



Friends Of the River Crane Environment

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Winter 2007-2008 edition of our newsletter

**Woodpecker Bench in Craneford West Field**

Some of you may already have seen the new carved bench, featuring **two woodpeckers**, located in the corner of **Craneford West Field** (recently re-christened by the council as Craneford Recreation ground) by the entrance to the Rifle Club. This is the second of a proposed series of themed benches along the Crane, following the success of the “fox bench” in Mereway Nature Park.

The bench was paid for by a grant from **Richmond Civic Trust** and a **donation** from one of our members Gurbux Singh, in memory of his wife Jagdish who died last year. A dedication to Jagdish will be added to the bench in the near future.

**Volunteer Days**

An updated list of Volunteer days for the rest of this season is provided below. You will note that we have added two days in May and June, in response to requests from our members. As usual they will be held on the **second Sunday** of the month, and run between 10-30am and 4-30pm. Everyone is welcome, for the whole day or an hour, to join in or to see what we are up to first hand.

<b>Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>Crane Park at Hospital Bridge Road</b> <i>The second of our days at this site, planting reeds from Crane Park Island and removing some of the refuse that has been left both in the river and the adjacent track on the south side.</i>
<b>Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>Duke of Northumberland’s River</b> <i>Improvements to the new strip of land transferred to the public by Harlequins.</i>
<b>Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May</b>	<b>Mill Road in Crane Park</b> <i>The second of our clean ups in this area, held in conjunction with local residents.</i>
<b>Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>Mereway Nature Park</b> <i>Completing the task of installing posts to deter parking on the site and improving the pathways.</i>

If you are coming to any of these days wear old clothes and stout footwear. We provide gloves and hot drinks but bring a packed lunch if you plan to stay the day.

**Crane Valley Partnership**

FORCE is an active member of this Partnership, which covers the whole of the Crane catchment from Harrow in the northwest through Ealing and Hillingdon to Hounslow and Richmond boroughs. In the last few months the Partnership has been investigating three parts of the catchment in detail, one of which is Crane Park, in preparation for a major **Heritage Lottery Fund** bid. Surveys have been undertaken and you may have completed a **questionnaire** on your views of the park. FORCE has been submitting information and ideas to this process, which has resulted to date in reports on how local people value the park and proposals for an **improved management** regime. The major conclusions and recommendations of the community survey were: -

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"Crane Park is a convenient local park. It has very attractive parts and good access to wildlife and open space. It attracts groups of visitors, particularly families, and is well-liked by children.

From the survey the park appears to suffer from problems of dog fouling and litter. Some visitors also report that they feel unsafe and some actively avoid sections of the park. There is also evidence of conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists and between dog walkers and others." Recommendations were made based on these findings.

### Crane Riverside Park

At the same time we are moving forwards with our **Feasibility Study** for Crane Riverside Park, our vision to extend the existing Crane Park to Hounslow Heath in the west and Twickenham Station in the east. We have held discussions with Richmond and Hounslow Councils, the Environment Agency and GLA and are collating data on land ownerships and titles. Progress has been slow and steady so far – and one advantage of being a small charity working to our own timetable is that we do not need to rush the results. Nevertheless we hope to complete a **draft report** on the study by this summer.

### Crane Park Island

Two new team members have joined Alex Robb at Crane Park Island. Annie Todd is employed to develop **new heritage projects** for the area and Anna Guzzo is introducing young adults to **environmental volunteering**. Both are employed part time over the next three years and we look forward to working closely with them on projects over this time.

### Projects for 2008

We have several new and evolving projects planned for this year. We are moving forwards with the **reedbed planting** at Hospital Bridge Road and are currently submitting a funding bid to construct a new **water vole channel**, hedge along the school fence and the third of our **sculpted benches** on this site. We have a separate bid to install up to four **kingfisher banks** at different locations along the river, building on the success of the existing artificial nesting banks on Crane Park Island. We also plan to produce **teaching materials** for our outdoor classroom and education space on Mereway Nature Park and we are looking at producing a new **walking leaflet** for the Duke of Northumberland's River, working with the Isleworth Society.

I hope this provides you with an insight into the range and breadth of work we are undertaking locally. I am as ever grateful to our members, volunteers and Trustees for their help and support. Please let me know if you are interested in becoming more involved in our projects. We are always happy to hear from new potential volunteers and would also be interested to hear from anyone interested in becoming a Trustee.

Kind regards,

Rob Gray (Chair of FORCE)

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