



Membership Information
Founded 1981

Member of the Hawk Board
A DEFRA Recognised Falconry Club
Affiliated to the Countryside Alliance



The South East Falconry Group



Thank you for your interest in the;

South East Falconry Group

This information pack has been produced as both an introduction to the Club and as a means of applying for membership. It includes background information under the following headings:

- **The Groups History**
- **Details of the Group**
- **Our Aims and Objectives**
- **Rules of the Group**
- **Our Code of Conduct**
- **Our Field Meeting Procedures**
- **Membership Application Form**

The Group was formed in 1981 just prior to the implementation of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act. In 1994 the SEFG became the first falconry club since the introduction of the above Act to receive 'Recognised Club Status' by the then Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions' (now Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs - DEFRA).

Originally fifteen local falconers and raptor keepers recognised the dramatic affect the 1981 Act would have on falconry and agreed to pool their knowledge and expertise in order to develop their own domestic breeding programme. However they soon realised that there were many more local falconers interested in joining the group, so the decision was taken to open up membership to other falconers.



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Soon the SEFG had expanded to provide a forum where 'local' raptor keepers could meet to exchange ideas, share experiences and to discuss general concerns or problems.

Since those early days the Group has seen a steady growth in its membership, reaching the 100 member mark by the late nineties. The Group now draws its members from the whole of the South and East of England and is fortunate in having members with skills in every aspect of keeping, breeding and hunting with birds of prey.

We play an active part in defending the practice of falconry through our membership of the Hawk Board (HB) and by keeping the art alive through a comprehensive winter hunting programme and summer flying displays at country fairs and shows.

The SEFG along with other members of the HB, lobby the DEFRA and other agencies regarding potential changes to the law (both UK and European) and on policies that may impact on falconry or hawk keeping.

The SEFG has established good relationships with other UK falconry clubs and actively contributes to the Campaign for Falconry and UK raptor research and conservation projects.

Details of the Group

We feel the SEFG provides an unrivalled forum within the South & East of England for falconers to meet, discuss and practice falconry. Amongst our membership we can boast successful breeders of all raptor species generally considered suitable for falconry here in the UK.

We pride ourselves on being one of the more active clubs, having a very high proportion of practising falconers and this is reflected in our busy field-meeting schedule (20 plus meets per season) and our well attended monthly meetings (normally 30 plus attendees).

Our monthly meetings provide a relaxed informal opportunity for new members to meet and mix with falconers from all backgrounds and levels of experience. Members of the Committee are always on hand to assist



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those wishing to learn more about the sport and are happy to provide introductions so that knowledge and experience can be shared. And of course, being active in the wider falconry community means that we can draw upon the extensive knowledge of falconers in other clubs or locations.

In order to support Clubs activities, income is raised through annual subscriptions, raffles and from undertaking a limited number of hawk flying displays at country shows. In addition to raising funds these shows enable us to promote falconry, country sports and occasionally to obtain hunting land for future field-meetings. Because of this our summer season forms an important part of the Groups calendar.

The Committee prides itself on the high standard of its flying displays and the Club regularly provides hawk flying demonstrations for the Country Landowners Associate Game Fair (CLA) and at the British Falconer's Fair.

SEFG Monthly Meetings

The Group hold meetings in Tilbury and Winchester. Our main meeting in Tilbury takes place on the last Tuesday of every month (except December) at the Community Centre, The Civic Square, Tilbury, Essex. Doors open from 7.30pm and the formal meeting starts at about 8.30pm. The general format is to discuss business, followed a demonstration, talk or video and concluded (time permitting) by open discussion.

Our Winchester meeting is a smaller, informal meeting and takes place on the 1st Tuesday of each month at the Phoenix Inn, High Street, Twyford, on the B3335 2 miles from Winchester (M3 junction 11).

Periodically special events are organised; guest speakers, a dance or training days. The training days have proven very popular. Members can take advantage of experienced falconers to learn more about hawk training, husbandry, handling birds of prey and to gain falconry tips and tricks.

The Group is structured around an executive of three Officers; Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary with a working committee of a further 4 or 5



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members. The Chairman and Secretary are appointed for a period of two years, the other roles are for one year. All eligible posts stand for election at our AGM held in November.

Contact Details

If you require any further information or would care to attend one of our meetings then please feel free to contact one of our officials on the numbers listed below.

