



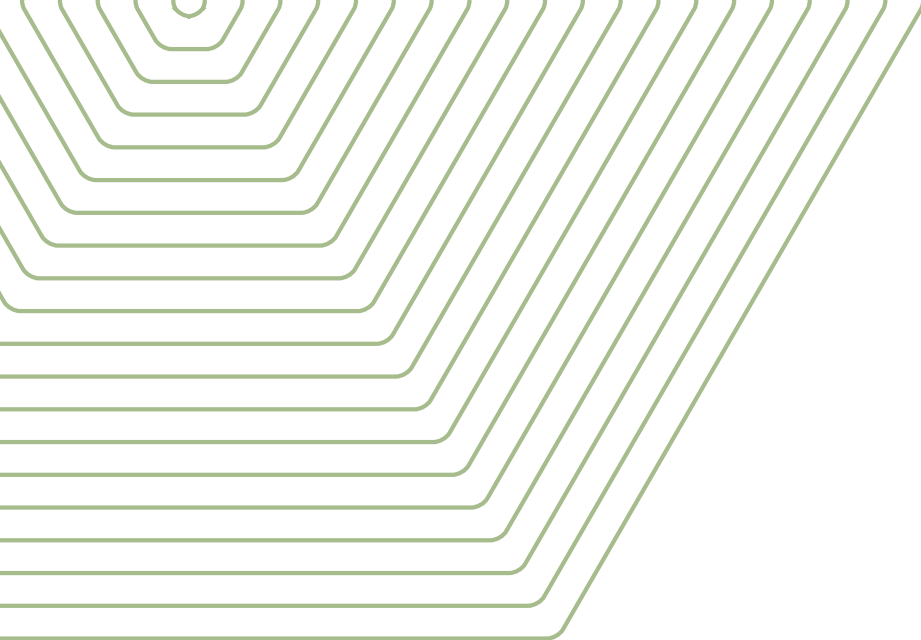
# **Final Report & Evaluation**

VENTURER CAMP 2023

WOODCRAFT FOLK  
JANUARY 2023

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# Background & Introduction

Part I



# 1 | Coordinator's Introduction

TODO

## 2 | Introduction to the Evaluation

This Final Report & Evaluation of Venturer Camp 2023 has been primarily compiled by Thomas Boxall, Venturer Camp 2023 Coordinator (Volunteer), and Millie Burgh, Woodcraft Folk Events Assistant (Staff).

Every effort has been made to ensure that this report is as accurate and representative of all teams as possible. However, there may be times where this was not possible. All data referenced throughout this evaluation is available on request. Please contact the Camp Coordinator should you have any questions or wish to seek clarification on anything.

### 2.1 Methods Used

Opinions and Thoughts from the wider coordination team were gathered through a series of interviews conducted by the Camp Coordinator and Events Assistant.

Feedback from participants was gathered during the event itself through a Workshop run on a village level. Not all villages submitted notes from their workshop, so participant evaluations may not be representative of all participants on site.

All Volunteers involved in the project were invited to complete a Google Forms questionnaire after camp where they could give feedback. As expected with a survey like this, not all volunteers have responded and those who have responded would fall at either end of the spectrum, either having lots of good things to say or lots of bad things. Conversations had with volunteers throughout the event have been included.

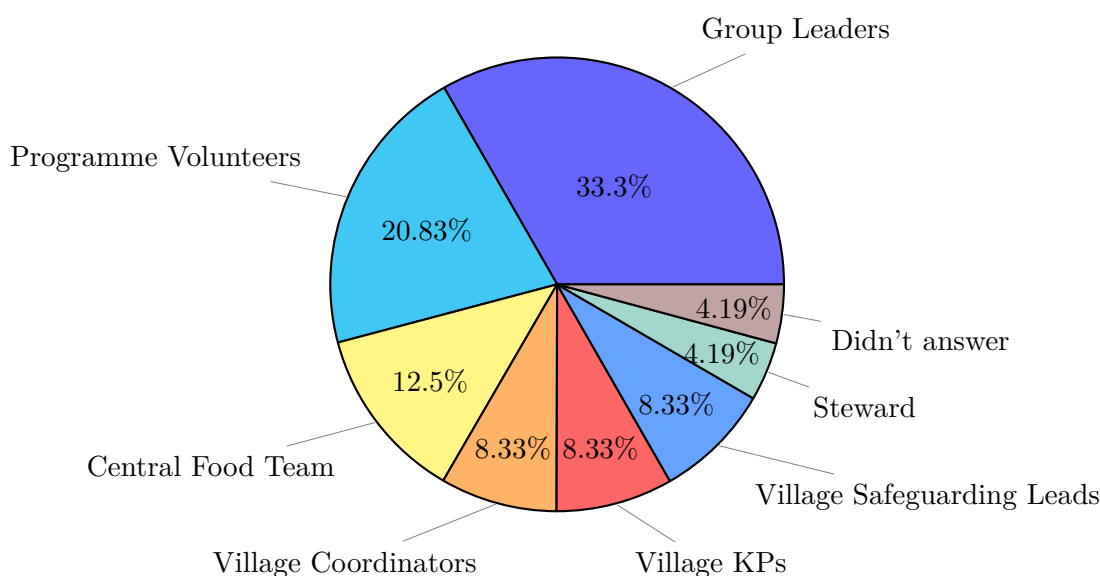


Figure 2.1: Respondents to the Google Form Questionnaire

### 2.2 Why Such A Long Evaluation?

To put it simply, we should be evaluating our projects like this properly. Big camps are such a fundamental part of Woodcraft Folk's operations and with the organisation nearing its 100th birthday,

you'd think we've got pretty good at getting lots of Woodcrafters in a field together having a good time. This is only mostly true, however.

This report aims to cover what we did, how we did it, and why we did it. As well as if it worked, how people found it and what we'd do differently in the future.

In all reality, there's going to be very few people who read the entirety of this document from cover to cover. However, people taking on roles at future large camps should be encouraged to read the sections relevant to them.

## 2.3 Names and Contact Information

Due to this report being made available to the public on the internet, contact information of most people involved in this project has been redacted. The exceptions to this are Woodcraft Folk members of staff and the Camp Coordinator.

To obtain the contact information of anyone mentioned in the report - please contact Thomas Boxall, Camp Coordinator via [thomas@woodcraft.org.uk](mailto:thomas@woodcraft.org.uk)

## 3 | Introduction To The Project

### 3.1 Idea Conceptualisation

Venturer Camp normally happens every 3 years, as a national camp for Venturers (the 13-15 year olds in Woodcraft Folk). 16 year olds are also normally allowed to come as participants if they haven't experienced a Venturer Camp before.

Typically a volunteer team provides infrastructure for the central area, a central menu, some central programme in the form of workshops in the daytime and some evening entertainment, and put groups in 'villages' where they will eat, sleep and do clan. Group leaders bring their young people and organise their village including infrastructure, clans and activities.

For a long time Venturer Camp happened at Drum Hill Scout Campsite in Derbyshire, but in 2019 for the first time we held it at Biblins, Woodcraft Folk's own site in the Wye Valley.

There were two key things we wanted to do differently from past Venturer Camps this time round. Firstly, due to Common Ground being postponed 2 years because of COVID, this camp was to be 4 years after the Venturer Camp before opposed to the usual 3. For this reason, we expanded the participant age range to 17, to ensure as many young people as possible get to experience a Venturer Camp.

