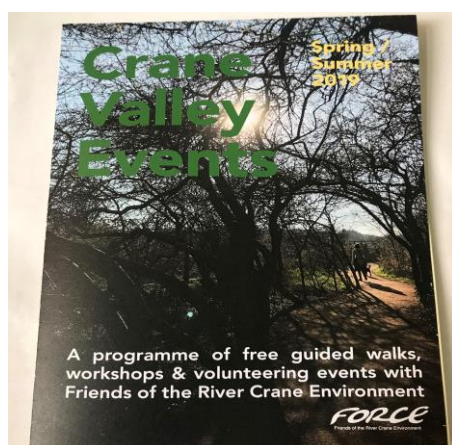


Dear Friends,

Welcome to our Spring 2019 Newsletter, which sees the launch of our new programme of events as well as significant progress on several long-term projects.

Programme of Events

The new programme is available on our website, with hard copies provided in local libraries and at our events. Members also receive a version of the programme as part of this quarterly newsletter.



The programme includes a new series of community learning events, including river restoration and traditional meadow management - working with scythes and shire horses. Monthly walks and talks have been scheduled until the end of the year alongside our regular volunteer days. FORCE will have a stall at the Twickenham HANDS May Fair and the Friends of Kneller Gardens dog show in September.

Hounslow Countryside Rangers are managed by Lampton Greenspace 360, the new contractors for LB Hounslow open spaces. They have set up a series of volunteer events for their open spaces and those in the Crane valley have also been listed.

Feltham Marshalling Yards

We are very concerned about the closure of the Feltham Marshalling Yards site to public access and the major development there – which started in March and included the large scale loss of trees on this London wide Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (Metropolitan SINC).

Following lobbying by FORCE and others a new pathway has now been cut which re-instates a link along the river corridor. We are now asking for a longer term solution to be agreed that creates a widened and enhanced river corridor through the site for people and wildlife.

Pevensey and Little Park

Pevensey Nature Reserve has been improved beyond recognition over the last three years by volunteers with the Pevensey Green Gym Rangers, supported by Lampton Greenspace 360, who continue to meet there every Monday. Little Park next door has slowly improved over the last few years following an initiative by LB Richmond parks department.

We are delighted that a bridge has now been installed to link these two sites together across the River Crane and create a new loop walk upstream of Crane Park. Further volunteer events are planned in the coming weeks to enhance the associated footpaths.



New bridge linking Pevensey and Little Park

This Newsletter is funded for FORCE by: -



Mayday Genealogy

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Duke's River pathway

Contractors have started work on improvements to the Duke's River walk adjacent to the RFU Stadium. This work will include stepping back the boundary fence and enhancements to the river environment. On completion, hopefully by June, all the main components of our planned enhancements to this 4km corridor, linking the Crane in Twickenham with the Thames in Isleworth, will be in place. Further maintenance and enhancement works are now under consideration by the project steering group.

Donkey Woods

FORCE held a second volunteer day in Donkey Woods this April and cleared around 1500kg of rubbish as well as improving the entrance to the site. Donkey Woods, along with the Causeway Site upstream and Brazil Mill Woods downstream, are high value wildlife habitats and wonderful but underused assets for the local community. During our volunteer day we held a six hour formal survey and recorded only 37 people walking and cycling through – all of them male! This contrasts with the 500 to 1000+ men, women and children per day in Crane Park just downstream.

We are stepping up our engagement with these upstream sites, as we can see the great potential for them to be as well-loved as Crane Park, with more engagement and support. We will be working with LB Hounslow and other key parties to further enhance these sites in the near future and we are pleased to note that Hounslow Countryside Rangers have already set up two volunteer events there over the summer.



Some of the rubbish collected at our recent volunteer day in Donkey Woods

Volunteer Support Needed

FORCE is a volunteer only organisation. This allows us to scope our activities based on need and resource – and to invest more of those resources into improvements on the ground. This model is only possible though by active partnership with many other interested parties combined with the dedicated work of Trustees and a network of volunteers.

In recent years we have developed six portfolios of work – covering Planning; Community and Education; Volunteering; Communications; Wildlife and Membership. A Trustee leads each portfolio, working to strategies agreed by the board.

A recent annual review identified key needs and opportunities across each portfolio, subject to recruiting further volunteers, and we are therefore actively looking for more support. If you (or someone you know) might be interested in finding out more then please contact us and we will set up an initial chat with key Trustees.

We also have a specific vacancy for a Company Secretary – please let us know if you are interested in this role.

Membership and Social Media

FORCE membership continues to grow and we are closing in on 600 members. You are all hugely important as a source of ideas and support as well as legitimising our role as Friends. Please encourage your own friends and neighbours to join us.

