

Elections 2025

General Council and Standing Orders Committee

We have elections to two bodies this Annual General Meeting.

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.

In 2021 a motion was passed seeking to maintain gender diversity on General Council, young and non-CIS male candidates will be prioritised when the votes are counted.

We have elections for eight lay members, five to serve for two years and three to fill vacancies which have arisen due to resignations. We also have elections for two 16-24 year old members to serve for two years.

This year we have 3 nominations for 16-24 members and 9 for lay members.

Details of the nominations are included in this document.

Standing Orders Committee (SOC)

Standing Orders Committee ensures 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 2 nominations and details of the nomination received are included in this document.

In 2025 nominations will not be reopened so any vacancies will be covered through co-option following a skills audit of all elected members or left vacant.

All elections in Woodcraft Folk use the Single Transferable Vote system, known as STV. For more information about STV visit the [Electoral Reform Society website](#).

Voting

All Group and District Contacts will be invited to vote. Individuals voting on behalf of groups and Districts will be invited to vote on the following:

- Approval of the Annual General Meeting minutes 15th June 2024
- Approval of the accounts and Trustees Annual report 2024
- Appointment of Woodcraft Folk's auditors

To ensure that no group or District misses out on their opportunity to vote due to any planned or unforeseen circumstances all groups and Districts are being asked to express their vote before the AGM meeting, which is taking place in person at Camp 100. They can cast their vote online or they can choose to:

- Nominate someone to vote on their behalf, known as a Proxy
- Nominate the Chair of General Council to vote on their behalf. If they nominate the Chair of General Council they can instruct the Chair how to vote or allow the Chair to vote as they see fit. If no instruction is given the Chair will vote in favour to approve the minutes, Annual Report and accounts, the appointment of Woodcraft Folk's auditors and in favour of all motions submitted by General Council. The Chair will not vote in the elections of candidates or on motion 5.

To cast your vote or nominate a proxy [please use this form](#).

All groups and Districts are also invited to vote in members of General Council and Standing Orders Committee. They can do that by completing the [online ballot paper](#). The ballot paper lists the names of the candidates. Voters vote by ranking their preferred candidates 1-6. They stop allocating preferences when they cannot decide between the candidates – they do not need to vote for them all.

If you have any questions please contact soc@woodcraft.org.uk

Summary of Candidates

General Council (16-24)

Two places up for election, 3 candidates:

- Callista Smithson Swain
- Esme Thompson
- Tyler Eckersall

General Council (lay)

Eight places up for election, 9 candidates:

- Ashley Harker
- Eddie Moriarty
- Ian Brown
- Joe Flannagan
- Joseph (Joe) Bailey
- Nancy Hawker
- Ruth Doak
- Stuart Walker
- Tamsin Pearce

Standing Orders Committee

Three places up for election, 2 candidates:

- Ralph Sleigh
- Wilfred Lamont

Callista Smithson Swain

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

District: Exeter



Woodcraft Folk knowledge and experience:

I have been a part of Woodcraft Folk since Elfins, and it has been a big part of my life ever since. My involvement began with Exeter Woodcraft, where I volunteered on camps as assistant KP and Folk Marshall. I then moved into national roles when I was elected Southwest Representative on Venturer Committee, gaining experience in planning events at a national level. Once I was in DFs, I was Shadow Events Representative in 2023 and Co-Events Representative in 2024. In these roles, I have helped plan and deliver national events, as well as attending regular Committee meetings and contributing to decision making policy. This combination of experiences means I not only have experience in decision making roles within Woodcraft Folk, but I also have a personal connection with the movement.

Skills I can bring to General Council:

My involvement in DF Committee has given me experience in organising national DF events, delegating tasks, allocating resources, and the opportunity to take on many of the different key roles in running an event. This experience has given me strong skills in communication, administration, and organisation. Through my degree in Biology I have developed excellent IT skills, becoming confident in data management and using Microsoft Excel and coding systems. Balancing my academic studies, DF responsibilities, and part-time work has also taught me effective time management, organisation, and problem-solving.

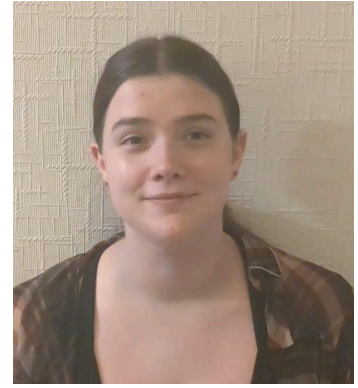
Why I am standing for General Council:

Woodcraft Folk has shaped my values, confidence, and provided me with a community throughout my life. It is for this reason I would like to give back to the organisation and become more involved in the planning which keeps it running. I am particularly passionate about ensuring that young people have a strong voice in our movement and continuing the inclusive nature of Woodcraft Folk. Serving on General Council would allow me to continue contributing to Woodcraft Folk in a meaningful way, while gaining new experience in governance and strategic decision-making.

