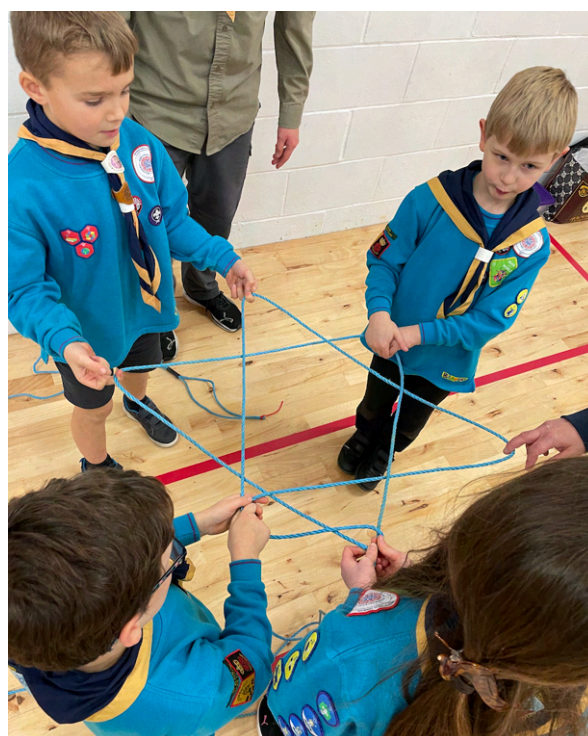


Woodside Beavers - 2023-2024

It's been a super year for Woodside Colony. All our members have joined in with great enthusiasm enjoying a broad range of activities and experiences. We currently have 22 Beavers in the colony.

We rounded off last summer with more outdoor activities to make the most of the sunshine and light evenings. Everyone enjoyed a game of rounders on the Butts Green. The Leaders subsequently programmed practice a little more regularly so that everyone gets a chance to remember the rules and game play. We played again in the early autumn and will repeat in a couple of week's time before the summer holidays. Beavers worked in lodges to complete a series of challenges on a trail through the town for their Navigator Level 1 badge. We also followed the Wey Walk from the station to Flood Meadows and picked up litter en route.

As always, we started each term with team games and challenges to welcome our new members and get buddies working together. This year we have had a go at circle games (including Look & Scream and Pass the Sound), getting to know you activities like 'Find a Beaver who...' and lodge challenges - tallest Jenga tower in 10 mins, rope shapes and replicating a series of Lego builds with only limited viewing. All went down very well.



In the autumn we had fantastic support from Hampshire and The Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust to help Beavers complete their Bugs of the World badge. Craig talked to the Beavers about bugs we could find in the grounds at The Den and in our gardens. There was a lot of excitement for a bug hunt up on the bank, where the highlight was finding slow worms. Beavers worked in pairs to

create beetle canteens in the soil. Part 2 of the badge involved creating bugs from pipe cleaners and decorating bug biscuits.



Beavers have had the opportunity to take part in events with their peers across the District. We had several teams participating in It's a Knockout held at the Community Centre last September. Unfortunately we didn't bring the cup home this time, but had fun trying to retain the champions position! Bentley Beavers hosted a District campfire in November, which was a chance to make some noise with campfire singing. We've had several campfires since then with marshmallow toasting sessions, and post snack vocal chord exercise, including learning the Kookaburra as part of our Australia theme. The Beavers have sung this several times now so should be in good voice for the Group Camp.

We also joined the District Christmas party held in Four Marks. The Beavers were in stitches with the magician and enjoyed making their Christingles. 3rd Alton Beavers had contributed their thoughts about Christmas in earlier meetings. These were collated into a Beavers' Own which several readers shared with the congregation in the Christmas service. District Curling was held in March and again we had a large sign up from 3rd Alton so could enter several teams. No trophy, though we were the winners last time.

Many of our Beavers are now seasoned campers, having attended our sleepover events which we run on a termly basis. We held a Chef's Camp in the autumn, obviously with a focus on cooking. Beavers learned how to use a range of utensils safely and cook over gas. In small groups, they made garlic butter and prepared garlic bread, chopped their own vegetables and made a sauce for pasta. They also completed a number of activities to learn about safety in the kitchen and healthy foods. In the morning they made individual apple danish pastries.

Our Spring term sleepover was a Film Festival. The Beavers had a whale of a time constructing their own cardboard cars for a drive in movie to watch the Disney animated film Encanto. We held an adventure camp at The Den in May when all our activities were outdoors, including sleeping and cooking. We are now looking forward to the Group Camp in July with 30 Beavers attending.



There's been other events throughout the year as well as our regular weekly meetings. In the autumn term we hosted a Lego workshop with Sarah from Brilliant Bricks, which enabled the Beavers to work through their Builder badge. In the spring term, Coach Chris taught participants from all our Sections a range of skills with a jump rope. This was a popular event with 80 young people attending overall. Merlin checked out Water Lane early in the year and planned a Welly Walk which was immense fun with plenty of mud and water - this is always a popular combination for Beavers! Games Day was held for the second year running with 8th Alton only last week. We enjoyed energetic team games and a picnic on the field at Anstey Park.

