for all events: we do need to know how much food to buy in advance for summer camps!

Another item of good news on pricing, is that we are **widening the age band for the young adult rate**. This will now cover those age 18 to 24 (it was previously 18-21). We understand that our young Folk Campers who are newly independent from their parents find camp prices difficult to pay for. There are also opportunities for paying less via the Bursary scheme, or by staffing at a Folk Camp – which we would love more of our young campers to do. There is a mentored training route via apprenticeships, assistants, etc before becoming a full member of staff. If you know of young folk campers (or potential folk campers) that this affects, please tell them – I suspect that some people in that age band may not read something as low-tech as this newsletter!

Yet another pricing improvement for campers: If you book 2 or more summer weeks, then as long as you have already paid for one week at the early rate, then subsequent summer week bookings are also at the early rate, even if you book them later. Though if you leave your bookings too late, you may not get in: our Orcop site has a lower capacity than the marquee last year, so make sure you book early to guarantee your preferred dates.

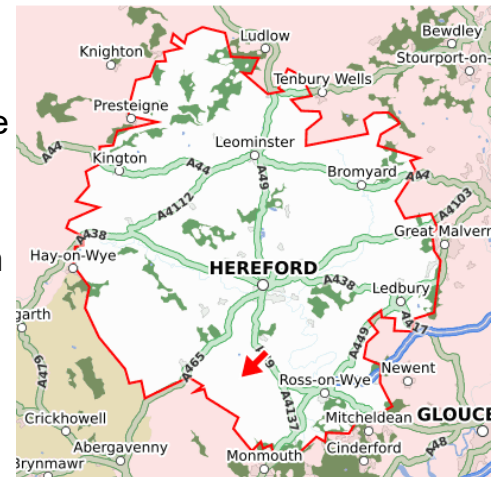
My term on Folk Camps Council is almost at an end: I retire at the AGM in January. After a dozen years on Council in the last 15, I think I have now done my bit! I have been chair for 8 of those years, and vice chair for another 3, so I'll be happy to let others run our fantastic organisation. I have confidence that our holidays will be in safe hands with those on Council going forward. And there is space on Council as I retire – do you want to fill it? Nominations close soon! There is more information on this page on the website: <https://folkcamp.co.uk/council/>

Patrick Self - Folk Camps Chair

Our Summer Site For 2026

We are pleased to reveal that our Summer Camp site for 2026 will be at Orcop Village Hall in the heart of Herefordshire, known as the 'Land of Orchards' for it's delicious local ciders. Just a handful of miles from the Welsh border this is the heart of border morris country with active sides and a vibrant folk scene. Within easy reach are:

- The historical Cathedral City of Hereford with the Mappa Mundi
- Hay-on-Wye, town of bookshops
- Garway hill with a lovely walk to views across Herefordshire and Wales
- The Black Mountains and River Wye are close by with canoeing and kayaking potential
- Monmouth, Abergavenny and Ross-on-Wye are all local historic market towns worth a visit (and with charity shop potential for party night!)



We last camped here 8 years ago and feedback was that the remote site had many of the benefits of a marquee camp in terms of isolation – but with toilets!!!



Jane Wheeler & Oscar Roberts – Landscape photo credit: Steve Porritt

Solar Power Charging in a Field

We all know how frustrating it can be to run out of charge on our phones when camping. After a few days in a field many might have issues with phones and power banks running out. Council have decided to upgrade to new docking stations in 2026 which will help.

However, Solar Power could be a good option for a personal top-up at Folk Camps and festivals. Some campers are already doing this, and I thought I would look into current options to be more environmentally savvy.

There are some very affordable, appealing solar light/ power banks on Amazon for £23-£40. However, BEWARE, when reading through the reviews I see that the power from solar banks when fully charged is great. You can charge multiple devices for about three days. BUT they do not recharge well using solar power, so after a few days you still need to use an electricity supply.



