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Welcome to the Autumn 2025 Newsletter

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our Autumn newsletter.

We were thrilled to see so many of our volunteers and supporters in attendance at the Annual General Meeting earlier this month. If you missed it, you can read the Minutes [here](#). Following the meeting, we heard from Stephen James from Habitats & Heritage who gave an overview of the range of work that is being carried out by community groups along the Crane Valley. Habitats & Heritage have written a series of blogs celebrating some of the community group projects funded by the Crane Valley Community Fund which is available on their website at <https://habitatsandheritage.org.uk/blog/community-action-in-the-crane-valley/>

The nights drawing in and the clocks going back means the return of our monthly Volunteer Sundays. It was great to see so many at our first day of the season on 12th October. Read more about it below.

Our website is a treasure trove of information, but is now looking a bit dated. If we have any web designers amongst our members who would like to help us with updating it, please do get in touch.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter and hope to see you at some of our events.

FORCE Trustees

October 2025

Get in touch

Water Vole Release Project: Update

Our volunteer survey teams were very excited to see evidence that water voles (released last summer around Crane Park Island) have extended their range upstream with new burrows in the river bank at Little Park. Water voles are much less active over the winter and our surveys will re-start next Spring.



A pair of water vole burrows at Little Park

Walks & Talks

Autumn is upon us, the leaves are turning red and yellow and it is a wonderful season to get out and explore the Crane Valley. Join us on one of our walks this season to get outside, chat to old friends and new and learn something about the flora and fauna around us. To book your place, please visit [here](#)

We kicked off with the **Fungi Stroll along the River on Wednesday 22 October**. The morning was spent strolling along the banks of the River Crane specifically to enjoy and learn about fungi along the river banks and fallen wood of the surrounding area.

We will **Walk along the River Crane on Wednesday 19 November** starting from the Shot Tower beside Crane Park Island Nature Reserve to Little Park & Pevensy Nature Reserve. We shall pass through a patchwork of open spaces, each with its distinct ecology. Many of these spaces have a high environmental value and include mixed grassland, heathland, wetland, scrub and woodland. Along the way we shall stop a few times to talk about interesting features that we shall see.

Join us on **Tuesday 16 December for our Winter Walk Along the Rivers**. We will follow the Duke of Northumberland River from where it branches from the River Crane to where it meets the Thames in Isleworth. For this linear walk, we will meet at the Kingfisher Bridge between Kneller Gardens and Mereway Nature Park



Checking out the fungi on Crane Park Island

Working Horses in the Crane Park Meadows

Working horses were out again in the five Crane Park meadows this autumn. They cut the meadows twice a year and this time they also bailed the hay – saving a major volunteer raking task. This work improves meadow condition and encourages wild flowers and insects to flourish – whilst using horses ensures the soil is not compacted.



Comtois horses cutting the meadow in Crane Park

Volunteering

We kicked off our 2025 / 26 Volunteer Sunday season with a really successful session around Twickenham Junction Rough, Craneford Fields and Twickenham Rifle Club. We were blessed with lovely weather, but hindered a little by thousands of (very well behaved) Harlequins fans heading to The Stoop! The plus side of course was that plenty of folk got to see what we do and many stopped to chat along the way. We managed to get an awful lot done, including maintenance of our benches, dead hedge building, vegetation clearance and the litter team cleared over 300kg of litter – much of which was from the river, including lime bikes, scooters and plenty of pipes and scaffolding!

This season we are trialling a different approach for our Volunteer Sundays with a member of The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) helping with organising and running the day in the absence of a volunteer coordinator. We're still looking for someone to help us longer term, so if you, or anyone you know, would like to get involved, please get in touch via info@force.org.uk

We're currently planning the next few months of Volunteer Sundays, which are on the 2nd Sunday of each month – keep an eye on our [website](#) for more details.



Taking the top of the hedge at the Rifle Club (which we planted over 20 years ago)



One of our carved benches – freshly oiled!

Citizen Crane and Misconnections

The Citizen Crane team are continuing to go out every month to collect information about river condition throughout the Crane Valley – and we have

just released our [Year 11 Report](#) (all our reporting can be seen in the [Crane Valley library](#).) This work is continuing to make good progress in identifying pollution sources - then working with Environment Agency, Thames Water and local authority partners to reduce them. One of the major pollution sources is from misconnected domestic drainage – where kitchen and/or bathroom appliances are connected into the surface water drainage instead of the foul – thereby discharging to the river instead of the sewage works. The photo below (from October 2025) shows the effect of a misconnected washing machine near Hospital Bridge Road discharging into the river at Crane Park. Everyone can do something about this by checking their own plumbing and talking to your neighbours about it. See below for details

<https://www.water.org.uk/developers/plumbing-and-drainage-misconnections>



Pollution flowing out of the Hospital Bridge Road outfall – probably from a misconnected washing machine

River Restoration at Mereway Nature Park

Contractors are working to create a second river restoration site on the concrete lined lower Crane – this time at Mereway Nature Park. Around 30 metres of concrete wall has been removed and a backwater area created, with in-river features and a new gravel bed to follow. The area will then be planted by FORCE and other volunteers in the spring with temporary fencing installed to allow the vegetation to develop next summer.



Partially completed excavation as part of the Mereway river restoration project

Get in touch



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We send a newsletter to our members

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