



Message from the Chair

FORCE has Charitable Objects to operate, together with other interested parties, to protect and enhance the value of the River Crane and Duke of Northumberland's River corridors, for the benefit of wildlife and local people and to advance education in the ecology, conservation and improvement of the environment of the River Crane.

We were formed in 2003 and over the last 13 years we have been making steady progress in line with these Objects. This Annual Review highlights some of the work done, and the key achievements delivered, over the last 12 months.

FORCE is entirely run and we are therefore always grateful for the efforts of our Trustees, members and supporters, as well as our key delivery partners.

Thank you for your contribution to the progress made, and we look forward to working together over the coming year.

Rob Gray - Chair of FORCE

The Big Green Fund

After successfully leading the bid through the Crane Valley Partnership for the funding of improvements to the Duke of Northumberland's River from Big Green Fund 2, FORCE has been part of the steering group to implement the project from April 2015. This project has delivered environmental improvements to sites on the Duke of Northumberland's River - including Mereway Nature Park, Riverside Walk and Silverhall Park. FORCE worked with TCV to remove around 20 tonnes of rubbish from the river. New paths have been completed from Mereway Nature Park to Chase Bridge on Kneller Road and the path along Riverside Walk has also been resurfaced. Work will continue next year.



Site interpretation projects FORCE worked on interpretation schemes throughout the open spaces of the River Crane. The GLA's Big Green Fund helped support a new leaflet and on-site map in Pevensey Nature Park and new interpretation for the Mill Road area of Crane Park. We have also developed an interpretation scheme for the Duke's River Walk as part of the project on the Duke of Northumberland's River. This scheme is due to be implemented in early 2017.



Citizen Crane

The Citizen Crane project is an initiative by FORCE, The Zoological Society of London and Frog Environmental (a small local environmental consultancy), started in 2014. Around 30 citizen science volunteers have been trained to undertake monthly sampling, at twelve sites up and down the river catchment, to measure the ecological value and chemical quality of the river. The project has helped to identify and resolve several significant pollution sources and the ongoing programme is producing a much enhanced picture of the spatial and temporal variations in water quality and ecology across the entire catchment. The project is helping to prioritise Thames Water's misconnections programme for the whole catchment plus Sustainable Urban Drainage schemes in Harrow; and has already helped deliver water quality improvements in the lower Crane. A catchment wide survey this year mapped and assessed over 200 outfalls, identifying and reporting around a dozen that were a significant cause for concern.

Education and community projects



FORCE continued to work closely with several schools and youth groups in the river corridor to promote outdoor learning. This work included school visits to the outdoor classrooms and open spaces of the Crane corridor, presentations and workshops to classes in support of the national curriculum, as well as workshops to teachers.



FORCE ran a third successful poster competition with Heathfield School to promote awareness of the effect of rubbish on the environment of the River Crane corridor.

We delivered a series of walks and talks on a variety of topics, with the aim of engaging local people who would not normally use the open spaces of the Crane Valley.

Park usage surveys

For the 4th year FORCE volunteers carried out two Sunday surveys of usage at Dragonfly Terrace in Hounslow, and the Meadway entrance to Crane Park. At Dragonfly Terrace, 337 people were recorded in the July survey and 215 in the January survey. At the Meadway entrance to Crane Park, 1092 were recorded in July, and 846 in January, of whom around 70% continued their visit to/from Kneller Gardens. A comprehensive and consistent time series of Crane Park usage is being developed and the data provides factual input into responses to planning applications. The same techniques are being applied to the new path along the Duke of Northumberland's River and through Pevensey Nature Reserve in order to record changes in usage as improvements progress.



Richmond and Hounslow Green Gyms



FORCE has supported TCV in their Green Gym programme, providing administrative support to the Hounslow Green Gym at Pevensey Nature Reserve and support funding through a grant award to establish a second Green Gym in Richmond sites at Meadway Orchard and Mereway Nature Park. There is now a further Green Gym on Hounslow Heath. These weekly conservation work programmes offer supervised exercise and the volunteers have made a major contribution to the maintenance of the sites over the last year.