Gary Biddiss	- Chairman	01245 226057	(Essex)
Peter Long	- Secretary	07889 438531	(Essex)
Mary Buck	- Treasurer		
Dean White	- Hon Secretary	01489 896504	(Hampshire)

Email us at enquiry@sefg.org

For further information regarding the SEFG or falconry, why not visit our web site:

www.sefg.org



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A - Our Aims and Objectives

To continue to provide:

- ❖ A forum in which falconers can come together to meet informally
- ❖ A means by which falconry and raptor keeping can be promoted with special regard to the conservation role undertaken by its members, the Group and other Clubs or raptor organisations throughout the UK
- ❖ To assist individuals and other organisations in the development of the skills necessary to undertake raptor management
- ❖ To develop the skills and resources needed to enable the domestic breeding of birds of prey and production and dissemination of information to the public
- ❖ To ensure that the Club is run by members for members
- ❖ To defend falconers rights to practice falconry in its true sense.

B - Rules of the Club

- 1) The Group shall be called the South East Falconry Group
- 2) The Group shall have the following officers :
 - 2.1) Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and
 - 2.2) A minimum of four committee members with assistants as the above Officers see fit.
- 3) The Chairman and Secretary shall hold office for two years. The period of office for the Chairman and Secretary must not run contiguously. All other officers and committee members shall hold office for one year and can stand for re-election. Upon the resignation or expulsion of any Officer or committee member, the Officers shall nominate any member suitable and willing to take their place.
 - 3.1) No member of the SEFG shall be eligible to sit on or stand for, election to the SEFG committee or election as an SEFG official whilst they act in a similar capacity for any other falconry club.



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- 4) The Officers and committee of the Group will control management of the Group and shall have power to purchase such articles or materials as may be necessary for the running of the Group. It shall have due regard to any resolution or recommendation of any General Meeting, but shall not be bound to give effect to same if in its opinion such action would be injurious to the interests of the Group.
- 5) All members will be supplied with a copy of the Groups rules.
- 6) All members shall pay into the Group funds the sum elected at each Annual General Meeting. These subscriptions being due on the 1st April of each year.
- 7) Any member who has not paid their subscriptions twenty-eight days after the 31st March will cease to be a full member being deemed a lapsed member and forfeiting the privilege of membership. The Committee on receiving information that any member is unable to pay their subscriptions owing to illness, loss of employment or other good cause will at its discretion excuse payment of such members subscriptions for such a period as they see fit and the member may not forfeit the privileges of membership.
 - 7.1) Any lapsed member (see para 7 above) who makes payment after 31st May will not be eligible to attend field meetings in the subsequent hunting season.
 - 7.2) No subscriptions will be accepted at field meetings.
- 8) The Treasurer shall pay all monies received by the Group from any source whatsoever, without any deductions for any purpose, to the credit of the accounts opened in the name of the Group, at such a bank and in such a manner as the Committee directs and shall keep such accounts and pay such debts incurred and when required to do so render to the Committee or General Meeting an account of any monies received or expended by him/her.
- 9) The Group in each year of account shall appoint either two capable paid up members or an independent external accountant to audit the treasures' accounts for that year and shall report to the Committee their general agreement or disagreement of the balance sheet.



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- 10) Any member or person having an interest in the Group funds, may at any reasonable time, inspect all books and accounts and it shall be the duty of the Treasurer to produce them for inspection.
- 11) Officers and Committee members shall have the power to order withdrawals of any member or non-member from the grounds if in their opinion, the said person is either through intoxication or consistent carelessness in handling and caring for their birds, or a danger to their birds. A person so ordered from the grounds will have no right of re-entry until, in the case of a member they have appeared before the committee. If expelled from the Group he/she will not be allowed on the grounds thereafter.
- 12) Officers and Committee members shall have the power to suspend or terminate the membership of any member found to be in breach of the Club's, Code of Conduct or Field Meeting Procedures. The Land Controller will make a copy of these procedures available to any members wishing to use the Club's hunting land.
- 13) No subscriptions will be refunded.
- 14) The Officers of the Group shall automatically invoke termination of membership on the following grounds:
 - i) By non-payment of subscriptions
 - ii) Flagrant disregard of the Groups rules
 - iii) By expulsion by the Groups Committee
 - iv) By resignation of the member in question
 - v) By actions or giving rise to actions which in the opinion of the Committee are detrimental to the name of the Group or to the interests of the SEFG or Falconry.
- 15) All members will from time to time be called upon to attend working parties to maintain the grounds or equipment in good order. It is essential that members requested to attend such working groups shall do so.
- 16) All members shall obtain a game license and/or quarry license before attempting to take game or a protected species. This must be produced if requested by any member or non-member.



