



Friends Of the River Crane Environment

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our Summer 2011 newsletter. Following a hot dry spring we have had plenty of rain in the last month and the Crane valley is looking particularly lovely this summer. It is great to see so many people out and about along the Crane, a surprising number of whom are exploring it for the first time. This may be due to the large number of projects ongoing in the valley and the positive publicity these are receiving. More details on many of these are provided below.

GLA Priority Parks Project

Over the last few months, this project has been delivering improvements to the entrances and access routes through the park on both sides of the river. The entrances are being made **more open and inviting** with increased use of natural materials. Logs produced from trees removed earlier in the project will be used to create beetle loggeries and dead hedges at the entrances from Meadway, Ellerman Avenue and Saxon Avenue. A final decision has been made not to provide a new bridge linking the two sides of the park and the GLA has given permission for these funds to be re-allocated to other schemes in the park.

Crane cycle path and new playground in Hounslow

The **new cycle path** through the Hounslow side of Crane Park has now been completed and will be opened officially this summer. It is already being well used and encouraging a lot more people to explore this side of the park. Local schools have been asked to come up with a name for the route. The cycle path also links with a new **natural playground area** in the top field next to Crane Park and the Chertsey Road.

Crane Valley Partnership projects

Lengths of **toe boarding** have been **removed** along sections of the river both within Crane Park and further upstream. The purpose is to encourage the **re-colonisation** of these reaches by **water voles**, well established on Crane Park Island and seen increasingly at other locations along the river. FORCE would be very interested in hearing of any sightings of water voles along the Crane or Duke of Northumberland's River. This is part of a programme of environmental improvements for a three-year project funded by Biffa and managed by London Wildlife Trust on behalf of the Crane Valley Partnership.

London Wildlife Trust is also managing a three year project on behalf of the Crane Valley Partnership with funding from the **Heritage Lottery Fund**. This project has recently employed a community development officer who has the aim of **improving access**, developing **educational learning resources** and **community engagement** within three sites along the River Crane including Crane Park. This project has been designed to complement the work of the conservation project. London Wildlife Trust also has a project exploring the **archaeological heritage** of Crane Park funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Volunteer Days

Our latest season of volunteer days has now ended and will start again in October. In April this year, we worked with Thames Water for the first time, **sowing wild flowers** along the Duke of Northumberland's River adjacent to Mogden sewage works. Following a day of maintenance in Mereway Nature Park in May we spent our day in June removing Himalayan balsam from the river bank at Hospital Bridge Road.

BTCV have also been very active in the Crane valley this year and they have taken on the maintenance of the wildflower meadows on both sides of Hospital Bridge Road. This project, funded by Richmond council, has been a **huge hit** with the general public. Its location next to the A316 has also helped to advertise the presence and value of the lower Crane to thousands of west London commuters.

This Newsletter is funded for FORCE by: -



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Carved Benches

This summer saw the installation of a **seventh carved bench** along the Crane valley. This bench, with a robin and willow theme, has been funded by a FORCE member in memory of her husband, and has been installed in Crane Park near the bridges to Mill Road Island.

Two recently installed benches, the oak bench and water vole bench, are currently under repair and will be re-installed in the next few weeks. We would welcome any help with the maintenance of these benches, for example in reporting problems with the benches or removing the graffiti that occasionally can be found on them. A fine sandpaper is usually sufficient for anything written in felt pen.

All London Green Grid

Around 30 representatives attended the first meeting of the River Colne and River Crane grouping of the GLA's **All London Green Grid** in June. This new initiative will help to promote the River Crane corridor and support specific projects to improve the environmental and public value of the Crane valley.

Duke of Northumberland's River

There is around £350,000 available to improve public access and the environmental quality of the Duke of Northumberland's River from Section 106 funds linked to developments at Harlequins and the RFU. We are in contact with officers at Richmond council regarding priorities for this work.

Feltham Marshalling Yards Airtrack Proposals

The Airtrack project, which included the construction of rail stabling on the old marshalling yards site, has been cancelled due to lack of public sector funding. We remain concerned about this high value green space and aim to work towards increased public access to it. Further photos of the site, as used in the My River Crane Exhibition, can be found at

http://www.richardclemence.com/Site_93/FORCE_and_Feltham_Marshalling_Yards.html

11th September FORCE open day and Friends of Kneller Gardens Dog Show

EDF are proposing to install another power cable across the Craneford West Field this autumn and, as a result, our Open Day this year will be based entirely at Kneller Gardens. The day will start with the ever-popular dog show at 1-30pm. All entries to the show should be made on the day. Favourite activities and stalls will be present including Marsh Farm allotments "Guess the weight" of a vegetable and the Rifle Club cake and soft drinks stall.

Calendar of activities

Date	Location	Activities
September 11 th	FORCE open day and Friends of Kneller Gardens Dog Show	See above
October 9 th	Volunteer day Craneford west	Maintenance of hedges, paths and saplings
November 13 th	Volunteer day Mill Road	Maintenance of hedge, paths and wetland areas
December 11 th	Volunteer day Crane Park Island	Annual management of willows

Kind Regards,

Rob Gray (Chair of FORCE)

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