From further research I realise that for your own reliable supply you need a much larger solar panel than on these torches AND a power bank. **Wattage is important!**

- Be careful because the watt-rating of a panel is the “peak under ideal conditions” (bright sun, optimal angle) but the reality in the UK is that you’ll often get significantly less.
- A 10–20W panel in ‘average’ conditions might only deliver **5–10W** - enough to charge *half* a phone battery or trickle-charge a small power bank.
- A 40–60W panel, would be better, even at 50% efficiency loss (clouds, orientation, etc), still giving **20–30W** = several full phone charges or a full power-bank top-up in a day.

Things to Check / Tips for Best Results

- Choose a panel with **USB-A and USB-C output** for flexible options.
- Make sure it gets as **much sun as possible** — angle it properly, keep it away from shade.

- Use a **power bank** in combination(panel → bank → phone) for more reliable supply.
- If you need more device usage (tablets, cameras, etc) consider **larger panels / higher wattage**.

In summary – in UK camping conditions, **40W is the minimum “trustworthy” solar panel wattage** for meaningful, reliable USB/power-bank charging.

For 40W kits you’ll find lots of deals from **£40–£60** and 60W panels from **£50-£100**.

Lots of these options are light, foldable and portable. I am definitely going to invest in one for next year’s Summer camp. You are very welcome to come over to our tent and ask how it is going!

Susie Savage

Your Folk Camps Need You!

Folk Camps is a voluntary organisation that relies on people to give up their time to staff, support and run things...people like you.

At the next AGM there will be the opportunity to run for council. The Folk Camps Council is a group of nine people who meet to arrange sites, staffing, food, marketing and work with our contractors to deliver Folk Camps each year.

If you have something to offer, have some time on your hands or think we could better, why don't you consider running for council?

All you have to do is...

- Be or become a governing member
- Fill in the nomination form
- Get two other governing members to support your nomination

Then you too can get involved in running Folk Camps to continue spreading the joy!

For further details, find the [Folk Camps council page here](#).

Barry Pollard - Vice Chairperson

Protecting Our Campsites: Why Folk Camps Now Use Green Chemical Toilet Fluids

At Folk Camps, we cherish the natural beauty of the countryside and strive to leave no trace behind. As part of our ongoing commitment to environmental responsibility, we've updated our toilet waste policy: only "Green" chemical toilet fluids are now permitted on site.

What Are Green Toilet Fluids?

Green chemical toilet fluids are eco-friendly, formaldehyde-free products designed to break down waste safely without harming the environment. Unlike traditional toilet chemicals, which often contain harsh substances like formaldehyde, green fluids are:

- Biodegradable.
- Safe for septic tanks, cess pits, and klargesters.
- Compatible with waste tank removal systems.

Why This Matters

Many of our campsites rely on delicate septic systems or natural waste treatment processes. Using non-eco toilet chemicals can:

- Disrupt the microbial balance in septic tanks, causing them to fail.
- Pollute local water sources and soil.
- Harm wildlife and plant life around the site.

Even small amounts of harmful chemicals can have long-lasting effects on these systems. That's why switching to green fluids isn't just a preference—it's a necessity.

What You Need to Do

If you bring a toilet (in your caravan, campervan, or tent), then before arriving at camp, please ensure your toilet fluid is:

- Clearly labelled as **eco-friendly** or "**green**".
- **Formaldehyde-free**.
- Suitable for use in septic tanks or klargesters.

If you're unsure, ask your supplier or check the product description. Many reputable camping stores now stock a range of green toilet fluids.

Together, We Make a Difference

By adopting this policy, we're helping protect the land we love and ensuring our campsites remain safe and sustainable for future generations. Thank you for doing your part!

Lorna Flower – Logistics Manager



Folk Camps to Trial USB-Charged Electric Shower Pumps in 2026

We're always looking for ways to improve comfort and sustainability at Folk Camps, and in 2026 we're launching a trial of electric shower pumps—powered by USB charging!

Why the Change?

Our current manual pump showers have served us well, but they're prone to blockages from grass and debris, which can make showering a challenge. The new electric shower pumps are designed to be:

- More reliable
- Easier to use
- Less prone to clogging
- Conveniently rechargeable via USB

This innovation could make a big difference in daily camp life, especially for families and those who appreciate a smoother shower experience.

