

FORCE

Friends of the River Crane Environment

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Annual Review 2018

Message from the Chair

Welcome to our review of FORCE activities for the year to April 2018. The saddest part of the FORCE year for me was the death of Dr Tim Elson in January. Tim was a founder Trustee, and a great source of strength and common sense to myself and others, both as a Trustee and a friend. He is greatly missed.

FORCE has made good progress over the last year and I hope this annual review gives you a sense of the work we are doing. More details on our work are available on our web-site and social media pages. FORCE is entirely operated by volunteers and we are very dependent on the generosity of our Friends and Members, alongside a wide variety of partners from all sectors, for the work that we do. Many thanks to you all.

Rob Gray - Chair of FORCE



Dr Tim Elson, pollarding willow at a volunteer day.

Projects 2017/18 – Dukes River Walk



Graham Hollins is joined on this new carved bench, located next to the Stoop and the Duke of Northumberland's River, by Quins players James Chisholm and Charlie Matthews. Graham funded this bench in memory of his parents who were long-time friends of Harlequins rugby. This new bench was installed in Spring 2018 and was the 14th carved bench along the River Crane.

The Duke's River Project started in April 2015, with £157,000 funding from the GLA and around £250,000 match funding from the LB Hounslow, LB Richmond and others. A further £200,000 or so match funding has been secured since the project started. The project has improved the community and environmental value of the lower Duke of Northumberland's from the lower Crane in Twickenham to the River Thames in Isleworth.

FORCE is part of the steering group and has helped to deliver major improvements to the paths along the riverside as well as clean ups of the river and support to new marginal wetland schemes and improvements to water vole habitats. The GLA funding is complete and the project has continued through 2017/8 and beyond with funding from other parties Wayfinding and a new leaflet were completed in 2017. The final main section of the route, alongside the RFU Stadium, is due to be completed in early 2019.



In-stream improvements at Riverside Walk.

Richmond Green Gym

Thames Water provided funding for the Richmond Green Gym based at Mereway Nature Park and Meadway Orchard. This project reopened in October 2017. Trustees have worked closely with Green Gym staff to promote the Green Gym to the local community. The Green Gym have worked at the Meadway Orchard and Mereway Nature Park and meet weekly on Wednesday in Kneller Gardens. This is the 3rd Green Gym in the Crane Valley with the others meeting at Pevensey Road Nature Reserve and Hounslow Heath.



The Mayor of Richmond reopens the Richmond Green Gym at the Meadway Orchard site October 2017.



Volunteers were joined by the working horses from Operation Centaur to manage the meadow at Willow Way in Twickenham.

Community and Education

FORCE delivered a community engagement project funded through Thames Water Community fund and LBRuT which built on previous environmental improvement and community engagement projects which we have delivered in the green spaces along the River Crane.

This two year funding enabled FORCE to provide a programme of 16 workshops in partnership with TCV which taught traditional conservation skills – hedge laying, marginal planting, woodland coppicing and scything. The sessions were attended by an average of ten volunteers. In 600 person-hours of activities they maintained 500m of hedge, hand scythed 1ha grassland meadow, improved 3 river deflectors by planting and created around a hectare of woodland glade, dead hedging and improved river bank habitat through coppicing.

Footfall surveys

FORCE volunteers carried out surveys of public usage in Crane Park for a 6th year. This year, for the first time, we added a new site at Marsh Farm Lane. The surveys are carried out in July and January. At the Dragonfly Terrace, 506 people were recorded in the July 2017 survey, the third highest total recorded here. At the Meadway entrance to Crane Park, 1,563 were recorded in July, the second highest, of whom 1,223 (78%) continued their visit to/from Kneller Gardens. The data provide factual input into responses to planning applications in the Crane Valley. Usage surveys were also carried out along the Duke's River and at Pevensey Nature Reserve, feeding into the overall picture of public usage of the river corridor.



On 21st January 2018 107 people were recorded using Marsh Farm Lane. This will form the base data prior to the opening of the new walkway through Twickenham Junction Rough. (Opened October 2018).