Esme Thompson

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

District: Bristol



Woodcraft Folk Experience

I have been a part of woodcraft folk since I was a woodchip (and a little one at that). Since then I volunteered with my local elfin group as a group leader before leaving for uni. While at uni I got involved with DF committee as accessibility rep then as first aid fairy, until taking one of the DF seats on GC two years ago. During my time on GC I have also been the link to Biblins Committee, and have attended many working weekends at the site.

Skills I can bring to General Council

Since I have experience both as a young person in woodcraft and as a group leader, I can provide a rounded perspective on decisions made. I study maths and physics at uni, which provides me with a broad statistical and analytical skillset.

Why am I standing for General Council

I have found my time on GC to be very fulfilling. I believe woodcraft is a fantastic charity that has shaped a large part of me and I would like to continue to contribute in every way I can to providing this experience to other young people. It continues to be increasingly important to raise a generation of confident, passionate young people and I really value the environment that woodcraft provides its members with to do so.

Tyler Eckersall

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

District: Manchester



I joined Woodcraft Folk as a venturer, but I felt most understood when I became a DF in 2021. Of these last four years, I've served on DF Committee for three of them.

First, as its communications representative but more significantly as the Chair of DF Committee. I've helped rebuild old DF events, as well as introducing new annual traditions. The work of the last two DF committees I have overseen has given me a strong sense of excitement for the future of Woodcraft Folk.

I joined General Council in 2023 as a DF representative excited to try something new. Now, in 2025, with two years of trustee experience under my belt, I want to make sure I can play a part in the next chapter of Woodcraft Folk beyond our centenary.

My time in the DF movement comes to an end this year, but I believe there is still a place for me to apply the skills I learned as a DF in a different place in our organisation.

Should the movement decide, I would be very grateful to them for the opportunity to continue on our General Council.

Ashley Harker

Candidate for **General Council (Lay)**

District: Waltham Abbey & Harlow



Woodcraft Folk knowledge and experience

I am a lifelong member of the folk, to the point where I was born on a group night and made my first appearance in my district at the ripe age of 7 days old. For 10 years I have been a group leader for Blazing Star district which includes my role as the district safeguarding officer. For the past 2 years I have been a warden at Cudham.

I am a secondary humanities teacher and have additional responsibilities as a school counsellor. My specialism is on LGBTQ+ history which I am campaigning now to be included in the National Curriculum.

Skills I can bring to General Council/Standing Orders Committee

I am a Trustee for the Epping Forest District and so already have experience working in the administration of a registered charity.

I provide training for schools and universities on supporting LGBTQ+ pupils and creating a safe and inclusive environment. I also have experience with writing and changing policy documents to promote in LGBTQ+ acceptance within organisations as well as legal guidance in how to support LGBTQ+ people within the shifting legal framework.

Why I am standing for General Council/Standing Orders Committee

I am standing for General Council because I want to make sure that I am representing my community and to make sure that LGBTQ+, particularly transgender people have a voice within the Woodcraft Folk that can safeguard our rights and campaign for inclusivity and tolerance, ensuring that we are a fellowship that is welcoming and supporting for everyone, particularly the most vulnerable.

Eddie Moriarty

Candidate for **General Council (Lay)**

District: Walton

Hi! I'm Eddie, I've been in the Folk since I was six, and I've been helping to run groups at my local district and others since I was 14.



You might recognise me as one of the members who help facilitate Ms Riley's at Common Ground!

I was first elected to GC in 2019, and since then I've been involved as the Lead Trustee for Health & Safety, chairing the Health & Safety Working Group, as well as sitting in a number of other Working Groups and Committees as well, including a newly formed Trade Union Working Group, and have sat in a number of recruitment and interview panels for new staff members joining the organisation.

If you'll allow me to rejoin GC, I hope to bring my experience of what GC has been doing over the last few years and, hopefully, use it to empower the newer members who're looking to join the committee - especially those under 25, some of whom have not had the experience of a committee like this, and could benefit from learning to have a more holistic view of our work, developing a greater level of engagement.

I want to see a General Council more involved in the day-to-day life of the Folk, from the ground up, and not just at the National Level. I'm standing for GC again because I have a deep love for the movement, and want to keep giving back to it in every way I can.

