

SWIFTS & KINGFISHERS JOINT COLONY REPORT – 2019/20

Swifts and Kingfishers Beavers at 1st Woosehill have, enjoyed an action packed, varied and of course fun set of activities over the past 12 months both face to face and virtually. Swifts numbers have dipped for the first time from full capacity (20 Beavers) to 17 in the final lockdown term. Kingfishers numbers remain steady at 18, with two new Beavers successfully invested in the most recent term

To ensure all Beavers are getting the same opportunities and experiences, both Colonies have mirrored the same programme each term. Activities for Beavers in the Autumn term included taking to the slopes for a ski lesson at John Nike, becoming scientists as we took a trip to the Lookout Discovery Centre, learning more about technology at the Apple Centre in Reading, becoming the next generation of David Bailey's as we learnt more about photography and making their own functioning broomsticks as part of our Halloween fun, as well as a joint Swifts and Kingfishers Christmas party.

During the Spring term, we visited Glebelands Care home sharing stories and artwork with the residents, built machines to help endangered animals (with junk modelling), had a fantastic tour of Morrisons and learnt about Holi, holding our own festival of colour (outside). The Beavers also raised money for the WWF by helping out around the home. Unfortunately, the abrupt end to term did not see us conduct our famous Mother's Day Café, or hold our planned joint Easter Egg hunt at Dinton Pastures.

Summer term saw the Beavers move to virtual meetings via Zoom with an average of 60-70% of the the colonies regularly attending. Beavers enjoyed baking cakes in the microwave, learning about Beavers from around the world, creating their own treasure maps and becoming navigators, crafting with materials delivered to their doors by the leaders for Father's Day and even enjoyed learning a dance lesson from a special from The Pauline Quirke Academy of Performing Arts.

As always, Beavers are rewarded for working towards a variety of badges which this year included: Photography, Creative, Faith, Communicator, Global, Experiment, Cycling, and International; Staged badges; Digital Citizen, Hike, Communicator and Navigator and Challenge: My Adventure, My Skills and Personal Challenge badges.

The lockdown measures mean that the planned Beaver Camp at Youlbury Scout Camp in September, ahead of returning for the Autumn term is unlikely to take place. Beavers were to sleep in 5-man bell tents and try their hand at five different activities, including zip wire, archery, 3G swing, crate stacking and fire lighting. They would also have had the delights of dinner, hot chocolate and songs around the campfire followed by breakfast and more activities the following day.

All of these activities could only be achieved with the support of the Swifts and Kingfishers Leadership Team. Thanks go Sparrow, Phoenix, Frog, Mouse, Bat, Dragonfly and Otter and the Young Leaders – without you Beavers would not happen! A special mention is also due for Robin, who has left her role as ABSL after two years with Beavers – thank you for all the hard work, love and care you gave the youngsters.

The leaders and the Beavers are all looking forward to when face to face meetings can resume, but we continue to plan other fun Zoom sessions should this not be possible next term. Challenges next year include attracting newcomers to the Leadership team to assist us in providing a safe and stimulating environment in which Beavers can have fun, learn new skills, and developing strategies to ensure new Beavers feel happy and confident to join the colonies virtually over Zoom should we not be able to conduct face to face meetings.