



Friends Of the River Crane Environment

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our summer newsletter, and a big thank you to all those who have re-joined and helped our membership to maximum levels for this time of year. Those few who have yet to re-join will also have received a final reminder letter.

This edition includes an update on the condition of the river and surrounding lands as well as details of our **Annual Open Day**, the **AGM** and our latest **volunteering season**. Everyone is of course welcome to these events and we look forward to meeting many of you there.

Crane Pollution

In July we hosted a meeting at Twickenham Library where Thames Water talked about the pollution incident and their proposed responses to it and answered questions from the public. Around 40 local people attended and there was a very good discussion, a summary of which has been posted on our web-site. Thames Water has pledged £400 000 over the next 5 years to improve the river to “an even better condition than it was before this regrettable incident” The next stage of the process will be the appointment of a **Crane Valley Officer**, who will be responsible for implementing Thames Water funded improvements for the river, as well as co-ordinating other projects. We are still awaiting progress with this appointment and will continue to lobby for prompt and effective action.

In the mean time, the river has continued on a slow recovery. The latest development has been a **surge** in the numbers of fish fry and young fish. This would appear to be a response to the presence of plentiful food stocks (the huge numbers of midge larvae noted from our May survey), combined with the continued lack of adult fish as predators. We shall continue to monitor the river every two months and welcome observations from members.

Priority Parks Project

In our spring edition, we celebrated the conclusion of this project. We can now announce the launch of three new **walking maps** that show (a) the new “**Dragonfly Trail**” that loops through the Hounslow and Richmond sides of Crane Park, (b) the **Lower Crane Valley**, including the existing trails and our aspirations, linking together a total of ten existing and five proposed carved benches and (c) the **entire Crane Valley** between Rayners Lane in Harrow and the Thames at Isleworth. These maps will be available at the Open Day and AGM and can be downloaded from the web-site.

June 9th marked the first **Park Run** along the Dragonfly Trail. This 5km run is held every Saturday morning, starting at 9am and has already proved to be very popular. Everyone is welcome to join in and more details can be found at www.parkrun.org.uk

On 15 July, we undertook our first detailed survey of levels of park usage. During the course of the day, over **400 people** were counted at the Dragonfly Terrace by Butts farm estate, and **over 1500** at the Meadway entrance to the Park. Of the latter, over 60% extended their trip to or from Kneller Gardens, taking full advantage of the “Green Corridor” along the river. These numbers greatly exceed the usage before the project began.

Also this summer, Crane Park was awarded **Green Flag** status, the first park jointly managed by Richmond and Hounslow councils to achieve this. This status should help to ensure that the maintenance of the park continues to receive high priority from both councils.

Outdoor Classroom project

Over the last four years, FORCE has been working on a project with local schools to use the green spaces along the river Crane as a teaching resource. **Teaching resources** have been designed for use by primary schools. These have been designed with the help of teachers, educators and designers. They are free to use and are now available to download from the FORCE website.

Over the summer, FORCE trustees attended a conference to showcase the resources to teachers from the London area, and several schools groups visited the open spaces along the Crane and made use of the teaching pack. For further information contact info@force.org.uk

This Newsletter is funded for FORCE by: -



Mayday Genealogy

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Volunteer Days

Our new season of **volunteer days** starts on Sunday 14th October and continues every **second Sunday of the month** until June 2013. As always, everyone is welcome to join in for an hour or a full day, to come along and meet fellow members. Old clothes and stout shoes are recommended – we provide hot drinks but bring a packed lunch if staying the day.

This year we plan to increase our **joint working** activities with other groups such as London Wildlife Trust (LWT), Environment Trust for Richmond (ETR), The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) and Green Corridor (GC). In this way, we hope gradually to expand the capacity and skills of the local voluntary sector to develop and manage the environmental and community benefit of the lower Crane.

Open Day

Our season kicks off with the annual **Open Day**, which we are managing alongside the Friends of Kneller Gardens on Sunday 16th September from 1pm. Following last year’s success we shall hold the entire event this year at Kneller Gardens, starting with the **Dog Show** (entries to be registered by 1pm) and continuing with family entertainment until 5pm. We look forward to seeing you all there.

Incorporation and AGM

On 27th June, we held a **special meeting** to discuss and vote on the issue of **Incorporation**. This process would result in FORCE being re-structured as a company limited by guarantee. It is a change being implemented by many charities at present and is designed to retain the existing operations of the organisation whilst limiting the liability of individual Trustees. The proposals to incorporate were **passed unanimously**. Many thanks to those of you who attended, or provided proxy votes.

The next stage of the review of FORCE governance is due to be put before to the membership at the **AGM**, to be held on Wednesday 14th November from 8pm at Rivermeads Hall, Staines Road, Twickenham. Following the formal business there will be a talk by Joe Pecorelli on the Crane fisheries. All members are encouraged to attend.

| Date | Location | Activities |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 16 th September | Open Day | Kneller Gardens |
| 14 th October | Crane Park – meet at the shot tower | Toe-board removal and riverside planting to improve marginal river environment. A joint project with ETR, LWT and TCV. |
| 11 th November | Twickenham Rifle Club | General maintenance of the club site and west field. Joint project with ETR |
| 14 th November | Rivermeads Hall, Staines Road | AGM |
| 9 th December | Crane Park Island | Regular day coppicing willows with LWT |
| 13 th January | Mereway | General maintenance – plus renovation of the outdoor classroom with TCV (family friendly day) |
| 10 th February | Mill Road | Maintenance of the hedge and further planting of the scrapes |
| 10 th March | Pevensey Road Nature Reserve – Hanworth Road | River and environment management in support of larger project– delivered with ETR, LWT and TCV along with LB Richmond and LB Hounslow |
| 14 th April | Mereway | General maintenance and wild flower planting. |
| 12 th May | Silverhall Park | Initial project day – with TCV and Thames Water |
| 9 th June | Catchment wide balsam bash | Repeat of the 2012 joint event with all parties. GLA supported |

We look forward to seeing you at one of these events in the near future,
Regards,

Rob Gray, Chair of FORCE

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