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- 17) Any resolutions to the Groups rules must be voted by at least ten members of the Group.

C - Code of Conduct

The South East Falconry Group has adopted the following code of conduct. Members are advised that they bound by this code, failure to due so my result in termination of their membership.

- 18.1) To uphold the sport of falconry by its true definition which is, 'The art of taking wild quarry in its natural state and habitat with trained birds of prey.'
- 18.2) Members are obliged to observe the current laws and customs surrounding falconry and keeping birds of prey with specific reference to the keeping and registration of birds of prey under 'The 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act', importation and exportation under current CITES requirements and especially to abide by game law, quarry seasons and the country code when in the field.
- 18.3) All members should place the welfare of their hawk with regard to housing, feeding management and general husbandry as their primary concern.
- 18.4) All birds that are being flown for public demonstration should wear flying jesses. All birds on public display should be equipped with suitable furniture, which is to be of a high standard. Club birds must not be used in association with any other public, fund raising or charity event that is not related to the Group unless given special permission by the committee.
- 18.5) All flying demonstrations should adhere, as closely as possible, to the Countryside Alliance's code of conduct related to public flying demonstrations.
- 18.6) Radio telemetry equipment **MUST** be used when birds are flown in SEFG public demonstrations. The use of radio telemetry equipment is strongly recommended when attending field meetings. SEFG Field Captains are empowered to withdraw permission to fly a hawk if in the opinion of the Captain not doing so would be detrimental to the hawk or SEFG interests.



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- 18.7) The use of 'bagged' game or live lures is unlawful. Use of either, if proven, will leave the said member in breach of this Code of Conduct and subject to disciplinary action.
(See rule 14.V)
- 18.8) Members should refrain from talking to the press or to giving public lectures as press interviews can be seriously distorted on publication. This could be potentially damaging to the Group and to the sport of falconry. Anybody who is requested to should carefully follow the guidelines set down by the Hawk Board.
- 18.9) Any member who is proved to be in breach of this code, or any member who has brought the Group or falconry into serious disrepute will face disciplinary action which is likely to result in termination of their membership.
- 18.a) Any offer of land, facility or opportunity made by a member of the public to a member of the SEFG while participating in an SEFG function and regardless of its type or nature shall be deemed to be an offer made to the SEFG. As such all such offers must be passed to a member of the committee at the next available opportunity.
- 18.b) All members shall be given a copies of the SEFG Field Meeting Procedures & a copy of the current version of the Countryside Alliance (formerly the BFSS) Code of Hawk Management & Husbandry. These codes must be used by all members on the basis of 'Recommended Best Practice' and therefore followed as closely as possible.

D - Field Meeting Procedures

- 1. Land Controller**
The SEFG Committee will consist of one elected committee member to act as Land Controller (LC). The LC will be responsible for planning, publishing, co-ordinating, liasing with the land owner and providing SEFG members with directions and other information regarding field meetings.
- 2. Booking**
Members wishing to attend a Club field meeting **MUST** book their place with the LC and at least 48 hours in advance. The acceptance of bookings made after this deadline will be at the discretion of the LC. Bookings made more than two weeks ahead of the event must be re-confirmed within 48 hours of the meeting.



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- 2.1 Members who book a place but are subsequently unable to attend **MUST** notify the LC. A minimum of 24 hours notice is expected so that a replacement can be found.

3. Priority

Places will be allocated on a 'first-come first-served' basis. Where places are limited, priority will be given to members flying hawks / falcons over members simply wishing to spectate. The LC will ensure that the allocation of places is fair and equitable.

- 3.1 Members must book their own place. Bookings made on behalf of other members will not be accepted as this often causes confusion and jeopardises places for other members.
- 3.2 The LC will operate a reserve list for places. Members wishing to be contacted regarding vacancies and or additional meets must pass suitable contact details to the LC.

4. The Meet

Members attending an SEFG field meet will be expected to abide by any instructions given by the designated Field Captain, the Land Owner or his/her agent.

- 4.1 Members are reminded that they attend Field Meetings as representatives of the SEFG. Poor behaviour or failure to comply with the above procedures, breaches of the SEFG's Rules or Code of Conduct, will be treated as a serious breach of said rules and may lead to the offending member being barred from future field meetings or termination of their membership.
- 4.2 Under no circumstance are members to invite guests to the meet without gaining authorisation from the LC. Anyone who arrives at a meet without prior notification will not be permitted to attend the meeting and the member responsible for their invitation will be barred from future field meetings for a period decided by the SEFG committee.
- 4.3 Members may be asked for a small contribution (CAP Fee) in order to cover the cost of the hunting land and/or a gratuity for the landowner or his/her representative.
- 4.4 The SEFG's policy on slipping is that only one hawk should be slipped at any one time during a single flight. All other



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hawks must be secured (ideally by a safety leash) to the falconers' fist until it is their turn to be flown. The exception to the above being a 'true' cast of falcons or Harris Hawks. In the case of the latter the Field Captain shall have discretion to vary the above policy taking into account the venue and type of game to be flown.