Another focus of this camp was volunteer support. Building on Common Ground, where for the first time there was a volunteer wellbeing role on the camp team, we wanted to ensure all volunteers (both central and village volunteers) were well supported on camp. We didn't manage to do as much as we wanted in this respect as we were only able to recruit one person for the volunteer support team who could support ahead of camp and on site, but the majority of the central team were able to get a day off with planning and support, which definitely hasn't been the norm in the past.

### 3.2 Planning Timeline

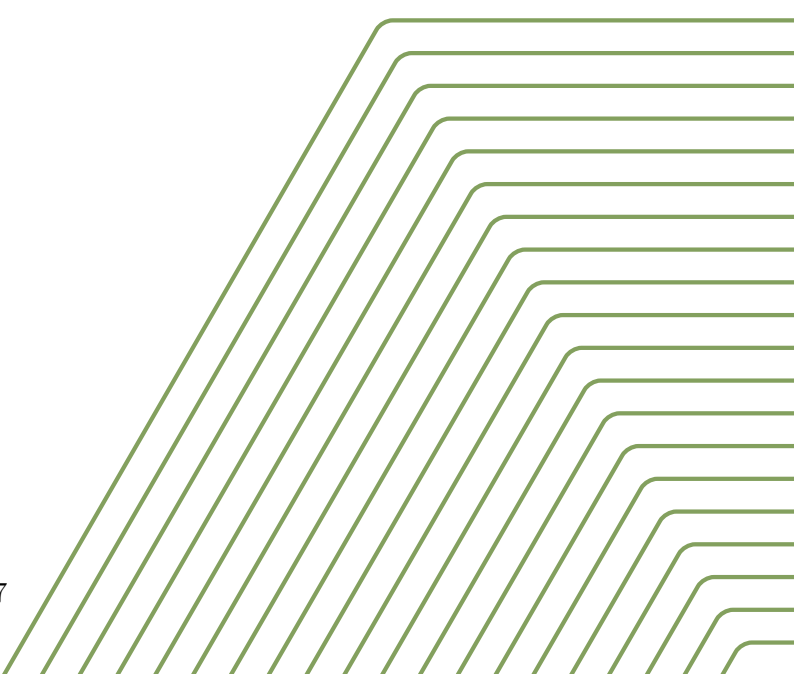
The decision was made in summer 2022 to hold a Venturer Camp the following August (we go into more detail why in the 'What Dates' section). Because of this we only had a year to plan the camp when preparation usually starts around 2 years in advance. While most things don't happen until the final year, this extra year is pretty key when it comes to recruiting volunteers, building trust and care among the team and getting started with some key decisions and actions. Much of what could have been improved this camp came down to not having enough volunteers or volunteers not feeling confident/part of a team, which may not have been fully rectified by having an extra year but this almost certainly would have helped.

We have shown a Venturer Camp can be planned in a year, but not without either having a full team from early on or seriously overworking some members of the team. Therefore we would recommend always beginning plans 2 years in advance where possible.



# Event Decisions

Part II





## 4 | Finding A Suitable Site

For Venturer Camp 2023, the decision of what site to use was perhaps easier than in previous years. The accelerated timeline for the project meant that we would have had great difficulty finding a suitable site for Venturer Camp (thinking about infrastructure requirements on the site, transport links to the site, location in the country, etc).

Ultimately, we used Biblins Youth Campsite, which is owned by Forestry England and leased to Woodcraft Folk. Using a site which is managed by Woodcraft Folk, gives us greater flexibility and a level of quality assurance which would be unknown for other sites which we haven't worked with before.

From the feedback about the previous Venturer Camp's choice of site, also held at Biblins in 2019, you wouldn't have thought that we would use the site again. A large proportion of the campers commented that they were a very long distance from their village to the central area. These complaints were mostly from those camping on pitch 1 where they had to walk to Pitch 6 and 7 for the central programme. Since 2019, Biblins has undergone renovation works to relocate Camp Koodoo (its permanent camp) from Pitch 5 to adjacent to Pitch 1a. This resulted in us being able to centralise our central area onto pitches 4 and 5. We received little-to-no complaints about walking distance from villages to the central area, other than from those volunteers who would be in the central area up until meal times who would have to return to their village, collect food and then get straight back to the central area to finish programme delivery. This issue was quickly rectified, however, by the volunteers getting food delivered from their village to the central area.

For many months, the Coordination team had very little contact with the Biblins Staff Team; however, as camp approached, we had more contact with the team to gain information about the workings of the site, infrastructure on site and get copies of their policies and procedures which we would potentially need to implement while on site.

During the event itself, the Coordinator and Project Staff Team worked closely with the Biblins Staff Team, which enabled clear communication about issues and matters which arose on site such as The Spill, access to the Bunkhouse Basement Storage and Adventurous activities, including a major change of plans to the Canoeing.

Having direct contact with the Biblins Staff Team proved invaluable and made the event considerably easier to organise.

## 5 | Deciding on Dates

### 5.1 2023 v 2024

As part of the project kick off, dates for the event had to be decided. However, before we could decide exactly which dates to host the camp on, we had to decide on a year first. This was a complex debate, with many people weighing in on the decision, ranging from Trustees to venturer group leaders to venturers themselves.

The ultimate decision was made that the camp should be hosted in 2023. We came to this decision based on the preference of Venturer Leaders and Venturers themselves to host the camp in 2023. This data was captured through a survey which ran for a few weeks in September 2022, the results of which can be seen in Table 5.1

	2023	No Preference	2024
Leaders	56%	11%	33%
Venturers	67%	11%	22%

Table 5.1: Results of Year Survey

The survey also provided space where the respondents could share any thoughts, feelings, or suggestions. The responses to this varied were varied, some of the responses are shown below:

- “I think another national camp would not be supported. We need to have district summer camps to get young people back into camping. We struggled like lots of districts getting pioneers to common ground without a summer camp next year we will struggle to get children back into summer camps after the disruption of covid”
- “Some venturers want a ‘proper camp before they are too old.’ Adults want a break in 2024 before 100 camp”
- “It would be good to have a date to be able to add to the calendar and to try and not book family holidays at the same time.”
- “Personally, I think sooner is best as delaying by another year will inevitably mean some venturers won’t get the chance to go. The venturers were mixed in responses, with a small majority favouring 2023 but others saying either or 2024. If it is next summer, please avoid clashing with the international camp in Finland (24-31 July 2023). Also, a question from our venturers is whether DFs who missed their chance to go to VCamp because of covid would be able to attend? Thanks”
- “I have a venturer and a DF happy to help”

At the time of making the decision, we did not have a fully fleshed out team. There were significant gaps of knowledge and experience in the following teams:

- Food
- Site Services & Production
- Programme
- Communications

- Access & Inclusion
- Event Administration (however we expected this role to be done by the Woodcraft Folk Events Assistant, so weren't worried about recruitment)

The lack of some of these teams presented a challenge for project initiation as once we had decided on 2023, they couldn't influence it and as such this deterred people from joining the team.

