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Welcome to the Spring 2025 Newsletter

Dear Friends,

We hope this newsletter finds you well and that the longer, warmer days mean more time outside enjoying our riverside open spaces – spaces which you are supporting through your membership. Thank you.

We are also grateful to everyone who comes out to join us, whether it's to volunteer at our monthly event, or join us on one of our walks. This summer, we plan to walk the length of the River Crane over three consecutive Saturdays. If you are interested in seeing how the river changes as it wends its way down Crane Valley, please join us for one or all of the walks.

Work to support the reintroduction of water voles continues - see below for the latest updates. The Crane Valley Partnership has shared this delightful [video](#) of their release last year.

FORCE Trustees
April 2025

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Walks & Talks

This year on Sunday 4th May, we are again holding a dawn bird walk to enjoy the dawn and to celebrate International Dawn Chorus Day. With help from our

expert Keith Martin, we will be looking for both native and migratory birds. You will be surprised to learn about the number of species we have living close by.

Book via our website <https://www.force.org.uk/calendar/item/54831021>

In June FORCE will be walking the length of the River Crane from its headwaters at Headstone Manor in Harrow to where it joins the Thames at Isleworth. We will do this in three stages over three consecutive weekends - Saturday 7 June, Saturday 14 June and Saturday 21 June. It will be most interesting as we watch how the Crane changes form and use meandering through the different landscapes en route. We hope you can join us for one or all. Book via [our website](#) to secure your place.



Usage Surveys

We carried out our annual winter count on 19 January, which gives us a regular picture of who is using our green spaces in the Crane Valley.

At Crane Park near Meadway, winter visitor levels have been fairly stable over the last few years. Mirroring our summer counts, there were welcome increases in the proportion of visits involving children and cyclists, the first since 2019.

Our second winter count at Moor Mead path suggests a decrease in the number of visitors compared to last year. We're watching closely how usage of the new path between the station and Moor Mead Park develops.

We also carried out a shorter count at Donkey Woods / Brazil Mill Woods, our first winter count there. There are indications of positive changes in the number of visitors at this location, although there are fewer visits by women and children than at other locations.

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

Thanks to all our counters, as ever. Our next survey will be on Sunday 13 July

and we'll need as many volunteers as possible. If you're interested to help out, please contact natalie.low@force.org.uk

Volunteering

A huge thank you to the volunteers that have come along to help us over the last few months.

February saw us in the Hanworth Road area of the park, where we extended the glade to create a new orchard and planted fruit trees.

In March the team were based around Mill Road and Hospital Bridge Road where we planted hundreds of marginal plants to backfill the areas where the overhanging trees had been cleared. We look forward to seeing them thrive in the coming months.

April found us back at Hanworth Road and Little Park, where our great group of Volunteers cleared litter, maintained the new orchard and maintained paths in Little Park



State of the Crane Environment Report

FORCE is one of the partners for the Smarter Water Catchment programme being delivered through the Crane Valley Partnership. In February the team launched the State of the Crane Environment Report – which sets out the current status of the Crane Valley across five key themes, identifies the improvement works delivered over the last few years and the aspirations of the Partnership for the period to 2030. These include for example: a fully functioning Crane valley Trail from Harrow to the Thames; the roll out of river improvement works across the catchment; and water voles expanding their range throughout the river system. The aspiration are encapsulated in an overall vision of:

“An urban river corridor teeming with wildlife and unconstrained by pollution, serving as a vital community resource where people can connect with nature and improve their wellbeing”

The project team is currently developing plans for the next five years and welcome engagement with all parts of the Crane Valley community.

<https://www.cranevalley.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/State-of-the-Crane-Environment-Report-February-2025.pdf>

Official



**Lower Crane Valley
Environmental Management Plan**
January 2024 – December 2028



How are our new water voles doing?

The beginning of April saw ten volunteers trained by ZSL to conduct latrine raft surveys through the Lower Crane – basically looking for water vole tic tac poo

on rafts set at key locations along the river. The aim of the surveys is to determine how successful last year's release has been, by seeing how the animals had survived their first winter, and if any water voles have spread and set up new territories.

News on how the water voles are faring will be available at the end of the survey in September, and will inform planning around potential future releases of water voles into the river.



Misconnections Investigation

FORCE has been working with various partners including the Clean Up River Brent group (CURB) to investigate and publicise the problems with misconnected properties putting their sewage effluent in to the river rather than the sewer system. This problem is surprisingly widespread with estimates that around 3 per cent of London properties are misconnected. Our investigations also discovered seven blocks of flats that were entirely misconnected, with all their waste going in to the Crane and Brent rivers. Investigative journalists at *Londoncentric* picked up this story and published an expose in March that has received widespread publicity and is leading to moves to resolve the problems and/or prosecute the offenders.

<https://www.londoncentric.media/p/revealed-the-london-flats-pushing>

New Pathways

We were delighted to see a total of eighteen small bridges installed through Little Park to enable better year round access through this site. Little Park is a hidden gem in the Crane Valley that also helps to link Crane Park with

Pevensey Nature Reserve and the upstream river corridor. Thanks to LB Richmond Parks Department and their contractors for their efforts to deliver this work



Get in touch



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We send a newsletter to our members

Our mailing address is:

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