

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our winter newsletter. This edition starts with the sad announcement of the death of Dr Tim Elson, a FORCE Trustee since we started in 2003 and a good friend to many of us. Tim was a great and reliable supporter of FORCE over the past 15 years and attended virtually all of our volunteer days (over 100 during this time), loading up at the start of each day and helping us to put everything away at the end. He was a source of advice, good sense (and a joke) whenever we needed it. We shall miss him.



### Planning Matters

There is a lot of activity around Heathrow at the moment. We have submitted a response to the Dept of Transport's report on the Third Runway and are currently developing a response to the Heathrow Airport's initial consultation on this. We also responded to the LB Hounslow West Area plan, which included large scale proposals for the removal of green belt protections on open spaces in the Crane valley, probably not unrelated to plans at Heathrow.

We have submitted a response to a slightly revised proposal to put a telecoms mast on the Cranford playing fields – a previous proposal for which was turned down last summer - and have repeated our request to the council that Richmond College honour its agreement to hold regular community liaison meetings regarding their development.

All our planning responses can be seen on our web-site.

### Volunteer Activities

Our programme of monthly volunteer days is in full swing. We have worked at the Rifle Club, Mill Road and Crane Park – Hanworth Road sites over the last few months and will be going to the Butts Farm area in March and Pevensy Nature Reserve in April.

TCV's winter community learning programme has come to a close, having completed eight days of woodland coppicing and hedge laying over the season. Their work helps maintain and slowly improve the habitats throughout Crane Park and, as an example, they laid around 200 metres of hedge and created a further 40 metres of dead hedge over the last couple of months.



TCV laying the alder hedge at Hospital Bridge Road in January

TCV will be back in Crane Park in the summer with a programme of river and meadow management works.

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

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Registered Charity No.: 1155971  
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Website: [www.force.org.uk](http://www.force.org.uk)  
E-mail: [info@force.org.uk](mailto:info@force.org.uk)

### Duke of Northumberland's River

The signage is going in along the Duke's River marking out the 4km route between Kneller Gardens in Twickenham and Mill Platt in Isleworth, a riverside walk linking the River Crane with the Thames.



We hope to announce further work with TCV this spring, creating improved water vole habitat along the RFU reach of the Duke's River in advance of the main pathway improvements scheduled for the summer.

Finally, there are major environmental improvement works starting along the Riverside Walk section later this month, designed to create new marginal river habitat and tempt the resident water voles to move further downstream into this reach of the river.

There has been quite a lot of frustration, including from ourselves, about the delays in opening Twickenham Rough to the public. The pathway is complete, and the new public open space is virtually ready – but there remains a remnant area of contaminated land to deal with. We understand the developer has recently agreed to do the outstanding work and we hope the site will be open in the spring.

### Carved Benches

One thing agreed for Twickenham Rough is to install a new carved bench on the site – and this one will be part paid for by Dr Tim Elson's family and friends. It brings to three the number of new benches on order for 2018, with others scheduled along the Duke's River on the Mogden and RFU reaches. This follows the opening of a first new bench along the Duke's River by the Harlequins Ground last year.



The opening of the Quins bench: here being weight tested by two players and Graham Hollins – whose family paid for the bench.

### Park Usage Surveys

Our twice-yearly programme of park usage surveys continued for a sixth year this January, with the help of some very hardy volunteers on a day marked by unbroken rain. Nevertheless, there were still several hundred people coming into Crane Park at Meadway, numbers in line with other wet Sundays. We also began counting usage at a new location, Marsh Farm Lane, which will provide a baseline of usage against which to assess the impacts of the new path through Twickenham Junction Rough. We plan to gather a 5-year dataset here, as we did at Dragonfly Terrace following the major investments there.

Thank you for your support and we look forward to seeing you at one of our events in the near future,

Regards,

Rob Gray,

Chair of FORCE



**Volunteer Days and Activity Programme**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event and Location</b>	<b>Activities</b>
11 <sup>th</sup> March from 10.30am	FORCE Volunteer Sunday Butts Farm	Managing the orchard and riverside open spaces – improving habitat for water voles
24 <sup>th</sup> March	Mogden Sewage Works Open Day	An exploration of one of Europe's largest sewage work – led by Thames Water
8 <sup>th</sup> April from 10.30am	FORCE Volunteer Sunday Pevensey Road Nature Reserve	Maintaining and improving the habitats on this newly restored reserve
21 <sup>st</sup> April 11am to 12 noon	Mindfulness in Crane Park - starting at the Shot Tower	An hour's mindfulness walk led by a local mindfulness practitioner
6 <sup>th</sup> May 4.30am to 6am	Celebrate the dawn chorus - starting at the Shot Tower	A dawn chorus special walk with a local expert – identifier and mimic of bird calls
13 <sup>th</sup> May from 10.30am	FORCE Volunteer Sunday Duke's River: RFU section	Installing new marginal habitat for water voles
26 <sup>th</sup> May	Lower River Crane Walk From Mill Road along the lower Crane to St Margarets	Explore the lower parts of the river, including the tidal Crane, and hear about the plans for river restoration
28 <sup>th</sup> May from 10am	Twickenham Green May Fair	HANDS Charities May Fair – FORCE will have a stall. Meet the Trustees

Walk and talk events are free but registration is essential. To register go to the events page on the FORCE website <http://www.force.org.uk/calendar/view> and follow the links. All other events are free, and no registration is necessary. More information is available through the FORCE and/or TCV web-sites.

There are three Green Gyms operating along the River Crane, all free. Everyone can join in this gentle exercise in a social environment whilst working together to improve local riverside spaces. You can just turn up on the day (10.45am to 2pm) or contact TCV Green Gym for more information.

Pevensey Road Green Gym meets every Monday – call Jack on 07989167787

Hounslow Heath Green Gym meets every Tuesday – call Chloe on 07717494476

Richmond Green Gym meets every Wednesday at Kneller Gardens – call Chloe on 07717494476