A volunteer close to the coordinator who supported him a lot said "it's very dangerous when we organise the camp in a very short timeframe with a big dependence on one individual as it puts them in a vulnerable position and goes against our aims and principles. Empowering people to take on roles they've not done before is good but they need support in place. We need to ask questions about how they are supported." It was these questions around support networks which were answered when they were asked; when the coordinator was struggling, not pre-emptively. Pulling off a Venturer Camp in such a short amount of time, with such a limited capacity team. was not an easy thing to do (yes we did have a large number of people on it but many were limited in their capacity to be involved due to other commitments). Woodcraft Folk put too much pressure on the Camp Coordinator who was also juggling many other things, see introduction, which should never happen again.

## 5.2 Which Dates In 2023

The decision of what dates we wanted to host the camp on came down to four things:

1. The dates which Biblins was available
2. Festivals & other attractive-to-young-people summer events
3. School Term Dates (taking into account the early return of Scottish Schools)
4. Finnish International Camp Dates

At first, we chose the dates Monday 7 August to Monday 15 August. These dates were put to the Co-ordination team who decided that we would rather start and end on a weekend to reduce the amount of annual leave adult volunteers would have to take.

After some deliberation, we decided on Saturday 5 August to Saturday 12 August. These dates didn't clash with any major festivals, were early enough that Scottish Young People would have a few days between camp finishing and their term dates starting, there were a few days between the Finland International Camp finishing and Venturer Camp starting, however the whole of the campsite was not available for all of these dates. There was a group booked onto pitch 1a for the night of Saturday 5 August. The decision was made that we wouldn't need that part of the site for the first night and so could press on with publishing the dates and working out the rest of the timeline.

## 5.3 Group on Pitch 1a

We took a gamble with the group on pitch 1a being a nice group who wouldn't mind 450 people descending onto the site. For the most part, the gamble paid off - the group were lovely and were interested in what we were doing. However, at first they weren't keen on the numbers of people who were camping to the West side of The Spill. We gave them a wide berth after they indicated this and had no further complaints or comments from them.

## 6 | Booking Timelines

Once we had decided on dates for the camp, we could begin to work backwards designing timelines to suit. We settled on the public timeline shown in Table 6.1

Date	Event
27 January 2023	Bookings Open
12 April 2023	Early Bird Booking Deadline
26 May 2023	Final Booking Deadline

Table 6.1: Public Booking Timeline

As we were designing the booking timeline, we made the decision to not close bookings. We believed that if we were to fully close bookings then we would be at risk of people turning up to camp who hadn't booked and would want to book on the door, or worse - they wouldn't tell the camp coordination team they had arrived which would complicate number based operations, such as food distribution or village size. We made a conscious decision to brand the 26 May 2023 deadline as the "Final Booking Deadline" in hope that we would deter people from booking late, and for the most part, we did.

We also had a second timeline, this was created and was published in the Payment Policy for Individuals and Groups, however it wasn't pushed onto people so they may not have known the late bookings were an option. One group reported that they treated the Early Bird Booking Deadline as their internal final deadline and another reported that they would accept bookings right up to the camp starting as long as the young person paid what they owed.

Date	Event
27 January 2023	Bookings Open
12 April 2023	Early Bird Booking Deadline
26 May 2023	Final Booking Deadline
10 June 2023	Booking Content Deadline Refund Request Deadline (ad-hoc)
22 July 2023	Late Booking Deadline
12 August 2023	Very Late & On-The-Door Booking Deadline

Table 6.2: Internal Booking Timeline

The refund deadline was added in an ad-hoc manner. This was due to the number of people wanting refunds for individuals coming up to the final booking deadline. The refund deadline was written into the payment policy and a second version was published on 24 May 2023.

Ultimately, not closing bookings proved valuable as a number of additional volunteers were recruited at DF camp to come and support the MEST-UP provision. These people paid the highest amount to come, the very late booking price, which supported us to hit our booking income target.

## 7 | Who Do We Want To Come, Who Came?

### 7.1 Expanded Age Ranges

Venturer Camps are traditionally held every three years. This cycle was disrupted by holding Common Ground International Camp in 2022, which was displaced from 2020 due to the Covid Pandemic. Not being able to hold a Venturer Camp in 2022, meant that there is one year's worth of Venturers who would have missed out on their Venturer Camp experience. For this reason, we decided to expand the age ranges of Venturer Camp 2023. The decision was made to include 16 and 17 year olds as Venturers. This would mean a small number of people who attended the 2019 camp as a participant would also be able to attend the 2023 camp as a participant.

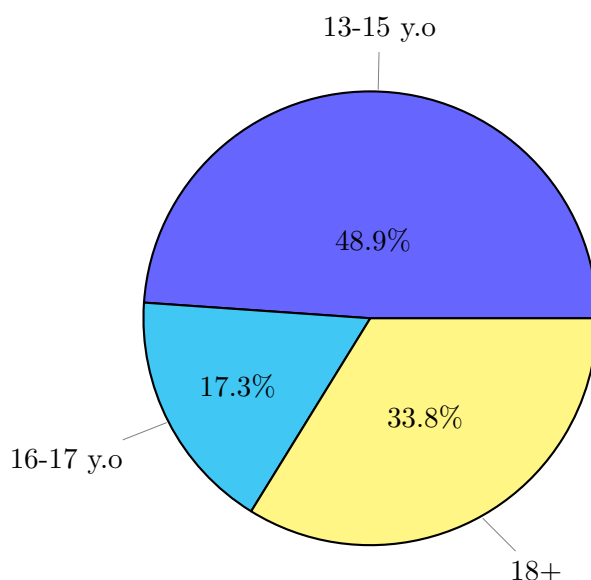


Figure 7.1: Booked attendees by age

By expanding the age ranges, we enabled more young people to participate in Venturer Camp 2023. We also enabled those 16 and 17 year olds who may never have experienced Woodcraft Folk outside their district or Common Ground, which was very structured, to have a looser structured Woodcraft Folk experience. The hope was that this would support them to transition to DFs, enabling them to grow their movement (the pandemic resulted in many DFs falling out of the movement). Figure 7.1 shows how some DFs were able to take on Volunteering roles as under-18 volunteers.

### 7.2 International Delegations

In Autumn 2022 we were also hoping that we would be able to support a number of international delegations to attend. We discussed a number of models through which we could facilitate this with a very small coordination team. The majority favoured being that a group or district would be responsible for all aspects of supporting an international delegation.

In Spring 2023, the general enquiries inbox was contacted about the possibility of hosting a group from an English Language school situated in Spain. However, due to the Woodcraft knowledge barrier and

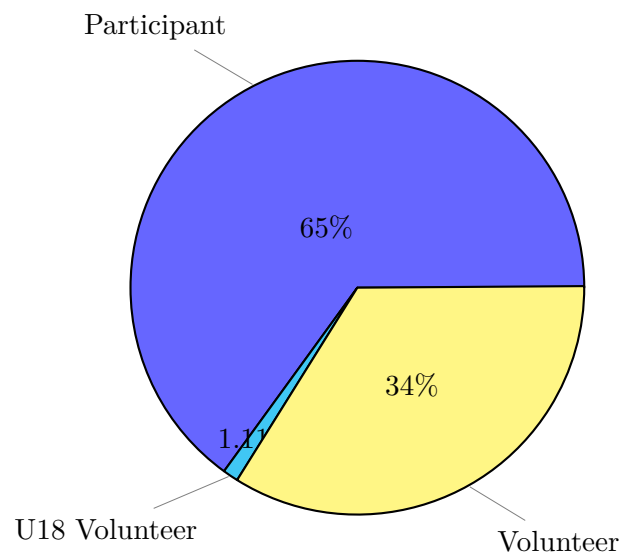


Figure 7.2: Distribution of Attendees

the implied expectation that we (the central coordination team) would be responsible for supporting this group to attend, the decision was made to decline this request. At this time, the coordination team was stretched very thinly, with many people taking on more than what they'd expected to be doing in the run up to the event.

