



Welcome to the Summer 2022 Newsletter

Dear Friends,

Welcome to this Summer edition of our Newsletter. As I write, the river is struggling with extremely low water flows aggravated by high temperatures and low rainfall; and several months' worth of volunteers' planting efforts are at risk. We know that the river and its environment are incredibly resilient. We are monitoring them closely so that we can take steps to help them recover and increase their resilience against future climate challenges.

In our last Newsletter I celebrated our record membership of 793, up 11% in the year since April 2021. It was perhaps inevitable that in our very next Newsletter, I have to report our first significant loss of membership since 2016, of some 40 members during the past Quarter. Cost-of-living challenges may well be leading people to cut back on all types of discretionary expenditure, including charity memberships like ours. Our membership appears to have stabilised at around 750, which still gives us a significant voice on behalf of the community in our dealings with councils, developers and other stakeholders. Your membership is really valuable to us. If you know of anyone who might be

interested in becoming a member, please encourage them to join. This is a numbers game in a very real sense.

We have a number of opportunities for members to get more involved in our activities, and would welcome your support:

- If you would like to know more about the Planning system, and learn some very transferable skills
- If you would like to help organise our successful and expanding Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme
- If you would like to help us count park users twice a year, or organise our counts using VolunteerSignup

If you're interested in any of the opportunities above, please contact info@force.org.uk

I wish you an enjoyable rest of the Summer, and hope you enjoy the following summaries of FORCE's recent activities in the lower Crane valley.

Gary Backler
Chair of FORCE

Get in touch

River Restoration Project

The main construction phase of the lower Crane restoration field trial was completed in March and we have been very pleased with how the riverside planting has survived and flourished during the last few months of hot and dry weather. We are working with ZSL to monitor the social and environmental impact of this scheme with a view to having more such interventions along the lower concrete lined parts of the river. An initial river netting survey showed that mayflies and caddis flies are inhabiting this part of the river for the first time. The council plans to install more gravels in the river plus an interpretation board in Craneford Fields in the near future.



Upcoming Walks & Talks

The summer season of Walks & Talks has just been published on our website and we are pleased to have family friendly events again. We have two events for the school holidays in conjunction with London Wildlife Trust. All can be viewed on the [Events](#) page of our website with bookings becoming available a month beforehand.

Walks & Talks 2022			
Walk	Date	Meeting Point	Route
Butterflies in Crane Park	Wednesday 3 Aug 2022 10:30 - 11:30	Shot Tower, Crane Park Island	Island and grass area
River Dipping	Friday 5 Aug 2022 10:00 - 11:30	Dipping platform at island	Crane Park Island
River Crane from Source to Thames : Walk 1	Sunday 11 Sept 2022	Headstone Manor Pinner View Harrow HA2 6PX	Headstone Manor to Bulls Bridge
Bat Walk	Tuesday 13 Sept 2022 19:30 - 21:00	Kneller Pavilion, Kneller Gardens Twickenham	Along River Crane
Litter in the Crane	Tuesday 20 Sept 22 19:30 - 20:30	Zoom	
River Crane from Source to Thames : Walk 2	Sunday 25 Sept 2022	Meet at Tesco Bus Station, Bulls Bridge Industrial Estate, Hayes Road Hounslow UB2 5LN	Bulls bridge to tower beside Crane Park Island
River Crane from Source to Thames : Walk 3	Sunday 16 Oct 2022	Shot Tower, Crane Park Island	Shot Tower to Thames
Walk the Duke's River from Kneller Gardens to Isleworth	Wednesday 23 November 10:30 - 13:00	Kneller Pavilion, Kneller Gardens Twickenham	Kneller, DNR, Silverhall park, Thames at Isleworth

Crane Park Usage Survey - 17th July 2022

Many of you defied the Amber Weather Warnings to help us conduct full surveys from 6am-8pm at Meadway and Marsh Farm Lane. This was our 11th year of undertaking counts, and our understanding of the usage of our parks improves with each survey. At Meadway, usage was nearly 30% below that of July 2021, and at Marsh Farm Lane 15% below. We believe the Weather Warnings and the well-attended High Tide Festival account for much of the reduced usage, which nevertheless comprised over 1,400 people at Meadway and over 1,000 at Marsh Farm Lane throughout the day.



