



# Blackhills Scout Campsite – Site Health and Safety

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Blackhills Scout Campsite. The site comprises around 14 hectares of woodland, which we lease from the Cottingley Estates and some 4 hectares of farmland, which we own, in the Aire Valley between Cottingley and Wilsden.

The camp is managed by Blackhills Management Committee (the BMC) on behalf of the two Bradford Scout Districts, Bradford North and Bradford South. It is run entirely by volunteers who may be Scout Leaders, or others who simply want to help. We are also indebted to numerous companies in the region who run “volunteering days” on site.

We are very proud of our site and the efforts of all those who work here and provide the activities and facilities used by many hundreds of children in Scouting, GirlGuiding, other youth groups and schools each year. This booklet is designed to give a guide to those who use our site and may not be as familiar with its various quirks and “rules” as others.

## SITE ACCESS

The site is accessed from Lee Lane by a gated unmade road. The road has a number of speed limit signs to warn users of the potential presence of children using the area, which they consider safe and do not expect to see vehicles. Please respect the limits and help us to keep our children’s belief intact.

You can use vehicles without hindrance as far as the car park. Access beyond that point is subject to control through the site wardens. Usually occasional access to the turning circle by the huts is allowed to load and unload equipment. Access beyond this point is only rarely permitted. All cars must be in the car park once children start arriving on site.

When entering or leaving site please report to the wardens in the Clewer Building (to the right of the car park). They are responsible for your safety. If they do not know you are on site they cannot fulfil this obligation.

Reporting applies to everyone entering or leaving site, even the Head Teacher, Scout Commissioners, or those who are regular users of site.

The wardens also allocate camping sites. You may have your favourite place, but others too may like it, or there may be other issues. Please be courteous and accept the warden’s directions.

Some areas of site are taken out of use periodically for a variety of reasons including over use, or such things as fallen trees. If you are told these are not in use do not enter them.

Walking access from the site to Bingley is possible through gates in the northern fence line. These gates are locked and keys are available from the wardens. If you are walking into site and wish to use these gates please let the booking secretary know and arrangements will be made to open them. Do not climb through the fence.

## **A WORKING WOODLAND**

The whole site both farmland and woodland is worked. A local farmer tends the fields as hay meadows and in winter grazing for horses or sheep, and the woodland itself provides timber to local saw mills. As such we have to be careful what we do.

We do not allow camping on the hay meadows and access for all activities in the fields is after agreement with the farmer and the site management. Activities on these fields must not leave any litter, glass or large solid objects like stones as these cause damage to farm machinery and injury to the cattle whose winter feed the grass becomes. Access to the fields may be restricted in the summer months when grass is growing strongly.

Stone walls surround the fields (and some of the woodland). This is used to control stock and to demark boundaries. All our stone walls are fragile and must not be climbed. No stones must be taken from any wall under any circumstance.

The boundary of the site through the wood is marked by fences. They are not to be climbed.

The whole woodland is a working environment. Forestry activities by the managers, Tilhill Forestry, can take place at any time of the year. Major works are planned and access to some areas of the site is restricted and clearly identified when this occurs. Minor works such as removal of damaged trees or boughs can happen at any time. Again every effort is made to clearly identify the work area and to do the works when the site is less heavily used. Due to the nature of some damage this may not be always possible.

The woodland also is replanted after felling operations. The new trees are planted in plastic tubes to protect them from animals. We would ask all users of the site to respect these planting and prevent young people kicking, hitting or otherwise destroying this new life. The alternative is to fence the areas of new plantings considerably restricting the areas of site available to use and costing the site a considerable amount of money (1m of fence costs around £15 to install).

A general rule of the site is "TWO FEET ON THE FLOOR". Please do not climb into trees and under no circumstances pull branches or break off growing foliage.

## **A WILDLIFE HAVEN**

The woodland is home to all manner of creatures and plants. Roe deer live in the quieter corners of the site and together with fox, badgers, stoats, weasels, can be seen by our quieter users. Rabbits and squirrels are common sights. We also have a huge variety of birds including woodpeckers, tree creepers, finches, tits, owls and of course crows and jackdaws.

The flora is just as diverse.

Whilst we welcome most of our fellow creatures, two cause us particular concerns, rats and squirrels. These feast on waste left on site by our users and are known carriers of disease. Squirrels also attack our infrastructure including electric cables and wooden buildings. They even rip through tents to help themselves to your stores.

Please help us to keep you healthy by ensuring that all litter and food waste is securely bagged and disposed of by either burning on "camp fires", at the burning point behind the Rhodes Hut or goes into the waste skip off the car park (that is in the skip, not slung on the roof). Keep your food stocks properly sealed in your stores.

Everything else on site needs the same things as we do. Leave things as you would want to find them, if it's a mess clean it up. Don't cause damage; it could be a fellow creature's home. Challenge anyone who you see doing damage.

## **SANITATION**

The site is provided with toilets, wash basins and drinking water for everyone's use. The toilet system uses a septic tank located at the site boundary behind the Grimley Building. This septic tank discharges to an area of woodland above the Chapel. It is good practice not to play, camp or work in this area. No septic tank system produces a totally clean discharge.

This area is not hard to spot. It is usually wet and often a bit smelly. Use a bit of commonsense and keep away.

Each hut is equipped with its own toilet and sanitary system. There are two toilet blocks provided for campers. Please help us to keep these clean. Follow the usual procedures of washing your hands after you've been. If you find them dirty, out of toilet paper or have any other issues please contact the volunteer wardens in the Clewer Building and let them know.