We were, unfortunately, unable to host any international delegations at Venturer Camp 2023.

### 7.3 Centrally Organised Equipment

During the conceptualisation of Venturer Camp 2023, we decided that to reduce burdens on Villages - we would centrally organise the equipment which was being assigned to Villages. This concept, what worked well and what didn't work about it will be explored in the Site Services & Production Team's section - there are very mixed views about this!

## 8 | Pricing

After developing the booking timeline and deciding about the expanded age ranges, we were able to decide on pricing for the camp.

Woodcraft Folk is committed to working to reduce barriers towards Volunteering. One such barrier, Venturer Camp presented a perfect test ground for - is the financial commitment to come to a camp. This resulted in us having the following pricing structure.

Before	Age Bracket	Whole Camp	1 night
26 May 2023	Under 18	£150	£21.50
	18 and over	£50	£7.50
22 July 2023	Under 18	£225	£32.25
	18 and over	£75	£11.25
12 August 2023	Under 18	£300	£43
	18 and over	£100	£15

Table 8.1: Pricing Structure based on 1-person figures

We made the decision that all those attending the camp who are aged 18 and over would be attending as a volunteer, and as such we would recognise their contribution by charging them a third of the participant cost.

### 8.1 Under-18 Volunteer Priced Places

Due to the enlarged age ranges for Venturer Camp 2023, we also wanted to ensure those who could technically come as participants had the opportunity to volunteer without paying the (higher) participant price.

This desire led to the creation of the Under 18 Volunteer Price Scheme whereby a young person aged 16 or 17 could apply for a volunteer priced place if they were at the camp primarily as a volunteer. The scheme required a few things of the young person before the price reduction could be allocated:

1. have begun the process of obtaining a Enhanced DBS (or membership of the PVG scheme if based in Scotland);
2. be registered as a member of Woodcraft Folk and have paid their membership fee;
3. have submitted references (this will normally have been done as part of becoming a member of Woodcraft Folk); and
4. have spoken to the relevant team leader about the role and a volunteer role description has been produced (this should be included with the application).

This scheme was widely publicised, and despite this - we only had approximately 5 people take part in it. The roles they took on ranged from stewarding to centre coordinator to cafe & special diets kitchen assistant.

There were a number of young people who had paid the participant price who attended to volunteer. These young people coordinated a centre as a group. They made the decision to pay the participant price as they also engaged in some other programme. For future events, it might be worth having an intermediary pricing point for those young people who are volunteering some of the time and also participating at other times.



## 9 | International Volunteers

After Brexit, organisations in the UK are no longer eligible to participate in the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) programme run by the European Commission. Common Ground (2022 International Camp) was supported by a 15-strong team of ESC volunteers and as such, it was hoped that Venturer Camp 2023 would also be able to be supported by a number of international volunteers as those at Common Ground proved extremely valuable to the team.

Woodcraft Folk worked with a UK-based charity called Concordia to manage the recruitment of volunteers. A further evaluation of how this worked, what went well and what didn't work can be found in the Concordia chapter.

## 10 | Venturer Committee's Involvement

At the time of project kick-off for this event - there was no functioning Venturer Committee. This was due to the pandemic and the fact that all the current members had 'aged-out'. This led to there being very little involvement in the planning process from Venturer aged people. It was an unfortunate loss to not have young people's voices on the planning committee. We had hoped to overcome this shortfall with a scheme called the *Village People*

In September 2022, a meeting was held between key individuals where it was discussed about using Venturer Camp as a chance to re-form Venturer Committee. Due to a combination of factors, including lack of capacity in progressing with re-forming Venturer Committee, nothing happened with this until camp itself started.

On Camp, an individual planned and held Venturer Committee elections with the support of previous Facilitators. The elections held at the event were a great success and all roles on Venturer Committee were able to be filled. This individual also held other roles of responsibility on camp, and as such they had a very busy time. For future events, it would be recommended that an individual with no other commitments takes on the Venturer Committee Elections Facilitation role.

### 10.1 Village People


The Village People was a scheme designed to introduce the voice of the participants and the people who knew the participants the best into the planning of Venturer Camp 2023. In Autumn 2022, we invited all Venturer Leaders to apply to join the group. We then selected a representative sample, ensuring all types & sizes of groups were represented.

The scheme unfortunately died out quite quickly due to extremely low response rates to opinion-gathering forms which went out. It would be lovely to see a scheme like this work at a future large Woodcraft Camp.



# Event Administrations & Communications

Part III



# 11 | Bookings

## 11.1 Booking System

After discussions between the Camp Coordinator and Woodcraft Folk Chief Executive where different booking system options were reviewed, it was agreed to use Ralph Sleigh's custom system which had been first used at Venturer Camp 2019, then Common Ground 2022. Ralph and the Camp Coordinator had initial conversations about what features the booking system would require as Ralph had started re-writing the booking system to use different, more cost effective, technology.

During Autumn 2022, the Food and Special Diets teams were consulted about what data they wished to collect from those booking in. As the focus on special diets was new to Woodcraft Camps, a larger amount of data was captured about each individual booked on. Through using the custom booking system, the implementation of this was exactly as we wished, while using an off-the-shelf system we may not have been able to collect and view this data in the same way.

During January 2023, the booking system was tested with the core team. These tests enabled the workflow of approving bookings, the mechanics of booking and ensuring that the wording used in the system was clear. Also during this period, the Booking Handbook was written.

The decision was made to require "applications to book" before enabling people to book. This decision was made mostly by the fact that Common Ground used this feature. In reflection, it was the right decision to use as it enabled us to ensure people booked in a way that was convenient to us. Rather than individuals booking, we had larger groups booking and we had the say to stop individuals if needed where there was already a group booking for their group. This also enabled us to ensure there were no bookings from people unknown to Woodcraft, but we either received no or very few requests of this nature.

Throughout the use of the booking system, a number of bugs and issues arose with it. Ralph responded quickly to all of these, deploying a fix usually within 12 hours of the issue being reported. Ralph was also able to implement features which improved the usability of the system, for example, messaging manager messages to the Coordination Team Discord server which prevented the need to use the emails the system also sent.

Overall, the use of a booking system which was developed "In house" gave us greater flexibility, greater options and overall a much easier experience than that of an off the shelf system.

The booking system allowed users to be able to be assigned backend access to view some or all of the data entered by users. To ensure volunteers who were being given this access had some basic understanding of GDPR, a Data Protection Declaration was created which all backend users of the booking system were expected to sign before being granted access. This worked and while Woodcraft Folk is not providing basic GDPR training for its volunteers, is something which should be repeated for future events. The transcript of the declaration can be found in the Appendix.

One thing that wasn't so great about Ralph's system is that it couldn't automatically match up who has/doesn't have membership. Or at least we thought it couldn't. When we discussed this at one point Ralph said there was something he could try to rectify this, so that's definitely worth exploring for future camps.

