

Rough Guide to Annual Gathering

What is Annual Gathering?

Annual Gathering is a two day event which informs Woodcraft Folk activity and policy for groups, General Council and staff. The weekend can be split into three parts:

- **Conference:** this business session is the Woodcraft Folk AGM and the main part of Annual Gathering. The centre spread of this leaflet explains how it all works.
- **Workshops:** these are held on the Sunday morning and are chance to try new things and learn more about Woodcraft Folk projects, policies and initiatives.
- **Social events:** including campfires, bars, parties and ceilidhs. Any member of Woodcraft Folk can come to Gathering, and we would love as many people as possible to be here, but to ensure its democratic you must be a delegate representing a group, district or DF region in order to vote in the business session and elections.

The Conference is the principal focus of the event and takes place in the main tent or room. Most of the session will be run as a plenary, when everyone comes together as one group, but we might also break off into some smaller open space discussions.

The Chair of Standing Orders Committee will explain each part of the session and the procedure as we go along and you'll find more detail at the back of the Final Agenda but here's an at-a-glance guide.....

The Conference (the business session)

Who's involved:

These people will be sitting at the front. If you want to ask a question or raise a point you will need to get their attention.

Chair: nominated by General Council to be in charge of running the plenary session.

Vice Chair: shares responsibilities with the Chair.

General Secretary: the member of staff who oversees the day-to-day running of Woodcraft Folk.

There are also other groups of people including:

General Council (GC): the elected board of trustees responsible for managing the Woodcraft Folk.

Standing Orders Committee (SOC): a group of 6 people who compile the agenda, make sure that the meeting runs smoothly and that all business is done in the right way.

Delegates: members attending Annual Gathering to represent their group/district/DF region and vote on motions and in elections.

Visitors: non-Delegates attending Annual Gathering. They are allowed to speak but cannot vote. Some visitors will be elected at the start of the event as 'scrutineers' and 'tellers' to count votes.

What happens:

1. Opening Address

This is given by the General Secretary and is a chance to hear about the past year and the year to come. It often also has lots of information about the weekend ahead, so don't miss it!

2. Minutes of the previous and matters arising

We need to vote to approve that the minutes of last year's conference are a true record (copies will be available to read).

3. Election of Scrutineers and Tellers

Standing Orders Committee need visitors to volunteer to be elected as 'scrutineers' to help count the election votes and 'tellers' to watch the count and make sure it's fair. The scrutineers will miss some of the business meeting but they get to know the election results first.

4. Annual Report

This is a document put together before Annual Gathering that outlines the achievements in the past year within Woodcraft Folk. At the beginning of Annual Gathering, we will vote on whether or not to accept the Report as a true record of our achievements (there will also be copies of this available for you to read).

5. Report of the Standing Orders Committee

Standing Orders Committee (who are responsible for planning the business section) will explain the order of the business and how the day will work. We will then hold a vote on this to approve their decisions.

6. Elections

Members of General Council and Standing Orders Committee are elected by delegates at Annual General Meeting. You will get to meet the nominated candidates and ask them questions during the event. If there are not enough candidates to fill the positions, then the Chair of SOC will ask for 'nominations from the floor' and anyone can stand. The ballot box will be open during the motion discussions and breaks so that you can cast your vote.

7. Motions

Motions (also sometimes called 'resolutions') and amendments (to change the motions) are proposed at the Conference and put forward for debate and vote. Some motions may refer to the whole of Woodcraft Folk and some just to parts of it, for example, to General Council.

Procedure for addressing each motion

- A representative of the group of people that wrote the motion makes a 5 minute speech to propose it.
- If someone has added an amendment, they then have 3 minutes to explain why they want to change the motion.

⇒ Anyone on the floor can speak for or against the amendment.

⇒ A vote takes place on the amendment.

- People speak for and against the 'substantive motion' (the motion as it is now - with or without the amendment).
- If you want to speak, move to the front of the room and wait in line for the microphone. There might be a set of 'traffic lights' to tell each speaker when their 3mins of time are up.
- Finally, the proposer will speak again and then a vote is held.

Open Space debates:

Some of the motions might be addressed simultaneously, using the 'Open Space' method of small group discussions, guided by facilitators. Delegates can move around the room, joining each discussion in turn. Facilitators will then feedback the points raised in the discussions to the whole conference and everyone will vote on each motion.