

Minutes of the Folk Camps Council working weekend 24th -26th September 2021

at All Saints Pastoral Centre, London Colney

Agenda

Friday

1. Apologies for absence
2. Camps 2022: Dates and staffing
3. Staffing levels and remuneration

Saturday

4. Approval of the Minutes of all previous Council meetings
5. Matters arising
6. Chair's report and strategy
7. Company secretary's report
8. Finance report
9. Folk Camps Party Band
10. Budgeting and pricing 2022
11. Lockerdown
12. Council closed session
13. Health and Safety report – effects on covid
14. Catering report
15. Outreach

Sunday

16. Marketing and Publicity
17. Bookkeeping and accounting
18. Sites 2022
19. Equipment 2022
20. Equipment management succession
21. IT
22. Development Funds & Bursaries
23. Training
24. Policies
25. AGM and reunion 2021
26. Any other business
27. Next meeting

Present

Marcus de Frettes (Chair)

Patrick Self (Vice Chair)

Anne Guthrie (Company Secretary)

Becks Boram

Mel Horton

Sue Malleon (on Zoom on Friday, Saturday 9.00-12.15, Sunday)

Claire Mycock (in person until Saturday 16.15, present again on Sunday on zoom)

Anthony Keen

Paul Weir (on Zoom on Friday, Saturday 9.15-15.00, Sunday)

Jenny Hopper

Kerstin Jewell (on Zoom)
Graham Clements (Sunday 9.30-14.45)
Steve Porritt (Sunday 9.30-14.45)

Friday 19.45-21.30

1. Apologies

Graham Clements (Friday, Saturday)
Steve Porritt (Friday, Saturday)
Sue Malleson (Saturday 13.00 - 17.45)
Paul Weir (Saturday 15.00 – 17.45)
Claire Mycock (Saturday 16.15 – 17.45)

2. Camps 2022: Dates and staffing

2022 summer programme:

It was decided to have only 4 marquee weeks from 23rd July – 20th August 2022.
The hall week at Welbourn will be from 6th – 13th August 2022.

Discussion on staffing for 2022.

Folk Camps are keen to ensure that we don't lose contact with previous staff and that staffing opportunities should be offered fairly
Discussion about H&S situation re Covid. It was acknowledged that staff can only confirm interest at the moment as we don't know about the situation nearer the time.

Action - PW and PS to share Google spreadsheet with the list of previous/potential staff

Action - PW to write an email to them to find out their thoughts about future staffing

Action - KJ to send out emails to them

Action - JH to arrange a caterers' meeting to take place in the next few weeks and will report back to Council

3. Staffing levels and remuneration

Discussion on numbers of staff levels and staff allowances at camps from 2023 onwards
Council is seeking to carefully manage Folk Camp's Financial position in the light of the pandemic and move back into at least a break even result.
Increasing costs are anticipated over the coming years and it is essential to try to hold down pricing of places as far as possible for all campers.

Giving a free space to a staff member as well as a free week whilst they staff recognises the workload and commitment they are giving to Folk Camps
It is desirable to have the same staffing model for each camp ensuring a great experience for all campers. Over past years, and changing policies, there has been a discrepancy between staff remuneration allowances and it is necessary to create a more consistent and fair system across all camps.
The ongoing need to develop staff for the future is recognised. Apprenticing and Mentoring roles remain a vital factor in developing future staff and it is important to ensure funding available for these roles.

Staff may have a preference to share a role with another qualified staff member. In this case, the staff allowance should remain the same and can be shared between them.

A consistent approach is needed to children of staff. Child places are already significantly discounted for younger dependent children, and we see this as sufficient support for those in need. Older children can take advantage of the full folk camping experience and benefit the same way as all children do at camp.

RESOLUTION: To standardise the staffing levels for summer catered weeks from 2023 season onwards be as follows: 1 leader, 2 musicians, 2 caterers and 1 warden with the exception of the first marquee week and subject to need the first hall week when there will be 2 wardens. Each member of staff receives a free place plus a credit for the value of one full adult place. Children of staff pay the normal discounted rates. If acceptable to FC, roles may be filled by more than the standard numbers but no further free places/credits are to be given. If acceptable to FC a dual role may be filled by a single person.

