



Friends Of the River Crane Environment

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our autumn 2009 newsletter. Since we last wrote, we have held our annual open day and AGM and made considerable progress with the **Crane Valley Park** project. We have received funding for one new project and made progress with several others, plus we have started our new season of monthly volunteer days. We have also taken a great interest in the proposals by BAA to build on the old **Feltham Marshalling Yards** site. More details of all these activities are provided below.

Annual Open Day

Thanks to all of you who came along to our seventh annual open day on Sunday 13th September. We were very pleased with the way the event went and particularly grateful to all who helped on, before and after the day to make it a success. **Photographs** showing the **Open Day** can be seen on our **web-site**.

AGM

Our **AGM** was held on 21st October and the report on the last year can be seen on the web-site. One innovation we brought in this year has been to propose that prospective new Trustees have an initial 12-month period as a co-opted board member, allowing them to experience the role without formal trustee responsibilities. We are pleased to say that **Ian Taylor**, one of our regular volunteers, has agreed to join us on this basis. We would welcome any other members interested in joining us in this capacity.

Crane Valley Park

The **feasibility study** for this project is now completed and we hope many of you have seen the findings (which can be downloaded from the web-site). We have distributed around 200 copies of the report and the executive summary and it has been well received by both Richmond and Hounslow councils.

As part of this project, we commissioned **Richard Clemence**, a local **professional photographer**, to compile a visual record of the park over the last 12 months. This work has now been largely completed and an **exhibition and book** are planned for next year.

This part of the project has been boosted by the award to FORCE of a **12-month grant** from Adobe to run a series of **public exhibitions** about the park in the two boroughs, and to develop an on-line version to which the public can add their own images. As well as Richard's work, we shall present images from "**A Close Eye on the Crane**" by Keith Martin, which is already linked to our web-site, and **historical images** of the Crane valley brought together by Annie Todd from her recent heritage project with LWT at the shot tower.

The London Mayor's **Priority Parks** project is now well underway. The priority areas for investment have been identified as entrances, pathways and access, biodiversity and public information. One main focus will be the Hounslow side of the existing Crane Park, which is a very valuable and **attractive area of wooded parkland**, but little used at present due to very **poor entrances and access**. There are also plans to improve the biodiversity of the park on the Richmond side. Formal proposals and consultation are anticipated early in the New Year and we shall ask all our members to respond to these.

This Newsletter is funded for FORCE by: -



Mayday Genealogy

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Feltham Marshalling Yards

FORCE has submitted a **formal objection** to the proposals to build across the old marshalling yards, currently some 35 hectares of green space along the Crane valley and protected as a **Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation**. Our objection can be viewed on the web-site. A **public inquiry** on the proposals is planned for next summer and we are putting our case together with voluntary support from a number of experts in the planning and development fields.

Kneller Gardens

There is a considerable amount of work going on in and around Kneller Gardens at the moment. The **new cycle bridge**, named the **Kingfisher Bridge** has now been opened and a new **raised table crossing** of Meadway is planned for next year. We are in regular contact with the council's team for this project. We welcome any feedback on the operation of this route and we will send this on to the council.

EDF are also putting in a **new cable** along an existing route through Kneller Gardens and Crane Park. This will be causing considerable disturbance over the next few months. We are working with the council to ensure there are no permanent detrimental impacts and we also hope to secure some local improvement from EDF as a result of this work.

The work on the **pavilion** is moving ahead and we hope this will be open, complete with new **public toilets** and a **café facility**, in the **spring of next year**. Finally, the council has just launched its consultation on **new play equipment**, designed to appeal to older children, and due to be installed in the gardens next year. This can also be seen via our web-site. The Friends of Kneller Gardens, supported by FORCE, are taking a lead on all of these issues.

Volunteer Days

The new season has started with a clean up event in **Crane Ford West Field** and the **Rifle Club** in October, where we also worked alongside a **local guide troop** to plant **native flowers** in the field margins – look out for these next spring. In November, we did another stint on the **new hedgerow** in Crane Park, planting a further 100 metres of mixed hedge with help from the Probation Service Community Payback team.

The upcoming volunteer days are as follows:

Sunday 13th December	Crane Park Island <i>Our annual visit to Crane Park Island to manage the willows.</i>
Sunday 10th January	Mereway Nature Park <i>Managing the site and planting a new wildflower area.</i>
Sunday 14th February	Crane Park – Hospital Bridge Road <i>Hedge planting and wetland management.</i>
Sunday 14th March	Crane Park – Hospital Bridge Road <i>Continuation of hedge planting and wetland management.</i>

As always you are all welcome for an hour or the whole day.

Kind regards,

Rob Gray, Chair, on behalf of FORCE

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