Volunteering

We've continued with our monthly Volunteer Sunday schedule in Mill Road in May and finishing the season with our annual Balsam Bash in June where we also raked up after the Operation Centaur meadow cut. We're now in planning for the next season, starting in October. Details of our future volunteer days will be on our [website](#) and we hope to see some of you there.

We include and encourage students undertaking their Duke of Edinburgh award scheme to complete their volunteering with us. This programme has been very successful and we are now looking for an individual who can take responsibility for this. This person will ensure promotion is in place, suitable students are recruited and their activities monitored, and an assessment completed at the end of the student assignment. For further information please contact info@force.org.uk

Duke of Edinburgh's Award - Litter picking (Bronze Award only)

Students who are undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme can now do litter picking in Crane Park and surrounding areas as a volunteering activity for the programme. We suggest each litter pick is a minimum of 1 hour and 12 picks need to be completed for the Bronze Award. We can provide a litter picker (on loan) and ask students to keep a journal recording the amount and

type of litter collected. Anyone interested can get in touch with us at info@force.org.uk to learn more about what is involved.



Planning Updates

Kneller Hall, Twickenham

In the LBRuT Local Plan, this site was designated for public open space. It has subsequently been sold for development as a private school. We walked the site with a representative for the development. There is scope to provide public open space along the northern part of the site and to de-culvert Whitton Brook as a public asset. When the proposal is brought forward for formal consultation, we will be seeking these provisions as community and environmental benefits from the school development.

Former Gregg's site, Twickenham

There are proposals to build either 115 affordable residential units or a mix of residential units with commercial development on this site. We toured the site with representatives for the development. We believe there is a once-in-a-century opportunity to enhance the river environment here, building on the lessons learnt from the field trial at Twickenham Rifle Club, and to integrate public access with the open spaces to the north of the river. The proposal is due for public consultation later this year, and we will be seeking these benefits. In the cases of both this development and that of Kneller Hall (above), we would urge you to respond to the consultations in your role as individual

residents.

Hounslow Local Plan

The next stage of the Examination in Public of the London Borough of Hounslow's Local Plan is expected to begin later this year. LB Hounslow propose to remove Green Belt protection from some 520 hectares of open space in the west of the borough, half of which they propose for development. We continue to collect base data on a number of these sites within the lower Crane valley, with a view to securing investment in their environmental, ecological and public-amenity value rather than in their eradication.

Royal Mail Jubilee Mail Centre, Hounslow

The Jubilee Mail Centre was built during the 1990s on part of the former Feltham Marshalling Yards. At its perimeter, a circular public footpath was created including a bridge across the River Crane, and new trees planted to enhance the interest and ecology of the site, which lies next upstream from Little Park. Since its opening, the site has been extremely neglected. A great deal of litter, primarily plastic from the Centre, accumulated in the open space and had begun to pollute the river. We visited the site in June with Royal Mail representatives. Within a fortnight of our visit they cleared 51 bags of litter. We will be continuing to work with Royal Mail and LB Hounslow to achieve a lasting improvement to the site, and to restore convenient public access.



Richmond Green Gym

The Green Gym meets every Wednesday at 10-45am at Meadway Orchard and provides gentle exercise whilst enhancing the value of local open spaces. We are delighted that the future of the gym has been secured for another year. For more information on how to get involved go to [their website](#)



Waye Avenue and Avenue Park Project

FORCE are supporting this project, being led by The Conservation Volunteers and local community based charity LGOAL, to enhance the open spaces along the river between the A30 and A4 in Cranford. Regular conservation and community engagement events have been held over the last six months and these are starting to have a cumulative beneficial effect. The longer term plan is to create a high value and accessible corridor for this whole reach of the river corridor, linking it to Cranford Park in the north and Donkey Woods to the south.

Get in touch



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We send a newsletter to our members

Our mailing address is:

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