



Friends Of the River Crane Environment

Dear Friends,

The evenings are drawing in and we are all starting to flex our muscles for the **new season** of volunteer days, starting on October 9th at the Rifle Club. This is a busy time of year for us as earlier this month we had our **9th annual Open Day** and on 10th November we will be holding our **AGM**. More details of these activities plus an update on many other developments up and down the lower Crane are provided below. Our membership numbers continue to rise steadily and this year's renewal rate is close to 90 per cent. This can also be a gentle reminder for anyone who has not yet renewed and wishes to do so. Some members have queried why we always send thank-you letters through the post on receipt of membership dues - the reason is that the letter provides a proof of membership for all members, and is in lieu of a membership card.

GLA Priority Parks Project

This project is ongoing with more **improvements to entrances** on the Hounslow side of Crane Park over the summer. Further major works are planned for the winter, creating new wildlife and recreation areas in the two recently created open spaces on the Hounslow side, as well as **ten new footpaths** into the overgrown and unexplored parts of the park. A new **outdoor classroom** is planned adjacent to Hanworth Road and FORCE is working alongside the council and LWT to promote the use of this facility by local schools.

The **new cycle path** through Crane Park was opened this September, creating a joined up route for cyclists and pedestrians (including wheelchair access) through both sides of the park. This route has been called the **Dragonfly Trail**, following a naming competition organised with local schools. This path and associated improvements (including a new playground and fitness point) has created a new interest in the park. The whole atmosphere of the Hounslow side of the park is more welcoming, with many local residents venturing there for the first time; if you haven't been go and take a look.

Crane Valley Partnership projects

Further environmental enhancements are planned over the winter, including the creation of new **marginal reedbed habitat** behind the deflector boulders in the river and the re-instatement of a silted pond near to Saxon Avenue, both within Crane Park. Community engagement activities continued through the summer with a series of **bat walks** and **herb walks** at locations including Crane Park. (For more information contact Andy Wilmore Crane Valley Community Project awillmore@wildlondon.org.uk). Andy has also organised the first Crane Festival, held in Yeading Meadows, in the upper Crane near to Hayes this September, and further annual festivals are planned for the next two years. We are actively involved with the partnership's activities and are working with them on another **River Crane Walk**, covering the route from Ruislip to Kneller Gardens, and provisionally booked for 25th March next year. We will provide our members with further details of activities as and when they are finalised.

Twickenham Station proposals

We have discussed the proposals for works at Twickenham station with the developer and local residents and have submitted comments on the proposals to the council prior to the planning committee meeting in October. These comments are also posted on our web-site.

Our role has been to try to ensure that any works at this site also provide significant net benefits to the Crane valley for both the local community and the natural environment. We are not considering any wider impacts and benefits of the scheme as these are outside our remit.

Village Green Application for the College Playing Field

In August of this year, we submitted an application for **Village Green status** for the College Playing field, adjacent to the River Crane on Craneford Way. This status can be conferred on land that has been used by the public for at least 20 years, "as of right", for recreation. This application, if successful, will not change the use of the site by the college in any way but will help to ensure that public access to the land is protected in the long term.

This Newsletter is funded for FORCE by: -



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The application was supported by 16 “evidence forms” from local residents who have used the site for some or all of the last 20 years. The council is currently reviewing the application; in the mean time, we would welcome further “**evidence forms**” from local residents. Copies of the blank form are available on our web-site, or request one from info@force.org.uk

Annual Open Day

Thanks to all of you who attended our recent **Open Day** and particular thanks to the many people from FORCE and the Friends of Kneller Gardens, who helped on the day. This year we held all the activities at **Kneller Gardens** as EDF had been planning to dig up the Craneford Playing Fields to install another new electricity cable. As it happened, EDF then delayed their work, which can now be expected in November.

The single site made for a larger gathering of people and was a little easier to organise logistically. On the down side residents were not able to visit the rifle club and allotment sites, though both groups were represented on the day and the rifle club held their own open day the following weekend. We are considering whether to run next year’s Open Day in the same way and would be grateful for any comments from members.

Volunteer Days and AGM

Our next season of volunteer days starts on October 9th and will continue every second Sunday until May next year. A list of the site locations until February is provided below along with details of our AGM .

Calendar of FORCE activities

Date	Location	Activities
October 9 th	Volunteer day Craneford West Field and Rifle Club	Maintenance of hedges, paths and saplings
November 10 th	AGM Rivermeads Hall, Staines Road Twickenham	Start 8pm. Annual report +presentation on a local project of interest
November 13 th	Volunteer day Mill Road Weir in Crane Park	Maintenance of hedge, paths and wetland areas
December 11 th	Volunteer day Crane Park Island	Annual management of willows
January 8 th	Volunteer day Mereway Nature Park	Annual management
February 12 th	Volunteer day Crane Park, Hospital Bridge Road	Maintenance of hedges, paths and saplings

On 23rd October LWT will be holding their **annual river clean up**, meeting at the shot tower from 10-30am. Regular monthly volunteer days are also held on Crane Park Island every last Sunday of the month and all are welcome.

BTCV (formerly British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) are also becoming more active along the Crane valley with regular volunteer days on both sides of the river. More information on all their weekly volunteer activities can be found at: -

http://www.btcv.org.uk/cgi-bin/office_opps_ind.cgi?ref=108®ion=lo

We welcome all comments or observations about the Crane valley from our members and look forward to seeing you out and about along the river in the coming months,

Kind Regards,

Rob Gray (Chair of FORCE)

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