

# Youth Participation in the Beaver Scout Colony



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## Introduction

This is the first edition of this factsheet. One of the areas of work for the Programme Team is Youth Participation. Scout Network members are encouraged to run their own sections and to join committees. Explorer Scouts are encouraged to have a big say in the running of their units. Scouts have their Patrol Leaders' Councils and Troop Forums. Cub Scouts have their Sixers' Forum. All the above have a much larger say in their section and its programme. Although it would seem much harder to encourage Youth Participation in the Beaver Scout Section, there are different ways of doing this, including using Log Chews.

Youth forums form a significant part of all sections' lives. One of the most frequently used methods of youth forums in the Beaver Scout section is known as a "Log Chew". However, this is not to say it is the only example of Colony Forum good practice.

To help you in your role as a Leader in the Beaver Scout section, the UK Adviser for the Beaver Scouts' Working Group, has put together the following examples of suggestions and good practice to encourage Youth Participation in the Beaver section. These examples have been used successfully in Colonies in the past.

It is for the Colony Leadership team to decide when and how Log Chews might be helpful and how often they are used. One suggestion is that they are held at every colony meeting.

## Basic principles

It may be that you are already operating a Log Chew system but know it by another name. A Log

Chew or forum is typically used at the beginning or end of a Colony meeting and can be an opportunity for the Beaver Scouts to talk about things that they have done during the time since their last meeting. You should also use this opportunity to allow the Beaver Scouts to express their opinions on the programme, complete their badge work or have a say in the Colony planning.

## Why hold one?

There are many reasons why you should regularly hold a Log Chew:

- It will help you to get to know more about the Beaver Scouts in your Colony
- You could use a Log Chew to create a Colony Code of Conduct, by which all Beaver Scouts have an input and agree to abide by.
- When held at the beginning of the Colony meeting it will give you an opportunity to explain to the Colony the evening's programme and learn of any concerns that a Beaver Scout may have about it.
- A Log Chew will enable you to gain an insight into the current trends amongst the young people in the Beaver Scout Colony.
- It will enable the Beavers to share any good news that they may have without disrupting the meeting and in a supervised manner.
- It will allow them to undertake badge work such as the Hobbies Activity Badge by talking about something in a less formal and more familiar manner. They will have a captive audience to Show and Tell the hobby they have chosen.

- A Log Chew could be a good way to encourage the quietest or shyest Beaver Scout to speak out, as well as learn that their voice is just as important as the loudest or most demanding Beaver Scout.
- Letting Beaver Scouts have a voice and be heard will give them confidence in all areas of their lives and hopefully help develop their sense of involvement, particularly in planning their own programmes as they move through the other sections.
- A Log Chew could be a good way of reviewing an Activity day; this could be a section, Group, District or County activity day review. Giving the Beaver Scouts a chance to say what they think.

### Methods

There are no formal guidelines as to how the Log Chew should be operated but the following are offered as examples:

- The Beaver Scouts sit around in a circle with the Leader in the middle. The Colony uses an item such as a beaver soft toy, which is in turn passed around the Beaver Scouts. Only when a Beaver Scout has hold of the beaver toy is it their turn to say something, either about what they have done in the past few days, or what they liked best about Beaver Scouts this week or what they would like to do again at future meetings.

(Alternatively, you could use a suitably sized log or small stick to pass round in lieu of the toy)

- All the Beaver Scouts sit around in a circle and one sits in a chair. Only the one in the chair is allowed to talk. The Beaver Scouts then take it in turns to sit in the chair
- If your Colony is a large one, perhaps you could consider holding a Log Chew with different lodges each week.
- You could hold your Log Chew after you have gathered the Beaver Scouts around to read a story or provided them with a drink and piece of fruit. They may be a little bit calmer after this

type of quiet time, particularly if you have had an energetic and excitable evening programme.

- Another method of involving Beaver Scouts in having a say in their programme is to invite the 'Birthday Beaver' to choose their favourite game from previous programmes, which will be played during the next Colony meeting.
- Activity review – try and structure the review. You could select an older Beaver to stand up and lead the review by asking the other Beavers that attended the activity to say what they liked or didn't like about it. Remember to ask one or two of the Beavers who didn't go, why they didn't attend, and was there something about the day that if changed, would make them want to attend next time.

If the activity was a District or County event, then you could invite the organiser of the event to the review.

### Behaviour during a Log Chew

As with all activities in the section, there will need to be some ground rules. When it comes to conduct during a Log Chew, it is recommended that Beaver Scouts clearly understand that there should be no shouting out and that they must take it in turns. This may well help to keep the more enthusiastic Beaver Scout under control and allow the quieter Beaver Scout to feel confident enough to join in knowing no one will interrupt them when they are speaking.