

What is the Backwoods Challenge?

The aim of the Backwoods Challenge remains the same as in previous years: to encourage young people's team-building and team leadership skills by asking the participants to prepare three edible meals from an unseen selection of raw ingredients, as well as to prepare a shelter for their bed for the night.

Who's invited?

The event is open to every Scout, Explorer Scout, Guide and Ranger in Northamptonshire

When & Where

The event is being held at the Sir John Lowther Centre, Rushton Road, Glendon, NN14 1QF from 10am on Saturday 12th to 11am on Sunday 13th December 2026.

Won't December be cold?!

Yes, it's likely to be a cold weekend but this simply adds to the Challenge and earns you a Brass Monkey pennant. One of the first jobs on Saturday will be getting a fire going so you'll have something to keep warm around.

How much does it cost?

£38 per young person with Adults (all) and Young Leaders (for Scout Troops / Guide Units) attending for free. A £20 non-refundable deposit per young person is required by **Saturday 31st October 2026** with final payments due by **Saturday 14th November**.

How do I book?

Register your Troop or Unit's place at <https://bookings.northantsscouts.org.uk/backwoods>

When do I need to book by?

Troops and Units must register by **Saturday 31st October 2026** with their approximate numbers so that we know the event is viable. Final numbers will be required by **Saturday 14th November**. No changes to team structures will be allowed after this date to give enough time to prepare the food packs for the challenge. As such, the charges for the Challenge will be as at the 14th November and so if any members drop out after that date they will still be charged for, and if any members wish to join, then they will go hungry (as will everyone else!)

What will you provide, and what will we need to bring?

We will be providing each team with a food ration pack (but no foil, oil, salt or pepper), i.e. a selection of raw ingredients tailored to your stated dietary requirements, from which the team will be expected to prepare three meals to be shared with the Leaders, namely lunch, dinner, and breakfast.

As this is a Backwoods Event, all cooking will take place over an open fire that will need to be set upon a slab (that will be provided) or in an off-ground fire pit that you bring with you.

Young people will be expected to build a shelter to sleep in on the Saturday night but you may wish to bring a small amount of tentage for **emergency use only**. We're not forcing adults to build a shelter so please do bring a tent for yourself!

Apart from emergency tentage and a few cooking utensils, Troops and Units are asked not to bring anything else with them in order to make this a true back-to-basics Backwoods event.

How does the challenge work?

As the name suggests, this is a challenge and therefore each Troop or Unit will be marked on their efforts throughout the weekend. We'll be looking at Camp Craft, Meals and Shelters.

As above, we will provide each Troop or Unit with a food pack however there is no menu - we will look forward to some imaginative combinations from the ingredients provided!

Lunch could be cold, but dinner must be two hot courses, and breakfast must also be hot. To ensure that you are being well fed, a plate of food from each course of each meal must be presented to the Event Team for marking. We will also want to see at least one extra surprise plate of food from the ingredients that we provide, in addition to the three main meals that we expect to see.

There will be a 24-hour café serving hot drinks to young people and adults alike.

This sounds scary and I don't think I have the skills to manage this

Please don't worry - this is exactly what the challenge is about. All of the previous challenges (5+) have seen Troops and Units from around the County working together to make sure everyone has a safe and enjoyable time. The Event Team will also be on hand throughout the weekend to make sure that everyone is safe and well.

We hope that this gives you all of the information you need to register for the event but if you have any questions at all, please drop us an email on backwoods@northantsscouts.org.uk.

We look forward to seeing you in December!

Vince Burgess

Backwoods Challenge 2026 Lead

Will Hazell

County Programme Team Leader