

**FRIENDS OF THE RIVER CRANE ENVIRONMENT (FORCE)  
NEWSLETTER THREE: FEBRUARY 2004**



Dear Friends,

The Friends of the River Crane Environment (FORCE) has been formed by local groups and individuals to represent the interests and views of local people regarding the River Crane and its corridor within the London Borough of Richmond. FORCE was formed in direct response to the Council's proposals to remove Metropolitan Open Land status, and subsequently develop, council owned green spaces within the Crane Valley between Kneller Gardens and London Road.

In December last year FORCE provided key witnesses to a two week Public Inquiry on the Crane Valley aspects of the Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) proposals. An independent inspector will issue a report, scheduled for March, dealing with each issue considered by the Inquiry and where appropriate recommending amendments to the UDP prior to adoption by the Council. We were happy with how the Inquiry progressed but it is the content of this report which will be the key to how the Crane valley area is managed and developed over the next ten years.

In the mean time there are a number of significant developments being proposed. Harlequins RFC are to submit a detailed planning application to build a new west stand this Spring, and this will be accompanied by housing development on their practice pitch. Open Days to present draft proposals are scheduled at the Harlequins ground on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February (6 - 9pm), 12<sup>th</sup> (4 - 8pm), 13<sup>th</sup> (4 - 8pm) and 14<sup>th</sup> (10am - 4pm). We recommend you go along and submit your views.

Richmond College is currently putting together a proposal for a new College development, envisaged for the same time-scale. This will propose building on their northern playing field with housing development on the existing College site. In addition, the Council may wish to move forward with plans for the Depot site in the near future and the Post Office site may also be subject to re-development.

FORCE is also proposing, whatever the Inspector's decisions, to move forward with improvements to the green corridor along the River Crane (and the Duke of Northumberland's River). We have recently secured a £2000 grant from the Scarman Trust to support this work as well as £2000 grant from the Council's Civic Pride Fund. We are proposing a number of Volunteer Days over the next few months and plan a repeat of last Summer's Open Day in June. More details on our proposals will be released in the near future.

Force is not against development per se but considers that any proposals should take the concerns of residents fully into account and should provide associated improvements to the local environment. We already have a commitment in principle from Harlequins and the College to work together with FORCE and the Heatham Residents' Association. We are also hopeful that our relationship with the Council will improve, once the inspector's report has been issued, and we believe that our Civic Pride award is the first positive sign of this.

The Heatham Residents' Association (HRA) will take a lead on local planning developments such as the College and Harlequins but FORCE will provide support and take a lead on the associated environmental issues. However, to achieve all this, both FORCE and HRA will require the active help and support of local residents.

This newsletter is being sent out to people who have already registered an interest and we would ask you to consider doing one or more of the following:

- Pass this newsletter to a neighbour or friend and ask them to register with us
- Attend one of our volunteer days; the next is at the Rifle Club site on Sunday 7 March (please turn up from 10-30am, in stout footwear, gloves and appropriate clothing)
- Keep in contact with our progress and send us your views through our web-site (accessed through [www.twickenham-online.co.uk](http://www.twickenham-online.co.uk) and going to "Community Links"). Our e-mail address is [FORCE@twickenham-online.co.uk](mailto:FORCE@twickenham-online.co.uk)
- Contact us to get involved with the campaign. You may have an interest or experience in planning matters or just be concerned to voice your say and play your part in the future of the area. We meet regularly at the Cabbage Patch and welcome everyone.
- Come to our next Public Meeting, scheduled for late April (details to follow)

Thank you for your support to date and we look forward to hearing from you,

Yours,

Rob Gray (Chair FORCE)

PS: this month FORCE submitted an objection to the proposal for a new 17 metre telephone mast on the Electricity sub-station site on Warwick Road, next to the Crane and opposite Craneford Playing Fields. We are interested in information on any other proposals that may impact upon the Crane corridor; please send any comments through via the e-mail or contact myself on (020) 8892 9518.