



# What does FSC need from stores now, and in the future, and how do we get there?

Council asked the consultation group to engage the wider lodge about what they felt and thought FSC needed from stores. To do this we asked the lodge the above question using an open space approach to give the FSC'ers an opportunity to discuss stores and share their views with council.

Over 150 people participated in the conversations at a variety of FSC events and get togethers. The discussions have been written up and compiled into this document.

The opinions expressed below will help council understand the variety of views and perspectives within the lodge and provide reassurance that views expressed in council are shared across the lodge. It is important to note at this point that this consultation only gives a snapshot of opinions. It is not possible to quantify how many people expressed certain opinions, and the report simply reflects the variety of views that need to be considered.

These findings show the range and diversity of views of the lodge. They have no statistical value so it is not possible to ascertain how many people expressed each opinion.

Views expressed have been themed and summarised for ease of reading. The original documents are available (contact [chair@fsc.org.uk](mailto:chair@fsc.org.uk) if you want to check out this raw data) so everyone can see what was discussed at which events.

The consultation engaged over 150 members of the lodge in open space discussions in a variety of forms at 6 separate FSC events and activities.

These were:

- Post Camps
- Nature Connection (Wales)
- Glee Camp
- West of England
- Gleeds
- Stores weekend at Haddenham (This was a conversation about the feasibility study and there needs to be a follow up)

## **An appetite for change?**

It is clear from the discussions that there is a view that stores at Haddenham needs urgent attention. The extent and direction of this change varies across the discussions. It was clear that the lodge was happy to engage in discussions about what stores could be and were energised by the potential for action. However, the point was also made about the organisation's readiness for change.

- It is exciting that we could have a big change within our generation's living memory. This would make us feel ownership and inspiration. And also give an opportunity for a new energy to blossom in relation to our stores centre.
- Is the organisation prepared for change?
- Slow change has worked for the last 70 years
- Does the pace of change need to be faster?
- Not been expanding much
- For 70 years, we have been sustainable without a centre
- Let's dream big/long term about this! And not limit ourselves with pragmatics at the initial stage.
- Haddenham commemorates Haddenham but not wider FSC. How do we create a space that can do this?

## **Perception of Stores and Haddenham:**

There were discussions about stores as it is now. These can be split into the physical environment and social environment at stores. Fenwood was also discussed.

### **Physical Environment:**

- Allows camp to exist through the year
- Not comfortable in winter
- Kitchen not very nice to hang out in.
- The lack of geographical features and biodiversity are not very inspiring.
- Woods are good for hanging out in
- No circle
- Toilets – are they great or horrible? Options?

### **Social Environment:**

- Good for socialising
- Friends
  - Can be intimidating for some
- Fixed roles
  - Some people don't know what to do and aren't always shown
- Fixed hierarchy
- Feel guilty about not going

- Conflict between people who know what to do and are focused and those who are going for the social side
- Ownership – people feel like it is not their part of the organisation. Others do.
- Some people leave before doing their jobs. Leaving it to the regulars.

### **Fenwood:**

Considering the work that has been put into Fenwood, including its value to the organisation now and in the future, as well as its monetary value should stores move to a new location.

- What would we do about Fenwood?
- Is Fenwood a suitable site to run a camp?
- Could it be kept, what would we need to keep it?
- What are the beneficial reasons to keep it?
- Fenwood has great emotional connection for some – e.g. peoples' ashes
- Fenwood is amazing and we should use it more – could it be a site for the Stockton camps?
- If we move, do we keep Fenwood?
- A lot of energy and love has been poured in to Fenwood.
- Would it be used as much if stores were moved?
- Would it be better to sell it to raise money for a new site?
- Even if stores are moved we can keep Fenwood as a location for weekend camps. Keep some kit in a hut.

## **Brave New stores**

This section looks at what people discussed in relation to the potential redevelopment of stores.

### **Redeveloping Haddenham:**

There was excitement about the potential to redevelop Haddenham giving it a new lease of life and engaging the lodge in stores in the future.

