

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our Winter 2020 Newsletter, the latest quarterly update on happenings along the Crane valley.

Donkey Wood and Brazil Mill project

We are really pleased to be starting this new project, alongside TCV and Let's Go Outside and Learn (LGOAL), led by South West London Environmental Network (SWLEN), and supported by a Hounslow Community Grant.

The project will cover the 3km river corridor and associated green spaces in Feltham, extending between Pevensey Nature Reserve and the Causeway (adjacent to Heathrow Airport). These are some of the loveliest and most wildlife rich sites along the whole Crane valley but have been neglected over many years and, despite being part of the London LOOP orbital footpath, very few people know about them or visit them.

Our project will start to change this – with a series of volunteer days, walks and talks, and school and community events. We will also be talking to the many local businesses, large and small, that back on to this part of the river corridor, seeking their support and their employees' active engagement.

TCV volunteer days started in February with more to follow throughout the year.



The first TCV volunteer day in Donkey Wood in February

More information on the project can be found at <https://swlen.org.uk/cranevalley>

Citizen Crane

This project is approaching six years of data gathering on the water quality and biodiversity value of the river system. Thames Water has embraced the project, and this spring will be launching the UK's first urban "Smarter Water Catchment" for the Crane, delivering a five year programme of improvements alongside our project.

In 2016 we worked with ZSL to deliver the UK's first "outfall safari". This identified around 235 surface water outfalls along the river, at least a dozen of which were grossly polluted. This method has subsequently been developed and adopted by many other river based volunteer groups across the country.

This spring we will be running a second outfall safari and we are looking for volunteers to help us. ZSL are holding a training session for prospective volunteers from 10am on 26th March at York House Twickenham – registration at www.CraneOutfallSafari_YorkHouse.eventbrite.co.uk

Or contact phoebe.shawstewart@zsl.org

New Carved Benches

The latest of our carved benches has been installed in Twickenham Junction Rough, next to the disused buffers, and features a steam train. A further bench has been delivered and awaits installation on the Mogden stretch of the Duke's River path.



The new bench in Twickenham Rough

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.: 1155971
Registered Company No.: 8383410
Website: www.force.org.uk
E-mail: info@force.org.uk

FORCE Volunteer Days

Our regular series of volunteer days, every second Sunday of the month, has continued through the winter. We are regularly getting 40+ volunteers, including several Duke of Edinburgh students and their families, and this allows us to achieve more across multiple adjacent sites.

In recent months we have built two new stag beetle loggeries, planted around 40kg of spring bulbs and cleared several hundred kg of litter from the parks and river. We continue to collate data on all our litter collection works and share the report with project teams investigating the sources and sinks of litter throughout the Thames estuary.

Community Learning Programme

The winter sessions of practical conservation techniques; including coppicing of riverside trees, creating poles and binders from the arisings and using these to manage and lay hedges, has been completed. We are currently finalising the summer programme, of meadow and river management works, which will start in May.

Our monthly walks and talks are continuing, and featuring events for children and families – please see our website for details.



Laying the hedge in Crane Park using coppiced wooden stakes and binders

Events Leaflet

We have produced a new leaflet that details all our events for the next few months and this can be found at local libraries and other public spaces. Upcoming events are also listed on our website and posted on social media – see the links below.



FORCE Usage Surveys

Our latest six month usage survey, in January 2020, recorded nearly 1500 people using the Meadway entrance to Crane Park, with over 80 per cent continuing their journey along the Crane valley. For the third time here we recorded more women than men using the park over the day, good evidence that the park is considered to be safe. We also recorded over 600 people using the pathway through Twickenham Rough, an increase of 66 per cent on the previous year.

These are hugely encouraging numbers. By contrast, our surveys show the numbers using the lovely but run down spaces of Donkey Woods and Brazil Mill Woods are in the range of 10 to 30 per day, most if not all of them male, with few if any children. TCV volunteers will be collecting public usage data on each of their 12 volunteer days there in 2020, and we hope to start to see some upward changes in these numbers over the course of the project.

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

