

Elections to General Council, Standing Orders Committee and Folk Supply Committee

We have elections to three 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

<http://woodcraft.org.uk/woodcraft-annual-general-meeting> and bring the completed form with you to Gathering.

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 and two members to serve for one year.

Details of the nomination received in advance of Gathering are included in this document. Nominations have been re-opened. If you would like to stand, please download a nomination form from <http://woodcraft.org.uk/woodcraft-annual-general-meeting> and bring the completed form with you.

Nominations formally close at 9:10am on Sunday 24 June, but it is incredibly helpful if you can submit your nomination in advance by emailing nominations@woodcraft.org.uk

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, two candidates:

- Pip Sayers
- Zeph Deakin

General Council (lay)

Five places up for election, four candidates:

- Jack Walker
- Jack Brown
- Richard Ball
- Tom Brooks

Standing Orders Committee

Three places up for election, two places up for by-election four candidates:

- Alicia Francis
- Richard Kirkwood
- Mia Neibig
- David Neibig

Nominations to be re-opened in both General Council categories and for the SOC by-election.

Pip Sayers

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

District: Greater Manchester

Age: 22

Experience & Reasons for Standing:

Hi I'm Pip. I have been on General Council for nearly 3 years now, and I am currently Shadow Chair, the liaison between GC and Height Gate and am co-coordinating VCamp 2019! I grew up in Bradford and have continuously attended Woodcraft since I was 6 and am now a Venturer leader in south Manchester, where I live and work as a music teacher. I have also previously been DF's treasurer and was on DF committee for two years.

Woodcraft has had an extremely positive impact on my life. I have many invaluable memories, friendships and experiences that I've gained from going to camps, group nights, and (even) committee meetings in Woodcraft. I am re-standing to be on General Council because I want to ensure that the great experiences I've had are ones Woodcraft continues to provide to young people across the country, no matter who they are or where they come from.

Woodcraft is all about empowering young people to change the world for the better, and we should be ensuring that our organisation is not just for young people, but also led by young people. Woodcraft is also about the value of cooperation, and I believe Woodcraft has the power to change society by giving young people the tools to fight injustice and prejudice. As we move towards Woodcraft's 100th birthday, we should be looking to get more young people involved in our movement, and involve more communities to widen the reach of our message and span the world with friendship.

I really enjoy being on GC and it's been great to be able to give something back to the movement. I am well versed in how GC operates and consequently where it can improve and evolve, such as its transparency and accessibility. For the last year I have been Shadow Chair, and during this time I feel I've gained a thorough understanding of the day to day challenges faced by Woodcraft's members and staff, and the ways in which we can further our support and guidance to them as we evolve as an organisation.

I would love the opportunity to be on GC for another two years. Let's continue to make Woodcraft the inspiring organisation it is, and sing to the fashioning of a new world.

Blue skies



Zeph Deakin

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

District: Greater Manchester

Age: 20

Experience & Reasons for Standing:

Hi all,

I'm Zeph, I'm a current GC member and soon to be ex DF (age 20) living in Manchester. I have been one of the DF reps on General Council for the last year, and have held the roles of Laymember and Secretary on DF committee over the last couple of years.

I am also Production Coordinator for Venturer Camp 2019, DF liaison to Common Ground 2020, and a Venturer leader in Chorlton. I've found the last year on General Council to be a really interesting experience, but a year is a short time and I feel like I have a lot more to gain and to contribute still.

I also think that being on GC has worked well with my roles with VCamp and Common Ground, as it has allowed me to feed back between the different groups and get support and guidance from GC when needed, and I think this will be really beneficial in the lead up to both camps.

Please come and find me if you have any questions or just want to say hello.

Blue Skies,

Zeph



Jack Walker

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

District: Newham Watersmeet

Age: 30

Experience & Reasons for Standing:

I am an elfin leader from Newham Watersmeet District. I am 30 years old and have been in Woodcraft since I was 3. I am also Chair of the London Regional Committee. I am asking for re-election to General Council this year. I have been on General Council for 2 years so far and feel that I have made positive contributions in that time.

We are at an exciting time for Woodcraft at the moment – the average age of our board is young and we have under-25s in many important posts. I have been very supportive of this over my period on General Council and want to be able to carry this on in my next term. I strongly believe in making sure the voices of young people are heard.

I am very excited by the Widening Participation initiative that Woodcraft is undertaking at the moment. I strongly believe that every child deserves to experience Woodcraft and I'm very happy that Woodcraft is concentrating its resources on ensuring we get closer to that. I myself have opened up a new elfin group in a very deprived area of Newham and want to use my position on GC to make sure that help is given to those members who want to reach out to new communities across the country.

