

Dear Friends,

In this issue we provide updates on the Crane pollution events and local development proposals plus we focus on the improvements proposed by FORCE and our partners at various locations along the lower Crane.

### Crane Pollution

The pollution event of October last year put a large volume of neat sewage sludge into the river from a Thames Water pipe near to Cranford and the A30 crossing. We understand that there is an ongoing criminal investigation relating to the incident but have little further information.

We have undertaken two recent sampling sessions of the invertebrates in the river and these have been reasonably positive, indicating a good level of survival within the river sediment. However, the information on fish remains very worrying. FORCE Trustees and other contacts have seen no fish in the river since the incident, with the exception of a few sticklebacks, and the kingfishers have also disappeared. We would be very grateful for any observations of fish or kingfishers from our members, along with times and locations.

We understand that all relevant papers have been submitted by the Environment Agency regarding the October 2011 pollution event but we still have no date for the case to be heard. FORCE trustees have provided a witness statement for the case.

We are aware that these two major pollution incidents are not isolated events and this has been highlighted by a report (posted on our website) from a local fisherman who has recorded seventeen serious fish kills on the Crane in the 27 years from 1986 to 2013. We remain very concerned about the current state and future vulnerability of the river.

### College Developments

We are monitoring the proposed development at the Richmond College site and the potential implications for local open spaces and the Crane environment. We are engaging with the council on these issues. We understand that a landscape plan is being produced and have requested to meet the consultants.

The Village Green inquiry for the east playing field was held in early December and we expect to hear the decision in the next three months. However the inspector decides, and the matter is likely to turn on interpretations of case law, we have shown conclusively that the public has used this field throughout the last fifty years, and we are certain that local people will strongly resist any attempt to remove this right of access.

### Post Office Sorting Office and the Twickenham Station sites

We met with representatives of the Twickenham sorting office site development in January and learnt they are still trying to finalise the planning agreement with the council. We remain



confident that public access through Twickenham Junction Rough will move forwards in the near future and we reiterated our desire for the access

route to be implemented in a low impact fashion with minimal disturbance to wildlife and vegetation. One positive step has been the compulsory purchase, by Richmond Council, of the remaining small plot of land alongside Marsh Farm Lane, thereby providing a clear access route through the Rough and into the lane.

The main station development has been delayed until after the Rugby World Cup in late 2015, although station improvement works are scheduled for this year. This means that the riverside pathway from the station to Moormead Park has also been delayed, until 2016 at the earliest.

This Newsletter is funded for FORCE by: -



### Mayday Genealogy

Family History & Genealogy Research Services  
89 Third Cross Road, TWICKENHAM, TW2 5DY  
Telephone: 020 8894 0488  
Info@maydaygenealogy.co.uk  
www.maydaygenealogy.co.uk

© Copyright Friends Of the River Crane Environment  
Registered Charity No.: 1108542  
Website: [www.force.org.uk](http://www.force.org.uk)  
E-mail: [info@force.org.uk](mailto:info@force.org.uk)

### Crane Park improvements

Further work has been completed at the Mill Road site in Crane Park and two new carved benches have been installed (a stag beetle and a heron bench). We are working with The Trust



for Conservation Volunteers (TCV) to lay the hedgerow at Mill Road and hope to

complete at least 100 metres by the end of February. This project is being run as an adult learning course and using traditional tools. Please contact Simon Hawkins if you are interested in attending (a part or all of) the course [s.hawkins@tcv.org.uk](mailto:s.hawkins@tcv.org.uk) mob: 07764655667.

### Other project work

We have recently received funding under the GLA's "Big Green Fund" to enhance four wetland sites, working with Richmond and Hounslow councils and other partners. We have already commissioned a woodland archaeology investigation, considering the age and historical uses of the woodland along the lower Crane between Donkey Wood and Crane Park, as well as a new map and leaflet for Donkey Wood.