Planning

FORCE continued to track all major planning applications along the lower Crane Valley and has been actively involved in negotiating environmental and community benefits on a number of key sites. FORCE was engaged with major developments in LB Richmond; at Twickenham Brewery Wharf site, Twickenham Station, Rugby Football Union and Richmond College; and LB Hounslow; at Hounslow Heath, Feltham Marshalling Yards, and Rectory Farm, and through the Hounslow West Area Plan. The approach has been the same as for all river related sites — seeking net benefits to the environmental and community values of the Crane valley from any development. In each case the negotiation, planning or development process is ongoing — some improvements on the ground have already been achieved and we remain hopeful that all promised benefits will be delivered.



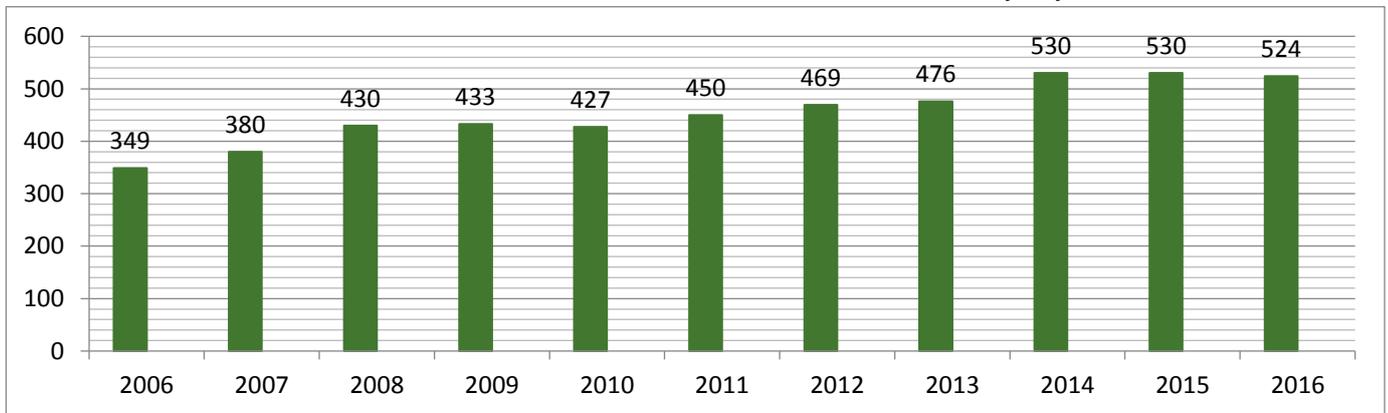
Volunteering

This year FORCE managed nine volunteer days along the River Crane corridor, providing maintenance and improvements of the habitat for wildlife and environment for local people. This programme improved and maintained nine open spaces and included 615 hours of FORCE volunteer time attended by 156 volunteers. In partnership with TCV, FORCE ran a community learning programme which delivered a series of practical conservation activities in the Crane valley. This year the weekday events included hedge laying and river margin vegetation work.



Membership Summary

As of 31st March 2016 FORCE membership was 524 which included 46 new members in the year. The quarterly newsletter was produced and distributed to all FORCE members. Membership remained around the same level as last year, having grown steadily over the previous ten years. Renewal rates remained around 90%, which reflects the loyalty of our members.



Financial Summary

FORCE's funds in hand totalled £26,272 at its 31 March 2016 as compared to £24,495 the previous year. They are divided between unrestricted (£11,495) and restricted funds (£14,777). The Charity is free to use its unrestricted funds as it wishes, provided it acts within its Objects. Restricted funds can only be used for specific projects - a restriction normally set by the body that grants the funds. The table below summarises FORCE income and expenditure in the year.

A full copy of the Annual Report and Financial Statements, approved by the Trustees on 1st July 2016 can be viewed on our website www.force.org.uk

All figures £	Unrestricted	Restricted
Income		
Subscriptions	1,728	-
Donations	1,718	-
Gift Aid	497	-
Bank Interest	28	-
Grants	-	36,946
Total Income	3,972	36,946
Expenditure		
Charitable Activities	2,713	35,988
Governance	440	-
Total Expenditure	3,153	35,988
Surplus for Year	819	958
Brought forward Funds	10,676	13,819
Carried forward Funds	11,495	14,777

In addition to the financial income reported, FORCE Trustees invested about 5,000 voluntary hours in developing and delivering projects. This equates to £125,000 gift in kind, some of which is used as match funding for projects. This is in addition to the estimated 1,500 hours' time that Trustees gave to governance. None of the Trustees received any remuneration or expenses during the year.

The Trustees would like to thank members and the following organisations for their support and generosity over the year.

