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Welcome to the Summer 2025 Newsletter

Dear Friends,

We hope you have an opportunity, in this fine weather, to enjoy the peace and tranquillity of our riverside open spaces – spaces which you are supporting through your membership, and in many cases through your active volunteer efforts.

FORCE has been busy! We have walked the length of the River Crane over three consecutive Saturdays, have just done our summer survey and have been busy outdoors, with our Volunteer Sundays and our annual 'Balsam Bash' around Lincoln Field and Hospital Bridge Road.

With the summer holidays ahead, we have arranged a number of events suitable for families, so we hope to see some of you there.

FORCE Trustees
July 2025

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Walks & Talks

FORCE volunteers led a series of three walks along the Crane Valley Trail in June. Starting at the source of the Crane at Headstone Manor and walking thirty miles to the confluence with the Thames in Isleworth. Along the way we

met with around half a dozen different groups and were very encouraged to see the amount of progress being made with improving the route itself and many of the associated green and riverside spaces. The route remains a challenge to negotiate in places, and still needs significant investment and improvement to be fully established as a new walking route for London. It is though hugely improved from our first adventure along it in 2003, with further improvements since our last time in 2022, and this is the first time we didn't get lost!

We have more great family events in August. We will be looking for [invertebrates](#) in the River Crane and also searching for butterflies as part of the [Big Butterfly Count](#). If you are lucky you might see a brown hairstreak – like this one (below) spotted in the lower Crane valley by Andy from Lampton Greenspace 360 recently and posted on to our social media. Booking is required so please visit [our website](#) to secure your place.



Walking through Crane Bank Meadows on Day One of our three day walk along the Crane Valley Trail



Brown Hairstreak in the lower Crane valley

Bench Walks

We have just completed a project funded by the Bupa Foundation Green Community Grants programme to create two QR-coded bench-based walks along the River Crane in Twickenham. Scan the QR code on the wooden bench to learn more about the carvings and see if you can answer some questions about what you can see and hear whilst you are there. Walk 1 goes from London Road to Kneller Gardens and takes in 7 wooden carved benches and Walk 2 goes from Meadway to Willow Way and takes in 6 wooden carved benches. These bench walks are great for all the family including those in pushchairs and wheelchairs although for walk 2, some benches are accessed through rougher tracks. A handy map can be found on our [website](#).



The working horses bench on Mill Road meadow

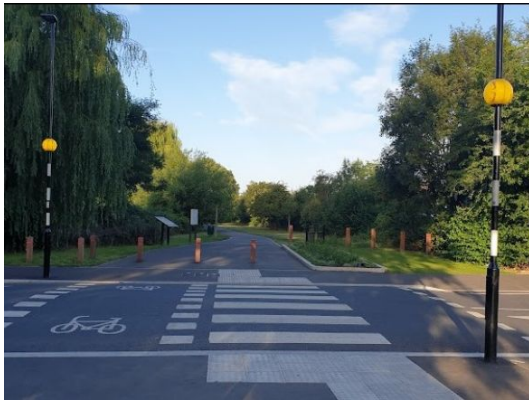
Usage Surveys

With thanks to all our counters, our latest survey of park usage took place at Meadway, Moor Mead, Pevensey and Donkey Woods on July 13th. Thank you to all our volunteers who turned out to help us build our database. We were very thankful that the weather was cooler than it had been! We will make the results available shortly.

You can see reports from previous surveys on the [Projects](#) page of our website.

If you are not already registered on our list of volunteers to count people (and dogs and bikes) and are interested in helping, please contact natalie.low@force.org.uk

Our next survey will be in January and we'll need as many volunteers as possible.



Surveying the Meadway crossing between Kneller Gardens and Crane Park at dawn.



Surveying the entrance to Donkey Wood

Volunteering

Our volunteer Sundays continued in May and June with the warm weather over the last few months proving quite a challenge! In May volunteers were based around Mereway Nature Park and Kneller Gardens and in June we completed our annual 'Balsam Bash' around Lincoln Field and Hospital Bridge Road. At both events, as always, we focussed on improving habitat, clearing pathways, picking litter, building dead hedges and making as many improvements to our park as possible. We're taking a break over the summer, but plan to resume our regular volunteer sessions in October. We hope to see some of you there.

A huge thank you to the volunteers that have come along to help us so far this year.



The fox bench (our first bench installed in 2003) has benefitted from its annual oiling and painting

Litter Picking

We are delighted by how many people have been out litter picking along the Crane Valley – and these efforts can be seen by the reduction in the amount of litter we are seeing and removing during our volunteer days. No-one is more keen than Mark from Thai upon Thames – who is out in the river most weeks and often posts on-line about his activities. We are happy to give him (and his restaurant) a plug here. FORCE have given out 35 litter pickers to local volunteers over the last few years (including two to Mark) and a further 19 have been lent to Duke of Edinburgh students for their Bronze and Silver awards work. We are happy to give out further litter pickers to anyone who would like to use them in their local open spaces along the Crane Valley – please email if you would like one.



Another impressive pile of litter removed from the river by Mark – this time in Brazil Mill Wood

Invasive Non Native Species

FORCE has been carrying out an annual balsam removal session in the Hospital Bridge Road area of Crane Park for many years. We are pleased to say that these efforts – which have included planting native species in to the gaps – are being effective in improving riverside biodiversity at a local level. We are though also aware that this is a catchment wide problem – and we are therefore delighted to see the work being done by the Crane Valley Partnership over the last two years to map and then start to remove four key invasives (balsam, giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed and floating pennywort) at a catchment level – starting from the top and working downstream. We are hopeful that this work – which is also helping to co-ordinate the efforts of volunteer groups like FORCE – can reduce and potentially eradicate these species from the catchment over the next few years.



Balsam removal by a young volunteer on our June volunteer day

Get in touch



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We send a newsletter to our members

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ETNA, 13 Rosslyn Road,

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