



Friends Of the River Crane Environment

Dear Friends,

There is a chill in the air that heralds autumn and our most recent volunteer day, on Craneford Fields, found us carrying out what now feel like traditional autumnal activities. We have planted some 25 kilos of daffodil bulbs along the new uncut field margin adjoining the river and planted hawthorn, oak, field maple and chestnut whips and saplings at strategic locations in the Rifle Club grounds as natural screens and fences. Clearing out the bird boxes showed that four out of five had been used during the summer and the day ended with an open fire and barbecue. We have now finalised our Volunteer Days for the rest of the season and these are listed below.

Volunteer Day Programme

The programme for the rest of our 2006-2007 season is as follows:

Sunday 10th December: Crane Park Island Nature Reserve (Meet at the Shot Tower in Crane Park)

Our traditional December visit to the island to coppice willows. If time permits we also hope to build a live willow shelter on the park.

Sunday 14th January: Mereway Nature Park (off Mereway Road)

Sowing wild flowers in the meadow area and further preparation works for the outdoor classrooms. This will be the second of our annual child friendly volunteer days, run in conjunction with Trafalgar School. We also plan to construct live willow woven structures on the site

Sunday 11th February: River Crane at Fulwell Park Avenue

This is a new site for our volunteer days, identified by one of our members as requiring work in removing large amounts of junk from the river and surrounding land. Could be fun.

Sunday 11th March: River Crane in Crane Park (meet at the Shot Tower)

Another regular event, removing shading trees and transplanting reeds from the Island. Our work over the last two years has resulted in an unprecedented amount of new reed growth along the river, creating attractive and valuable new habitat.

Sunday 8th April Duke of Northumberland's River by Harlequins Ground

This is another new site, created by the setting back of Harlequins fence to allow the widening of the path by the DNR and, we hope, create suitable conditions for water voles to re-colonise.

Everyone is welcome to come along to volunteer or to see what we are up to. All days start at 10:30am and we can be found by calling 07932 599208. Boots or stout shoes and old clothes recommended and a packed lunch if you are staying the day. All tools provided.

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Report on The Open Day and AGM

Our fourth annual FORCE Open Day was held on Sunday 17th September and was by common consent the best to date. It may have been the additional publicity or the lovely weather, we certainly benefited from linking with the Friends of Kneller Gardens, but I remain convinced that the main reason was the addition of a beer tent. Thank you to everyone who attended and particular thanks to the 50 or more people who helped on the day and beforehand. Photos from the day can be found on our web-site.

Three days later we held our third AGM, where we voted in the Executive and Trustees for the next year, and were then treated to a presentation on the Minet Country Park, a 40 Hectare site some 10km upstream of us and adjacent to the Grand Union Canal and the A312 in Hillingdon. Minet Country Park has many similar assets and problems to more local sites in Twickenham and Hounslow and we hope to remain in touch with their Friends Group.

Harlequins Site

We are hopeful that the agreed land transfers resulting from the recent West Stand redevelopment and associated housing will be taking place in the next few months. A triangle of land between the housing and Craneford Way is to be landscaped and opened to the public along with a strip of land intended to widen the footpath alongside the Duke of Northumberland's River. In recent weeks the Club has submitted an application for a new South Stand, incorporating educational facilities, to which we have submitted a response.

River Crane Cycling Route

FORCE has been a statutory consultee to a study recently completed on behalf of Richmond Council and Transport for London into an improved cycle route along the Crane. We have been generally supportive of these proposals, as they should lead to considerable new investment on access for both cyclists and pedestrians.

We shall continue to bring updates on these and other projects over the coming months. Please contact us if you have any queries or other information to share,

Regards,

Rob Gray (Chair of FORCE)

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