



Young people from across the world unite at Common Ground camp in the UK

This July thousands of young people will be travelling to the UK from locations worldwide for a very special event, Common Ground. Attendees from around the world will stand together to live co-operatively in solidarity and friendship.

Over 2,600 young people will be attending the International Falcon Movement – Socialist Educational International (IFM-SEI) camp, hosted by UK youth organisation Woodcraft Folk, which lasts for ten days with many volunteers arriving beforehand to help prep the camp. IFM-SEI international camps happen around every four years and change host location each time, with the last camp, 'Welcome to Another World,' located in Germany in 2016. The UK hasn't hosted an IFM-SEI camp since CoCamp in 2011 and Common Ground is expected to be even bigger and better!

Locally, Woodcraft Group *{insert group name}* ' will be in attendance. *{Insert info on your local group - see Comms pack for guidance}*

A lot of hard work has gone into the planning of the camp for the last five years which has also been rescheduled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

What is special about Common Ground is that young people from Woodcraft Folk, along with the international volunteers they are hosting, have been empowered and given the control and support required to organise the camp themselves. Common Ground at its heart is a camp organised by young people for young people.

At a time where many young people are suffering with mental health issues arising from war, climate change, increased costs of living and the Covid-19 pandemic, the camp couldn't have come at a more opportune moment. With the theme of international friendship and solidarity, Common Ground offers some much needed youth action, collaboration, problem solving and fun!

Woodcraft Folk are thrilled at the amount of international young people attending Common Ground. The camp has representation from twenty six countries, including Palestine, Denmark, Germany, Belgium, Catalonia, Finland, Switzerland, Peru, Mali, Chile and Zimbabwe, plus many more. There are also a diverse range of international organisations attending such as Slovenian and Georgian Falcons and Youth Advocates Ghana. Some of the campers have experienced conflict, displacement or other life challenges, and all will come together at Common Ground for social change and peace across borders.

With the charity's values built on inclusion and international friendship, it was really important to Woodcraft Folk for international attendees to camp with UK participants, and the camp set up is truly unique, innovative and engaging. Creating this community atmosphere has required intensive logistical planning.



The camp is split into 'villages' comprising of around one hundred people. These include at least one UK Woodcraft Folk group and at least one international group. Everyone in the village camps in a circle and eats, sleeps, cooks and cleans together with a kitchen area and a space to run activities available to use. Groups of six to seven villages form towns of around 600 attendees where there is a communal area and cafe. A central area provides a space where everyone in the camp can congregate and come together and take part in a diverse range of activities in programme centres, run by young volunteers from all over the world.

Young people input into how the camp is run and devise rules for their village, which provides an engaging and educational camp democracy experience that includes coming up with creative, collaborative solutions. For example, how campers can communicate inclusively on an international level.

Eva Chatrain, Common Ground ESC volunteer says;

"Common Ground will be my first experience of an international camp. I am really looking forward to seeing all the different cultures and nationalities living together for ten days. It will be a real life changing experience that will provide a great opportunity for attendees to learn from each other and share our customs and habits."

"What makes Common Ground so special is that after two years of Covid issues and lockdowns, we can look forward to meeting new people from around the world and sharing experiences together."

Young people have played a key role in the planning and execution of the camp, from designing the programme to managing bookings and promoting the camp as well as forming a board to oversee logistics. The camp is the perfect example of how youth organisations such as Woodcraft Folk can empower young people, aid with educational and skills development, boost confidence and encourage team building all within a supportive environment where young voices feel heard.

There is lots on offer for young people to get involved with at Common Ground. A programme of activities and games are organised, and these exude an underlying message of social change and equality. Educational workshops will be running on topics such as children's rights, conflict and peace, environment, arts, anti-racism, co-operation and migration. From making manifestos for no borders in the peace tent, to exploring bushcraft activities in Hands On, or creating radio programmes in the media centre, there is something for everyone. There are also lots of volunteer opportunities for young people to get stuck into at camp including sound and stage engineering and wellbeing support.

Common Ground Chair, Tom Brooks says;

"Common Ground will bring together over 1700 people from the UK and another 1000 from across 26 different countries to a field in Northamptonshire. For 10 days we will live together; cook and eat together, play and sing together, learn each other's cultures and ideas. There will be cafes and bands, a camp radio station, debates, workshops, sports, crafts, all run by young people for young people."



“An International Camp is a marquee event for the Woodcraft Folk. Once every five years our movement comes to camp as one, reminding us of our strength and our diversity, it galvanises us to reach out to new communities and builds bonds between the communities which already exist within us. It's also just a lot of fun.”

Woodcraft Folk is a member of IFM-SEI, which is made up of organisations from across the globe that all share the same values and educate on social change. International camps such as Common Ground bring these organisations together for a once in a lifetime opportunity to build bridges, make friendships, live harmoniously and to learn from each other.

Due to the huge scale of the camp, Woodcraft Folk are asking local organisations or individuals if they can help with supplying equipment such as spare tents, sporting equipment, musical instruments and technical equipment. If you think you could help with any of these requests, please contact the charity at info@commonground.camp.

For those who do not have tickets to the camp, but want to experience a taste of Woodcraft Folk, there are plenty of other ways to get involved with the youth organisation both nationally and internationally. Find out more about the ways to get involved at <https://woodcraft.org.uk/>

At a local level, **[insert call to action for your local group and note how people can get involved and include contact details - see Comms pack for guidance]**.

Woodcraft Folk are hosting another international camp in 2025 in celebration of their 100 year anniversary. Join Woodcraft folk now and follow us on social media to be the first to hear when tickets launch and to learn all about the next camp.

Common Ground camp will be located at Kelmarsh Hall and Gardens and runs from 29th July - 8th August 2022. Woodcraft Folk would like to thank their Common Ground funders The Lipman-Miliband Trust, Erasmus+, The Jeremy Willson Trust, Barry Amiel & Norman Melburn Trust and the Bens Educational Trust.

Ends

For further information contact **[insert a local group comms contact name], [insert contact email] [insert contact phone number]**

Notes to editors

Woodcraft Folk is an educational movement for children and young people, designed to develop self-confidence and activity in society, with the aim of building a world based on equality, friendship, peace and cooperation. The youth organisation offers a place where children explore engaging activities, learn about the world, build lasting friendships and start to understand how to value the planet and each other. It operates 300 volunteer-led groups for young people across England, Wales & Scotland. Woodcraft Folk is a movement for children and young people, open to everyone. Woodcraft.org.uk

Woodcraft Folk is a registered charity in England & Wales (1148195) and in Scotland (SC039791), and a limited company, registered in England & Wales (8133727). Registered office: Holyoake House, Hanover Street, Manchester M60 0AS