- 4.5 Generally we expect all members to; wear suitable country attire, for mobile phones to be switched off, for dogs to be well trained and under control at all times. We strongly recommend the use of a 'Ferret Finder' when ferreting.

5. Longwing Meets

Anyone attending a S.E.F.G Longwing meet does so on the understanding that the following applies.

- 5.1 Prior to commencement of the meeting numbers will be drawn to determine the slip order for the Falconers present. These numbers may be swapped by mutual consent if need be.
- 5.2 Once a suitable point/set up is achieved the slip order will be followed. If the field captain and the falconers present agree that the point/set up is not suitable for good reason, the game will be flushed or left alone and the field shall move on. The field Captain will have the final decision.
- 5.3 If upon their slip any Falconer decides that he/she does not wish to accept the slip, he/she may swap with a colleague by mutual consent
- 5.4 If a swap is not possible the whole field will be asked by the Field Captain if they wish to take the flight so as not to waste the point/set up. Any member can accept the slip as an out of sequence slip (i.e a free slip which will not effect the slip order for the day)
- 5.5 If any member chooses not to accept his/her second point/set up than they forfeit their slip and the order continues as normal



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E - Role of the Land Controller

The Land Controller (LC) is an elected member of the SEFG committee who has a number of very important roles and responsibilities. An outline is given below for your information. If you have any comments or questions regarding their actual application, please contact a member of the SEFG committee to discuss them.

1. Liaising with land owners

The LC is the initial point of contact for all landowners and has responsibility for maintaining a good relationship ensuring regular contact and that the Club's appreciation is known. Members must not contact landowners independently of the Land Controller.

2. Land Management

The LC audits all prospective new land to determine local boundaries, its suitability: type of ground (is it open or enclosed), the available game, along with any specific restrictions such as the numbers of people or game that's off-limits.

3. Field Meeting Calendar

The LC is responsible for planning and organising the field meeting calendar, taking account of the types of hawks and falcons being flown, available game and targeted quarry species. As a minimum the Club aims to organise a general longwing and shortwing meeting at least once a month during October thru February.

If numbers of falconers and/or venues permit then specialist days and/or additional days will be organised. Examples of specialist days include partridge or duck hawking for longwings and hare or squirrel hawking for shortwings.

4. Bookings

The LC (or someone designated by the LC) will act as the organiser for each day. The LC will take bookings from members in accordance with SEFG Field Meeting Procedures and ensure that a Field Captain is designated to take responsibility for each group and to liaise with the landowner or his/her representatives.



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5. **Field Captains**

The Field Captain (FC) is responsible for helping to make the day successful by:

- Getting the group organised at the meeting point
- Making sure everyone is aware of the rules, boundaries and other conditions as may specified by the landowner or LC
- Enforcing the SEFG's Field Meeting rules
- Within reason, taking account of the different needs of each member in the party so that each member has an equal opportunity to fly his/her hawk or falcon at their chosen quarry. For example allowing someone to run his or her dog for the first/last session or splitting the day into named slip and open slip sessions. (These guidelines may not be applicable on meets that have been specifically organised as specialist days)
- Checking-in with the landowner or his/her representative on arrival and checking-in with the landowner or his/her representative on departure
- Organising a small show of appreciation (CAP Fee) from the members and guests present for the landowner or his/her representative
- The Field Captain is authorised to withhold or withdraw permission to fly a hawk or falcon at a field meet if in their opinion the conduct of the member or guest, their hawk or dog breaches SEFG Rules, its Code of Conduct or those of the Land Owner.
- The Field Captain must provide the LC with feedback on how the day went including information regarding the quarry caught and seen, state of the ground and behaviour of the group or individuals

6. **Unsuitable Quarry**

The SEFG committee in accordance with Hawk Board constitution considers that Fox, Deer and Mink are unsuitable quarry for hunting with birds of prey in conjunction with more than 2 dogs.

7. **Annual Report**

At the end of each hawking season the LC will prepare a short summary of the SEFG's hawking season (number of events, number of people attending, type and numbers of game caught) for inclusion in the SEFG journal.