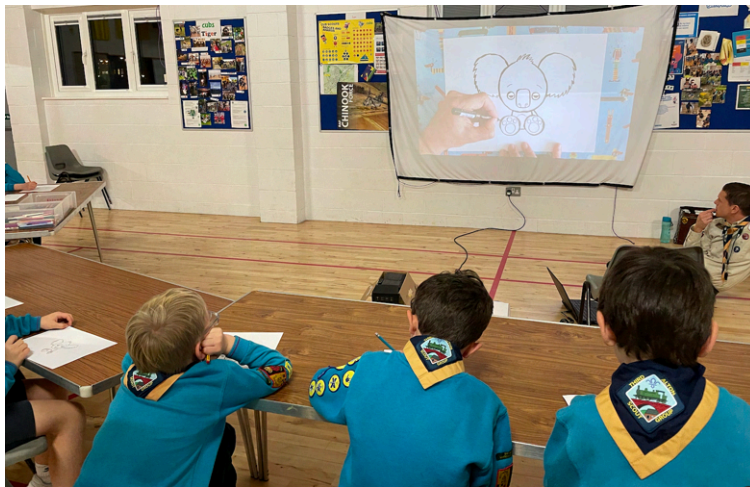


We've also been away from The Den to a number of different locations with visits to RAF Odiham, Boots Optician, Marks & Spencers, the Spice Bank, Borovere Care Home, Hogmoor Inclosure and St Lawrence's church. At these venues Beavers were able to complete the required components for Air Activities Level 1, learn how to keep their eyes healthy and try out some of the testing equipment, find out about Fair Trade and recycling, have the honour and privilege to witness part of the call to prayer and Muslim salat (prayer routine), support older people through the Community Impact level 1 badge, play some new wide games, and complete some elements for the Faith badge. The owner of the Spice Bank opened the restaurant to both our colonies in February and helped the Beavers learn about the five pillars of Islam, offered a range of food to taste and allowed us to invest 11 Beavers while we were there! Hopefully those brand new Beavers will remember that experience in years to come.



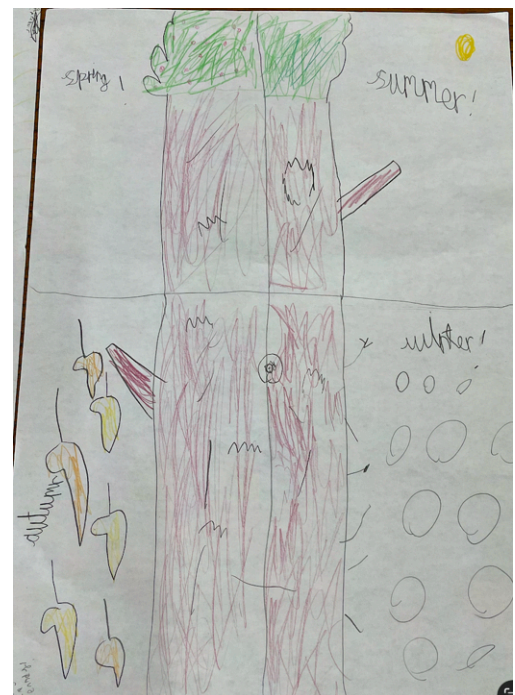
Key badges completed in the last year include Disability Awareness when we welcomed visitors Pip and Peter with their respective guide dogs Alice and Dexter. The Beavers had lots of questions for Pip and Peter and watched how skilfully their dogs could lead them through obstacles. Alice was perhaps a little overwhelmed by the occasion and led Pip to a number of chairs for her to sit down, instead of walking round them! For part 2 of their badge, Beavers viewed a pop up art gallery and voted for their favourite painting. They subsequently watched a video, and discovered all were by local artist Tom Yendell. They were blown away by his skill and talent as a foot and mouth painter and then tried to emulate this themselves. Beavers also completed the Money Skills

badge - collecting bottle tops over time and watching their 'savings' mount up. The accounts were then opened with money available to spend in a pop up Lego shop complete with special offers. Beavers had to make spending decisions.



For the International badge, we focussed on Australia, building quarters of a jigsaw in lodges and then fitted the parts together to make an illustrated map. We also played some great Australian games - Flip Flop toss and 2 up - drew Koalas following the online tutorial from illustrator #DrawWithRob, found out about the Beavers equivalent in Australia (Joeys) and looked at some Australian artefacts brought in by a well-travelled parent.

We planted seeds earlier this term and Beavers have been watching these grow into a range of healthy plants over the last couple of months. They've measured the height of their plants and even tasted their radishes. The final piece for the Gardener badge was drawing the changes to trees in the 4 seasons. This picture was a thoroughly deserved winner of Beaver of the Week for a cleverly designed piece of artwork.



Throughout the year, our older Beavers have taken turns to lead a game with the colony to complete their Skills Challenge. This has helped them grow in confidence with leadership skills and expand our games repertoire with popular ideas such as Red Rover and Crocodiles. Our Lodge Leaders and Uniform Inspectors have been great in helping with Investitures of Beavers and Leaders, as well as Swimming Up and preparing for parade.

Ahead of the summer holidays we had a brilliant evening with Claire from the RNLI Education team who led an interactive session on water safety. Hopefully the Beavers will remember the key points to stay safe near water - 1 Stop & Think, 2 Stay together, 3 Float, 4 Call 999 if someone is in trouble in the water.

My thanks go to our terrific Leaders - Merlin, Badger, and Eagle, Young Leaders - Sparrow who joined us this term and Rook, our stalwart, who has now taken the plunge in to a Leader's shirt on turning 18 and was invested by our Lodge Leaders this week! We really appreciate the support of parents who help out - we have several regulars, and Matt provides a very strong foundation for everyone at 3rd Alton behind the scenes. I'd like to invite any parents or family members to join our Leadership team or support in other ways if you don't fancy volunteering directly with the children. Assistance really is vital for sustainability of our Sections. Leading is such fun, and full of new opportunities. Please do contact us if you feel you could take that bold step into uniform or help in another capacity! We all started from scratch too! It's so rewarding to see our Beavers develop their knowledge, skills and friendships.

Anna (Tawny)

Beavers Section Leader - Woodside