Proposed by MdF, seconded by CM, agreed unanimously.

Saturday 9.00-12.15

4. Approval of the minutes of all previous Council meetings

Approval of the minutes of 28th June 2020, Working Weekend (3rd, 4th, 11th and 16th October 2020, 22nd November 2020, 27th February 2021, 4th July 2021 was proposed by MdF, seconded by AG.

Minutes of 28th June 2020 approved with 7 voted for and 2 abstained

Working Weekend October 2020 approved with 8 accepted

22nd November 2021, 27th February 2021 approved unanimously

4th July 2021 approved with 7 voted for and 2 abstained

Action – KJ to publish these minutes on the website

5. Matters arising

Most actions have been completed and because time is limited at the working weekend, these will be discussed later.

Action – KJ to check and notify Council members of outstanding actions

6. Chair's report and strategy

The present Folk Camps situation is unsure. Have campers changed their minds about Folkcamps? There is much positive feeling which Lockerdown, Party Band etc have kept alive but has this chain of regularity be broken? In order to give Folkcamps the best chance of a re-launch, Council must go wholeheartedly into doing everything they can to bring everyone back using the financial reserves to encourage the restart. I am very confident in the present Council and therefore I am optimistic for the future of Folk Camps.

Comments:

Many people may have experienced camping for the first time during lockdown and so Folkcamps are perhaps more attractive as a holiday. They could be an enormous market of new campers.

Possibly 80+ are unlikely to return fully so perhaps a discount for those taking offsite accommodation should be considered.

The camps must be safe but especially the approach consistent. This is not the time for new ideas. Use the reserves as necessary including a price freeze.

7. Company secretary's report

The trustees were updated in December 2020. AG replacing JJ as company Secretary and CM appointed as a director.

The accounts for the year ending 31st August 2020 were submitted on 10th June 2021.

8. Finance report

AG and KJ presented a report for the year.

Comments:

If camps were cancelled again next year what would be the worst-case scenario. Approximately £60,000 loss.

As no camps running and improvements have been made to the system the accounts are ready to be passed to the accountants next week. Last submission date of accounts 20-21 to Companies House is 31/05/22

Action – AG and KJ to determine whether there are any conditions or restrictions on the withdrawal of funds from Charibonds and Charifunds investments.

9. Folk Camps Party Band

CM presented a summary for the year.

Discussion followed. (See also below under Outreach).

10. Budgeting and pricing 2022

There was considerable discussion about pricing, deposits and when to open bookings (and how these aspects encourage or discourages campers to book). Also whether the booking process itself will be easier or more time-consuming for admin.

For 2020 the price of an adult place for a summer camp was £308. In spite of inflation Folkcamps want to keep the prices down as low as possible. It was suggested a price under £300 would be good for marketing and that no deposit should be required when making the initial booking.

It was agreed that an adult place would be £295, 18-21 years £221, 12-17 years £148, 5-11 years £74.

The pricing for the weekend self-catered camps is unchanged.

Regarding catered camps, it was agreed to publish the programme as soon as possible (probably the end of October), to open the bookings one week after that date, in November, requiring deposits to be paid at the end of February 2022 and full payments at least two months before the opening date of the camp.

Council agreed camp target size should be 120 but to make exceptions up to 130/135 when appropriate (favourable adult/child ratio) and if needed.

There was illustration of the budgeting spreadsheet, developed by MdF, and how criteria such as inflation, staffing, free staff places etc can affect the final balance.

Action – KJ & PS to implement the price changes

11. Lockerdown

It is planned to have another virtual event in October 2022. Currently 11 events are booked, starting on Friday evening 22nd finishing on Sunday 31st October 2022. There will be music workshops, craft and other interest. It will be published on the website and on Facebook when finalised.

Action – SM to publish the programme on Facebook

Action – PS to publish the programme on the website

Saturday 13.00-17.45

12. Council closed session

13. Health & Safety report

RB presented a report for the year.

There was a considerable discussion about H & S at camps.

