



Dear Friends,

We are coming up to the first anniversary of the founding of Friends Of the River Crane Environment (FORCE) and we shall be holding our first **AGM** on **Wednesday 22nd September** at All Hallows Church Hall in Erncroft Way at **8:00pm**. All FORCE members are welcome to come along and hear about the highlights from last year plus our plans for the next one. The attached sheet provides further details of the AGM. There are currently two vacant positions on the executive committee. We would welcome the nomination of new committee members.

Volunteer Days

We are also holding the first of our autumn series of volunteer days on **Sunday 12th September**, meeting at either **Twickenham Rifle Club** or **Mereway Allotments** from **10:30am**. As usual, everyone is welcome for some or all of the day. Please remember to wear your old clothes and sturdy shoes.

To celebrate our first anniversary, there is an added attraction. We shall be holding a **barbecue** on the Rifle Club site following the volunteer day, starting from **5:00pm**. Please come along, bring some food and drink and meet your fellow members.

You can get to the Rifle Club from Craneford Way or via Mereway — following the pathway between the Depot and the railway and across Craneford playing field. You can also access it over the footbridge from Marsh Farm Road. The entrance to the Rifle Club is along the drive between the two Craneford playing fields.

We plan to hold further volunteer days on the **second Sunday** of each month throughout the Autumn and Winter. The full programme of scheduled events is as follows:

Thu 2nd Sep	7:45pm	Bat Watch	Children's Playground, Craneford Way
Sun 12th Sep	10:30am	Volunteer Day	Rifle Club & Mereway Allotments
Sun 12th Sep	5:00pm	Barbecue	Rifle Club
Wed 22nd Sep	8:00pm	AGM	All Hallows Church Hall, Erncroft Way
Sun 3rd Oct	1:30pm	LWT Fungal Foray	Crane Park Island Nature Reserve
Sun 10th Oct	10:30am	Volunteer Day	Crane Park
Sun 14th Nov	10:30am	Volunteer Day	Mereway Allotments
Sun 12th Dec	10:30am	Volunteer Day	Rifle Club



BTCV & LWT

We are co-ordinating our volunteering activities with both Richmond BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) and London Wildlife Trust (LWT). **LWT** run regular volunteer events every **last Sunday of the month** from **10:30am** at **Crane Park Island Nature Reserve**, and **Richmond BTCV** are planning events for the other weekends (more details can be found at www.btcv.org). This means that there are opportunities to get involved in local environmental projects on most Sundays.

Bat Watch

We also hope to organise other events throughout the year and the first of these is a bat observation evening on **Thursday 2nd September**. We will be meeting by the **Children's Playground** on the Craneford Way playing fields at **7:45pm** and conducting the second of our surveys of the local bat population, supported by the London Bat Group. Again, everyone is welcome.

Water Vole Surveys

FORCE is planning to assist with **water vole surveys** along the River Crane and the Duke of Northumberland's River. These surveys will be carried out on an on-going basis and form part of the London Water Vole Project, which is being co-ordinated by LWT. We are keen to recruit volunteers to assist with this exercise. Training can be provided. Anyone who is interested should contact **Keith Martin** at keith@borsuk.clara.co.uk or by telephone on **020 8755 2091**.

London Wildlife Trust

London Wildlife Trust are holding an **Autumn Open Day** on **Sunday 3rd October** at the Shot Tower in Crane Park and this will include a **fungus foray** around **Crane Park Island** from **1:30pm**. The shot tower was officially opened in June and will be open to visitors on the last Sunday of each month from 1:30 to 4:30pm. LWT are very keen to hear from any people willing to help in opening the shot tower on other Sundays during the year. Call **Alex Robb** on **07702 669888** for more details.

Environmental Improvements

There is plenty of planning activity happening in the background as well. FORCE is in the process of developing a plan for a **Nature Park** on **Mereway Allotments**. Additionally, we are hoping to move forward with our plans to improve the appearance of the wall on the Craneford Playing Fields in the next couple of months.



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We are also in discussions with London Wildlife Trust and Richmond Upon Thames Council on a more ambitious plan to extend Crane Park. The plan is to encompass the green spaces along the River Crane between Hounslow Heath and Twickenham Railway Station, a total length of some 4 kilometres. More details on all these plans will be available during the AGM.

Crane Park Questionnaire

Richmond Upon Thames Council is gathering information on people's perception on the current management of **Crane Park**. This is with a view to enhancing the site for both people and wildlife. A copy of a questionnaire is attached together with a covering letter. Please return the completed questionnaire to the address in the covering letter or, if you prefer, you may e-mail the questionnaire to Charlotte Williams at C.Williams2@richmond.gov.uk.

Revised Crane Valley Masterplan

The Council is also busy on plans for the area downstream of Crane Park, developing Supplementary Planning Guidance to control development proposals in the Crane valley area. They are also producing a much-revised Crane Valley Masterplan. We are in discussion with the Council on these documents and are hopeful that both will reflect our own ambitions for the area.

Summary Of Activities To Date

We originally founded FORCE to counter the proposals put forward by Richmond Upon Thames Council to remove Metropolitan Open Land status from various sites within the lower Crane valley. The proposals went to public inquiry in December last year, with FORCE heavily involved in countering the proposals. In March this year, the inspector issued his report, which largely supported FORCE's case.

Additionally, in the 12 months to the end of July 2004 FORCE has:

- Been awarded a **Civic Pride grant** for the improvement of Craneford Playing Fields and associated infrastructure;
- Through volunteer activity, improved the appearance of Mereway Allotments, Craneford Playing Fields and Twickenham Rifle Club through the removal of **more than seven skips of rubbish**, planting of hedges and the painting over of graffiti;
- Developed an approach to **graffiti removal** and reporting in co-ordination with the local police;
- Responded to **planning proposals** regarding Harlequins, Crossrail and the Post Office site developments and the Warwick Road Phone Mast proposal;



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- Developed working relationships with London Wildlife Trust, Richmond Upon Thames Council and the Environment Agency;
- Affiliated to Richmond CVS and BTCV;
- Held a total of **four Volunteer Days**, typically with 40 volunteers at each event;
- Contributed to the development of Supplementary Planning Guidance for the Crane Valley area;
- Joined the **River Crane Management Forum** as an active member;

And Finally

Thank-you to all those who supported our second Open Day in June, for which we had a good and enthusiastic turnout despite the unseasonable weather. The Open Day, and stalls at the Twickenham and St Margaret's Fairs, have helped to boost our membership to **over 340** and we are grateful for your support.

We hope to see and hear from many of you in the coming weeks and months and are keen for all of our members to get more involved in the planning and implementation of our plans for the area. Please come along to our events and e-mail us with your ideas and suggestions.

Once you have read this newsletter, please pass it on to your friends and neighbours and help us to spread our message further.

Regards,

Rob Gray (Chair FORCE)

August 2004

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