FORCE has been active on Facebook and Twitter for several years and it is proving a very useful means of engaging with a new and wider audience – with close to 1800 Facebook followers. We have now also set up an Instagram account. Links to all these accounts are provide below and we are always pleased to hear from members and others with an interest in the Crane valley.

Regards,

Rob Gray,

Chair of FORCE



Volunteer Days and Activities Programme 2019

Date	Event and Location	Activities
12 th May 10:30 – 15:00	Mill Road Crane Park	FORCE volunteer day
20 th May	Pevensey and Little Park	TCV event improving access – working with shire horses from Operation Centaur
27 th May 10:00 – 16:00	HANDS May Fair: Twickenham Green	Community Fair with lots of local charities - including a FORCE stall
31 st May 10:30 – 15:00	Donkey Wood and Brazil Mill	Volunteer Day with Hounslow Countryside Rangers*
1 st June 10:30 – 12:00	Shot Tower to Twickenham Station	Walk and talk looking at the restoration works carried out on the river over the last 10 years and discussing future opportunities
5 th June 10:30 – 15:00	Community Learning in Crane Park: River management with TCV	See www.tcv.org.uk/london/richmond for details
6 th June 10:30 – 15:00	Community Learning in Crane Park: River management with TCV	See www.tcv.org.uk/london/richmond for details
9 th June 10:30 – 15:00	Crane Park – Hospital Bridge Rd	FORCE volunteer day: balsam bash and riverside planting
9 th June 10:30 – 15:00	Crane Park – Butts Farm	Volunteer Day with Hounslow Countryside Rangers*. This event will link with the FORCE volunteer event on the same day
26 th June 10:30 – 15:00	Community Learning in Crane Park: River management with TCV	See www.tcv.org.uk/london/richmond for details
27 th June 10:30 – 15:00	Community Learning in Crane Park: River management with TCV	See www.tcv.org.uk/london/richmond for details
29 June 10:00 – 15:00	Three Rivers Walk: a circular walk from Kneller Gardens along the Duke's River, Thames and Crane	A walk along the three rivers in Twickenham, Isleworth and Richmond; exploring both history and wildlife
30 th June 10:30 – 15:00	Donkey Wood and Brazil Mill	Volunteer Day with Hounslow Countryside Rangers*
21 st July 10:30 – 15:00	Crane Park – Butts Farm	Volunteer Day with Hounslow Countryside Rangers*
24 July 10:30 – 12:00	Butterfly Walk Mereway Nature Reserve	A butterfly walk for families: part of the national "Big Butterfly Count"
24 th July 10:30 – 15:00	Community Learning In Crane Park: meadow management - TCV	See www.tcv.org.uk/london/richmond for details
25 th July 10:30 – 15:00	Community Learning In Crane Park: meadow management - TCV	See www.tcv.org.uk/london/richmond for details
11 th August From 12pm	Crane Park – Butts Farm and top field	Community Fun Day with LB Hounslow and the Countryside Rangers*
14 th August 10:30 – 15:00	Community Learning In Crane Park: meadow management - TCV	See www.tcv.org.uk/london/richmond for details
15 th August 10:30 – 15:00	Community Learning In Crane Park: meadow management - TCV	See www.tcv.org.uk/london/richmond for details
17 August 11:00 -12:00	Photography for Children Kneller Gardens	A children's activity taking photographs of local plants and wildlife
28 August 19:50 – 21:00	Bat Walk Kneller Gardens	An evening bat walk led by an expert
15 th September	Kneller Gardens Dog Show	Community events – including FORCE stall

FORCE Walk and talk events are free but registration is essential. Go to the events page on the FORCE website <https://www.force.org.uk/calendar/> and follow the links. All other events are free, and no registration is necessary. More information is available through the FORCE and TCV websites.

*Hounslow Countryside Rangers have started a series of volunteer events in open spaces in Hounslow – including the Crane valley. At present there is no more information but there will be on the LB Hounslow website in due course - or please contact countryside@hounslow.gov.uk

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 Rangers meet every Monday at Pevensey Road Nature Reserve
- Hounslow Heath Green Gym Rangers meet every Tuesday at the Hounslow Heath visitor centre
- Richmond Green Gym meets every Wednesday at Kneller Gardens - – call Pablo on 07717 494476

All green gyms are designed to provide light exercise and social engagement whilst improving local open spaces. The sessions normally run from 10.45am to 2.30pm and everyone is welcome to join them.

For more information about the Green Gyms and all the events run by the Conservation Volunteers see www.tcv.org.uk/london/richmond