What to Expect During the Trial

We'll be testing the new electric pumps alongside our traditional manual pump showers, giving campers the chance to try both and share their feedback. Your input will help us decide whether to adopt the new system more widely in future camps.

We Want to Hear From You!

As always, your experience matters. After trying the new showers, please let us know:

- How well they worked
- Whether they improved your camp experience
- Any suggestions for improvement

We're looking forward to seeing how this trial goes in 2026

Susie Savage

Serious Medical Dietary Requirements at Catered Camps

Recently it has become increasingly difficult to cater accurately and safely for those with complex medical dietary needs. We have a duty to ensure that those with such needs are fully informed of the catering situation on camp, so they can make an informed choice about their diet while in attendance.

Folk Camps Society catered summer camps are run by volunteers, and all food is prepared in a single camp kitchen set up to provide basic, communal meals. Although our Caterers are fully trained, they may not be professional chefs. In addition to this, the food is prepared daily by campers who have volunteered to be Cooks of the Day. While they are closely guided by the Caterers, they are essentially cooking to the standards they would use at home, with no required professional training.

Although we will always strive to provide food free from allergens to those who request it, and where a particular allergen is easy to exclude we will always do so, if you have a condition such as coeliac disease you may wish to choose to bring your own safe food with you and prepare it at your tent.

Unfortunately, though every step has been taken to ensure food is safe for everyone, those who may become ill through cross contamination of any common allergen, including nuts, cannot be guaranteed they will be catered for safely at Folk Camps.

Please get in touch with any further questions regarding this.

Melanie Golding

Lend a Tent Scheme

Is there any interest from Folk Campers in lending or borrowing a tent for Summer week camps? Do you have a spare tent that you would be willing to loan or possibly donate to folk camps? Why not try lending (or being lent) a tent!

The idea came from a conversation in Rhayader about people voicing that it was getting harder for them to camp in a field miles from home, for a variety of reasons - transport, location, cost or health issues. There have been occasions in the past when we have had storms and broken tents where a spare tent has been really useful on site and generously offered.

I wondered "Would anyone be willing to leave their 'accommodation' at Summer camps for someone else to use another week, a caravan or a tent, to help fellow camper friends to continue to enjoy Folk Camps?"

Council discussed this at Working Weekend, and it was decided to start with 'tent help' first.

- With the help of donations, some free tents could be made available to campers. The tents need to have all their parts and be in good working order.

To donate please contact Lorna Flower - Logistics Manager, at lornaflower@folkcamp.co.uk

- If anyone wants to leave their tent for someone to use on another week, whilst Folk Camps is unable to organise that or bear any responsibility, we can put people in touch with each other.

To lend or borrow a tent please contact Kerstin - Admin Manager, at bookings@folkcamp.co.uk

- In the future, if there is enough interest, there may be a possibility that glamping yurts could be hired by campers. Feel free to watch this space and any future discussions on the Cold Bogmarsh Facebook page.

Susie Savage

Knees-Up Weekender Recap

The Knees-Up Weekender was envisaged as a new weekend camp to cater to our young adult campers, and the weekend at Little Horwood in July was a great chance to meet up with friends new and old to enjoy a little taster of what Folk Camps has to offer. However, don't just take my word for it, as some snippets from Weekender attendee comments are included below.



“Staff and musicians SMASHED IT!”

“A great weekend, so relaxed.”

“The music and dancing were great fun.”

“I will definitely come back.”

“Was so lovely to see lots of people I have not seen in years, plus returners and new campers.”

