



Friends Of the River Crane Environment

Dear Friends,

### Season's Greetings

It's December again and this time last year we were contesting the Council in the Public Inquiry on their Crane Valley proposals. A lot has changed since then and we are pleased to update you on the progress over the last few months.

### Crane Valley Planning Guidelines

The council has recently completed a consultation exercise on its revised Crane Valley Planning Guidelines. FORCE submitted a **detailed response** to this and we are aware that many of our members also submitted responses. Last month we met with the Council Planning Officers and they were very responsive to our comments and we are hopeful that many of our proposed amendments to the document will be adopted in the final version when it is published next year.

### Harlequins Development

In the meantime the **detailed planning application** from Harlequins was considered by the Council. FORCE attended this meeting and made a number of proposals. We are also pleased to report that each of these were accepted by the Council and Harlequins and are to be included in the detailed Section 106 Agreement for the scheme. The key elements are:

- **A strip of land along the Duke of Northumberland's River** will be transferred to the Council. This will allow the pathway along this reach to be widened and also increase the potential for the re-introduction of **water voles** to this river.
- **A triangle of land**, currently in use as part of the training pitch, will be landscaped and provided for public use following the development.
- **Craneford West** playing field will continue in **sole public use** and will not be used as an alternative training pitch for the club.

We shall be working with the Council and Harlequins to implement these components of the scheme.

### College Proposals

The College is currently preparing detailed plans for a new campus with associated enabling development. We are in regular meetings with the College to discuss these plans as they develop. We are pleased to say that **Heatham Residents Association** is also taking an active role in these discussions and is looking after residents' interests with respect to broader development and associated traffic issues away from the river corridors. Alistair Edwards is taking a lead on this and can be contacted on 8892 4241.

Website: [www.force.org.uk](http://www.force.org.uk)

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### Can you tell your Coots from your Moorhens?

We are seeking volunteers to assist with a **water bird survey** along a section of the Crane and Duke of Northumberland's River. The work involves walking a fixed stretch of these rivers (approximately from Twickenham Stadium to the Crane Park Shot Tower) on a number of occasions between mid-March and mid-July. (Ideally, we would prefer volunteers to be able to do at least two such walks). The only necessary skills are to be able to read a large-scale map and to be able to recognise the common water birds likely to be seen along these rivers. Training will be provided for anyone who requires it. Feel free to pass on this request to anyone else you know who might be interested. Please contact Keith at [borsuk@clara.co.uk](mailto:borsuk@clara.co.uk) or 0208 755 2091 for further details.

### Volunteer Days

Our Volunteer Days continue through the winter, held every second Sunday of the month. We are making good progress with both the Mereway and the Rifle Club/Marsh Farm Triangle sites and we hope you have had the opportunity to visit these works in progress. The programme for the next few months is as follows:

<b>Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> January:</b>	Mereway Allotments.	<i>Further development of the meadow and pathways through the site.</i>
<b>Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> February:</b>	Crane Park Island Nature Reserve.	<i>Willow Coppicing and preparation for planting reed beds in the river at Crane Park.</i>
<b>Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> March:</b>	Craneford Playing Fields.	<i>Working on the wall alongside Marsh Farm Lane.</i>
<b>Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> April:</b>	Crane Park.	<i>Planting reed beds and other native water plants in the river.</i>

As always, we welcome all ages for the day, or just an hour or so. We provide tools and gloves and recommend old clothes and stout shoes. The day starts at 10:30am and goes through until 4:30pm. For further information call Rob Gray on 8892 9518.

### Gloves, gloves and more gloves!

When you come on our next volunteer day, you should find exactly the right gloves for the tasks in hand, thanks to a very generous **donation** by Bill Roagh of Centre Sales Limited, ([www.centresales.co.uk](http://www.centresales.co.uk), tel: 01527 832092). He has sent FORCE a **large box of gloves** of varying types and sizes. There are heavy-duty gloves for thorny tasks, palm fit gloves for more delicate work, and gloves for working up to your elbows in water, to name but a few. There are plenty of children's sizes, so the whole family can be kitted out! Many thanks to Bill.

Thank-you again for your support, best wishes for Christmas and we look forward to seeing you in 2005.

Regards,

Rob Gray (Chair of FORCE)

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