I have been Press Officer in my time on General Council and because of other time commitments have not been able to put enough time into this role. Because of personal circumstances changing, I will have more time to put into this role in the coming years and will make sure I use that time to make sure Woodcraft is more widely known.

I am also on the board of Common Ground, the international camp happening in Kent in 2020. I would like to continue being on General Council as I believe it is a good idea to have a number of members on both boards to ensure good communication between both committees. Tom Brooks is doing an excellent job as chair of Common Ground and I would like to continue supporting him on both committees.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on General Council and believe I have made a positive contribution in my time on the board. I would like to be re-elected so I can continue to ensure that General Council works positively for the movement.



Jack Brown

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



District: Banbury

Age: 30

Experience & Reasons for Standing:

I want to continue to be on General Council because I love thinking about how to make Woodcraft Folk better and doing things to make it happen. I have been on General Council on and off for a total of about 4 years, I feel I am particularly good at scrutinising trends and thinking about what to do about them. This year I have been lead safeguarding trustee. I was also heavily involved in the TREE project, supporting staff on a regular basis to deliver its aims of a more sustainable Woodcraft through youth participation. This, as well as my work with my local district, give me a good understanding of the challenges groups face – one of the most important challenges facing General Council in the next few years is to work with staff and the rest of the movement to reverse a decline in groups. I am very excited about the new focus on widening participation, I think my experience with other Woodcraft projects will help consider how to make this something the whole movement actively engages in.

Another thing that will be important for General Council and Woodcraft over the next 2 years is to ensure Venturer Camp and Common Ground improve Woodcraft as much as they can. These big events are such a chance to come together and energise our groups and members that they have a lasting impact on Woodcraft. I organised a successful Venturer Camp in 2013 and am involved in the Common Ground board, making sure the children and young people in our groups are engaged in the planning.

It really feels like General Council is making progress in making council more accessible for young people to get involved with, I have spent much of my time in Woodcraft working to empower young people. I set up Venturer Committee and supported it for 5 years and am now working on youth participation for Common Ground. I want to use this experience to continue to expand how General Council engages young people in its decisions, one of the things I am working on with Common Ground is expanding involvement beyond those few young people who get involved into committee by taking discussions and decisions into group nights. I want to support Council to do this too. I love Woodcraft and talking Woodcraft so come and talk to me about how you would change Woodcraft.

Richard Ball

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

District: Waltham Forest

Age: 48

Experience & Reasons for Standing:

"Life isn't fair" – I get a lot of pleasure when we are at events with other woodcraft groups asking my motley little crew what the first rule of woodcraft is. They enjoy the look of shocked outrage on the others leaders faces as they shout it in unison, and then run off laughing.

I have a point. Life isn't fair – my district is privileged – they have parents who are able to engage with them, they won't ever know hunger or poverty, and they could forget that if life has been unfair in your favour, you have responsibilities.

One is to do what you can to redress the balance. To be kind, to give your time and energy to others. To listen, to be aware of inequality, and if you can't actually empathise, come up with a bit of constructive sympathy and actual support. It's called "help".

The other is to not feel guilty for your luck, your privilege, whatever form your wealth, be that financial, societal or emotional, takes, because that's self indulgent and even counter productive.

I have been involved with Waltham Forest Woodcraft since my son was an Elfin nearly 15 years ago, and in the last ten years I have like many people given a few Thursday nights over to building a very tall chair out of spaghetti, or discussing the situation in Palestine with the people we hope will be running the country the right way in a few years, the young. (I am reliably informed that youth is not wasted on them).

This would be my first involvement directly engaging with the running of the show, and all I can offer in bona fides is a precis of the other parts of my life:

I am 48, married to the cleverest person I know, and live in London. I work in technology and training, I am in the process of becoming an adopter or foster parent, and I am that guy who wears mismatched shoes.

TL:DR – The folk have been an important part of my son's life. I have a debt to the movement, and I should be proud to serve on general council to pay those dues.



Tom Brooks

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

District: Lewisham & Greenwich

Age: 26

Experience & Reasons for Standing:

I have now been on General Council since 2012 with a 2 year gap to do my teacher training in 2014/2015. I am an Elfin Leader in my district and have been since I was 16. I am also currently coordinating Common Ground Woodcraft's international camp in the summer of 2020.



