

# Common Ground Info Pack for international delegations

Version 1

October 2019



## Intro

Common Ground is the next IFM-SEI international camp, organised by Woodcraft Folk in the UK - and you are invited! It will take place from 1st - 11th August 2020 at Kent County Showground in the South-East of England.

We will add to this Info Pack every few months, when information is confirmed. Enquiries are welcome to [info@commonground.camp](mailto:info@commonground.camp).

## Camp fee

Region	Price
Asia	£105 per person
Africa	£105 per person
Eastern Europe	£155 per person
Latin America	£105 per person
Middle East (Israel, Egypt, Turkey)	£155 per person
Middle East (Palestine)	£105 per person
Western Europe	£205 per person

## Payments

This is a summary of our payment policy. Please read the full document at [commonground.camp/book](https://www.commonground.camp/book).

- Participants aged 0 - 4 do not pay a camp fee but please read the rules about ratios between adults and children, later in this document
- Included: 10 days of camping, food and day/evening programme.
- Not included: Travel costs, spending money, airport transfers.
- Deposit of 50% of group fee to be paid by 1st December 2019.
- Remaining balance due by 1st May 2020.
- Full-time carers for young people with disabilities may be able to attend for free – email [info@commonground.camp](mailto:info@commonground.camp) so that we can offer support.
- Book online at: <https://www.commonground.camp/book/> and follow the payment instructions on your confirmation email.
- We encourage any group with limited funds to get in touch with [international@commonground.camp](mailto:international@commonground.camp) for fundraising ideas. Information about extra funding for international delegations to be confirmed in the spring 2020.

## How to get there

By plane:

Please compare London's many airports carefully, or speak to the Common Ground team to decide which is best. Gatwick airport is 65 kilometres from Kent County Showground. Heathrow is 100 kilometres away and involves travelling all the way across London, for three hours or more.

TOP TIPS:

- London is a metropolitan city - heavy congestion, occasional strikes and public events can cause long delays.
- Don't decide on distance or flight price alone: check the public transport connections.
- You can plan your route from the airport using <https://www.traveline.info/>.
- Choose flights that arrive earlier in the day if you can. It is no fun putting up tents after dark!
- Consider whether you will want to arrive a day or two early. Will you visit London for tourism? Will your UK delegation host you for a night?

If you are travelling from outside Europe and/or have a large delegation, please contact [info@commonground.camp](mailto:info@commonground.camp). We will help you with the practical arrangements.

By rail:

Maidstone East Railway Station is 4.2 miles from the Kent County Showground. Trains to London Victoria depart twice an hour. Shuttle buses from Maidstone East to the venue and back are being planned for the 1st August and 11th August.

There is no national rail in the UK. The trains are operated by 28 different companies, and the prices range from very cheap to very expensive. If you buy a same-day ticket, this can cost a small fortune. When your group has chosen your flights, we will advise you separately about how and where to buy the train tickets.

By car or coach:

The Kent Event Centre is located just off the A249 dual carriageway.

From the M20 Motorway, exit the motorway at junction (7) and follow signs to Sittingbourne, Sheerness A249. Follow the A249 for approximately 2 miles, the Kent Event Centre & Kent Showground are clearly signposted on the left-hand side after the brow of the hill.

From the M2 Motorway, exit the motorway at junction (5) signposted (M20) Maidstone A249. Follow the A249 for approximately 5 miles. Please be aware that cars are unable to cross over the carriage way to the Showground on the right-hand side of the road. Visitors will need to carry on along the A249 to the roundabout at the bottom of Detling hill, then follow the M20 directions above. **Please note:** Kent County Showground is not accessible via Scragged Oak Road. Using this route will direct you to a locked gate.

## Visas

EU27: The EU parliament has agreed that it will allow British citizens up to 90 days visa-free travel to the Schengen area and British government has agreed to offer the same for EU27 citizens. However please alert Common Ground team by 1st May 2020 if you have **a young person in your group who is travelling with a non-EU passport or a refugee travel document**. We will assist with the visa guidance and application process.

Delegations from outside the EU: For most participants, the application window for a tourist visa will open 1st May 2020. We will issue visa support letters to everyone in your group, in April. We recommend EARLY visa applications. Book an appointment at your consulate / embassy for any time after 1st May 2020. Remember to obtain the visa first, only then book your flights (if they are non-refundable). This is to reduce your financial losses. Flight prices will go up, but it is better not to commit any money until you have been cleared to travel. Alternatively, you can try to work with a travel agent. Travel agents can sometimes "hold" flights without any fee. This is a good option especially if you are a large group.

## Camping in the UK - what to expect

Common Ground will be a unique camping experience because you will be living with, educating alongside and making friends with Woodcraft Folk and IFM-SEI members of all ages from across the world. August is one of the warmest months in the UK but please expect rain, sunshine and every sort of weather in between! The temperature drops in the evening and you need to pack sleeping bags and warm and water-proof clothing, just in case.

The site has enough showers and toilets for our camp participants, but your toilet block may be a little further away. Tents will be on grass and there is a network of paths and roads with hard surface. High heels are a bad idea! Think: practical clothing, sensible footwear. A large rucksack may be better than a suitcase with wheels.