Over the last year, I'd fallen out of love with some aspects of the Folk, but during recent activities I'd taken part in, including a recent interview panel, as well as returning to group work more permanently, I've rediscovered my love for the movement - and I'm keen to defend the heart and soul of it, wherever I can.

Part of me is worried about our movement losing part of what makes us, *us*, and I find myself driven to defend and protect that wherever I can. I want to bring a greater focus on those principles, and help us truly deliver Education for Social Change at every level.

I'm keen to reinvigorate our traditional links with the Trade Union movement, and strengthen our connection with the Cooperative movement. I believe that there is a great deal of learning and benefit we could all share from, if we were to engage in a deeper level of cooperation.

Ian Brown

Candidate for **General Council (Lay)**

District: Leicestershire



Woodcraft Folk knowledge and experience

I first encountered Woodcraft Folk when looking for an alternative to the mainstream youth groups for our then young children.

Work commitments prevented me from taking part in group activities but I enjoyed district camps and when Leicestershire's camp store had to be relocated I renovated a dilapidated barn to act as our new store. Since then I have been instrumental in the running of Leicestershire's District Camps and jointly ran a village at Common Ground.

In 2014 I trained as a Lockerbrook warden, have wardened several times a year ever since, and enjoy meeting the groups, supporting them and resolving any issues. I joined Lockerbrook's Centre Committee in 2019 as Health & Safety Representative, soon joined the Lockerbrook Decarbonisation Group and represent Lockerbrook on the national Health & Safety and Decarbonisation working groups.

I have served on several Lockerbrook recruitment panels, including for Centre Manager, Deputy Manager and Centre Assistants, and in 2020 acted as line manager for our newly recruited Deputy Manager who could not be furloughed.

When Lockerbrook was unable to welcome large groups during the Covid-19 lockdowns, I led the team of volunteers refurbishing Lockerbrook's cottage to generate much-needed income and have been helping to run Lockerbrook's twice-yearly Working Weekends ever since.

Skills I can bring to General Council

As a Chartered Engineer I spent the first fifteen years of my working life managing various energy generation and baggage handling projects. After taking an MBA I spent six years in business process re-engineering then another eight years in Governance, Risk and Compliance management for the public healthcare sector.

In 2014 I founded, and now chair, the Friends of Clarendon Park community group in Leicester which supports local residents and businesses on matters of planning, licensing, consultations and campaigns, as well as running projects including noise monitoring and community gardening.

Why I am standing for General Council

I understand that GC is looking for a lay member who will represent the interests of all Woodcraft Folk centres and be able to convey the likely impact of GC's decisions on the centres. Although I have a wealth of experience at Lockerbrook, I would expect to work with staff and volunteers at the other centres to understand their specific issues and needs so as to be able to represent them at GC.

Joe Flannagan

Candidate for **General Council (Lay)**

District: Ealing



Woodcraft Folk Knowledge and Experience

I attended Woodcraft from age 14 and as a young person in the organisation I was on a grant panel for TREE, was vice chair of DF committee, helped run events, and set up the first ever STEM Cell centre. I've continued to be involved as a kinsfolk by contributing to national events as co-head steward at V camp 2019, camp public health expert plus evaluation coordinator at Common Ground, and most recently overseeing all of programme for Camp 100. I have a deep understanding of the principles at the core of Woodcraft and a great appreciation for the wonderful things it offers young people.

Skills I Can Bring to General Council

I'm an epidemiologist which means that professionally I manage and analyse data at large scales. I code in multiple languages, have responsibility to maintain good data governance practices, and know my way round a spreadsheet. Through my Camp 100 role I believe I've shown many other skills which I can also bring. I'm very organised, hardworking, a clear communicator, work well with others, and I bring a dose of creative thinking to everything I do. Part of this is being willing to listen, to contribute, and to even challenge others when necessary. I would say this culminates in one of the biggest strengths I think I could bring, the drive and ability to turn ideas into action, which I believe is well evidenced by the vast and wide-ranging programme at Camp 100.

Why I am Standing for General Council

Woodcraft has given me a lot: fresh perspectives, close friends, unforgettable experiences, and a whole host of skills that I've used again and again. Since I aged out I've been keen to give back to the organisation and give others the opportunity to be shaped by it how I was. As mentioned I've done this in numerous ways already which I believe show my dedication to this organisation and its aims. Becoming a member of general council is the next way I'd like to get involved and give back. Being a member of GC at this time just after our big anniversary and with a new CEO incoming is an exciting prospect to me. I'd love this opportunity to support the organisation and work with others to address the challenges it faces and help it grow.