The most pressing reason I am asking you to vote for me is for Common Ground. Organising large events requires a lot of clear communication between, the Common Ground Board, General Council, the Woodcraft Central Staff team and soon the Common Ground staff team. Being on General Council allows me to deliver frequent updates in person answer questions and avoid miscommunications. It would be much harder for me to coordinate Common Ground if I was not on General Council.

More generally, I think my time on GC for a while as well as on a few organising teams for large camps, has given me experience of how Woodcraft works at a national level, its personalities, its intricacies, take a while to get used to. Only in the last couple of years have I felt truly comfortable; I really don't want to stop when I feel I am doing my best work for our organisation.

Things I would like to do as a GC member:

- Maintain excellent links between General Council and Common Ground
- Keep up clear communications between General Council and the rest of Woodcraft
- Find more sources of income for central Woodcraft
- Encourage and support more of Woodcraft's brilliant young people onto General Council and other organising committees so we can truly be a youth movement led by young people.

Alicia Francis

candidate for **Standing Orders Committee**

District: Newham Watersmeet

Age: 53



Why I am standing for Standing Orders Committee:

I am keen to be on Standing Orders committee because I believe:

1. that it is important that our procedures are transparent, open and properly applied, and
2. that these same procedures must encourage and facilitate engagement in the democratic process, particularly from our younger members.

I am keen to learn more about our standing orders and how we can make them work for the wider benefit of members.

My experience:

I am a member of Newham Watersmeet District, and a Pioneer and Venturer leader. I am active in our District Committee and over the last few years I have been involved in activities to widen participation in Woodcraft locally and nationally.

I have a solid understanding of the practice of good governance. I have been a voluntary Board member of two Housing Associations - Old Ford and Octavia; I have developed and reviewed the governance of several tenant management organisations; and I have previously been Director and Company Secretary for a small national charity.

Richard Kirkwood

candidate for **Standing Orders Committee**

District: Hackney

Age: 75

Length of Membership: since 1985



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

WcF Conference delegate 1987-1995 and 2009-2012.

SOC member since 2012

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

Member of my TU (Natfhe, now UCU) equivalent of SOC from 1992 to 2004.

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

Mia Neibig

candidate for **Standing Orders Committee**

District: Three Rivers

Age: 13

Length of Membership: 12 years

Experience & Reasons for seeking election:

I have been involved with Woodcraft almost my entire life. I went to Global Village when I was one and I spoke at CoCamp for Hiroshima day. Now I want to be involved nationally and I believe that SOC is the right committee for me. Woodcraft strives to teach the younger generations about democracy. As I am from a younger generation, I can ensure that age groups such as Elfin and Pioneers can completely understand Woodcraft's own democracy while being at an age in which I can understand it myself. I am a young person and since Woodcraft is keen to involve young people and therefore I think I am suitable for a role on the committee.

David Neibig

candidate for **Standing Orders Committee**

District: Greater Manchester

Age: 28

Length of Membership: 21 years



Previous SOC experience:

SOC member since 2008

Previously chair for 4 years

Other Woodcraft committee experience:

DF Committee Treasurer 2010 to 2011

DF Committee Shadow Treasurer, 2009 to 2010.

District responsibilities:

Represented Group or District at AG 2006, 2007 and 2008

Village KP at Northern Region Camp 2007

Work with other organisations:

Newcastle upon Tyne Youth Opportunities Fund youth assessment panel 2006 to 2008

Member of Youth Parliament for Newcastle upon Tyne 2006 to 2007

Reasons for seeking election:

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on the Standing Orders Committee to date. I feel that Standing Orders Committee is crucial to maintaining internal democracy within the Woodcraft Folk and as such, it is important that the committee remains in a position where it can offer impartial judgement on matters relating to the Governing Documents and our internal democratic process. I feel that I am also capable of explaining the technicalities of the Governing Documents and our democratic process to people in a way that is easy to understand.

I feel that as an experienced member of the committee I have a very good understanding of the way in which our democratic process works and as a result, can also provide valuable input to the function of the committee. Additionally as one of the more experienced members I feel that I can help other members of SOC learn the more intricate/technical parts so that they too can contribute their full skills and potential to the work of SOC and ultimately Woodcraft as a whole.

Moving forward I want to ensure that SOC takes a major role in helping groups and districts understand the governing documents, how they function and for SOC to help all parties to have a greater understanding of the implications of Woodcraft's structure for groups and districts. I want to ensure that not only groups and districts but individuals, particularly young people, know how they can participate in internal Woodcraft democracy, to help ensure that as many parts of Woodcraft as possible feel enfranchised and empowered to use their democratic rights so that their views can help shape our movement looking forward to the future.