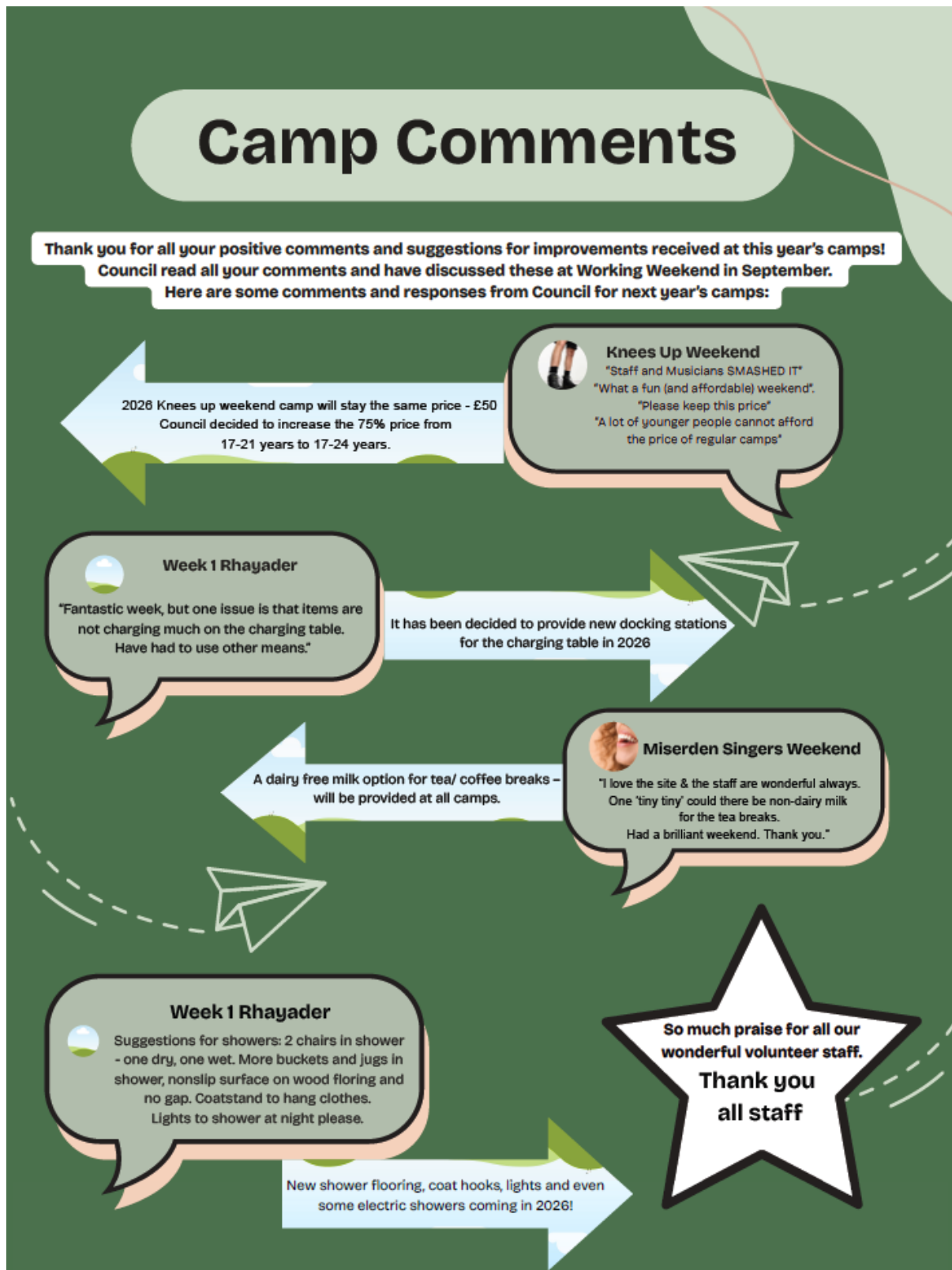


If you'd like to join us next year for a chilled-out camp full of all the music and dancing of Folk Camps (plus wonderful pub pizza!) Feel free to book via the website as soon as bookings open.

Oscar Roberts



Camp Comments



Toilet Twinning

our toilets at Folk Camp could help transform lives around the world!



At Folk Camp, we live simply during our holidays — tents, tunes, shared meals, and the great outdoors. We step away from our usual comforts, and yet there's one thing we're always grateful for: **a toilet**.