## 11.2 Bookings Administration

After the bookings opened - Thomas and Millie processed most of the administration around bookings. This involved things such as: managing applications to book, reviewing bookings to locate any access needs.

Before bookings opened - there were conversations around how we want people to book. The decision was taken to try to get people to book as groups, with the general principle of one booking per group; with central adult volunteers booking separately. This system worked, mostly. There was one case in particular where a region decided to come together and due to the disconnected nature of the young people attending - they took the decision for all the parents to book their children on. Unfortunately, they decided to start making their booking on the date of the early booking deadline. This led to the booking applications being accepted.

With having the booking deadlines at midnight, this meant that the responsibility of being on standby to approve the booking applications which come in after the members of staff had finished for the day fell to a volunteer, which for this event fell to the Camp Coordinator. For future events, the booking system needs to be able to specify the time of a booking deadline so that it can be set for a more sociable hour!

The booking system generates a unique booking reference for each booking. This then means that when the money is transferred to the Woodcraft Folk Bank Account, we should be able to match up the payment to the booking. This works reasonably well, so far as people used the references and we were able to match up payments. The difficulties experienced with this system came from the structures of the Woodcraft Folk Finance Administration Systems, see below for a more detailed analysis of this.

## 11.3 Early Booking Deadline

A decision was taken that the incentive for booking by the early-bird deadline was to receive a free limited edition t-shirt. This decision, whilst good in theory, creates a large financial overhead - where each t-shirt costs more than the financial discount would have been. Once this fact was discovered, it was agreed that we would expect people to have booked and paid their deposit by the Early Bird Booking Deadline to receive a free t-shirt.

The communications around the requirements for payment before the t-shirts were given out was not the best due to a number of factors. Primarily, it was down to time pressures that all locations promoting the early bird deadline weren't updated to reflect the payment requirement. The requirement to pay was communicated through the Payment Policy and through social media content leading up to the deadline.

Unfortunately, some groups didn't receive the message about the payment requirements. These caused tensions where group leaders had promised their young people free t-shirts and there were no free t-shirts for them as they had not paid by the deadline. These tensions were rectified by selling the group leaders t-shirts 'at cost', rather than at the standard camp rate. Whilst not a perfect solution, it was accepted.

For those who did pay deposits & book in advance of the deadline: a Google Form was used to gather the size requirements, which influenced the numbers of garments in each size we ordered.

It would not be recommended to do a free t-shirt as the reward for Early Bird bookings in the future. This is due to the complex administration requirements, and the difficulties experienced with advertising the offer

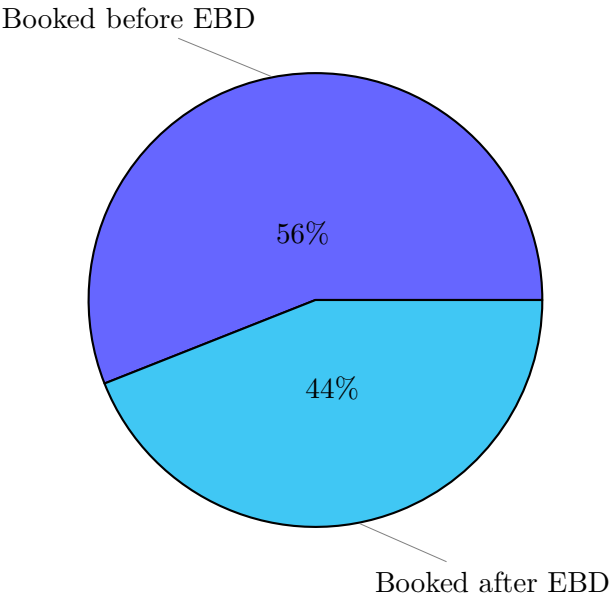


Figure 11.1: Attendees booked before / after Early Bird Deadline (EBD)

## 12 | Finance

The finances for Venturer Camp 2023 were overseen by the Head of Resources at Woodcraft Folk with assistance and knowledge given from the Venturer Camp Treasurer and Coordinator. The decision to manage the finances like this came about from not having anyone in the treasurer post at the start of the project so the Coordinator and HoR began managing the finances themselves, then once a treasurer was appointed this felt like the simplest option.

The management of finances through the Woodcraft Folk systems had a number of benefits and drawbacks. The most notable benefit was that it was all dealt with for us ("us" being the Core Team), with trained professionals managing the day to day running of the finance. The Treasurer was able to support by approving expenses and invoice payments as well as doing the first level of chasing for payments, later levels of chasing were done by the HoR.

One of the significant drawbacks of using the very established Woodcraft Folk finance system is that it is already set up very firmly. The Venturer Camp team's budget lines didn't match the central monitoring system, and this made our lives much more difficult when reviewing payments into and out of the account in order to monitor how much was being spent in each category. This was further exacerbated by the fact that the finance monitoring tools (a series of Google Sheets) were set up such that they required a great level of understanding to be able to read them. This resulted in large amounts of confusion amongst those people who had to read them and understand them.

Another significant drawback of using the Woodcraft Folk finance system was that quite often transactions were "mis-coded" within the system. This resulted in transactions erroneously appearing on the monitoring spreadsheet, or not appearing altogether - leading us to believe we hadn't spent as much as we in fact had.

### 12.1 Budget

The first budget for Venturer Camp 2023 was drawn up by Woodcraft's Chief Executive using figures from Venturer Camp 2019 and Common Ground International Camp 2022 to influence expected expenditure for 2023. Throughout the project, minor alterations were made to the budget, mostly to reflect the change in expected income due to fundraising income being lower than initially expected.

Due to the above mentioned issues with income and expenditure coding within the Woodcraft Folk finance systems, and the fact that they do not line up with our budget lines - we do not have a final breakdown of expected vs actual for our budget.

Shown below is the Venturer Camp 2023 budget, compared to the Venturer Camp 2019 actual expenditure.

Category	2019 Actual	2023 Budget
Number of paying campers	?	300
Number of campers	434	400
Price per camper	125/135/150	150

*continued on next page*

Category	2019 Actual	2023 Budget
<i>Total Camp Fees</i>	52411	45000
<b>Other Income</b>		
Pre-Camp Food Contribution		750
Christmas Challenge Access Fund	0	5000
Merchandise Sales	?	1800
Restricted Fundraising	?	6000
Unrestricted Fundraising	?	4000
<i>Total Income</i>		62550

Table 12.1: Venturer Camp 2023 Income Budget

Category	2019 Actual	2023 Budget
Site Fees	10500	15000
Food	10811	14000
Pre-Camp food & pitch (50 people max)		1300
Evening Programme	1830	1750
Day Programme	1599	1500
Adventurous Activities	0	4000
Printed Material	140	450
T-Shirts	240	0
Merchandise	0	1500
Website	72	50
Wristbands	400	450
Toilet Hire	600	750
Fridge Hire	?	1750
PA, Stage & Lighting Hire	1000	800
Coach Hire for Shuttle Service	?	2500
Main Marquee Hire	7000	6000
Village Equipment Transport Van Hire	?	2800
Volunteer Expenses	2466	2000
Tables & Chairs	1500	1500

*continued on next page*



Category	2019 Actual	2023 Budget
Contingency	?	6000
Contribution to Core	5000	0
Venturer Committee	6000	0
<i>Total Expenditure</i>	49158	64100

Table 12.2: Venturer Camp 2023 Expenditure Budget

Broadly speaking, there was enough money in each category for the expenditure required. The only places where we felt the strain was within the *PA, Stage and Lighting* hire where the stage hire came out as nearly £2k where we had only budgeted £800.

