

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our summer 2015 newsletter where we are reporting on project progress at Mill Road, Willow Way and the Duke of Northumberland's River – and announcing details of annual events and the AGM.

Thank you to everyone who has renewed their FORCE membership this year. If you have still to do so then there is a reminder with this newsletter.

Work at Mill Road and Willow Way

With funding from the Crane Valley Partnership Thames Water Fund, we have been working with Richmond council and The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) to improve these parts of Crane Park. Several backwater areas have been created on the main channel – and the materials arising have been used to build a kingfisher nesting bank and several habitat banks for solitary bees and wild flowers. Balsam has been removed from the back channel, which has then been planted with native marginal plants, and several new stag beetle loggeries have been installed. The newly opened Willow Way area, on the south side of the river between Hospital Bridge Road and the A316, has been cleared of rubbish and a new pathway put through it. These works will be completed in the winter with more planting and the installation of new signage telling the history of the sites.

Duke's River Project

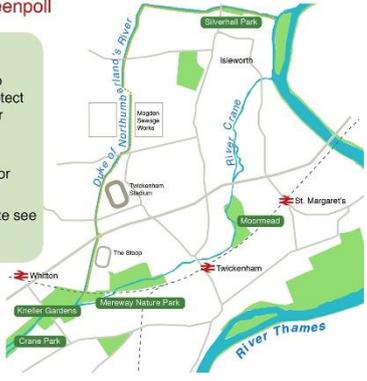
After votes from FORCE members and other members of the public, this project received funding of £157,000 from the GLA this spring, with match funding from LB Hounslow, LB Richmond and others bringing the total pot to over £400,000.

A steering group is now in place and the first improvements are happening on the ground. TCV have been walking the river and removing rubbish; whilst ZSL has installed two new eel passes to get beyond impassable barriers at Kidd's Mill and Mogden and – STOP PRESS – the first few eels have been recorded using them!

Surveys for bats, kingfishers and water voles are underway and the first pathway improvements will be starting later this summer. The project will continue into 2016.

Vote for the Duke's River project now!

www.london.gov.uk/biggreenpoll



We need your help to make this remarkable river better known, to improve the pathways and to protect and enhance the environment for wildlife.

Help us secure much needed funding from the GLA by voting for "The Duke's River" project.

For further information and to vote see www.london.gov.uk/biggreenpoll

FORCE
Friends of the River Crane Environment
London Borough of Hounslow

Crane Valley Partnership
THAMES WATER FUND

Map labels: Duke of Northumberland's River, Silverhill Park, Isleworth, Muggen (George) Works, Tricketts Farm, The Glass, Whitton, Crane Park, Kneifer Gardens, Mareway Nature Park, River Thames, St Margaret's, Moorham, Tricketts Farm, Tricketts Farm, Tricketts Farm.

RFU Proposals

Less welcome news on the Duke's River comes from the RFU. You may recall the RFU applied for consent for a large structure adjacent to the Duke's River pathway last year and proposed to set back the fence as part of the scheme. We were concerned about the proposal but gave it our support due to the setting back of the fence which has been a long term objective of ours. Anyone who knows the Duke's River will be aware this is a narrow and difficult part of the walk.

We were therefore both shocked and angry to discover last month that the RFU, having constructed its buildings, has now applied to move the fence back to its original alignment. A further proposal, received this month, seeks to close the pathway entirely during the World Cup matches.

When we first mooted the Duke's River project we contacted the RFU for their support – as they have a 700 metre boundary with the river. Their initial response was positive and they proposed to fund four new carved benches along the river. However, this initiative too has fallen by the wayside and we are currently awaiting further information – both from the RFU and the council – as to how these latest proposals are to be resolved.

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Crane Park Usage Survey

On 12 July we conducted our fourth annual summer survey of usage of Crane Park. Although the weather was poor, nearly 1,100 people accessed Crane Park at Meadway, and over 300 used the pathway at Dragonfly Terrace. The proportions of Cyclists and of Children & Toddlers at Dragonfly Terrace were the highest we have recorded, demonstrating the continuing value placed by the community on the amenities here. Thanks to all those members who helped with our counts. Our next survey will take place on Sunday 17 January 2016.

Walks and Talks

We have been running a series of ten walks and talks this year. These have engaged with a new audience and extended our own understanding of the character and value of the Crane corridor. The last of the series –an ever popular bat walk – is listed on the programme attached, whilst we are pleased to announce funding has been received for a second series in the winter and spring of 2016. These will include another of our three part walks along the whole of the Crane corridor from the source to the Thames.



Chris Hern leading a FORCE "walk and talk" around the ruins of the Hounslow gunpowder mills in Crane Park

Hounslow Heath Golf Course development

We are engaged with the applicant for a new children's adventure park for the 50 hectare golf course site. We are seeking details of environmental improvements, new public access ways and other guarantees to be included in the scheme, and will report back as proposals are developed.

Crane Park Litter -Poster Competition

Heathfield School came out this year's winners in the annual competition to select the anti-littering poster for all the litter bins in Crane Park.

2015 AGM

Our AGM this year will be on Tuesday 22nd September at the Twickenham Club on Church Street Twickenham, starting at 8pm. Papers are included regarding the formal business –which will be followed by refreshments and a talk by Bob Barton of Friends of Cranford Park to tell us about their activities further upstream in the Crane Valley.

Other Activities

Thank you to everyone who has joined us on our 12th season of monthly volunteer days, completed in June with the annual balsam bash. Our new season will start on Sunday 11th October and continue every second Sunday of the month until June 2016. In the meantime TCV continue to spend many of their Wednesday and Thursday sessions along the Crane and Duke's River corridors. To find out more about their activities see

www.tcv.org.uk/london/richmond

Finally, the annual Kneller Gardens dog show is taking a break after 10 years and will not be held as there is so much going on related to the Rugby World Cup.

Thanks again to everyone who has renewed their membership. We are hopeful that the membership will continue to grow as you provide great support and

encouragement for the work we are doing.

Regards,

Rob Gray,

Chair of FORCE



FORCE Volunteer Days and Activity Programme

Date	Location	Activities
12 th August	Dragonfly Terrace, Crane Park 1pm	Cycle Ride for families.
15 th August	Butts Farm Orchard Workshop, near the playground in Crane Park 11.00am – 1.00pm	At the workshop we can check the trees over and prune where necessary; check the posts and ties; and weed the tree wells at the base of the trees.
11 th September	Dragon Fly Terrace, Crane Park 7.30pm	Walk & Talk Bat Walk – Alison Fure
22 nd September	The Twickenham Club, Church Street, TWICKENHAM 8.00pm	FORCE AGM and talk by Bob Barton of Friends of Cranford Park.
11 th October*	FORCE Volunteer Day	Details to be arranged
8 th November*	FORCE Volunteer Day	Details to be arranged
13 th December*	FORCE Volunteer Day	Details to be arranged

*FORCE volunteer events start at 10-30am; join us for an hour or the whole day. Hot drinks are provided but bring a packed lunch if staying the day. Please wear stout shoes or boots and old clothes.