



Friends Of the River Crane Environment

Dear Friends,

For those of you who may not have heard, the River Crane received a major blow last autumn when, on the weekend of 29th and 30th October, a large amount of **raw sewage** was discharged into the river by the A4 road bridge in Cranford. We have been working with our partners in the last few months, trying to assess the damage caused and how best to respond. In this issue, we provide an update on this incident as well as the latest news on many other projects.

Crane Pollution Incident

The initial impact of the pollution, over the first two days, was to kill virtually all of the fish within the Crane and DNR below the A4 road bridge. The Environment Agency have stated that around **10,000 dead fish**, representing 17 different species, were collected from the river and taken to Mogden for recording and analysis. Just as seriously, the macro-invertebrate life in the river, the food source for many of the fish, has also been virtually wiped out.

Recent surveys of the river indicate that the water quality has largely recovered – however significant patches of **sewage sludge** remain in the river and it cannot yet be considered safe for people or their dogs to enter. The macro-invertebrates are likely to take at least 12 months to recover and a full recovery of fish stocks will hopefully follow over the next five years.

Thames Water has admitted responsibility for the incident and pledged to fund works to rehabilitate the river such that its ecological value will be higher, in 5 years time, than the 2011 baseline. This will include works to improve its environmental value as well as re-stocking of fish and other species.

We are currently in close communication with Thames Water and the Environment Agency and have put forward outline proposals for how the response may be taken forward. Our preference is for this to be managed through the **Crane Valley Partnership (CVP)**, an existing network including all parties with an interest in the river, and for the CVP to be strengthened and funded for the long term as one positive legacy of this incident.

We hope to hold a public meeting with the other key interested parties this spring to set out the latest proposals and listen to public questions and concerns. In the mean time we are collecting all sightings of aquatic life from members of the public and would be grateful for any information provided. You can send these sightings to info@force.org.uk

Village Green Application

Last summer we submitted an application for **Village Green status** for the College Playing Field (aka **Cranford East Field**) on Cranford Way. The purpose is to retain the current public usage of the field and the application is not intended to impact on the existing legal uses by Richmond College. The college has now formally objected to our application and the matter is currently with the council who will decide whether to award the status or proceed to a formal review. Over the next couple of months, we will be augmenting the data on public usage and would be very grateful if members (and their neighbours and friends) who use the field could consider filling out one of our Evidence Forms in support of the application. A blank copy of the form and Map A is attached to e-mail versions of this newsletter. They are also posted on the web-site and hard copies can be requested.

GLA Priority Parks Project

After three years, this project is moving to completion and we are very pleased with the progress to date. Both sides of the park are much improved, with a profound change in the appearance and usage of the Hounslow side of the park. (Further details and photos can be found on our website: www.force.org.uk)

This Newsletter is funded for FORCE by: -



Mayday Genealogy

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Friends Of the River Crane Environment

A **management plan** is currently under review and an application for Green Flag status has been submitted by both boroughs. These actions should help to ensure that improvements are maintained and built upon in the years to come. We are very grateful to the teams from both boroughs that have worked together on this project and the many volunteers from BTCV who have helped to implement it. Particular thanks are due to Yvonne Kelleher, the project manager from Richmond council.

Twickenham Station Development

This scheme is immediately adjacent to the River Crane and we have been active in trying to ensure that any development will also **benefit the Crane and its corridor**. We are pleased that most of our suggestions have been included in the proposals and we shall be working with the developer, council and Environment Agency in the coming months to try to ensure that improvements to the river environment and community usage along the river are optimised through the scheme.

Post office Site

We are also tracking any developments on this site and have recently met with the council to ensure that they are fully aware of the opportunities for **river enhancement and community benefit**. We hope that these will be built into the planning brief for the site as well as the Twickenham Area Action Plan.

All London Green Grid (ALGG)

The GLA report on the Crane river corridor, as part of the ALGG, is due for publication early this year. This report brings together proposals and aspirations for **over 100 projects** to improve the environmental and community value of the River Crane and DNR, and to link the corridor more closely with the River Thames and River Colne.

Calendar of FORCE Activities

| Date | Location | Activities |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| February 12 th | Child Friendly Special Crane Park, Mill Road | Maintenance of hedges, paths, saplings and wetland areas |
| March 11 th | Working with the Butts Farm estate Crane park – Hounslow side | Planting of hedges and borders in the new park area |
| April 8 th | Mereway Nature Park and Kneller Gardens | Maintenance and planting |
| May 13 th | Crane Balsam Bash Crane park - Hospital Bridge Road | Balsam removal as part of a Crane wide initiative |
| May 20 th | Walk the River Crane | A walk from the upper reaches to the Thames |

Our volunteer days run from 10.30am until 4.00pm and all are welcome for the day, an hour or just to meet and see what we are up to. The Crane walk on 20th May will start early and we will give more details in the next newsletter.

Best wishes for 2012,



Rob Gray
Chair of FORCE

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