When Folk Camps first began back in the 1960s, things were a little more... **basic**. Stories from those early days tell of **holes** dug in the ground, **buckets** emptied by hand, and a level of **rustic** living that many of us today can barely imagine. Sadly, **2.3 billion people** around the world today do not have access to clean and safe toilets.

This **Christmas**, we'd love to share our appreciation for toilets more widely by twinning our Folk Camp toilets through **Toilet Twinning**. For £60, we can help fund a safe, clean toilet in a community where people currently have to go without — where something so ordinary to us can be truly life-changing. By coming together as our wonderful Folk Camps **community**, we can make a difference for a good cause.

Our goal:

To raise £180 to twin our gents, ladies and accessible Folk Camp toilets for our 2026 summer week camps.

Please donate to this worthwhile cause. Spend a penny (or even £1) by scanning the QR code or this website:

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/folk-camps-twin-their-toilets>



Let's raise some festive cheer (and a toilet seat) to celebrate the comforts of plumbing, the joy of giving, and the toilets of Folk Camp.

(Campaign being run by Steph on behalf of Folk Camps Society)



**TOILET
TWINNING**

It's like town twinning
(but with toilets)



Folky Family Ceilidhs: Community ceilidhs run by Folk Camps volunteers.



One thing we find hard to convey through our social media is that warm fuzzy **feeling** we get at Folk Camps. For some of us that's at the morning workshop, others it's singing together at song circle, but for many of us it's taking part in a ceilidh dance. Country dancing, folk dancing, contra dancing, whatever you want to call it - **it makes us feel good.**

Liz & I set out on a mission to try and promote Folk Camps through experiencing that feeling, by running ceilidh events in our local communities.



We had lots of things to consider, but above all we wanted to make sure it was a family event. Of course, similar events already run, but at ours we could share that Folk Camps feeling to our hearts content.

We applied for funding from the **Folk Camps Development Grant** and were delighted to be able to get the ball rolling/accordion squeezing. We pulled in some favours from fellow Folk Campers, to source sound

systems and musicians. After some research and planning, we were advertising our first ceilidh in June 2025. In true unpredictable weather scenarios, all too familiar for us at camp, it was the hottest day of the year so far, in the upstairs of the **Upper Norwood Library Hub**, with no air con. But the band played on, the caller called on, and people had a fun, sweaty time. People danced with their children, partners and families. We had three generations on the dance floor - just what we had hoped for.

So we re-grouped and went again! A bigger, better venue at **Mycenae House**. A sound system and more Folk Camps banners. It was a great success. Liz adapted the dances for children and families, Steph & Richard led the band into endless tunes to keep the dancers going. We had people travel from all over London to attend, and found that most people had heard of the event through word of mouth. Across the two events, **we sold 105 tickets** and were able to donate **£114** to two local schools. Whilst we may not have been headlining the Pyramid stage at Glastonbury 2025, we felt like we had

achieved so much, and left with a sense that that Folk Camps feeling had been shared.

After the event, I put together a comprehensive “how to run a ceilidh” guide, so that this model could be replicated. Have you got a venue in mind? Why not be a part of it? The guide will be available soon, after Folk Camps Council has approved it.

Thanks to Richard, Belinda and Ian for their time and skills to make this happen. And of course to our cheerleaders, Harry, Gary and Emily.

Steph Broodbank and Liz Millward



Obituaries

It is with great sadness that we have learned of the death of four people who were, in their day, regular attendees of Folk Campers.

Derek Appleing ran the Folk Sales shop with his wife Ann and for many years and used to pop into various camps with their shop. They were also regulars at the Halsway Craft Break.

George Hearnden was on Council in the 1980's and his whole family were regular Folk Campers.

Peter Neal also died recently. He had emphysema for many years. Some of you will remember him as the video man, who diligently videoed at every Folk Camp he attended and sent copies out to anyone who wanted one.

Hugh Rippon was one of the original signatories when Folk Camps became a registered charity and company, and led many of the early Folk Camps. He was a very fine caller who inspired so many of us, a wonderful dancer and great teacher.

Sincere condolences to all their family and friends. They will all be sadly missed by their Folk Camps family.