There were some other expenditures which were higher than originally anticipated, relating to the Solar Array configuration - the difference here was absorbed through a combination of reducing Programme budget and volunteers buying-back the equipment from Woodcraft Folk after the event.

The budget was designed with rental fees for a trailer refrigeration unit in mind. Due to not being able to power a unit like this, the majority of this budget line was re-allocated to the other budget categories, such as Solar equipment. The lack of adequate refrigeration was something which caused the food team many difficulties and is something which should be carefully considered at future events.

## 12.2 Outgoing Payments

### 12.2.1 Ahead of Camp

Woodcraft Folk aim to reduce the admin taken to expensing people as much as possible. To help with this, payments should be and generally were made by invoice to Woodcraft Folk where possible. This can be done with a form that Woodcraft Folk staff have access to, and the coordinator and treasurer should be given access too.

The deadline for the weekly payment run is Tuesday, so forms should be submitted by then in order for the Finance staff to have time to process payment by the end of the week. If we need urgent invoice payments, this is also possible by talking to the finance team.

For things that can only be bought on card, this was done via the Events Assistant, Programmes Manager or CEO where possible, as they all have Woodcraft Folk credit cards and this means Woodcraft Folk are charged directly and there is no need for anyone to be out of pocket.

Discussions were had surrounding the use of prepaid cards for certain teams. It was agreed that these would be sensible to attempt to get however due to complications (i.e. time pressures, exams, not having obvious people to give a card), we were unable to follow through with this. We would recommend this in future so it is easier for essential last minute payments to be made by budget holders (e.g the food and programme teams) in the final month leading up to camp and on site. Being able to pay by card directly and not have to organise doing so with a staff member would reduce admin for volunteer budget holders as well as staff members.

### 12.2.2 On-Camp

On camp, sometimes people need to buy things urgently e.g food items that haven't been delivered, equipment for programme that is missing, items to repair tents or other equipment in case of unusual weather conditions etc. Often these will be things we cannot get from suppliers we have accounts with

due to availability of the items/how urgently we need them.

This camp we managed to minimise the number of volunteers out of pocket/the admin taken to expense them as we had 3 members of staff on site with Woodcraft Folk credit cards. The food team took the CEO's credit card off site to buy emergency items on a few occasions, and the Events Assistant also ordered some things to be delivered to site the next day on her credit card.

Volunteers also ordered some things on their personal bank cards which were reimbursed. We looked to minimise the spread of this as far as possible, with the Coordinator and other central volunteers ordering the majority, rather than the wider volunteer team being expected to do this.

## 12.3 Expenses

Through utilising the Woodcraft Folk finance system, they have an already well-established expenses procedure which many core volunteers were already familiar with from other events.

Core volunteers were able to either put their own expenses through a Google Form, or have the treasurer put them through for them. The treasurer would then have to approve every individual expense request before it went to the Finance Team to be paid. This system worked for the most part as we were clear about what could & couldn't be expensed apart from one incident.

The only incident surrounding expenses was where communications were had with a young person rather than their parent who was driving them to & from the camp. This caused some confusion around what legs of their journey could legitimately be claimed for and what couldn't; when all other members of the team weren't able to claim for their personal journeys to & from the main camp as we simply didn't have the budget to stretch this for everyone.

For clarity in the future, it might be advisable to only allow the treasurer to put in expenses claims, requiring a coordinator to sign off on them. This is a conversation that should be had between the HoR, Camp Coordinator & Treasurer to ensure everyone is on the same page and the systems are set up correctly.

## 12.4 Supplier Accounts

### 12.4.1 Food Accounts

The Head of Resources helped lots with setting up accounts with food suppliers. He did the forms they asked for with proof of finances etc, and set up a Woodcraft Folk email for contacting suppliers/accessing accounts with them so we could use that for all events in future rather than changing the contact details all the time.

We already had an account with Booker; which the Chief Executive is responsible for the upkeep of, including changing our 'home branch' for the duration of events. Additionally, supplier accounts were created with: Evans and Castell Howell.

### 12.4.2 Equipment Suppliers

Woodcraft Folk have an account with Viking. We ordered some stationary, cleaning and generic Site Services supplies through them. They are cheap and good for bulk orders in advance of camp. The delivery gets delivered directly to the site which aids transport logistics massively! The SMT Assistant on the Woodcraft Folk staff team is the only person who can make orders to this company, which adds a little bit of processing time - however we knew about this far enough in advance for it not to cause

an issue.

For programme specific resources, and general stationery supplies, we used Manchester Woodcraft Folk's YPO account. The suggestion to use this came from the Head of Memberships & Programmes who is a leader in Manchester. This worked very well and was cheaper than Viking for stationary and other programme supplies. Woodcraft Folk should look into registering as a central unit for this for future events.

## 12.5 Access Fund

At the time of project initiation, and then while discussing ticket prices, it was decided that an access fund should be created. This would aim to support disadvantaged Young People and Adults to attend camp as participants and volunteers respectively.

To apply for the access fund, there was a short form which allowed the applicant to self indicate their responses to the following questions:

- I am eligible for Free School Meals
- I am in receipt of Universal Credit
- I would describe myself as disabled
- I would describe myself as a person of colour

The responses to this form were then analysed, in combination with the applicant's distance from Biblins, to distribute the funds. Discounts were applied to bookings where an individual had received some money from the access fund.

This worked successfully, especially to support some of the larger groups who were travelling via group-hired coaches, engaging more people in Venturer Camp than we would otherwise have expected.

The access fund was publicised through our website, emails to group leaders and social media.

## 12.6 VCoin

Due to the lack of signal at Biblins Campsite and the desire to minimise cash handling from the Woodcraft Folk Finance Team - it was decided to use an on-camp currency. This would solve our problem of wanting people to pay by card and only having one location on site where we could use a card machine.

The currency used, deemed "VCoin" was represented by poker chips which were sourced from a Member of Staff's local Rotary Club. These worked out very well for us as there was a plentiful supply of them in not-too-awkward denominations which we weren't charged for the hire of.

The currency exchange rate was 1:1. Attendees were able to exchange as much GBP to VCoin as they wished, however only values over £5 would be returned to GBP at the end of camp. This was due to the fact that we didn't have capacity to handle high amounts of cash. This decision was frowned upon by many and for future events where there is a requirement to use an on-camp currency - it would be suggested to increase capacity for refunds at the end of the event.

The use of the currency on site caused lots of difficulties. It had originally been planned that the bank would only be open for a few hours a day; it was very quickly learnt however that Venturers aren't that organised and the bank had to be open at any time money could be spent (i.e. whenever the shop or cafe was open). This caused staffing issues for the bank as it had only been planned for the

Treasurer to staff the bank, whereas we had to source more volunteers to staff it while the Treasurer was handling other finance related duties. The Cafe team in particular noted that not having the bank open at the times they were open led to a loss in sales, where an attendee would wish to purchase something but wouldn't be able to due to they didn't have any VCoin and the bank wasn't open.

