

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our Spring 2018 newsletter. We are very pleased to have confirmed our programme of walks, talks, community learning and volunteering events for the spring and summer. These are listed at the end of this newsletter and we have also produced a leaflet "Crane Valley Events" for local libraries and other outlets.

Heathrow Third Runway Proposals

Heathrow lies largely within the River Crane catchment and existing activities at the airport already affect the quality and integrity of the river corridor.

We are concerned about the direct effects of the Third Runway proposals on the Longford and Upper Duke of Northumberland's River – as the runway will sit on top of both rivers as well as the River Colne – and the noise and air pollution impacts on the Crane corridor. We are also just as concerned about the indirect effects – eg new transport links plus other infrastructure developments on local open spaces.

FORCE submitted a detailed objection to the proposals in March. We noted that any scheme needed to consider the regional level impacts of the project on open space – the Thames, Colne and Brent catchments as well as the Crane – incorporating all the locations where Heathrow undertook its own consultation events. We asked for a detailed assessment of the impacts on open space across this wider impact area followed by a long-term investment programme to protect and improve this open space network.

Volunteer Activities

Our programme of monthly volunteer days has continued, with events on the Butts Farm side of Crane Park and Pevensy Nature Reserve, over the last couple of months. Both were supported by Hounslow's rangers, newly employed by Lampton Greenspace 360 following the demise of Carillion earlier this year. Their support enabled us to remove around one tonne of litter at the two sites, including a dozen car tyres, and assorted large metal posts and water tanks, that had been a local eye sore over many years.

The Community Learning programme with TCV continues this summer, with eight days practical training in marginal river habitat and meadow management techniques. On the first of these days we will be joined again by the shire horses from Operation Centaur.



Operation Centaur at Willow Way in 2017

There are three weekly Green Gyms along the lower Crane – at Pevensy Nature Reserve, Hounslow Heath and Mereway Nature Park – held on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays respectively. These provide gentle outdoor exercise through improving the value of local habitats for people and wildlife. All are free and welcome new volunteers.

Crane Park Usage Surveys

FORCE will be holding our summer park usage surveys on Sunday 15th July 2018, based at the Meadway entrance to Crane Park and at Marsh Farm Lane in Twickenham, from 6 am to 8 pm. If you can spare an hour or two to help with the surveys at either location, you would be most welcome. The counting is very straightforward, full instructions are given, and help is always on hand. The usage surveys are very important in helping us to understand how the local community is using its open spaces, and in helping us to build the case for more investment in our open spaces. Please contact gary.backler@force.org.uk if you can help.

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Duke of Northumberland's River

Riverside Walk in Isleworth has benefitted from the installation of around 500 metres of marginal river habitat in March this year. This work has been designed to improve the aesthetic and wildlife value of this reach and to encourage the migration of water voles into this part of the river. The work is being complemented by regular litter picks by TCV and there are proposals to set up a new Friends group to help co-ordinate these activities.

Plans are being finalised for further river improvements in the stretch along the RFU stadium in the autumn, followed by the widening of the pathway along this 750 metre length of the river.



Installing new deflectors in the Lower Duke's River at Riverside Walk

River Pollution Management

The Crane is an urban river and subject to a range of urban pollution problems. These include – misconnected properties, plumbed into the surface water rather than the foul water drainage; polluted run-off from roads and; a particular problem in the Crane catchment; glycol de-icer in the run-off from Heathrow Airport, which turns the river grey-green and promotes fungal growth on the river bed.

We are working, through the Citizen Crane project, and with partners including the Environment Agency, Heathrow, Thames Water and the local authorities, to tackle each of these problems. Our Citizen Crane teams have helped identify major misconnections in recent months – including a school and a new housing estate; we are working with ZSL and Thames 21 to develop a London wide "Position Paper on road run-off", and Heathrow has started construction of a new £20m treatment plant to deal with the glycol problem.



Black water from "first flush" road run-off meets the murky grey-green water downstream of Heathrow: Hospital Bridge Road this March

The Citizen Crane volunteer project has just completed four years of monthly monitoring at eleven locations - we hope to see real improvements in the ecological value of the river over the next two years of investigation.

Twickenham Station and the Rough

FORCE met with the developers of Twickenham Station in March to talk about the detailed plans for creating the new riverside pathway linking the site to Moormead. We also took the opportunity to ask the developer and Network Rail to get together and resolve the river bank littering problem by the London Road bridge entrance to the station.

We understand that an agreement has been reached between Richmond Council and the Brewery Wharf developer to complete the remediation work in Twickenham Junction Rough. This work has commenced, and we remain hopeful this new public green space will be open this summer

We look forward to seeing you at one or more of our events over the next few months.

Regards,

Rob Gray,

Chair of FORCE



Volunteer Days and Activities Programme

Date	Event and Location	Activities
6 th May 4.30am to 6am	Celebrate the dawn chorus - starting from the Tower	A dawn chorus walk with a local expert – identifier and mimic of bird calls
13 th May from 10.30am	FORCE Volunteer Day Donkey Wood and Brazil Mill	Large scale litter pick of the area
26 th May 10.30 to 12.30	Lower 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 th May from 10am	Twickenham Green May Fair	HANDS Charities May Fair – FORCE will have a stall. An opportunity to meet the Trustees and hear our plans for the year
7 th June from 10.30am	Community learning with TCV. Meadow management at Willow Way and Mill Road in Crane Park	Initial hay cut at Willow Way and Mill Road – working with Operation Centaur
10 th June from 10.30am	FORCE Volunteer Sunday Hospital Bridge Road - Crane Park	Balsam removal and planting with native marginal species
23 rd June 10.30 to 12 noon	Walk and Talk Mill Road – Crane Park	Find out about what lives in the river – demonstration of river dipping
27 th June from 10.30am	Community learning with TCV Crane Park – meeting at the Tower	Management of river margins – including building deflectors and planting
28 th June from 10.30am	Community learning with TCV Crane Park – meeting at the Tower	Management of river margins – including building deflectors and planting
4 th July from 10.30am	Community learning with TCV Crane Park – meeting at the Tower	Management of river margins – including building deflectors and planting
25 th July from 10.30am	Community learning with TCV Crane Park – meeting at Mill Road	Meadow management – including scything
11 th August 10am to 12.30pm	Children's event Mereway and Kneller Gardens	A bug hunt in Mereway Nature Park followed by model making in Kneller Gardens
31 st August 7.50pm to 9.30pm	Walk and Talk Bat walk in Kneller Gardens	An evening bat walk led by an expert

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 are free with no booking required. Everyone can join in this gentle exercise in a social environment whilst working together to improve local riverside spaces. You can 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 Chloe on 07717 494476

Hounslow Heath Green Gym meets every Tuesday – contact Stephen HounslowHeathGG@outlook.com

Richmond Green Gym meets every Wednesday at Kneller Gardens – call Chloe 07717 494476

For more information: www.tcv.org.uk/london/green-gym-london