

Elections to General Council and Standing Orders Committee

We have elections to two bodies this Annual Gathering

General Council

General Council is the Trustee board of Woodcraft Folk and is made up of ten lay members, four 18-24 members, four DF reps, one rep each from Wales and Scotland, the Treasurer and a rep from the Co-op movement.

We have elections for five lay members to serve for two years and two 16-24 members to serve for two years.

Details of the nominations to date are included in this document.

Nominations for both lay and 18-24 members have been re-opened. If you would like to stand, please download a nomination form from <https://woodcraft.org.uk/annual-gathering-2019> and bring the completed form with you to Gathering.

Nominations for GC formally close at 9:10am on Sunday 23 June, but it is incredibly helpful if you can submit your nomination in advance by emailing nominations@woodcraft.org.uk

Standing Orders Committee (SOC)

Standing Orders Committee ensure the smooth running of Woodcraft Folk's internal democracy and is made up of six members.

This year we have elections for three members to serve for two years.

This year we have 4 nominations and details of the nomination received are included in this document.

All elections in Woodcraft Folk use the Single Transferable Vote system, known as STV.

How does STV work?

- 1** The ballot paper lists the names of the candidates. Voters vote by putting a '1' next to the name of their favoured candidate, a '2' next to the name of their next favoured candidate and so on. They stop allocating preferences when they cannot decide between the candidates – they do not need to vote for them all.
- 2** At the count, the number of votes which candidates need in order to be elected (the 'quota') is calculated by dividing the total number of valid ballot papers by the number of people to be elected plus one. For example, with 100 valid ballot papers and 3 places to be filled, the quota would be 25.
- 3** The ballot papers are sorted into piles according to the first preferences – the '1's. If any candidate has more first preference votes than the quota, they are immediately elected.
- 4** The next stage is to transfer any surplus votes for these elected candidates, i.e. the difference between their vote and the quota needed to be elected. To avoid the problem of deciding which of the votes are surplus, all ballot papers are transferred but at a reduced value so that the total adds up to the number of surplus votes.
- 5** After all the surpluses have been transferred, we look to see whether all the places to be elected have been filled. If they have not, then the candidate with the fewest votes is excluded and their votes are transferred to the voters' second preferences.
- 6** This process of transferring surpluses and excluding candidates continues until enough candidates have reached the quota to fill all the places to be elected. Although the counting process is more complex than with 'First Past the Post', it can be done by, or with the help of, a computer and it is a small price to pay for improving the voting power of every single elector.

Summary of Candidates

General Council (16-24)

Two places up for election, one candidate:

- Robin Lyster

General Council (lay)

Five places up for election, three candidates:

- Sapna Agarwal
- Jeremy Hudson
- Stuart Walker

Nominations to be re-opened in the General Council categories.

Standing Orders Committee

Three places up for election, four candidates:

- Jeni Dixon
- Richard Kirkwood
- Ralph Sleigh
- Ash Taylor

Robin Lyster

candidate for **General Council (16-24)**

District: Oxford

Age: 18

Experience, Skills & Reasons for Standing:

Woodcraft Folk knowledge and experience:

I've been a part of Woodcraft since I was 6 years old, and have been volunteering with Woodcraft since I was 14, when I was elected to Venturer Committee as the Meetings rep. Since then I have volunteered with a local elfin group, and served as Events rep on DF Committee. I have been admin for DF camp 2017, and have been to various planning meetings, including last pre-camp for Venturer Camp.



Skills I can bring to General Council:

From being the Events rep for DFs, I have become very proficient at organising and administrating events, including securing a site, managing bookings and booking forms, finding and directing a coordination team, and keeping within budget. I know how to communicate with people, both by email and face to face. I am also good with spreadsheets (specifically manipulating databases, like booking information), but am competent at IT in general. I also have social media skills, including those used by older and younger demographics.