For future events which require the use of an on-camp currency, it would be suggested to: define the opening hours for the bank further in advance; ensure that any time money can be spent on site; better plan for the end of the camp where more provision should be looked for to exchange the camp currency back to GBP.

## 12.7 Final report & Figures as at 1 November 2023

The original budget assumed Venturer Camp would break even but make no contribution to overhead costs. The Final Forecast recognised attendance and income were lower than originally planned. While attempts were made to reduce expenditure to offset the reduction on income it was recognised it would be challenging to retain a breakeven position and the final forecast assumed a £4k deficit. The final position presents a £2k deficit.

Income was £6k (10%) lower than originally planned due to lower levels of attendance.

Expenditure was £8k (12%) lower than the final forecast and £4k lower than the original budget. All areas of expenditure finished very close to budget with the only material underspends relating to 'Other' (£7k) which included a £4k contingency for the potential reduction in income. 'Total Premises' finished £21k underspent, however, this is offset with the 'Internal Centre Fees' overspend (£19.4k) which relates to the internal transfer of funds to Biblins for the hire of the site.

	2023 Actual	2023 Final Forecast	Variance	Variance (%)	2023 Budget
<b>External Income</b>					
Events	44,109	45,000	-891	-2%	45,000
Donations	165	5,750	-5,585	-97%	5,750
Restricted Grant	0	6,000	-6,000	-100%	6,000
Unrestricted Grant	0	4,000	-4,000	-100%	4,000
Stock Sales	4,690	1,250	3,440	275%	1,250
Internal Events	1,851	0	1,851	0%	0
<i>Total External Income</i>	50,815	62,000	-11,185	-18%	62,000
<b>Internal Income</b>					
Internal Transfers	5,250	0	5,250	0%	0
<i>Total External Income</i>	5,250	0	5,250	0%	0
<i>Total Income</i>	56,065	62,000	-5,935	-10%	62,000

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	<b>2023 Actual</b>	<b>2023 Final Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Variance (%)</b>	<b>2023 Budget</b>
<b>People</b>					
Travel & Subsistence	2,120	2,000	120	6%	2,000
<i>Total People</i>	2,120	2,000	120	6%	2,000
<b>Direct Costs of Sale</b>					
Activities Expenditure	24,033	7,250	16,783	231%	7,250
Catering Expenditure	661	15,300	-14,639	-96%	15,300
Cost of Sales	0	1,500	-1,500	-100%	1,500
<i>Total Direct Costs of Sale</i>	24,695	24,050	645	3%	24,050
<b>Premises</b>					
Gas	855	0	855	0%	0
Other Utilities	145	0	145	0%	0
Rent & Rates	0	15,000	-15,000	-100%	15,000
Cleaning	17	0	17	0%	0
Equipment	6,710	13,936	-7,226	-52%	13,936
<i>Total Premises</i>	7,727	28,936	-21,209	-73%	28,936
<b>Other</b>					
Fundraising and Marketing	3,217	0	3,217	0%	0
Administration	865	0	865	0%	0
Other	0	11,014	-11,014	-100%	7,014
Bad Debt	0	0	0	0%	0
<i>Total Other</i>	4,082	11,014	-6,932	-63%	7,014
<b>Internal</b>					
Internal Centre Fees E	19,442	0	19,442	0%	0
<i>Total Internal</i>	19,442	0	19,442	0%	0
<i>Total Expenditure</i>	58,066	66,000	-7,934	-12%	62,000
<b>Annual Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	-2,001	-4,000			0

Table 12.3: Venturer Camp 2023 Final Figures

## 13 | Website & Social Media

### 13.1 Website

For historical Venturer Camps, the domain `venturercamp.org.uk` has been used. Having a separate domain provides a number of pros and cons, this was the cause of a lengthy discussion in Autumn 2022.

Ultimately, it was decided that the domain would be re-registered and a simple WordPress website would be created using a cheap shared hosting provider. Ralph Sleight and Thomas Boxall met virtually to register the domain, choosing 123-reg as the domain registrar and Hostinger as the hosting provider. Ralph managed the domain registration and therefore configured the DNS records to ensure that the domain was linked correctly to the Woodcraft Folk Google Workspace.

Having our own website gave us the flexibility to publish whatever content we wanted and allowed us to configure the website exactly how we wanted to. The decision was taken to leave WordPress configuration as simple as possible, exclusively using off the shelf components as this would make our life as simple as possible!

The configuration of the website was for the most part left unchanged during the year which it was active for. Only two major changes were made: adding reCAPTCHA and changing the Home Page. Adding reCAPTCHA to the contact form plugin we used (WP Forms) was done out of necessity. We were beginning to receive an unmanageable amount of spam to the WordPress comment queue and by adding ReCaptcha, we were able to reduce this to a more manageable amount. Changing the homepage was done to be able to give out the most accurate information during camp - something which the initial homepage didn't allow for.

For the most part, the operation of the website was managed by Thomas, however a number of others also had access to edit and manage the content on the site. There had been plans to expand the number of editors on the website, to allow teams to publish their own news articles and content - however this never happened due to time limitations.

### 13.2 Social Media

After Venturer Camp 2019, there is an already-established Venturer Camp instagram account which we gained control of during October 2022. At the time, the Camp Coordinator was doing the comms role and as such began posting semi-regular content to the account. At the time, there was no plan used as there was little time to devise a plan.

While gaining access to social media accounts, Thomas also got into the Facebook account. Through this, he learnt that the 2019 camp used a profile, rather than a page which meant we wouldn't have had any statistical oversight from it. Thomas created a page and published a link to it across all social media platforms and we gained followers.

The Facebook and Instagram pages were both linked to the same Meta Business Account, which meant we had oversight and control over them both from one place.

Thomas took the decision to not use Twitter. A tweet was published informing followers of this fact and signposting them to where they could find out more.

Through October, November, December and January, Thomas took a lead on producing content for the social media platforms. Posts were sporadic and it was generally used as calls to action for volunteers rather than beginning to excite people for bookings to open. For future events, it would be massively beneficial to have a dedicated communications manager in the team whose responsibility it is to deal with pushing content to social media.

As pressures on the coordinator ramped up in different aspects of the camp, Thomas handed over the managing of the social media to the Events Assistant who managed the social media until late spring / early summer where Alex Baird, national Communications Volunteer, took over the managing of the social media alongside Woodcraft Folk's Communications Manager.

The use of social media for an event like this has many different purposes, ranging from telling people bookings are open, raising people's excitement about the event and giving them all the critical information.

There were times that we were unable to create and push content out due to not having capacity. This was unfortunate as the event is catering for those who probably spend the highest amount of time out of any age group on social media.

Without the role of communications being filled on the team - we were in a situation where social media often fell to an afterthought. Whilst not ideal, we managed like this. There were enough people who had access to the social media accounts that something could be pushed out when absolutely necessary. For future events, having a dedicated communications team (for larger events) or person (for smaller events) is imperative. It is not something which should fall to the Coordinator to do. The coordination team should also have the space to share content through the social media when needed, another thing which we were unable to do due to the size of our team.

## 14 | Written Communications

### 14.1 Mass Emails

Throughout the coordination of an event like this, communication with the membership is a vital process. Within Woodcraft Folk - the main way in which this is done is through mass emails pushed out through Constant Contact (mass mailing platform).