- An amazing and exciting possibility.
- Would give a sense of ownership.
- If people are engaged in the moving/building process they will be keener to get involved in stores weekends.
- How would this practically work?
- Paying a builder? How do we square this with FSC being voluntarily run?
- Skills could be learned during building it. Potential for it to be a training opportunity for FSCers.
- Choice of building methods and materials that would suit inexperienced/voluntary workers.
- Potential to minimise costs.
- Important that current Haddenham crew are involved.

### **What FSC needs from Stores now and in the future:**

These discussions focused on what FSC ideally needs from stores going forward. Space to work on and maintain equipment.

- Where tents could permanently hang.
- Workshops to maintain equipment and train people.
- R&D space for new tools/camp technology.
- Place for people to stay
- Do we need someone to live there?
- Be able to deal with trucks and coaches
- Accommodation
- Security
- Internet access
- Have a space similar to Fenwood, which can be used for FSC events such as Glee or Postcamps, or potentially be opened up for use by the local community.
- Workspaces need to be heated
- It would be important to have a site we can have a standing camp on
- Experiment and try things out. Self-sufficiency, alt energy
- Beyond stores
  - Staff Training
  - Internet Access
  - Central office
  - Social Hub
  - Campsite
  - Council/committees
  - Archives
- Help FSC to thrive
- Inspires individual
- Empowers individuals
- Stores campsite = base
- We should use our assets

#### **Purely storage:**

The point was also made that perhaps stores needs to be stripped down to a purely practical space where equipment is stored and cleaned.

- Is there a cheaper way of storing equipment, such as a warehouse?
  - Would this stop people volunteering

#### **What FSC's base could be:**

There were lots of points made about what could happen at stores if it was considered a 'home base' being more ambitious about its role in the future.

- Physical manifested presence of FSC - Home, like minded people.
- Open space where everyone feels welcome.
- Core FSC activities, Post camps etc - Others come to learn.
- Beautiful space for FSC members' events. Bring groups of friends, including non-FSC people.
- Away from civilisation. Life affirming, warm, loved.
- Retreat for FSC members. Anybody's barn.
- Dancing. Barn.
- Fits into local countryside which can be explored on foot.

- Apocalypse rendezvous
- Design a space that can facilitate community.
- A new space that everyone can invest in. This process might help people to invest.
- Let's be idealistic about our space and our future!
- Creating a space that reflects our values – sustainable, permaculture, in circles.
- What does a space look like that can facilitate what we do?
- Can we have a big indoor space for ceilidhs etc. A round house.
- A space that embodies the spirit of FSC. Circles!
- Space for running camps.
- Supporting ourselves from the land.
- Hold camps there

### **More than Stores:**

There were discussions about how a home base could involve other organisations and help to develop other parts of the organisation such as learning centres and to be a commercial venture.

### **Involve other organisations:**

- Give back to the local community – allowing scouts / woodcraft and others to camp at Fenwood or stores
- 'Beefy's dream' that stores place shared with others who share interests and ideas
- Spreading our ethos is part of FSC
- Community use of base site – local community relations and engagements
- Could a centre exist and do good work related to FSC ethos, relationship with FSC, keeping FSC at the size it is, doing what it does.
- A learning space - for skills sharing and possibly extending out into wider community.
- What management would it need?
  - Concerns over capacity – should people be compensated for their labour?
- Should it just be like-minded groups?
  - Could it be commercial – weddings / corporate
  - Environmental / ethical burials
- Does it matter that the space would only be used by us for a few weeks of the year?
  - Is that feasible? Might highlight sustainability. Will it need funding
- local children activities
- Public rights of way to walk nearby
- Out of the way but part of the community too
- If we were building/improving that might help with neighbourly relations
- could have satellite stores near camping regions
- Lots of tents at first could make neighbours think 'festival'
- How would outside orgs manage with the tree bogs and water washing up facilities at Fenwood?

### **Commercial:**

There were also ideas about making FSC's base to be a source of revenue for the organisation.

- Cottage or space for solo retreats.
- FSC-only Airbnb type accommodation.