Why I am standing for General Council:

Woodcraft, as an organisation, has given so much to me and shaped me for the last 12 years, and I would like to be able to give something back. I would also like to help ensure that Woodcraft continues to be as amazing to children today as it has been to me.

Sapna Agarwal

candidate for **General Council (lay member)**

District: Glasgow Kelvingrove

Age: 39

Experience & Reasons for Standing:

I have been the District Coordinator of Glasgow Kelvingrove for the last five years and volunteer regularly with Woodchips, Elfins and Pioneers. I have been serving on General Council for the last two years. I am on Staffing Committee and, in recent months, have taken on the role of Lead Safeguarding Trustee and one of the new roles as Diversity Officer. I'd like to be re-elected so that I can continue working with General Council to examine the structural inequality in Woodcraft Folk and create a fairer, more equal organisation that can offer education for social change to all young people.



Jeremy Hudson

candidate for **General Council**
(lay member)

District: Cambridge

Age: 65

Experience & Reasons for Standing:

I was Finance Manager in Folk Office for some years, and still provide some help with financial matters on a voluntary basis. So I know Woodcraft well from a central point of view.

I have also worked in finance roles for a number of charities over the past 20 years, in some cases as an employee and others as a volunteer. I am currently volunteer trustee and treasurer for my local Young Peoples' Club, working hard to defend and promote the services and opportunities for young people which have been so decimated by austerity.

I believe that with its rich traditions and many committed volunteers Woodcraft is well-placed to grow and prosper in the future.

However, all charities need good financial management, particularly when resources are so hard to come by, and General Council have recognised this by requesting nominations of people with expertise in this area.

So I would like to use my knowledge and experience to help with the financial management of Woodcraft by joining the General Council team.



Stuart Walker

candidate for **General Council**
(lay member)

District: Newham Watersmeet

Age: 53

Experience & Reasons for Standing:

Since I encountered Woodcraft as a parent, then, with Elfin-aged children, I have been dedicated to ensuring it does everything it can for young people.

I have become acutely aware of the transformational impact of Woodcraft: how it can bring a sense of purpose to our young peoples' lives. I am a current leader of Newham's Magpie Venturers and work every week directly with our young people collaborating on our programme and campaigns. This year we are leading the Woodcraft stopDSEI campaign and I am

immensely proud of how our Venturers have driven this. I have sat on General Council for four years, have been Chair and am currently Vice Chair (Operations) which offers me the privilege of working directly with our staff team as well as our volunteers. The next couple of years present great opportunities for us including V Camp, Common Ground, and our centenary. I'd like to continue as a member of GC and trustee to see these delivered brilliantly, and to realise our ambition of Widening Participation.



Jeni Dixon

candidate for **Standing Orders Committee**

District: Lewisham and Greenwich

Age: 40

Length of Membership: 3 years and 4 months

Why I am standing for Standing Orders Committee:

I started my involvement in Woodcraft Folk back in 1986 and after growing up in the movement returned to be a Venturer leader in Lewisham and Greenwich several years ago. In 2017 I was elected to Standing Orders Committee and have chaired the committee for the past two years.

In my day job I work for Amnesty International in Community Organising, and have a key role in supporting our Annual Conference and AGM. Perhaps this makes me a gluton for punishment, but I do find exchanging experiences and ideas across the two organisations is really beneficial.



I have really enjoyed my time Chairing the Standing Orders Committee, and during my tenure the committee has returned to full capacity of 6 members, including 2 Venturers and we have a positive working relationship with both staff and General Council, whilst ensuring the rules of our democracy are followed by all. I'm really excited to have 1/3 of our committee under 16; I think it's vital as a youth movement that we do our best to enable young people to take on lead roles across the organisation. It's also a really good way for us to understand what is accessible for our Venturers and younger members when it comes to democracy; and far more relevant than my memory of a dusty? AGM in 1997!