New Leaflets

There were three new leaflets produced over the year. These include a new and improved leaflet for the Lower Crane valley and a new leaflet for the Duke's River Walk. Trustees also worked on a map of a circular walk "The Three River Walk" which joins the Duke's River, the Thames Path and the River Crane. Work began on another circular walking leaflet through Feltham, the Upper Duke's River and Longford Rivers. All our maps can be found on our website:

www.force.org/discover



The Citizen Crane project

This is a partnership between FORCE, ZSL (Zoological Society of London) and Frog Environmental (a small local consultancy). Around 60 trained citizen science volunteers undertake monthly sampling at twelve sites along the river to measure the ecological and chemical quality of the river in time and space. Four years of data have been gathered and a Year Four report is available on our website. The project has helped to identify over 20 significant pollution problems and these have been resolved by the Environment Agency and others.

The project led the UK's first citizen science outfall safari in 2016, which assessed over 200 outfalls and identified a dozen that were a significant concern. This approach has now been adopted by Thames Water (TW) for the whole of London. Partly as a result of these successes TW is now developing plans for the Crane to be the UK's first urban "smarter catchment" and we are working with them to design this so that it delivers further benefits to the river system.



Citizen science volunteers undertake monthly sampling in Crane Park

Planning

FORCE tracked all major planning applications along the lower Crane Valley. This year FORCE was involved in the following major planning developments in LB Richmond; the London Borough of Richmond Local Plan, Twickenham Brewery Wharf site, Twickenham Station site, Rugby Football Union site, Harlequin Football Club and Richmond College sites, and village planning proposals; and in LB Hounslow; at Hounslow Heath, the West Area Plan and Feltham Masterplan

FORCE has also been engaged with Heathrow Airport Limited regarding issues that have an impact on the River Crane environment which include major operational issues and the Third Runway proposals.

The approach of trustees is to seek net benefits to the environment and community from any development. In each case the negotiation, planning or development process is ongoing.



Ecologist Paul Losse surveyed Hounslow Heath to give valuable data to trustees for the planning application submitted by Kidspace Adventures Holdings Ltd in October 2015 progresses. Trustees are developing a positive relationship with the developer in order to secure environmental benefits.

Volunteering



Twickenham Junction Rough,
August 2017



Dead hedging in Crane Park



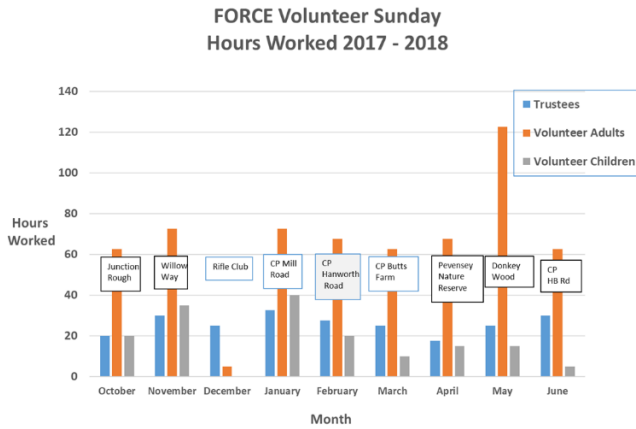
Lunchtime at Dragonfly Terrace



DoE students hedge planting

Volunteer Sundays 2017 – 2018 Key Features

- Over 1,000 hours worked (Up from 750)
- 9 locations visited
- First event at Brazil Mill Wood and Donkey Wood
- Support from Boroughs of Richmond and Hounslow
- Bench repair project



Walks and Talks

FORCE Trustees led a programme of 20 guided walks and talks along the Crane valley which 288 people joined, including 60 children many of whom were at the clay model making event held in Kneller Gardens. Surprisingly the two most popular walks were held in winter, bird spotting and ecology with water voles. The bat, river invertebrate and mindfulness walks remain popular too. We have been using a free online booking website to help manage the attendance of these free events. We were disappointed to note 30% of people who booked onto walks do not turn up on the day.

