

Walton Firs Newsletter

March 2017

Introduction

As the winter months come to an end, Walton Firs remains a hive of activity as we prepare ourselves for another super season of adventure, activity and challenge for young people. The team have been hard at work throughout the off-season maintaining the buildings & activities, taking bookings for the coming months and they even managed a well-earned break over Christmas. But now they have returned - completely refreshed and ready to welcome more youth groups to Cobham and help them experience life in the great outdoors at Walton Firs!



Low Ropes

Over the winter months, we have constructed a new Low Ropes course, consisting of different elements which the participants will need to overcome to complete the activity. These include a giant see-saw, a '4 - way', Mo-hawk and trail. This new activity will be an instructed session and available for visitors aged seven and over, due to the strength required to complete the course.

The course itself sits just one metre off the floor and is designed to develop team work, balance and coordination as well as trust in other people - whilst allowing participants to have fun at the same time. The low ropes course could also help visitors gain in confidence before approaching some of the other higher activities at the centre.

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New Low Ropes Course

The Business Manager

Nightline Rebuild

Site Expansion

New Ablution Block

Forthcoming Events

Courses

And lots more....



Welcoming our new Business Manager – Andy Harvey

Since our last issue the team has been bolstered by the arrival of Andy Harvey, our new Business Manager. Andy joined us at the beginning of January from KPMG, where he spent over a year working with small and medium sized businesses in and around London. Prior to that Andy spent 30 years in the Army, joining as a fresh faced 16 year old and rising through the ranks - eventually retiring as a Major. His parents were keen Scouting enthusiasts and consequently he progressed through Cubs, Scouts and Venture Scouts prior to his military career.

Andy says "I am absolutely thrilled to be joining the team here at Walton Firs. I remember fondly my Scouting days, and I want to help the centre become a place where great memories are made for children from all kinds of youth groups. Outdoor education has a really important part to play in developing youngsters, and Walton Firs is able to make that happen in an interesting, fun and challenging way - outside the classroom in an environment where children can learn by doing".

Andy's role is multi-faceted and will encompass marketing, fund raising, budgetary and general management responsibilities.



In Appreciation.....

In this issue we would like to pay tribute and extend our heartfelt thanks to....

The Brewery Inn, Ashted (donation of 6 benches for our picnic area)

Harken UK (donation of rope for the Low Ropes Course)

Waitrose, New Malden (cash donation from their 'Community Matters' scheme)

Service Crews (for continuing to be absolutely incredible)

Patrons and Directors (who assisted greatly and spent a very long time trying to teach us youngsters how to splice the Low Ropes).



Do you want to get involved?

As a Charity the Walton Firs Foundation relies on a great deal of volunteer support to be able to provide such a great facility for young people.

It's brilliant fun, makes a real difference to people and looks great on your CV too!

If you would like to help by donating some time or resources, or would like to offer a financial donation please get in touch by telephone on 01932 863243 - or by dropping us a line at info@waltonfirs.co.uk – we'd love to hear from you!

Courses at Walton Firs

We are occasionally asked to run courses here at Walton Firs. These include:

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|-----------------------------|---|------|
| Emergency First Aid (1 day) | - | £40 |
| NVQ Level 3 in First Aid | - | £150 |
| Archery Instructor | - | £220 |

Please contact us if you would like to enquire about a course, or if you would like to run a bespoke course for your organisation at Walton Firs.

Nightline Revamped



Due to the construction of the low ropes course, we have moved and improved the Nightline course. The new course which is over 120 meters in length and has more elements for the participants to complete (e.g. dangling ropes, spiders web, 'through the key hole' and a cargo net crawl).



The overall purpose of the nightline course is to make participants use different senses and teamwork as they navigate through the course.

The course will remain a self-led activity and have a useful information sheet for leaders to get the most from it.

We hope to further extend the course, so if you know of anyone with a large plastic tube going spare (1 metre diameter & between 3 and 6 metres in length) please let us know!



The New Ablutions

The new toilet block at Walton Firs completed in June last year. Since then the construction of the water fountain and the pathways outside the toilet block have been completed by staff and volunteers.

Within the pathway around the toilet block a special paving slab has been set which displays the various compass points.

This area has also seen the erection of fences for both aesthetics and safety reasons, and we plan to build an outside shower over the coming months for use after the adventure course or any muddy activities.

Expanding Walton Firs

Walton Firs has leased an additional parcel of land from our neighbours on the Burhill Estate. The land is located behind the Adventure Course and extends from the Horse Field up towards the Seven Hills Road. The land will be cleared to allow the Centre to move the Archery range and offer additional activity space for schools and youth groups visiting the site.

We potentially have a generous offer of a JCB to help clear the land, but we have a great deal of chainsaw work to do first so that the JCB can access the more overgrown areas.

If you hold a chainsaw certificate of competence, and would like to come and assist in the clearance the please do get in touch. But it's not just chainsaw teams we need - If you would like to volunteer any kind of assistance to help clear the land then please let us know. There will be a great deal on hands-on assistance required. Discounted camping rates may be available to certain youthful categories of helpers!

The JCB (if procured) will be on-site after Easter, so we are especially keen to hear from individuals or teams that could assist:

Weekends of 1st-2nd April, 8th-9th April or Easter long weekend (14th-18th April).

Weekdays 3rd-7th April or 10th-13th April.

If you can spare some time it would be great to see you here!

Coming soon.....

Watch out for:

Vending machines – by popular demand for leaders that need regular coffee fixes (and for young people with the midnight munchies of course).

Outside showers – just to keep our shiny new ablutions clean really.

Multi-faith Chapel improvements.

Supporting Walton Firs

Walton Firs Foundation prides itself on reinvesting all profits into the Activity Centre and maintaining it as a great venue for young people to learn and develop life skills. The cost of the new ablutions and other site projects have left the Foundation quite low on resources, so if you have a great fundraising idea, or would like to make a small donation of time, sweat or cash to support the Foundation then please do get in touch. Investing in our youth is a really great cause!

Raising the Profile and Fundraising

There is lots of planning underway for some new events at Walton Firs:

We are sometimes called 'the best-kept secret in Surrey', as quite a lot of people seem unaware of our existence. To help raise our profile, especially locally, we are planning a whacky weekend of activities open to the general public in August 2017. More details and dates to follow!

Many of our visitors come from schools and uniformed youth groups. We are planning a weekend in October 2017 to invite group leaders and event/trip planners to come and see us on site – and maybe even try out some of the activities for themselves.

Our friends and neighbours at Burhill Golf Club have offered to host a Charity 'Black-Tie' Dinner and Auction in the spring of 2018 in aid of Walton Firs Foundation. Tickets will be limited in number, so please let us know if you are interested in attending. Also any suggestions or donations for Auction lots would be very welcome!

Digital Developments



New for 2017, Walton Firs has adopted a new logo - which you'll see draws heavy influence from the much-loved previous 'Fir Tree' logo.

Additionally the Walton Firs website (www.waltonfirs.co.uk) is undergoing major redevelopment to allow it to better support our marketing efforts. More news expected shortly!

The social media accounts on Twitter (@WaltonFirs), Facebook (Walton Firs Activity Centre or @WaltonFirs) and Instagram (waltonfirsactivitycentre) have all been refreshed, and visitors are encouraged to post any 'action pics' of their visit (with appropriate consent naturally).

Contact Us:

info@waltonfirs.co.uk

www.waltonfirs.co.uk

Tel: 01932 863243

Facebook: Walton Firs Activity Centre

Twitter: @WaltonFirs

Instagram: waltonfirsactivitycentre