I am proud of our committee and every member of it; we can only focus as a committee with everyone contributing to the best of their ability and we have developed a strong, cooperative and collaborative relationship which has enabled us to contribute further to our wider purpose of enabling positive and inclusive participation in our democracy; from discussions on how to manage debates at Annual Gathering to utilising the wide variety of lived experiences in committee. In this vein, I will hold my hands up that I have deferred to other committee members on some of the technical questions and focussed instead on bringing us altogether as a well-oiled machine, with everyone leading from their strengths.

As Woodcraft Folk we, like all organisations, still have a way to go to find the balance of democracy, inclusion, debate and fun (dare I say some bits about our democracy can feel quite boring!) but we're heading in the right direction and I'd like to serve another term to further support that direction.

Richard Kirkwood

candidate for **Standing Orders Committee**

District: Hackney

Age: 76

Length of Membership: 18 years and 4 months



Experience & Reasons for seeking election:

Member Woodcraft Folk since 1985.

Pioneer leader since 1988 (including periods leading Venturers and Elfins)

Various offices in Hackney District since 1986

London Region Committee

WcF Conference delegate 1987-1995 and 2009-2012.

SOC member since 2012

Member various national Woodcraft Folk working groups (e.g. anti-racism, international) since 1990

Member of my Trades Union (Natfhe, now UCU) equivalent of SOC from 1992 to 2004 and local negotiator on terms and conditions. So I am very familiar with interpreting rules, constitutions etc.

I consider that this experience qualifies me to be re-elected as a member of SOC.

I think that SOC plays a vital role in Woodcraft Folk democracy by ensuring that everyone in Woodcraft Folk, including 'leaders' such as members of General Council, is subject to the same rules and has the same rights. SOC should aim to make the way our democratic system works clear to everyone and encourage all members, particularly younger members, to be involved.

Ralph Sleigh

candidate for **Standing Orders Committee**

District: Ealing & Hammersmith

Age: 33

Length of Membership: 17 years

Experience & Reasons for seeking election:

Hey

I would like to stand for Standing Orders Committee to best help continue the work we are doing to enable remote participation in our democracy. I also love a good procedure and think I have a good handle on what the role entails.

I have been a leader in Ealing & Hammersmith since I was 16, and have spent the last 8 years on General Council, and have taken on a wide range of roles in that time and have a great deal of experience of how Woodcraft Folk works. During this time I think we have become a lot better at acknowledging the challenges facing our movement and doing what is required to meet them. I want to help us continue balancing evolving for the future with keeping what makes this movement so special to so many people.

AMA.

-Ralph



Ash Taylor

candidate for **Standing Orders Committee**

District: Sheffield Derwent

Age: 20

Length of Membership: 5 years

Woodcraft Folk Experience

Representative to Annual Gatherings 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 for Central Barnet District and 2015 for a DF Regional Place

2012-2015 Member of Venturer Committee and contributor to the TREE Programme
2015-2016 DF Liaison to Venturer Committee

2015-2016 Shadow Events Rep for the DF Movement

2015-2018 Member of Standing Orders Committee, including Vice Chair 2017-2018

2016-2017 Events Rep for the DF Movement

2017-2018 Secretary for the DF Movement
Involvement in the planning of Venturer Camp 2016 and Venturer Camp 2019

Involvement in the planning of other events

both local and national, inside and outside of DFs, in particular multiple DF Althings (AGMs) with a focus on ensuring constitutional correctness



Reason for Seeking Election

I greatly enjoyed being on Standing Orders Committee while I was on it previously, and I feel I improved in the role for the three years I was a member. After a year off, I am ready to come back in, and I am excited to see where this last year's full committee will have taken the group by now!

I want to be part of ensuring that our movement's democracy is as accessible as possible to all, but in particular, younger members of the folk.

I believe I have a good understanding of Woodcraft Folk's governing documents, and a good ability to carry that understanding out into the planning of a really great and enjoyable Annual Gathering!

Finally, I love to see more representation of our young members on Standing Orders Committee as it ensures a diversity of ideas and creativity, so as a person under the age of 21, I think I am very useful in that way.