Council agreed Folk Camps will take reasonable measures to ensure camps are a safe place. Folk Camps should run as normal as possible along with the Government guidelines.

It was agreed that on arrival campers have to declare (and sign) that they are fully vaccinated, without symptoms or have had a negative lateral flow test result in the last 24 hours. Folk Camps may have to update this guidance nearer the time (depending on the UK Government guidance that is in place at the time) but this or similar is Folk Camps aim.

Current H & S regulations need to be written in the staff manuals. Also each role section needs to be refreshed.

Action – CM to look at H & S

Action – AK and BB to look at the individual's roles (finished by May 2022)

Action – JH to send the caterers checklist and manual to KJ

14. Caterer's report

As Folk Camps have not had any catered camps during 2020 and 2021 the catering group has not met.

After the working weekend they hope to meet to start looking at the revised catering manuals from 2019/20.

15. Outreach

MH presented a report for the year.

The Arts Council bid is being written (but is delayed by personal circumstances).
The funding requested (up to £15,000) will include 10-20% administration.

It was suggested that the activities of Folk Camps members are doing that relates to the mission statement and values.

The Party Band could be included in the first Arts Council bid. Cat McGill is dealing with Jenny Newman on this.

There is £4,300 remaining which the Council had allocated to complete Party Band bookings after the contract was terminated. It was suggested that the most effective use of this is that it should be used, as a priority, for rehearsals and a performance at Towersey in 2022.

Action – MH & MdF to talk with Cat McGill for an update.

Action – then MdF to talk to Jenny Newman about the band's approach to Towersey and the need for an 'outreach' aspect to the Arts Council bid.

Sunday 9.00 – 12.15 and 13.00 – 14.45

16. Marketing and Publicity

SM presented the report for the year.

Discussion about leaflets that have been distributed at Party Band gigs giving extra discounts.

Decision not to distribute any more leaflets, but to honour any that come in.

Any future leaflets must have an expiry date.

Council agreed on just organic marketing until they know camps will run.

Helen Self's article in The Guardian could still be used for marketing.

Action - MdF to contact Jenny Newman to arrange for any remaining such leaflets to be destroyed.

Action - SM to investigate the Guardian article

17. Bookkeeping and accounting

The Quickbooks bookkeeping should be handed over to Kerstin as soon as is possible. MdF has offered to help after leaving Council to make sure the booking system and Quickbooks stay in step and test it.

KJ should start working with Quickbooks ASAP. Folk Camps are willing to spend up to £500 for QB and other training. MdF and PS are both there for support.

As agreed at the AGM, James de Frias will be the accountant for 2020 -2021. MdF has negotiated half price for this year. However, Council will investigate using Sarah Hardy at Lightwater Accountants who come highly recommended.

18. Sites 2022

SP expressed his unhappiness at spending time and money visiting sites only for foreseeable problems arising afterwards and not being suitable.

Discussion on offering more money to Hole Park and New Forest but Council have lost trust with these landowners. Folk Camps need reliable landowners to deal with.

There may be a problem next year with so many weddings needing fields.

Might be worth asking The National Trust or stately homes with parkland, or The Forestry Commission (Paul Tabbush), also Highclere estate via Sharon Day.

Discussion on previously used sites and possibility of returning.

Marquee sites should be planned and definite 2 years ahead so Folk Camps should be looking for sites for 2023 and 2024 as well.

1. **Action** – MdF and PS to visit Gaunts with a number of field options. Then if unsuccessful, next
2. Gower
3. Swanton Moreley
4. Rolverden and New Forrest

Action - MdF to contact Welbourn to make sure everything is ok.

Action – MH and PS to contact National Trust

Action – SM to contact Sharon Day

Site Management

Site finding has moved back to Council possibly with a new group tbd. SP will retain site surveying. Event management will move back to Administration Manager.

19. Equipment 2022

GC is sourcing stainless steel kettles.

Chopping boards, First Aid kits are out of date and need replacing when it is decided camps are going ahead. The water pipes also need changing. New batteries. £1200 to spend to get ready for season. Changing gas bottles may have to be done by certified person.

Action – GC to buy things are needed, at the time

Action – GC to investigate gas changing by qualified person.