Joe Bailey

Candidate for **General Council (Lay)**

District: Waltham Abbey & Harlow



I joined the Folk as a Pioneer and stayed through to DF in the Muswell Hill district, re-joining in 2013 when my children started as Woodchips in the Waltham Abbey & Harlow district. Since then, I've taken on various roles and responsibilities: from parent helper to Elfin Leader alongside my wife Jojo; as Secretary for the Bushcraft Group; and as a volunteer warden for Cudham.

In 2023, I joined General Council and became Co-Lead for Campsites and Centres. In 2024, I was elected Chair of General Council, our Board of Trustees.

During my time on Council, I've served on several committees and working groups, collaborating with fellow Trustees to make strategic and sometimes difficult decisions to steer the Folk toward financial sustainability. I've worked to support both the Board and staff teams, and have built strong working relationships—but there is still more to do.

2025 marks our 100th year and brings with it significant change. As an organisation, we must adapt to the challenges ahead to continue delivering our aims and principles for the next century. At the upcoming AGM, several long-standing members of Council will be stepping down, and new Trustees will join.

If re-elected, I intend to continue as Chair and support both existing, and new members as they find their feet. The knowledge and experience I've gained over the past two years as a Trustee will help provide continuity at a time of change and ensure Council continues to deliver for the organisation it serves.

I'm fortunate to be able to take time away from work to attend group nights every week and to meet the many responsibilities that come with being Chair of General Council. If re-elected, I hope the insight and understanding I've gained will help the Folk begin our next chapter with confidence.

Nancy Hawker

Candidate for **General Council (Lay)**

District: Highgate & Holloway



The main skills I provide to Woodcraft Folk are reading and writing, which I learnt by the age of eight. I have only marginally matured since then, which is probably why I identify with Elfins.

I stimulate teamwork by getting the giggles at the slightest pretext, pleasing everyone: team-mates are flattered that their joke set me off, and if they don't succumb to contagious giggling, then my silliness contrasts with their sophistication...

Woodcraft Folk knowledge and experience

When my son Adam joined Highgate & Holloway District in 2018, and me with him, it felt like coming home. The volunteers created the kindness that made the community that our world-wandering family needed.

Our age-group leaders asked for help with activities: I had crafts, wide games and call-and-response songs to share. I co-led Elfins since 2020, and now Pioneers. When our District Coordinator of ten years stepped down at the end of 2023, I was elected to coordinate the District. We adults are responsible for building the flexible and practical structure that meets children's need for sociable, informal, meaningful learning about the world.

The history and principles of Woodcraft Folk resonate with me. In 2023 I enabled the Woodcraft Folk children's contributions to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' report on inclusive social protection. In 2024 I acted on our Elfins' wish to march for Restore Nature Now. In 2025 I chaired the District AGM where Venturers contributed to our resolution for peace in Palestine and Israel.

Skills I can bring to General Council

I have worked in large and small charities – Alternative Information Center, Amnesty International and now London Gypsies and Travellers – as a researcher and campaigner for human rights. I can present Woodcraft Folk messages to different audiences including Elfins (my favourite), other community organizers, journalists and politicians (not usually my favourite). I was also a lecturer, qualified in pedagogical methods. I offer Woodcraft children “pedagogical love”, following some ideas of Anna Freud: I clear the brush from children's paths to the issues that matter to them, with an interest in their individual and social development.

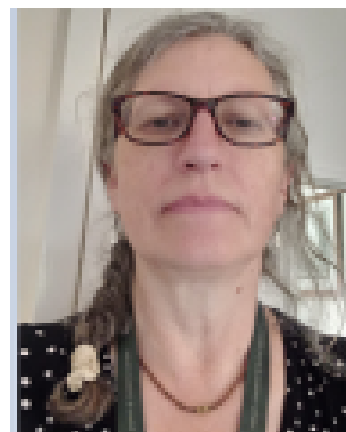
Why I am standing for General Council

I endeavour to open opportunities for children to be engaged in progressive change. If elected, I will guide Woodcraft Folk's strategy for acting on children's campaigning priorities. My special objective is encouraging children from disadvantaged groups to participate. My name is Nancy and this is my friend, every child in Woodcraft Folk.

