



Friends Of the River Crane Environment

Dear Friends,

Seasons greetings to you all and thank you for your continued support. We are pleased to say that our membership numbers have continued to hold up at **more than 340** following subscription renewals in the spring. As usual there is plenty of activity over the winter months and we have provided a summary below.

Website Re-launch

We have completely **re-designed** our website. You can see it at www.force.org.uk. We hope you like the new look and content. If you have any suggestions for the website, please let us know.

Marsh Farm Lane

Hopefully, many of you have seen the **railings** and associated improvements along Marsh Farm Lane over the last few months. Particular thanks are due to the Council **graffiti** department, who have **first cleaned off the wall** and continue to remove fresh outbreaks within a few days of occurrence. We expect the contractor to start the next phase of work in the next few weeks, **breaking through the wall** into the "Triangle" behind and thereby linking into the pathways we have created through this wooded area.

Mereway Nature Park

We are also moving forward with works on the Mereway allotments site, recently re-named as **"Mereway Nature Park"**. Our next volunteer day will be held there on **8th January** and this will be a special event, run in association with **Richmond Environment Network** and particularly aimed at **young volunteers**. We are also working with **Trafalgar School** to develop an **outdoor class room** on the site and have recently been awarded a Civic Pride award to construct a **"chainsaw sculpted" bench** for the meadow area.

Kneller Gardens

Since our last Newsletter the Council has announced that proposals for new rugby pitches and associated flood lighting on the site would not be acceptable and has proposed its own **£60,000 grant** to improve the infrastructure around the Gardens. We are also pleased to say that a new group, known as the **Friends of Kneller Gardens**, has been set up to represent local interests and we hope to be working along with this group and the Council on various improvements around the site over the coming months.

Harlequins Re-development

We have recently received assurances from Harlequins, as well as the Council, that the two schemes agreed as part of the development package are to go ahead in the near future. These are, to **widen the corridor of the Duke of Northumberland's River** alongside the ground, and to **landscape a triangle of land** beside Craneford Way for public use. We look forward to working with them on the final design and implementation of these schemes.

Richmond Upon Thames College

The College has a **new Principal**, Kevin Watson, and he has reinstated regular liaison meetings with residents, local police and rail representatives as well as FORCE. At the first of these meetings the College made it clear that re-development plans are on the back burner at present.



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River Crane Forum

This Forum covers the entire Crane catchment, and is supported by Hillingdon, Hounslow and Richmond Councils as well as the Environment Agency, London Wildlife Trust and the GLA. BAA has agreed to sponsor the Forum, through a charitable organisation called **Green Corridor**, and we are hopeful that this support should improve the management of the river corridor and the implementation of **environmental improvement schemes** that would be beyond our own means.

Walk the West London Green Chain

The lower Crane Valley is part of the West London Green Chain, a vitally important **wildlife corridor** which runs downstream along the Yeading Brook and the Crane Valley, starting in Ruislip in North West London. On **2nd April next year** we are planning to **walk the length** of the Green Chain, some 20km, in a single day. All members and their friends are welcome to join us for some, or all, of the journey, more details of which will follow in future newsletters.

Volunteer Days

The next series of volunteer days for the New Year are as follows:

Sunday 8th January: Mereway. *Improvement of pathways through to the Duke of Northumberland's River and development of the meadow area and outdoor classroom. The day will incorporate special activities for children..*

Sunday 12th February: Rifle Club/Triangle. *Completing the pathways through the Triangle to Marsh Farm Lane.*

Sunday 12th March: Crane Park. *Creating wetland and reed bed areas behind the deflector boulders in the park.*

Sunday 9th April: Kneller Gardens. *A joint event proposed with the Friends of Kneller Gardens. Activities still to be agreed but likely to include removing rubbish from the rivers. It will also provide an opportunity to discuss the future plans for the Gardens.*

Sunday 12th May: Duke of Northumberland's River. *Improvement works along the reach of the river widened as part of the recent agreement with Harlequins.*

As always we welcome all ages for the day or just an hour or so. Come and find us on the site. 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.

Thank-you again for your support and we look forward to seeing you in the coming months,

Regards,

Rob Gray (Chair of FORCE)

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Registered Charity No.: 1108542
Website: www.force.org.uk
E-mail: info@force.org.uk