



FRIENDS OF WALTON FIRS

Newsletter No 16
December 2008



A Very Happy Christmas 2008 from the Friends of Walton Firs



The weather has been seasonally cold but this has not stopped our efforts to prepare for the next camping season. We undertook to keep you up to date with progress and can report that plans are now well underway to erect a Dutch Barn covered area near the car park. This will make loading and unloading easier in bad weather, and also provide somewhere to shelter for our increasing number of day visitors. If we are fortunate enough to have some hot weather, it will also provide much needed shade.

This project has been made possible by your continued support without which we would not be able to offer Surrey young people a superb camping experience.

Many who come along meet personal challenges face-on by attempting our climbing wall. This is another area we would like to improve and update. It offers the climber a safe way to stretch boundaries and take calculated risks. If anyone has any stories about their climbing wall experiences, or anything you would like to recall about the site, you can email them to Stella at stella@waltonfirs.co.uk and who knows, you may be in print next time!



One of the most recent changes has been in our Admin Office. Debs Beaney who started the ball rolling with the set up of the Friends of Walton Firs office, and its systems, has handed over to Stella Simpson, We'll miss you Debs and hope you are enjoying life without us. Stella comes to us with a background in 'child centred activities' having once run a toddler group, worked in a playgroup, helped at Girl's Brigade and been a Woodcraft Folk leader. Here's what she says about herself...

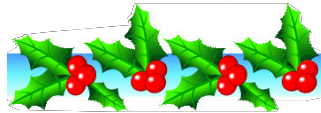


"It was nearly 5pm when I arrived home after my introduction to Walton Firs with mud splattered up my suit trousers and caked over my high heels. It was probably 6pm before my partner could get a word in edgeways as I recounted all the exciting things I had seen there. Not everyone gets the chance to work in such amazing surroundings or with such a dedicated team of enthusiastic people. I would not wish to bore you with every detail of my past experience suffice to say it has mostly been child centred, culminating with a 3 ½ year stint with Connexions Surrey. Along the way I have raised three daughters and, as a mature student, gained a degree at Brunel University. Now I am in my element, working for the Friends of Walton Firs!"

Now the site is secured we cannot rest on our laurels but need to keep pressing ahead with ideas to fund the main projects. Even though these are still in the planning stage, we have no income other than that which our supporters raise and donate.

So at this time of giving, may we thank you for what you have given and ask if you would pass on to others the thought that they might like to help us in 2009?

This can be done by a donation of any size, or by sending us £20 to become a member until July 2009, or if you wish to give us £200 you can become a Life Member. By completing a Gift Aid certificate you will enable us to have the full benefit of your donation by allowing us to reclaim the income tax you have already paid on the amount of your donation. In return we will keep you updated with news of our plans and progress by sending you our regular newsletter about one of the most exciting developments for young people in Surrey !!.



And finally,

We hope that by the time you are reading this, your Christmas preparations are well in hand and that you will be looking forward to the mid-winter holiday. Those of you who have had an opportunity to visit Walton Firs this past summer will be in no doubt that the staff here are also looking forward to the break. This is a good place to put on record our thanks to our Wardens Dave & Sue McIntosh and wish them a Merry Christmas. As the daylight fades, a dew drop drips from the beak of the totem, and the reindeer on the office roof grow restless, may we take this opportunity to wish *you our Friends* a joyous Christmas celebration and a happy, healthy New Year!



Derek Pollard

Stella Simpson

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