



Friends Of the River Crane Environment

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Spring 2008 edition of our newsletter. This is annual renewal time for our members and renewal forms as well as Standing Order and Gift Aid forms have been included with this newsletter. Particular thanks to those of you who have already completed forms - hopefully the system has ensured you haven't received any reminders this time. Incidentally, around 25 per cent of our members pay by Standing Order and Gift Aid was worth some £350 to us in 2006/7.

Upcoming Events

FORCE will have stand at the **Twickenham May Fair** on Monday 26th May, where last year we won a prize for "Most interesting stall!" We will also be at **St Margaret's Fair** in Moormead Park on Saturday 12th July. Both events provide good opportunities to meet FORCE Trustees, find out what we are up to and put your own questions and ideas to us.

Bergitte McGovern is one of our Friends as well as being a **local herbalist**. She has been running occasional guided herbal walks through local green spaces, identifying local plants and describing their health properties. Bee will be running a series of **free walks** and one workshop during May. For more information contact Bee on 07711 539488 or visit www.herbsbybee.co.uk

We are also planning a meeting for our members (and local councillors) to talk through our work to date on "**Crane Riverside Park**". This is scheduled for June this year and details will follow.

The Annual **FORCE Open Day** will be held on Sunday 7th September. As usual we are proposing a community based event with many of the familiar attractions from previous years – Kneller Gardens dog show, beer tent, rifle range, story teller, Marsh Farm produce tasting etc. We are also happy to consider suggestions from any of our members for additional features you may think appropriate to the event.

Volunteer Days

On 9th March we held the second of our volunteer days in **Crane Park near to Hospital Bridge Road**. We split into two teams, one team trans-planting reeds along the river bank from Crane Park Island and the other removing rubbish – including three motorbikes, two shopping trolleys and many assorted car tyres, pallets etc from the river and surrounding undergrowth.

Our April volunteer day was a quieter affair, with numbers reduced by other commitments and poor weather. Nevertheless, we discovered a free source of hawthorn and blackthorn whips, removing young natural sucker plants where they are encroaching the DNR pathway (and risk strimming) and transplanting them to form hedgerows alongside Network Rail's less than attractive new fencing.

A final volunteer day of the season is proposed for Sunday 8th June on **Mereway**, where we hope to be joined by attendees of a local young offenders' scheme. This will be an interesting and hopefully positive experience for all concerned.

This Newsletter is funded for FORCE by: -



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

EDF Project

Some of you may have noticed a trench appearing across **Craneford West Playing Field** in recent weeks. This is part of an EDF project to install a new power line between the substation and the RFU ground that we mentioned some time ago. The delay has been caused by negotiation with Network Rail to drill under the railway line and this final phase of the project is currently in progress, with a temporary pit being dug in the field.

The contractors have done a very neat and tidy job (so far) and we have negotiated an agreement with EDF to provide some funding (for a new bench and safety mirrors) and surplus soil (for a **kingfisher bank** on the Rifle Club site) as part of the agreement. To date the soil has arrived and the cheque is “in the post”.

Grassland Management

Last year, after a number of false starts, we managed to negotiate with the council's contractors for a marginal grassland area to be left uncut along the West Field and Kneller Gardens. We think this is an attractive feature as well as being good for wildlife. You may have noticed that the new grass cutting year has brought a return to cutting everything – although touch-wood our new hedgerows have not yet been strimmed. We are talking to the council, who are sympathetic to the situation, and hopefully we will start to see grassland margins appearing again in the summer.

Richmond College and Twickenham Station developments

The College is currently putting together a masterplan for its redevelopment. At present its preferred option is to re-develop whilst retaining all its green space. We are in discussion with the College on this, along with local councillors and the Heatham Residents Association, although we have not yet seen any plans.

Proposals have also been mooted to re-develop Twickenham Station. We have posted our interests in this project with the Council, in as much as it affects the Crane corridor and provides opportunities for local riverside improvements.

In all these projects we benefit enormously from your membership and support and we hope you will be renewing this for another year.

Kind regards,

Rob Gray (Chair of FORCE)

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