20. Equipment Management Succession

Many thanks were expressed to GC.

It might be possible to split the job into 3 parts: Storage, maintenance and setting up.

Storage place needs to have an area beside for cleaning.

SP could be an option for storage. (Weekend stuff??)

Another possibility would be to hire a container and have a washing up team arriving 1 day early. Shower tent is very heavy.

Discussion of buying a field and barn, but problems with insurance and liability.

It would be good to have someone lined up before the summer camps so GC and the new person could set up camp together.

Action – GC to check his job description is correct and covers all aspects of their current roles. Also to assess the number of hours work and at which times of the year.

Action – GC to estimate storage size of equipment.

21. IT

PS presented the report for the year.

Discussion followed about Slack.

Slack shouldn't be used as a library.

Any resolutions on Slack need to be saved in the appropriate meeting's minutes.

Some of Council are not aware of any link to google doc spreadsheet.

Data from private channels on Slack cannot be exported.

Folk camps need more people on the IT-Working Group to take workload off PS.

Action – PS to put together some guidance for Council for using Slack

Action – KJ to save resolutions

Action – PS to share link to google doc spreadsheet

Action – PS to look into sharing data from private channels

22. Development Funds & Bursaries

KJ presented the report for the year.

A discussion about limiting the Development grants each year.

It was decided to keep Bursaries, Apprentices and training courses separate from the Development Fund and to limit the Development Fund grants to £3000 per year.

Discussion about Bursaries and the document which was written by PS and Sally Claydon.

Action – KJ to write to Holly Clamp

Action – MdF to check if the accounting for the Development Fund and Bursaries etc. is correct

Action – KJ to find Bursaries document

Sunday afternoon

23. Training

All staffing caterers need to check if they have to update their food hygiene certificate. If new legislation for H&S comes in, new requirements need to be included.

Action – KJ to check caterers food hygiene certificate's expiry date and notify them if applicable.

Action - RB to find out any new legal requirements that might come in.

24. Policies

H&S policy needs updating.

Action – PS to look at any other documents that need updating and circulate to Council.

Action – KJ (and PS) to add a suggestion that every person who makes a booking reads the FAQ on the website before coming to a camp.

25. AGM and reunion 2021

The venue we had booked for the 2021 AGM is unable to host Folk Camps as the venue only holds 57 under current regulations. It was decided to have it online again for 2021 and to ask Cat McGill to host again on her Zoom account. Regarding Folk Camps accountant, it was decided to put a

resolution to change for next year. There are now 2 vacancies on Council and the Governing Members should be notified.

Action – PW to write and email to members explaining the situation

Action – MH to ask Cat and offer recompense

Action – PS to sort out online election

Action – PS to ask Sean Hayden to be returning officer again

Action – PW to ask Chris Jewell and The Band in the Cupboard to do the evening ceilidh with him

Action – PS to set up process for approval of accounts online

Action – PW to write words to Governing Members to explain Council's resolution to change accountant

Action – PS to put resolution words into election for appointing new accountant

Action – PW to contact Sarah Hardy at Lightwater Accountants

Action – PW & KJ to compose and send out 2nd email to Governing Members as there are now 2 vacancies for Council

26. Any other business

Pending Development Fund Application Nancy Khan

Discussion about what needs changing to allow younger people to be able to apply for a bursary place. Someone should do a 2 minute talk on the bursary scheme at the AGM.

Action – PS to discuss in Development Fund and Bursary Committee

Governing Membership

Discussion about membership expiring date. Decided that a 5 year membership should cover 5 AGM's and expires on 31st August.

Camp capacity at Miserden

It was agreed a camp capacity of 80 people and to run an in-betweener camp for £45 for 3 nights.

Next years Working Weekend 2023

Are we happy to return next year to St Albans?

Action – MH to give feedback to KJ for a decision to be made at the next meeting.

Retirement MdF from Council

MdF thanked Council for the good work they have done together. Thanks were expressed from Council for the huge amount passion and time MdF has put in.

27. Next meeting

Next meeting is **Sunday 21st November 2021, 10 am** on Zoom.