Ruth Doak

Candidate for **General Council (Lay)**

District: Newham Watersmeet



Woodcraft Folk knowledge and experience

Woodcraft is an organisation I have been involved with as a parent, volunteer and a district officer for more than 10 years, initially with the Leytonstone group, a parent volunteer with Newham Pioneers and Venturers and as Membership and Safeguarding Officer for Newham District until 2023. I am strongly committed to Woodcraft's values and its organisational objectives of empowering young people, building community, standing up for social issues and with our young people, building a compassionate, kind, inclusive society in the UK and more widely.

Skills I can bring to General Council

I am currently a headteacher at a nursery school and Children's Centre in Tottenham, North London; a disadvantaged community with strength in its resilience and diversity. Our setting helps build community and provides support. It is a real example of 'if any are weary we'll help them along'. I have worked with children and families in education for 30 years as SENCO and Senior leadership, also for a large part of my career as an advisory teacher in Newham for children experiencing Social, emotional and mental health difficulties. I have good knowledge and experience of outdoor education and the Forest school approach, embracing play opportunities that enable children, helps them explore and enjoy adventurous play experiences.

In both my Woodcraft and my school role I have always been involved in safeguarding, both in its narrow and broadest senses, with families and young people and organisationally building a strong safeguarding culture. As Designated Safeguarding Lead for the last 25 years I have a practical and strategic understanding of safeguarding and would like to use that experience and knowledge to support the organisation. I lead on the health and safety of my buildings, within the budget available, and have a good working knowledge of requirements.

The range of responsibilities that I undertake as a head have given me a broad range of skills, especially problem solving and responding to changing situations. Currently within my role I am part of the Racial Equity Steering group in Haringey focusing on how to provide a curriculum in our schools for racial equity and challenge schools to provide equity in our schools.

I am a Trustee for the Haringey Education Partnership and the Haringey Nursery School Consortium, so have experience of being a trustee and of governance.

Why I am standing for General Council

I'm proud to be part of the Woodcraft family. Woodcraft has been a hugely influential part of my family life, values and experiences. Through membership of the general council, I would be able to support the continuing impact of this fantastic organisation. Young people are our future and in these challenging Woodcraft can be part of positive and empowering part theirs.

Stuart Walker

Candidate for **Standing Orders Committee**

District: Newham Watersmeet

I am a Woodcrafter with significant experience. I have been a group leader for many years and led ambitious projects including a group visit to the occupied territories of the West bank of Palestine.

I have sat on General Council for several terms and have been a previous chair. I am passionate about enabling our young people to make a genuine contribution to a better world.

If I am elected to the Council I will focus on ensuring that we have strategic plans for financial sustainability, that the recommendations of the EDI report are enacted, and that our marvellous centres are supported to deliver our values to young people of the future.



Tamsin Pearce

Candidate for **Standing Orders Committee**
District: Bath



Woodcraft Folk knowledge and experience

I have been a member of Woodcraft Folk since the age of six and have been actively involved at various levels of the organisation:

- Co-leading Elfin, Pioneer and Venturer groups, including setting up an Elfin group in 2019. Currently a regular leader for the elfin/ pioneer group.
- Member of DF committee and General Council from 1998 - 2005 and 2021-23 including chairing General Council for two years.
- Global Village 2006 project officer, bringing together 5000 children and young people.
- IFM-SEI Vice President/ Secretary General (2001 - 2013)
- Biblins volunteer, regularly wardening and supporting long-term European volunteers.

Skills I can bring to General Council

I feel I have a range of skills relevant to General Council:

- **Organisational management.** Leading strategic direction and day-to-day management of member-led movements both as a volunteer and a staff member.
- **Project design and management.** Developing, securing funding for, and managing a range of educational projects with and for children and young people.
- **Participation.** Facilitating the meaningful participation of children and young people at local, national and international level.
- **Education.** Facilitating educational activities and meetings as well as writing and editing educational resources.
- **Fundraising/ financial management.** Raising significant grant income as IFM-SEI Secretary General and managing large project and administrative budgets.
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.** Devising and implementing inclusion strategies and facilitating safe spaces for reflection and learning. Not being afraid to challenge myself and others.

Why I am standing for General Council

Woodcraft Folk is a powerful movement. It has shaped my life hugely - my politics, my career and my friendships, and I feel incredibly lucky to be part of it. I have seen hundreds of young people in Woodcraft Folk go on to make positive change in the world and I want to see many more not only getting the opportunity to access our activities, but to be part of that movement for social change. I am passionate about supporting and strengthening our groups in order to re-energise. I see camp 100 as a fantastic opportunity to rebuild a sense of community and connection in our membership, providing a springboard for the years ahead. I feel I have skills and experience to support this work and the motivation to work with members towards the next 100 years.