- Revenue-generating. Could be energy generation. Making products (e.g. beer) and rentals.
- Run/rent out space for others – for youth/community organisations or schools
- Our needs as FSC should be a priority – additional use an extra

### **Location of stores:**

Location was discussed at all the conversations. These discussions ranged from the need for stores to be better placed so that it is easier to get to as well as discussions about what the location should look like and have potential to be used for. These discussions have been broken into, Location, Geography, Accessibility and Other. There was also discussion about how a decision about location could be made.

### **Location (Where it is):**

- Not London (London centric)
- Accessible –
  - From London
  - Else where
  - To camps
- Accessible to all people
- Urban site – industrial estate for stores only
- Central to where the camps actually are.
- Near an existing FSC community. (Some people looking to set up a sustainable land project – relationships could be tricky.)
- Be in the Midlands which makes more sense than Cambridgeshire as the vast majority of our sites are now in Wales or the North, and will be an incentive for people from other areas than the South East to come to stores weekends.
- Haddenham’s proximity to London doesn’t mean loads of people go all year round.
- Somewhere more appropriate for getting the kit to the rest of the country, where our camps are, and getting people to stores weekends.
- Please move to a more central location. There is a lot of passion about this.
- It’s too far to come from Wales.
- We do things in circles – can our stores/physical base be at the centre of our circle? Geographically? Emotionally? At our heart.
- What are the different type of store we could have?
  - Does it need to all be in one place? Yes probably
  - Would it be feasible to split it if the right facilities come up, near to each other, but not necessarily on the same site?
- Climate-proof locations.

### **Geography (What does it look like):**

- Would geography make more people come to stores?
- More inspiring landscape
- Mountain/hill/slopes, woods, not an SSI, river, lake, see. Diverse natural habitats.
- Be in a more interesting geographical location than the Fens - ideally where it is possible and nice to go walking/swimming in the evenings. This will act as an extra incentive to attract

people to stores weekends who are put off by how ugly/boring the area surrounding Haddenham is to spend your weekends in.

- If it was somewhere more inspiring people would be more willing to give more time/energy to it.
- We need a venue that chimes with our wide variety of outdoor activities and nurtures the soul as FSC camps do.
- Woodland. Water.
- Like being on camp in terms of landscape.

#### **Accessibility (How do we get there):**

- Cycle distance from public transport or London
- Easy to access from north
- Public transport
- Accessibility throughout the year
- Avoid it having difficult terrain
- Transport – train station, public transport. Walking major roads but not too close. Not near a fracking site.
- Be near a train station that has easy access from London, Leeds/Manchester and Bristol/Wales (and ideally have good public transport links from that station to within walking distance from the site)

#### **Other comments about location:**

- In a place or community that will accept us
- Potential for taking over a similar existing site or facility (military)
- Not near annoying locals. Or under flight path or ministry of defence land, or traffic. No footpaths
- In an ideal world FSC would sell Haddenham and invest in a plot of land outside Birmingham, since Birmingham is centrally located and has direct train access from all large cities. This land would be big enough to house our stores buildings, as well as having space to host events such as Post Camps or Glee Camp.
- Do we need regional stores?

#### **Making a decision about location:**

Discussions about FSC's decision making process was mentioned in relation to the moving of stores rather than the need to redeveloped the current site. It was suggested that this process should potentially be:

- Democratic
- Involve Pathfinders
- Involve an extraordinary general meeting

#### **How should FSC approach redeveloping stores?**

There were a number of discussions about how FSC as an organisation should approach making the redevelopment of stores a reality. These range from how to fund any works to using the skills within the organisation, to ensuring that the space is sustainable.

## **Funding:**

The practicalities and ethics of fundraising were discussed with there being a need for more clarity on where the organisation stands in relation to funding a project of this cost and size.