We have recently finished a project, funded in part by Hounslow Innovations Awards, to create a leaflet for the area around Pevensey Rd Nature Reserve and Feltham Marshalling Yards. Additional funding from Metropolitan Parks and Gardens Association provided a further carved bench (the "tawny owl bench") in Pevensey. This bench is alongside the new cycle and footpath through the reserve which links through de Brome fields and into Hanworth Park. More improvements are scheduled in these areas over the next year and much of it will be implemented through our volunteer partners, including TCV, LWT, Environment Trust and Green Corridor.

### Citizen Science Monitoring Programmes

We have recently submitted a detailed proposal, partnered by Froglife Environmental, to undertake a citizen science programme of monitoring for phosphate along the River Crane. Phosphate is the key parameter causing the river to be classed as moderate to poor under the EU Water Framework Directive, and this programme is designed to engage local people in finding out the causes and helping to develop solutions.

In partnership with ZSL we have also adopted a "Riverfly Monitoring site" at Mill Road weir. This is part of a national river water quality monitoring programme that will record changes in water quality in the river and allow us to detect pollution events that might otherwise go unnoticed. We will be recruiting for people interested in involvement in both these projects in March, subject to funding being granted.

### Visitor Surveys

We carried out the fifth of our twice-annual surveys this January and were astounded by the numbers, over 1500 people being counted entering or leaving the Meadway entrance of Crane Park for example. This is as many as in July 2013 and in half the daylight hours. The large numbers using and enjoying the parks are a wonderful sight and a powerful reminder to ourselves and the councils that our open spaces are very important to us.

### Board Changes

This month we welcomed Joe Pecorelli and Jane Satchwell as new co-opted members of the Board of Trustees. Both are good Friends of FORCE and have been supportive over a number of years. Our Treasurer, Anna Smyk, will be standing down as Trustee from the AGM in November 2014, and we would be keen to talk to anyone interested in taking on this role. Anna has kindly agreed to work with a new Treasurer before and after the AGM.

### A New Strategy for FORCE

Since its inception FORCE has changed and developed significantly. The trustees of FORCE have recently been considering where it should focus its efforts in future, putting together a strategy to help direct FORCE over the coming years. One key driver for this has been the process of Incorporation, which also provides an opportunity to review the organisational purpose and Objects. We want to share our thoughts so far with our supporters and to invite your comments so we can take these into account when developing our plans. We have included a paper which introduces these issues and suggests how you might take part in shaping the future of the charity.

Regards,



Rob Gray, Chair of FORCE

## A New Strategy for FORCE

### Introduction

Since its inception FORCE has changed and developed significantly. The trustees of FORCE have recently been considering where it should focus its efforts in future, with the aim of putting together a strategy to help direct FORCE over the coming years. One key driver for this has been the process of incorporation, which also provides an opportunity to review the organisational purpose and Objects.

We want to share our thoughts so far with our supporters and to invite your comment so we can take this into account when developing our plans.

Our main concerns are that we need to:

- Review and possibly re-define what FORCE is and what it does following organic development over time
- Examine the large number of activities FORCE does, prioritise more effectively, and make sure the group doesn't overreach itself

### Main Points

#### *What We Are and What We Do - Updating our 'Objects'*

FORCE's 'Objects' are its legal statement of charitable purpose as registered by the Charity Commission and there are several reasons why we need to update them:

- Trustees believe that FORCE is both an environmental and a community organisation with both environmental and social impact. However this isn't fully reflected in our original Objects
- We have seen the slow geographic extension of our practical activities along the Crane valley into most of LB Richmond and much of LB Hounslow over the last ten years
- However, FORCE also has an increasing strategic interest in the whole Crane, and this would mean expanding the geographical remit that forms part of the current Objects

#### Setting Priorities and Managing Resources

We need to be clearer about our priorities and we need to be careful not to overreach ourselves and lose quality as a result. At the same time, we view breadth of work as a key feature of FORCE and don't want to lose this, so we want to increase the resources available to us. FORCE has no paid staff (and doesn't plan to employ any in the foreseeable future) so we aim to do this by developing our membership, our trustee board and our volunteers, by working more in partnership with other organisations, and by using more contract services where appropriate.