No one on the Venturer Camp team had direct access to Constant Contact, this caused a number of problems as we were unable to send the mass emails ourselves. Whilst understandable from a GDPR standpoint, it caused some difficulties. The main difficulty was the inability to send an email on-the-fly. Emails would have to be booked in with the member of staff sending the email at least a week in advance of needing to send them with the content deadline often at least multiple days before the target email send date - to give the staff time to schedule the email to be sent. There were a number of times where these tight deadlines meant that the emails didn't contain all the information in them that was originally intended due to not having enough time to write them.

Towards the end of the project, when time pressures were higher, Gmail's Multi Send Mode was utilised as this meant that emails could be sent to multiple recipients without using BCC (as this often results in emails going directly to people's spam box) while maintaining GDPR compliance. This proved extremely effective as the Coordinator had control over exactly when emails were sent and the content of them therefore reducing the dependence on others to send emails therefore reducing the lead time to send a mass email.

Another issue encountered using Constant Contact was the mailing list inconsistencies. Initially, we were using a "All Venturer Group Leads" list which had been pulled from Groop in the Autumn of 2022 however towards the end of the project, it was more relevant to email just the booking contacts. This data was only accessible within the booking system which therefore meant, a new mailing list would have to be created each time a mass email was to be sent within Constant Contact to ensure that any new booking contacts or additional booking contacts were included. Once the final booking deadline had passed, this was less of an issue however it still presented edge-case challenges where extra individuals would book on and we would then need to ensure they too received the mass emails.

As we didn't have capacity to, we didn't think about tailoring emails to the two different groups of people who booked on: group bookings and individual bookings. There was quite often confusion amongst the individual booking contacts where their entire contact with Woodcraft before had been as a parent of a child attending a weekly group night. This added some additional administrative burden to respond to the individuals when they questioned what the email meant to them. In the future - it may be useful to tailor the mass-emails to the two groups.

### 14.2 Big Month Updates

Towards the later months in the project, we began to push out 'Big Month Updates'. These were one-stop-shop updates which contained all the relevant content either for the upcoming month or about the month-just-gone. It was unfortunate that these updates were only started towards the end of the project as it was felt that they were useful.

A newsletter-kind of update proved useful to the coordination team as it was a regular chance to push updates to the wider movement. Shorter updates would still need to be pushed during the times



between the larger updates as sometimes there were news items too critical to wait.

For future large Woodcraft camps, it would be suggested to review and look to keep going with larger newsletter style emails & blog posts on the website. Through publishing to the website, you also make the content available to those not in direct receipt of the email. It would also be advisable to share the highlights through social media, ensuring you reach as many people as possible.

## 14.3 Information Pack

Another staple within Woodcraft Folk camps are the Info Packs. For Venturer Camp 2023, we produced 3 (v0, v1 and v2).

The info packs were timed to be released at strategic points in the academic calendar, providing group leaders the information they needed at the right time. It was felt that less questions came through around topics covered in the info packs than would be expected, suggesting that leaders found them a useful resource.

Info Packs were co-authored by the entire Venturer Camp team, with the Coordinator and Events Assistant taking a lead. Once the content was complete, the coordinator typeset the packs using L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X. The proof copies of the documents were then shared to the team for further contributions / comments, and once amended - the document would be published to the website.

### 14.3.1 Info Pack v0

Info Pack v0 was published in December 2022 and aimed to provide a single location where the initial information about the event could be found. The document included:

- An introduction from Thomas & introductions to the different teams
- Information around the bookings process
- Information surrounding the cost of camp, suggestions for local group fundraising & the access fund
- How to get involved
- Early information around food at camp, focusing on the differences to previous camps
- Information on the Sustainability of Venturer Camp 2023 & its environmental impact
- The dates for on-site pre-camp

### 14.3.2 Info Pack v1

Info Pack v1 was published in early May 2023. There had been plans to release a few weeks earlier however due to delays in some content, the publication of the pack was delayed.

Info Pack v1 contained much more information about the event, still with some unclear details however. Much of the pack was dedicated to logistics surrounding equipment, communications, programme and food at the event. The table of contents included:

- Pre-Camp details, both virtual and on-site
- Travel to site logistics
- Communications during the event, including emergency contact details

- Equipment
- Food
- Programme
- Introduction to the International Volunteers
- Decarbonisation
- Volunteer Wellbeing
- Safeguarding & Risk Management
- Site Safety

### 14.3.3 Info Pack v2

Info Pack v2 was published in late June. This was the last major update group leaders got before the Village Handbook was released in July. the table of contents included:

- Repeat of much of the info pack v2 content, with some details further fleshed out
- Site Layout
- Village composition
- Further detail on programme offerings
- Greater details on Safeguarding & Risk Management
- Price list for the Cafe and Merch stand
- Remaining roles to be filled

## 14.4 Village Handbook

For Venturer Camp 2023, we wanted to go back to the historical ways of doing things - publishing the Village Handbook well in advance of the camp, ensuring those who needed it had the information, before they got to site. This methodology worked, and while there were a few minor amendments made on site - the main village handbook document was published two weeks before the start of camp.

### 14.4.1 Village Handbook Document

The Village Handbook document was co-authored by many different members of the team, with the Coordinator bringing the sections together. The VH document followed the same workflow as the Info Packs, including typesetting.

Much of the handbook was dedicated to on-site logistics and sharing the details which are needed to ensure that everything works smoothly. There was also some information about the site, features of it, and how emergencies are handled as well as the consultation activities we were asking villages to run.

Many people commented on how comprehensive the document was, and were thankful for that fact. The aim of producing a longer document was to ease minds and ensure they had all the information they would need, which we achieved!

The full Village Handbook document can be found in the appendices.

### 14.4.2 Village Handbook Folder

Due to the nature of Biblins having very limited cellular connectivity, a decision was made to give each village a ring binder stuffed with information which Village Coordinators & Village Volunteers would find useful. This worked well, however there was a lot of printing and folder stuffing.

Printed lists of members of each village was also provided to Village Coordinators as this ensured that they had the data to hand should it be required. The Camp Office also held a printed copy of the booking data, broken down in the same units as the Village copies, for quick reference.

- Camp Map
- Village Handbook Document
- Safeguarding Documents
  - Safeguarding Responsibilities & Support
  - Woodcraft Folk's safeguarding policy
  - Venturer Camp 2023 Risk Register
  - Missing Young Person Procedures
  - Incident & Disclosure Form
  - First Aid Forms
- Village Members lists
  - Attendance list
  - Consents list
  - Dietary Data
  - Medical List
  - Central Role Holders list
- Programme
  - Daytime & Evening programme itinerary
  - Grab 'n' Go Activity Pack
  - Adventurous Activities Info Sheet
- Consultation Activities
  - Heading to 100 Session Plan
  - Strategic Plan Session Plan
  - Camp Evaluation Activity Session Plan
  - EDI Exploration & Discussion Session Plan

This was obviously a lot of paper to print and then dispose of after the event. The decision to do it this way was taken to ensure that Village Coordinators felt they had all the information they needed, without having to continually ask the same questions at the camp office. This worked, with very few village coordinators asking lots of questions at the camp office. For camps where there is phone signal, it would be suggested that the village handbook 'folder' is provided as a web page with downloadable documents linked, then either a QR code or URL is provided in the main document signposting people to this.