The secret walled garden at Cranford Park visited as part of our walk from Bulls Bridge to Pevensy Nature Reserve. July 2017

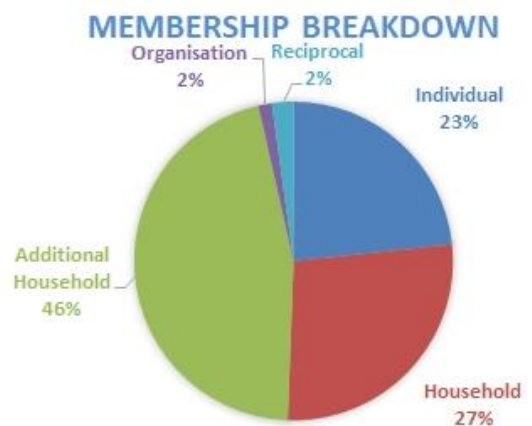


Membership

By 31st March 2018 FORCE membership had returned to above 500 (507), up from 453 at the end of last year; an increase of approximately 12%.

This is a very encouraging increase and reflects the amount of communications work as well as the general increase in FORCE's public profile.

Four newsletters were produced and distributed to FORCE members.



Financial Summary

FORCE received £6,012 of unrestricted funds in 2017/8 (2016/7: £8,623). The main components were £4,072 from membership subscriptions, donations and gift aid and £1,940 contribution to core costs from project funders. £4,932 (2016/7 £5,290) was spent on charitable activities and accounts examination costs. The resulting surplus of £1,081 (2016/7 £3,333) increased year end unrestricted funds to £15,666 . During the year FORCE received £36,947 of restricted funds from funders ring-fenced for specific projects. Only £19,713 of these funds were spent in the year leaving £17,234 for use in later years. The Trustees consider it to have been a successful year with an encouraging increase in unrestricted funds which can be used to expand the Charity's work.

Further details are given in the table alongside this note. A full copy of the Annual Report and Financial Statements, approved by the Trustees and the Independent Examiner, can be viewed on our website www.force.co.uk

The Trustees are very grateful to Anna Smyk for her dedicated voluntary work as FORCE's Assistant Treasurer and bookkeeper. They also thank members and organisations funding projects for their generosity and support.

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for the year Ended 31 March 2018

INCOME FROM:	£	£	£
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
Donations and legacies	2,098		2,098
Grants		36,947	36,947
Subscriptions	1,283		1,283
Gift aid	599		599
Reimbursements	93		93
Contribution to core costs	1,940		1,940
TOTAL INCOME	6,012	36,947	42,959
EXPENDITURE ON:	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
Charitable activities			
Insurance	133		133
Materials	463	282	745
Postage	112		112
Printing	555	238	793
Publicity	15		15
Services	2,173	19,192	21,365
Stationery	61		61
Training	883		883
	4,394	19,713	24,107
Other			
Independent Examination	530		530
Bank Charges and PayPal Fees	7		7
Total resources expended	4,932	19,713	24,644
NET INCOME/ EXPENDITURE	1,081	17,234	18,315

FORCE Trustees

FORCE is a small volunteer-led community based charity with no paid staff. This model depends on volunteers to deliver benefits through partnership working, often with larger charities or landowners. FORCE estimates that the total investment this year from projects managed in partnership with others, in line with its Objects, to which FORCE has made a significant contribution, was around £300,000. FORCE trustees invested about 5,000 volunteer hours in developing and delivering projects across the portfolios. This equates to about £125,000 gift in kind, some of which is used as match funding. This is in addition to the 1,500 hours trustees spent on governance and directorship. There was a further investment from co-optees and volunteers of around 1000 hours on practical work days and other support activities. These hours do not include volunteer activities provided through our partner organisations.



Chris Hern MBE planning expert, local historian and FORCE trustee for 15 years, resigned in August 2018. Trustees are very grateful to him for his many years of support.



Dr Keith Martin has decided to step down from his role as trustee. Keith was also one of our founding members and FORCE has benefited from his extensive knowledge of wildlife over the years. We hope that he will continue to entertain us with his popular bird song and dawn chorus walks.

With thanks

Trustees would like to thank members and the following organisations for their support and generosity over the last year:

As a community organisation we rely on the our members to show the support that we have in the local community and on membership fees to cover running costs of the charity. We are grateful to members for all the time and commitment that they give us.






We are grateful to the volunteers who regularly come out with us on projects to improve the local spaces for the benefit of wildlife and local people.



Bird walk in the rain January 2018

Contact FORCE

-  www.force.org.uk
-  info@force.org.uk

-  www.facebook.com/FriendsRiverCrane
-  twitter.com/friendsrivcrane
-  www.youtube.com/channel/UCaeesHyZO2bzQngLrOrw6dw