

The Beaver Colony stopped meeting regularly in March 2020 in line with Government and Scout Association guidance at the start of the covid-19 pandemic. Between March and July 2020 we sent a number of emails to Beavers to check-in and suggest badges they might like to be working on over the first lockdown. Over the summer period we provided ad-hoc Zoom meetings with scavenger hunts and games for Beavers. For the autumn term we provided a more regular pattern of meeting in line with the advice at that time; Beavers alternated Zoom meetings and outdoor meetings in groups of 15 for activities such as welly walks, conker collecting and outdoor games. Between January-April 2021 when the UK went back into lockdown, we provided a substantive weekly Zoom provision and worked towards a number of badges including air activities, international, craft and challenge badges. Beavers have continued to earn hikes away and nights away badges for activities completed at home such as big walks and camping in their gardens. We invested two new Beavers in February 2021, and during half term delivered each Beaver their badges and craft supplies for the rest of the term. Three older Beavers have just completed their Chief Scout's Bronze Award. In anticipation of the Government lifting restrictions again after Easter, we plan to resume a cautious mix of alternative Zoom and outdoor meetings until the summer holidays.

Over this difficult year, the Beaver Colony has maintained numbers and enthusiastic participation. We are keeping membership to 15 children for the time being, as that is the current number for youth groups allowed to meet as Government restrictions ease again. We are proactively contacting children on the waiting list to inform them of their position, potential start date and confirming they still wish to join the Colony in due course. If Government restrictions allow, we anticipate taking more children from September 2021. We are working with the rest of the Group on membership numbers, noting that the intake of Beavers affects Cubs and Scouts in the long term. From January 2021, Elise officially took over as Beaver Scout Leader, though we are very much a leadership team with Jacquie, Chris and Rachel continuing to give a lot of time each week together with Young Leaders Charlie Hitching and Robert Whitelgg (now an Occasional Helper)..

Elise Laker – Beaver Leader