

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Alton Kestrel Beaver Colony Annual Report 2023-2024

What an incredible year we've had in Kestrel Colony! We have 20 Beavers in the Colony who as always, are split across our four "insect" themed lodges (Bumblebees, Beetles, Ladybird and Grasshoppers). Our lodge leaders and assistant lodge leaders have done a terrific job of supporting our younger beavers when they first join by ensuring they feel welcome in the Colony. Kestrel Beavers have worked so hard towards achieving their badges this year. We have awarded over 200 badges to the colony including nearly 50 challenge badges!

We started the Autumn 2023 term by welcoming Craig from the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust who helped us learn about the magical world of bugs! Craig took us on an adventure to discover the minibeasts hiding around in the grounds around The Den and then we worked together to build an amazing bug hotel! The following week the beavers decorated (and munched) bug themed biscuits... yummy!



We had our first campfire in late September which of course we finished off with a round of "heads, shoulders, knees & toes" whilst gobbling delicious gooey s'mores!

In October we were invited by our friends at RAF Odiham to visit the base again. The beavers (and leaders!) had an amazing time getting up close to the incredible Chinooks, as well as learning about the equipment the pilots use and how to make the best paper aeroplane!



Also in October, the beavers started work on the Money Skills Badge where we set up our own bank to help the colony learn about saving. We also had our first camp of the year! The theme of the camp was based around the Cook badge which saw the beavers learning about being safe in the kitchen and how to wash their hands properly. Most excitingly of all the beavers helped to cook their scrummy dinner of pasta and garlic bread finished of with ice cream.



In November we were very proud of all of the young people from 3<sup>rd</sup> Alton who took part in the Remembrance Day Parade in Alton town centre. Felicity did an excellent job as the flag bearer for the colony.





We were out and about a lot in November as we visited Marks & Spencer's to see behind the scenes in the store as well as learning about Fair Trade. The beavers also visited Boots Opticians to learn about how to look after our eyes and to experience how much fun an eye test can be!



In the spring term our beavers bravely explored dark tunnels (tables covered in tarpaulin) hunting for treasure armed only with their headtorches and helmets! Our new beavers were invested during a very special joint colony meeting at the Spice Bank restaurant where we learnt about Islam and sampled many delicious dishes. We had the great pleasure of welcoming back Pip and her guide dog Alice to a meeting and they were joined by Peter and his dog Dexter. The beavers learnt about what it's like to have a visual impairment and the amazing job guide dogs do to help their owner.



The colony visited our friends at Borovere care Home again and the beavers and the residents had great fun playing games and making puzzles together.



In February we undertook a super soggy welly hike along water Lane with Woodside Colony. We all had a wonderful time and many beavers returned with rather damp feet!

Many beavers attended a Disney Encanto themed “drive-in movie” sleepover in March. The beavers spent time making their own car to take to the “movie” and enjoyed their dinner from their cars. Our second sleepover of 2024 was in May where the colony gained experience pitching tents ready for Group Camp this summer.



Most recently, this term Kestrel Colony have visited the Butts Church to work on the Faith badge, explored Hogmoor Enclosure and used navigation skills in the public gardens. We have also welcomed Claire from RNLI who taught the beavers about water safety. Our beavers have had a go at planting and caring for some plants and lots have been successful and surprised by how well their lettuce and sunflowers have grown!





We are so lucky in Rotherfield District to have such an enthusiastic team who put on a huge number of events throughout the year, and this year has been no different. These events have enabled the beavers to meet new people and to try lots of new activities including curling and “it’s a knock out”. Some beavers from Kestrel colony also attended a campfire at 2<sup>nd</sup> Bentley Scout hut where there was lots of singing! The district team also organised a Christmas party (everyone looked smashing in their Christmas jumpers!).

Several Beavers completed their Chief Scouts Bronze award and even more are very close to finishing. Many thanks, as always go to the amazing Kestrel Colony leadership team – Hawk, Owl, Hedgehog and Mouse and our Young leaders Robin and Raven who always ensure the Beavers have lots of fun whilst building #skillsforlife

As ever, Matt our Group Scout Leader, provides fantastic support behind the scenes, and we appreciate the parents who help at our meetings and the maintenance days. This assistance really is vital for sustainability and to ensure that all our plans can be implemented . Leading really is fun and so very rewarding, so please do contact us if you feel you would like more information about what is involved... it's far less training than you are probably thinking!

Emma (Ratty) Beaver Section Leader Kestrel Beaver Colony



