

20 March 2025

Dear {{ contact.FIRSTNAME | default : "volunteer" }}

This week we have a special Whizz all about Ellesborough. We wanted to update you on what has been happening as the refurbishment is nearing completion. The official opening is going to be an exciting occasion and we are sorry we can't invite everyone from the county, we just don't have the space for all the cars. However, Rikki, Janet and I would like to invite you all to one of our drop-in sessions in early June (the details are below). Please come and share a cuppa with us and take a look around. We also hope you will use Ellesborough for your unit camp or holiday, bookings can be made through our county website.

Best wishes,
Sue Berry
Interim county commissioner
countycomm@girlguidingbucks.org.uk

Ellesborough Guide Centre: A New Chapter Begins
A bit of history



For over 50 years, Ellesborough Guide Centre, the county home of Girlguiding in Buckinghamshire has been a cherished venue providing members and young people with opportunities for adventure and personal growth through training events, residential trips and leadership development. Situated in the rural Chilterns just below Coombe Hill in two acres of grounds in a building which originally housed Ellesborough Village School, built in 1839. Girlguiding Buckinghamshire acquired the freehold from the Chequers Trust in 1971 and the historic building was transformed into a Pack Holiday House in 1972 and has since hosted thousands of Guides, Brownies, Rainbows, and other youth organisations.

However, as time moved on, the Centre's facilities required modernisation to meet the evolving needs of its users.

To find out more about the history of Ellesborough Guide Centre, please visit: https://girlguidingbucks.org.uk/ellesborough-guide-centre/ellesborough-2/

What you thought of it



Ellesborough Guide Centre has long been a place of cherished memories, from camps and training weekends to county events. However, it was clear to many that the facilities were in need of an upgrade to meet modern standards and the expectations of today's members.

To ensure the refurbishment addressed the real needs of our users, the Ellesborough Committee conducted a survey among past, current, and prospective visitors. The feedback was invaluable, highlighting both fond memories and areas needing urgent improvement.

Many respondents recalled the Centre's warm atmosphere and the sense of adventure it fostered, but they also pointed out challenges: *"Cold and tired-looking," "poor parking and lighting,"* and *"limited space for activities."* Some leaders expressed concerns about the accommodation: *"Difficult to supervise girls properly," "cramped and outdated leader facilities,"* and *"the kitchen was challenging to use."*

When asked what improvements would make Ellesborough a more desirable venue, the message was clear: *"Updated showers and toilets, better accessibility, new bunk beds, and improved spaces for leaders."* This feedback became the foundation for the ambitious refurbishment project that followed, ensuring that the Centre remains a welcoming and practical space for future generations of Girlguiding members.

The new Ellesborough Guide Centre – phase 1



Faced with funding limitations, the committee made the strategic decision to prioritise the complete refurbishment of the outdoor toilet and shower block, ensuring an immediate

improvement in essential facilities while continuing to seek additional funds for Phase 2. This was completed in June 2024.



The new Ellesborough Guide Centre – phase 2

Thanks to generous funding from legacies, charitable trusts and community grants together with fundraising around the county the house, Cygnet Cottage, has undergone significant upgrades. The project has focused on improving accessibility, security and sleeping arrangements (with new bunks throughout) and modernising the toilet and shower facilities.

The transformation has included the creation of two bedrooms upstairs and one downstairs for the girls and a leader's bedroom and bathroom downstairs, modern amenities such as a new cooker, ensuring that leaders and young members alike can enjoy a comfortable and practical environment. We have used sustainable building materials such as energy efficient lighting, fully insulated the building to conserve energy, installed central heating throughout, new wi-fi, a new fire and intruder alarm system and exterior lighting. Accessibility has been a key priority, with the inclusion of improved facilities for individuals with additional needs. These updates will not only benefit Girlguiding members but also other community groups that use the Centre, including Duke of Edinburgh Award participants, local schools, and Scouts.

Looking ahead, the Ellesborough Committee remains committed to ensuring the Centre continues to evolve, with future plans focused on enhancing the site.

We thank all those who contributed to the refurbishment

Girlguiding Buckinghamshire

The refurbishment of Ellesborough Guide Centre was made possible through the generosity and dedication of the Rainbow, Brownie, Guide and Ranger units and Trefoil Guilds across Buckinghamshire, individuals, organisations and groups who have held fundraising events and made donations to Ellesborough and the dedication of Ellesborough Committee (past and present).

The Grand Re-Opening

To celebrate the completion of this exciting development, Ellesborough Guide Centre will host a grand re-opening event on 1st June 2025. The invitation only event will be a momentous occasion, with Tracy Foster, Chief Guide, officially unveiling the newly refurbished Centre. Attendees can look forward to guided tours of the new facilities and a chance to reconnect with the rich history of EGC.



For those who we can unfortunately not invite due to lack of space (particularly for cars), Sue, Janet and Rikki invite you to drop in for a cuppa and a tour of the house on one of the following days: Saturday, 7th June 2.00-4.00PM or Tuesday, 10 June 9.30-12noon.

The re-opening marks not just the end of a successful project but the beginning of a new era for Ellesborough Guide Centre. With improved facilities and a renewed commitment to providing outstanding experiences for young people, the Centre is ready to welcome the next generation of adventurers.

We hope you love the new look Ellesborough Guide Centre and look forward to welcoming you and your unit there soon.

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