



Friends Of the River Crane Environment

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our Autumn 2012 Newsletter. Thanks to everyone who attended our Open Day this September – we were once again blessed with fine weather and photos from the day can be seen on our web site. This edition includes a report on our AGM, updates on our major ongoing projects as well as proposals for a series of spring walks and a Crane conference for autumn 2013.

#### **FORCE AGM**

Thanks to all our members who attended the AGM and a special thanks to Joe Pecorelli for his **talk on eels and the Crane fishery** – particularly relevant given current discussions on re-stocking the river.

We welcomed Martin O’Gara as a new Trustee and took a further step towards incorporated status, the final stage of which should be completed early next year. Following incorporation, we shall undertake, with our members, a formal review of the Charity’s Objects and strategy for the next five years.

The AGM considered the opportunity of commissioning by FORCE of LB Richmond’s open space management along the Crane. In short, we shall not progress with discussions at this stage but will retain a watching brief on how it is implemented in other parts of the borough. Reports for this and other parts of the AGM will be posted on our web site.

#### **Crane Pollution**

October marked the **first anniversary of the major pollution** incident on the Crane. On 23<sup>rd</sup> October we released a report on our monitoring of the river’s response to this event, and a press release that was picked up by the local newspapers, both documents are now on our web site.

In summary, although the river invertebrates are recovering well, it will take several years for a good fish population to return to the river. We are in discussions with the Environment Agency about their proposed fish re-stocking and will report further in the next newsletter. Thames Water remains pledged to support a five-year improvement programme and the next stage in its implementation will be the employment of a project officer, scheduled for spring next year.

#### **Pevensey Road Nature Reserve and Little Park**

These two sites are immediately upstream of Crane Park and on the two sides of the river, where this acts as a boundary between Hounslow and Richmond boroughs. Both sites are currently **heavily overgrown**, with limited or difficult access, and are the next priority areas for improvement along our part of the River Crane.

LB Hounslow has already started with works to create **new backwater areas** and improve light penetration into the nature reserve. Further works, funded by Transport for London, will create **new walking and cycling routes** through the reserve and link these through de Broome Fields to Hanworth Park, greatly increasing the local green transport network. FORCE has received funding to help develop a new friends group for the site. We shall also be working with LB Richmond to **improve access and environmental value** at the Little Park site. This is one of five “People in Parks” sites along the Crane currently open to public consultation, the others being adjacent to Meadway, Hospital Bridge Road and Mill Road. We hope to see all these spaces brought into Crane Park.

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#### **Mayday Genealogy**

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**All London Green Grid and Crane catchment plan**

These two **catchment wide initiatives** are currently both in progress. They are being led by the GLA and Environment Agency respectively and are helping to plan improvements for the entire length of the Crane valley. FORCE is an active partner in both initiatives and we hope to announce practical improvement projects coming out of them over the next year.

**Volunteer Days and other Plans**

We have already had two successful volunteer days this season – and our joint working with other local groups is leading to lots of new ideas and plans for 2013. We are always very pleased to welcome new volunteers and this year we are again seeing local youngsters use the days as part of their Duke of Edinburgh award training.

Next spring we are planning a **series of three walks** that will, between them, encompass the whole of the Crane – from the source to the Thames. The date is also announced for a **major three-day conference** on the Crane, consisting of two days of papers and workshops followed by a day of guided walks. The walks and conference are joint initiatives with LWT through the Crane Valley Partnership and are intended to **raise the profile of the valley** and engage London wide expertise and interest in our plans for the next five years.

Date	Location	Activities
9 <sup>th</sup> December	Crane Park Island	Regular day coppicing willows with LWT
13 <sup>th</sup> January	Mereway	General maintenance – plus renovation of the outdoor classroom with TCV (family friendly day)
10 <sup>th</sup> February	Mill Road	Maintenance of the hedge and further planting of the scrapes
10 <sup>th</sup> March	Pevensey Road nature reserve – Hanworth Road	River and environment management in support of larger project – delivered with ETR, LWT and TCV along with LB Richmond and LB Hounslow
14 <sup>th</sup> April	Mereway	General maintenance and wild flower planting.
21 <sup>st</sup> April	River source at Headstone Manor	10km walk to Gutteridge Woods
12 <sup>th</sup> May	Silverhall Park	Initial project day – with TCV and Thames Water
19 <sup>th</sup> May	Gutteridge Wood	10km walk to Hatton Cross
9 <sup>th</sup> June	Catchment wide balsam bash	Repeat of the 2012 joint event with all parties. GLA supported
16 <sup>th</sup> June	Causeway Nature Reserve	10km walk to the Thames in Isleworth
15 <sup>th</sup> September	Kneller Gardens	FORCE 10 <sup>th</sup> annual open day
4 <sup>th</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup>   October	RFU	Crane Valley conference

Next year also marks the tenth anniversary of the formation of FORCE. The actual anniversary falls on our open day on 15<sup>th</sup> September and we will have more to say about this next time.

We look forward to seeing you at one of these events in the near future,

Regards,

Rob Gray, Chair of FORCE

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