

FORCE

Friends of the River Crane Environment

Newsletter 38 Winter 2013

Dear Friends,

A happy new year and a reminder that 2013 marks the **10th anniversary for FORCE**. We shall be running a series of events over the year and will also take the opportunity to review our Objects and Strategy for the next five years. We hope that our members will get involved in both the celebrations and the review.

FORCE Review and Update

Following agreement to become an incorporated charity at the AGM we have recently become a **company limited by guarantee** and are in the process of **re-registering as a charity**. This will have little or no effect on our membership and activities. We have also taken the opportunity to review our logo and layouts and hopefully you will notice the (subtle) differences in this newsletter.

We are also this year reviewing our objects and strategy. We have planned a morning session in the summer to review the key issues and would like representation from our trustees, members and partners at this event. **If you are interested in taking part then please contact us.** Draft proposals will then be circulated to members and the issues discussed at the next AGM.

FORCE 10 Activities

We have planned several events in addition to our regular volunteer days, attendance at summer fairs and annual open day in September. We are working with London Wildlife Trust to promote a **series of three walks** covering the whole of the River Crane from source to Thames over the summer.

Also, a conference is planned for October to develop ideas for the Crane Valley as a key green corridor for London. These are all tabled below and more information will be provided nearer the time.

Pollution Response

Our regular monitoring indicates a good recovery of insect life, and a few smaller fish such as minnows and sticklebacks, but **very few larger fish returning naturally**. In December last year the Environment Agency undertook its **first re-stocking** since the pollution, introducing a total of 5500 one year old dace, roach, chub and barble. They will continue to monitor the fish population in the river as part of an ongoing stocking programme over the next few years.



Crane Valley Partnership is currently interviewing for a Crane Valley officer to manage £400,000 Thames Water funding over the next five years. FORCE is a key party to this process.

Crane Park

FORCE is helping Richmond Council to bring 4 areas adjacent to the park into better public use. **An orchard is being created** on the recently cleared site between Crane Park and Trafalgar Infants School opposite Kneller Gardens. FORCE is working, together with Lincoln Avenue residents Association, Briar Road Allotment Holders Association and Trafalgar Infant School, on the design. The orchard will be planted with old variety fruit trees in the next few weeks, with help from the school, TCV and the Environment Trust.

This Newsletter is funded for FORCE by: -



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The Environment Agency is starting work on the **removal of the weir at Mill Road**. Further works, potentially funded by the council, Agency and GLA, are planned to enhance the environmental and community value of this area.

In January we undertook our **second survey of visitor numbers** at the Dragonfly Terrace and Meadway, following an initial round in July last year. Despite snowing for the entire day, overall visitor numbers were nearly 200 at Dragonfly and 650 at Meadway -- almost half the July totals. We plan to continue the survey series and any help would be much appreciated.

Pevensey Road Open Space & Nature Reserve



Plans are developing to improve the environmental and community value of this area. It is potentially a valuable addition to Crane Park but is currently overgrown and little used.

New cycle paths, along with community initiatives supported by FORCE, are planned. Recently created backwaters and large ponds provide **increased environmental value to the nature reserve**. The project will also strengthen links into Hanworth Park and, potentially, through the marshalling yards into Brazil Mill Woods and Hounslow Heath.

Twickenham Post Office Site

The planning application for this site has now been submitted. It includes a plan to transfer Twickenham Junction Rough to the council so that it will be brought into public use, protecting and enhancing its environmental value, and providing a **walking and cycling link** to the area around Craneford Fields. We are supportive in principle of the proposals, subject to agreement on programme and design details.

College Development

Richmond College has announced an **initial consultation on its plans** and hopes to submit a joint application with the council for new college buildings, a secondary school and housing development by the end of the year. FORCE is aware there will be significant implications for local open spaces and will work towards a solution providing net community and environmental benefit.

Volunteer Days

We are now well into our programme and would like to thank all our volunteers for their efforts, despite variable weather.

One of our longer term objectives is to support local residents in taking on local open spaces and forthcoming volunteer days support this aspiration



The next event will be our **first at Pevensey Road** and will include local residents, combining practical improvements with investigating the site and developing future plans. We return to Mereway Nature Park in April before **another first at Silverhall Park in May**, again working with a newly formed local group. Following the success last year we plan to repeat the catchment wide balsam bash in June.

See the next page for a full list of upcoming events. We look forward to seeing you at any of our events in the near future

Regards,

Rob Gray, Chair of FORCE

Events For Your Diary

Date	Location	Activities
Sunday 10th March	Pevensey Road nature reserve – Hanworth Road	River and environment management in support of larger project– delivered with ETR, LWT and TCV
Sunday 14th April	Mereway Nature Park	General maintenance and wild flower planting.
Sunday 21st April	River source at Headstone Manor	10km walk to Gutteridge Woods
Sunday 5th May	Orleans Gallery	Spring Safari
Sunday 12th May	Silverhall Park	Initial project day – with TCV and Thames Water
Sunday 19th May	Gutteridge Wood	10km walk to Hatton Cross
Monday 27th May	Twickenham Green	HANDS May Fair
Sunday 9th June	Big Balsam Bash	Repeat of the 2012 joint event with all parties.
Sunday 16th June	Causeway Nature Reserve	10km walk to the Thames in Isleworth
Sunday 8th September	Shot Tower	Crane River Festival
Sunday 15th September	Kneller Gardens	FORCE 10th annual open day
Friday 4th October	George Suite, RFU	Crane Valley Conference