Our draft overarching aims are:

- To increase the environmental value of the Crane and DNR\* corridors
- To increase public use and appreciation of the Crane and DNR corridors
- To increase educational use of the Crane and DNR corridors
- To enhance local public management of the Crane and DNR corridors at a borough and catchment level

\* DNR: (lower) Duke of Northumberland's River

At this stage these are draft aims and we recognise some of them as needing further work. We are also beginning to set out more specific aims and activities and would welcome your thoughts about what you consider to be priorities. We expect to develop our strategy in the first quarter of 2014 following supporters' input.

**Involvement**

We are keen to enhance our dialogue with our supporters and are developing more ways for you to have your say, including:

1. A member's slot as the first agenda item at selected trustee meetings
2. Enhanced newsletter
3. More active Facebook page
4. Interaction at volunteer days, local fairs and our annual open day
5. Survey

We hope you will want to be involved by commenting on our ideas so far.

We are also keen to have more people getting involved in other ways - FORCE's activities can only be delivered through the involvement of our supporters. The developments we are proposing will bring new opportunities for people to get (more) involved:

1. Hands-on volunteering
2. Joining sub-groups that will work on particular areas of work. Sub-groups already in existence or being considered are:
  - a. Volunteering
  - b. Fundraising
  - c. Education
  - d. Marketing
  - e. Planning
  - f. Projects
  - g. Membership
  - h. Finance
  - i. Legal (covering both the organisation itself and its activities)
3. Joining the trustee board. Whilst we need longer term trustees to provide stability and continuity, we are also open to the idea of co-opting members to the board for a shorter period of time for those wishing to make a short term contribution to a specific issue via membership of the board.

If you have any comments on FORCE's future strategy or objects, please send them in an e-mail headed 'OBJECTS' to [info@force.com](mailto:info@force.com). Alternatively, send any written submissions, with the same heading, to the Membership Secretary, 89 Third Cross Road, TWICKENHAM, TW2 5DY.

**FORCE Activity Programme**

\*Volunteer events start at 10-30am; join us for an hour or the whole day. Hot drinks are provided but bring a packed lunch if staying the day. Please wear stout shoes or boots and old clothes.

There will also be TCV volunteering events on the first and third Wednesday of each month for 12 months from March, to deliver the wetland projects at Mill Rd, Pevensey and Donkey Wood. More information on these and all the borough's events can be found at <http://www.swlen.org.uk/events-calendar/view>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Status</b>
*11 <sup>th</sup> January	Meadway Orchard	A very successful day, despite the poor weather, maintaining the orchard and creating a new stag beetle loggery	Completed
*9 <sup>th</sup> February	Mill Road, Crane Park	Another successful day. We started to Lay the hedge and plant new hedging plus maintain and improve the wetland scrapes.	Completed
*13 <sup>th</sup> , 14 <sup>th</sup> , 19 <sup>th</sup> , 21 <sup>st</sup> , 26 <sup>th</sup> and 27 <sup>th</sup> February plus March 5 <sup>th</sup> .	Mill Road, Crane Park	A series of seven volunteer days run by TCV and continuing the hedge laying work. Everyone is welcome to join them – formal training included for those who would like it	In Progress
22 <sup>nd</sup> February	Shot Tower, Crane Park	River fly training day – more details to follow, subject to funding	
*9 <sup>th</sup> March	Pevensey Road Nature Reserve	Wetland planting of the new ponds and maintenance at Feltham Circles	
16 <sup>th</sup> March	Pevensey Rd Nature Reserve	Tree walk with LWT. Meet at the Pevensey Road entrance at 10-30 am	
*13 <sup>th</sup> April	Mereway Nature Park	General maintenance and wild flower planting	
*11 <sup>th</sup> May	Silverhall Park	The annual project day	
Saturday 24 May	Cycle ride along the River Crane in Hounslow	Part of the Hounslow Cycle Club programme the ride will be led by FORCE and will feature the new route through Pevensey Road and De Brome fields. Meet at Feltham train station car park at 12.45pm	
*8 <sup>th</sup> June	River Crane	Balsam bash. Repeat of the 2013 joint event with all parties	