You can expect to spend most of your time on this very large camp. There is very little else within walking distance. We won't be close to any city centre or shops for example. But the site has other benefits, namely several acres of forest for hiking and recreation. You can view more site information here: [www.kenteventcentre.co.uk](http://www.kenteventcentre.co.uk) **but please direct any enquiries to [info@commonground.camp](mailto:info@commonground.camp)** so that we can give you information that is specific to Common Ground 2020.

A provisional layout for the camp has been set but will depend on participant numbers. The plan is to have villages (around 100 people each) and between 3 and 5 villages form a town (around 500 people each). Each town will have a large tent for communal activity. More details to follow in the spring. Speak to the UK delegation you are matched with, to discuss whether you want to be right next to the central area (=some noise) or further away from the services (=less noise).

## Ratio between adults and children

Small children are very welcome on camp, and we have lots of activities for under 10's. But when planning your group size, please ensure you have enough adults. You will need to meet the required ratio between adult volunteers and children as follows:

- 1 adult volunteer to every 3 children aged 0 - 5
- 1 adult volunteer to every 5 children aged 6 - 9
- 1 adult volunteer to every 8 children aged 10 - 12 and
- 1 adult volunteer to every 10 children aged 13 - 15.

## Equipment

You can still attend if your group owns little or no equipment. The Common Ground team will offer to match UK and international groups. Some groups own extra tents which you can borrow. Or perhaps your group members have connections with a UK group. Why not get in touch and discuss, what you would need and how much funding you will need to raise. Shared fundraising will deepen your friendship with the UK group and will give both groups a great sense of achievement! Please also make the most of the new IFM-SEI Community Fundraising Guide, due to be published in November 2019.

## Accessibility

We want the camp to be open and welcome to everyone. You may have a member in your group who has a physical, sensory or learning disabilities. Speak to Project Manager Pauliina Keinanen, [info@commonground.camp](mailto:info@commonground.camp) early on about any additional needs. Will you bring a young person who uses a wheelchair? Do you have autistic members who need quiet areas with no bright lights? Will someone need a fridge for their medication? There are many support measures we can develop to keep those participants safe, included and comfortable. We also want to encourage participation from young people who are transitioning. Woodcraft Folk is a trans-friendly organisation and gender-neutral toilets and other adjustments are available. Please contact us to discuss.

## The food

Three meals a day is included in the camp fee but they will be cooked by all the campers, in small teams on a rota basis. This is a part of the whole experience, that everyone is a volunteer and a participant. You can expect to receive a camp menu, with a recipe and clear instructions for each day. There will be confident cooks around to help if your team gets stuck. Dry ingredients can be collected from the Town pantry and fresh items like bread and milk will be delivered to site every couple of days. In Woodcraft Folk, even very young children help in the kitchen, with tasks that are safe to do.

The menu has been designed to offer everyone a filling, warm meal including young children, and campers who need a vegan, halal, gluten-free or dairy-free option. Please put the group dietary needs and allergies on the booking form by May 2020 so that we can cater for these.

The environmental impact is important to us as a camp - to minimise food waste, plastic waste and the carbon footprint. Please keep a totally open mind - you may end up eating much less meat than you would have at home. Or the dishes may include more beans and pulses than you have in an average week. The camp is a great opportunity to learn about and explore sustainable diets.

Some cafes will be set up around the site, so that you can buy a hot drink or a special treat like cake. Why not take on a role helping to run one of these lovely cafes? There will be more information soon about alcohol rules on site, card payments and the Camp Bar for over 18's.

## The camp programme

The central programme is delivered through Centres. Every Centre will run sessions on different topics on children's rights, sustainability and activism. The programme has something for every age group, including the under 10's. Centres will operate every other day. On the other days, the towns and villages will come together for sports, games and self-organised activities. Look out for more detailed information on each Centre from November 2019.

## How to get more involved

"Many hands make light work". This camp is investing in volunteer wellbeing, so we are recruiting lots and lots of volunteers to share the tasks. This will allow everyone a good pace of duties, rest and play.

Come and join our great team! You could try a new role you have not done before, or offer your skills and experience in almost any area: healthcare, stewarding, engineering, counselling. We especially welcome our international participants to volunteer and help with delivering the programme. It's a chance to improve your English, make the camp better and make it a truly international event! Email [info@commonground.camp](mailto:info@commonground.camp) and we will put you in touch with your team. You can then have meetings online to plan everything together.

## Contact details

General enquiries and Project Manager (Pauliina Keinanen): [info@commonground.camp](mailto:info@commonground.camp)

Chair of the Board (Tom Brooks): [chair@commonground.camp](mailto:chair@commonground.camp)

Communications (Ellen Gibson): [comms@commonground.camp](mailto:comms@commonground.camp)

Food (Emma Shuttleworth and Hannah Khan): [kp@commonground.camp](mailto:kp@commonground.camp)

International (Frankie Marsh): [international@commonground.camp](mailto:international@commonground.camp)

See our website for a full list of contacts.