If you see any one doing things you would not want to see done in your own home (muddy footprints up the walls, toilet paper blocking pans) tell them off there and then and then tell the wardens.

A disabled toilet facility exists in the main toilet block (between the Grimley and Rhodes huts). This is also available for adults who require a little more privacy than can be provided in the other toilets.

Drinking water is available from a number of taps located around the site. Please respect these as clean water sources and do not wash up at these points. Do not dispose of dirty water at these points. Turn off taps when not in use.

Disposal of dirty water is a problem on site. When the site is lightly used we would recommend disposal in the undergrowth outside the camping area. When the site is heavily used with many campers, or for long camps we reserve the right to require a means of collecting and disposing of dirty water to be determined by the campers and agreed with the site management.

We do not have disposal facilities for chemical toilets on site. The contents of these must not be put down any of the toilets on site as these all feed the septic tank and the chemicals used will interrupt the natural processes occurring in the tank.

## **ACCIDENTS AND FIRST AID**

You are responsible for your own first aid. However the wardens must be told of any serious occurrence whether it involves a visit to hospital or not. There is an accident book located in the Clewer Building and this is checked frequently to ensure there is not a repeatable sequence developing.

You can help us to spot things before they become serious by reporting any "near miss" or other concern you may have about the state of facilities to the wardens.

If you have an accident which requires the attendance of the emergency services please ensure you let the warden know immediately. Remember you can be up to ¼ mile from the access road and the emergency services know to call at the Clewer Building as they enter site. They will expect to be directed to the appropriate part of site by the warden.

The wardens also have route cards to direct you to the Bradford Royal Infirmary (BRI, one of the busiest A&E department in the UK) or Airedale Hospital (less busy than the BRI) if a visit is required but an ambulance is not appropriate.

## **FIRE SAFETY**

It is a requirement of the hut users that they conduct a fire drill on the first night of occupancy. If you have different children on successive nights fire drills must be conducted with each group. The wardens will point out the assembly point when they open the buildings for you. It is very important that you keep a register of who is in your group, particularly if you have staff visiting for the day.

All huts are wooden structures and in most cases the wood is old and may be very dry. Under no circumstances shall open fires or barbecues be lit within 6m of any building walls.

On camp sites concrete bases are provided as points for fires. The land is peat, which will burn if fires are lit directly on it.

The fire bases are intended for cooking fires. If you wish to have a larger fire a "Camp Fire" area is located at the bottom of site which caters for this.

All tents should be placed 6m from any fire and tents should be generally spaced about 3m apart to reduce the risk of fire spread.

All camp fires should be reduced to embers before the campers retire each evening. No fires should be left burning unattended or at the end of camps.

Be particularly careful of young people playing around, or poking the fire. Many accidents each year result from burning twigs melting or firing clothing.

The Wardens may require you to reduce any fire they consider inappropriate.

If a fire occurs which requires the attendance of the Fire Brigade the camp leader should call immediately for the brigade using a personal mobile phone or from the Clewer building phone, ensure all the people in his party are safely at the assembly point, alert other campers or site users in the area and then inform the Wardens.

There is a telephone in the Clewer Building for emergency use. Mobile phone coverage on site is not always good.

Do not try to fight the fire unless you have been trained to do so and consider it safe to do so. Do not re-enter any building until the fire brigade give you permission to do so.

## **WOOD PILE**

Located behind a fence in the car park is a wood pile which generally contains imported timber for fires on site. The timber is usually pallets or similar and contains nails.

The pile is not managed and the wood can become dangerously stacked. Please take care when removing timber from it. Do not climb onto the pile. You will find unexpected holes and sharp items which may lead to injury.

If you take wood from the pile it must be either burnt during the course of your visit or returned if unburnt. This is your responsibility.

Do not allow young people to take large quantities from the pile. You won't like having to drag it all back when you're trying to go home after a busy visit.

Always be aware that other people may be elsewhere on the pile when returning wood to it.

## **CHAPEL**

At the bottom of the site is a Chapel. This is surrounded by a low stone wall and accessed through a gateway. We encourage people to use this space for quiet work or religious observance (no matter what creed).

It is an area where many people have had loved ones ashes scattered.

Please respect this area and do not enter the area except by the gate. If you see other not doing this please tell them there and then and tell the wardens.

## **OTHER OUT OF BOUNDS AREAS**

The area outside the Carlton building, the Service Team compound at the top of the track, the waste skip, the climbing tower, the shooting and archery ranges and the gas tank by the shooting shelters are all "out of bounds" areas.

The first two areas are used by our volunteers to carry out maintenance work or store raw materials. They do not expect to find young people there when they are working with machinery or the like. Please help us to keep these areas safe for everyone.

The waste skip is available for the disposal of waste from site. However it is recommended that young people be supervised during access to the area. Some bulky waste and waste metal is also stored within the compound.

The climbing tower and ranges are opened for activities under the control of qualified instructors.

The ranges abut the top field and are separated from it by a bank and heavy undergrowth. There is a very good reason for this. Even when these ranges are not in use it is good practice to ensure your young people do not enter this area of undergrowth or attempt to scale the banking.

It should go without saying that someone else's camping area is out of bounds to all others unless they are invited in.

At the bottom of the site behind the Chapel is a "pond". This is not fed by any fresh water but collects drainage from the site; it can be stagnant for much of the year. It is not recommended that this body of water/bog be used. If you are determined to use it ensure adequate washing facilities are available for after the activity.



# Plan of the site

0 metres 100