- Ask our parents, members and alumni – something in Jan 18 programme?
- Can we start a fund and how long can we hold the money for?
  - We don't need the plan finalised to start fundraising
- Borrowing
- Grants
- Switch voluntary donations from aid fund to stores
- Funding bodies – No Salaries – Low cost organisation
- Should we prioritise certain appointments
- Do investments of these kind fit with our current principles?
- Not sponsorship
  - No logos on our stuff – can they mention us in their materials?
- Does funding need to be ethical?
  - Can we take BP's money – Who decides?

## **Ethos of Sustainability:**

Sustainability is a key principle of FSC and was discussed in terms of the building process and long term sustainability of any redevelopments.

- We could have a cradle to cradle policy – policy could guide feasibility study and aid in planning process
  - It is a way of working that means that the development can be changed and reused depending on the needs of the organisation
  - Point of policy is that the materials used in the development can be used again and again
- Materials can either be bought or donated
- Build with labour or volunteering
- Need for buildings – can be shipping containers
- Will help organisation meet goals on energy use and waste
- Will help gain funding for our innovative approach to design / sustainability
- Any buildings should be as sustainable as possible. Solar or wind power can subsidise running costs as well as helping us practice what we preach RE: environmentalism.
- There would be space for FSC to build structures using sustainable materials, perhaps a green roof, and incorporating some level of self-generating power supply (solar, wind). This would also be an opportunity for members of the lodge to get involved in the design and build of part of our new home through skill share and work weekends.
- Redevelop an old industrial site / brown field

## **Using and developing our Skills:**

Ensuring that the lodge could participate in the building process by using and developing the skills of FSCers was also discussed.

- Doing stuff ourselves is part of our ethos and history.
- Likely a skilled project manager is required. To get the commitment required this person would likely have to be paid.



- Skills audit of FSC as a whole would be needed.
- Survey of peoples willingness and ability to get involved.
- Time imperative – needs to be done efficiently and relatively quickly
- Shell built by professional contractors and then fitted out by FSC.
- Skills sharing would be good (construction skills).
- Deeper sense of connection with the place/buildings when people have had a hand in making it.
- Would it make more people volunteer – Would more unique situations create more exciting opportunities.
- Health and safety/regulatory implications of volunteers doing work in particular CDM (Construction Design and Management) regulations.
- Choice to use in-house skills could be affected by whether we decide to renovate or relocate.
- Can we pay FSCers to design/build?
- Whether or not we move location, our discussion decided that if we need to build new buildings from scratch there is a large skillset within the FSC, and work weekends in which we can come and help work on the building progress could be a great way to skill share, as well as helping to build more of an emotional connection to the space, in the same way many of us feel with Fenwood.
- Create a space for teaching and learning – this can be part of the building process

### **Increase involvement in Stores:**

Participation in stores and how to encourage more people to attend stores underpinned many of the discussions. These could be split into physical and nonphysical things that could encourage more of the lodge to get involved in stores.

#### **Physical:**

- Not enough people come in winter
  - Dorms or bunkhouses for volunteers could help with this
- Would more people go if the social areas were more cosy and nice to be in?
- Make it nicer in winter.
- Pool table / table football / poker night / beer taps / Bar
- Sauna and hot tub - lush
- The new "Number 6" should be cosier and a nicer place to hang out in (another incentive which will attract people to work weekends, especially in colder winter months.)
- Make it nicer
- More comfortable
- Pleasant space
- Fenwood is looking good and will only get better over time
- Relocation could be an opportunity for new start; however, many memories are held at Haddenham.
- Electricity and comfort are important
- Can Fenwood be a draw for people?

#### **Nonphysical**

- Could council etc happen there?

- Using site for FSC gatherings helps the FSC community engage
- Share skills – internally and externally - Experimental buildings could be built – possibilities and permissiveness
- The hearth – come together, not worrying about neighbours, safe
- Football while washing up – sky sports
- Themed weekends – tour de france
- Celebratory space - Beautiful space - Woodland
- A place you'd go just because it was so nice
- Energetic and lively – where things happen
- Woodcrafty and handmade/homemade
- Like being on camp, also part of the community
- Volunteer happiness and wellness is important
- Yearly updates of photos – a wall or album to show all involved