

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our Autumn 2019 Newsletter, the latest quarterly update on happenings along the Crane valley.

FORCE AGM and Trustee Update

Thank you to everyone who came along to our AGM in September. The [annual report and accounts, and presentations](#) from the portfolio holders, have now been posted on our website. After formal business we heard a presentation from John Waxman, who was appointed this year as the new development manager for the Crane Valley Partnership (CVP). John has ambitious plans for CVP over the coming years (see also below) and FORCE will be engaging closely with CVP to try and deliver them.

All the Trustees stood again for another year. We are also delighted to welcome Catherine Wyatt to our team, providing administrative and technical support.

Colne and Crane Valleys Green Infrastructure Strategy

This document sets out a plan for greatly enhancing the network of green corridors that run through the Colne and Crane catchments. It would link the River Thames with the Chiltern Hills by creating new and enhanced cycle and walking routes, alongside improved wildlife corridors, on the existing river and associated open space networks.

The document was launched in November 2019 and has already been shortlisted for a Landscape Institute award. We hope that this will become a template for landscape scale protection and improvement of these corridors in the face of unprecedented development pressures. The [strategy](#) can be found on the Colne Valley Regional Park website.

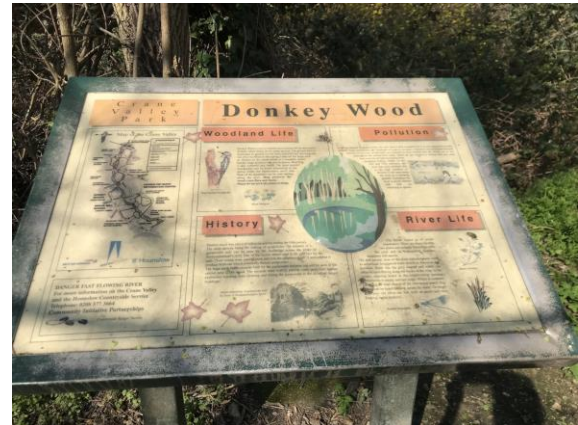
Mereway Fish Pass

The Environment Agency has started the work of replacing Mereway Road weir, which controls the distribution of flows between the Lower Crane and the Lower Duke's River, next to Kneller Gardens in Twickenham. This work is necessary to enhance the flood protection standards for the surrounding area.

The EA also proposes to install a new fish pass through Mereway Nature Park. This will take the form of a new 80 metre stream channel, creating new habitat and allowing fish to move between the lower Crane and the main river. FORCE are very supportive in principle, although there remain issues of detailed design and maintenance to be resolved. The scheme is scheduled to move forwards next year.

Donkey Woods and Brazil Mill Wood

A partnership of local charities, including FORCE, has been awarded funding from the Hounslow Communities Fund to start practical improvements and public engagement along the Brazil Mill and Donkey Wood sites in the middle Crane within LB Hounslow.



Old notice board in Donkey Wood

The project will include monthly volunteer days, walks and talks, schools and community engagement plus work with local small and large businesses. The longer term plan is to transform these areas into vibrant community parks whilst protecting and enhancing their existing wildlife value.

FORCE Family Challenge

There are several new downloadable I-spy activities on the FORCE website which link to the [FORCE Family Challenge](#). The aim of the activities is to get families out exploring the open spaces along the river.

This Newsletter is funded for FORCE by: -



Mayday Genealogy

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FORCE Volunteer Days

Our season of monthly volunteer days is now in full swing. We meet every second Sunday of the month from 10.30am and have already worked in the Mill Road area of Crane Park and Twickenham Rough. At the Twickenham Station site, a group of volunteers worked alongside station staff to create the line for the new pathway for public access along the river between Moormead Park and the station. The path will be installed this winter and be opened next year following completion of the main construction works.



Volunteers celebrate reaching Moormead Park from the station site along the line of the new footpath

Heathrow

FORCE continues to engage with Heathrow's consultants in order to promote and enhance the value of the Crane valley, alongside partners from local authorities, the EA, Colne Valley Partnership and others.

We are pushing for stronger protections to the existing green network and larger scale enhancements to counteract the inevitable negative impacts of the third runway proposals.

Citizen Crane

This citizen science programme has been collecting monthly data on the conditions up and down the Crane catchment since April 2014. A [report on the findings of the first five years](#) has now been produced and can be found on the projects pages of our website.

The project is now evolving, with considerable support from Thames Water and the Environment Agency, to fully support the UK's first urban "Smarter Water Catchment" project, due to start on the River Crane catchment in April 2020. This work is likely to kick off with a second outfall safari in the spring of next year. And we will be looking for volunteers to support this programme.

FORCE Usage Surveys

We have been counting public usage of paths and open spaces in the Lower Crane Valley since July 2012, and as a result have one of the few reliable databases of usage of any open spaces in the boroughs of Richmond and Hounslow.

Our next usage survey will take place on Sunday 19 January 2020 between 0800 and 1600 at Meadway and Marsh Farm Lane. The survey is relatively straightforward, and full instructions are provided. If you are interested in helping us with our usage surveys, please contact gary.backler@force.org.uk. Your support is much appreciated.

Please note that all our [upcoming events](#) are listed on our website and advertised through our social media channels. We also produce a hard copy seasonal events listing that is available in libraries and other public venues. We have therefore removed the events listing from this newsletter – but please advise if you would like it re-instated.

Regards,



Rob Gray,
Chair of FORCE

