

## Annual General Meeting of The Friends of the River Crane Environment

20<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at 8pm

The Twickenham Club,  
Church Street,  
Twickenham

### Minutes of Meeting

Attended by: Trustees: Rob Gray (Chair), John Simpson (Treasurer), Frances Bennett (Secretary), Mike Day, Tim Elson, Keith Martin, Martin O’Gara

21 FORCE members

#### 1. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from the following members:  
Chris Hern (Trustee), Jane Satchwell (Trustee) and 2 members.

#### 2. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed. There were no matters arising.

#### 3. **Reports and accounts**

Trustees asked members to receive and consider the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2017 and the reports of the Charity trustees.

##### 3.1 Report from Treasurer

The treasurer reported that the accounts of the charity were signed off in July 2017. Making reference to the full accounts (these can be found on the website: <https://www.force.org.uk/who-are-we/charity-reports/>) he said that FORCE's funds in hand totalled £16 592 at 31st March 2017 compared to £26 272 the previous year. The funds are divided between unrestricted funds of £14 828 and restricted funds of £1664. The Charity is free to use its unrestricted funds as it wishes, provided it acts within its Objects. Restricted funds can only be used for specific projects as determined by the grant funder from whom we receive the grant.

Overheads for the charity remain low.

The results reflect a successful year with an encouraging increase in unrestricted funds which can be used to expand the Charity's work. The reduction in restricted funds largely reflects expenditure from grants given in the previous year.

The treasurer noted that Trustees are very grateful to Anna Smyk for her dedicated voluntary work as the Charity's Assistant Treasurer and bookkeeper.

It was proposed that the charity accounts were adopted by Tim Elson and this was seconded by Gary Backler. There were no objections.

##### 3.2 Report from Chair

The Chair reported that for the last two years trustees have been operating a portfolio structure with six key areas of work – planning; wildlife; membership; education and community; volunteering; and communications. Each area, led by a trustee, has a strategic plan.

##### I. Ongoing work

FORCE continues to work to engage communities in the linked open spaces along the river and findings means, through volunteering and planning gain for example, to improve them. It is gratifying to see so many activities taking place, and the means of delivering them becoming so well embodied. Much of the credit for this goes to the Trustees and key supporting members along with our network of partner organisations.

The work load on Trustees is significant so it is wonderful to see our Trustees choosing to continue for another year; and two new Trustees – Alison Horwood and Alan Charles – joining the fold. FORCE have a full set of Trustees but we are always on the lookout for members willing to become more involved.

## II. New developments

There are several new, and not so new, developments:

- Hounslow Heath Golf Club closed last year and plans for a new adventure playground on the site were turned down by the council and then approved on appeal. FORCE objected to the proposals due to the lack of community and environmental benefit and continue to monitor the situation – including recent flora and invertebrate surveys to assess the value of the site.
- Duke's River path at the RFU. There are signs the pathway may be constructed – the funds are in place and plans have been agreed in principle between the council and the RFU. FORCE hope the work may start this winter but nothing is yet agreed in writing
- Twickenham Junction Rough is another long running story. This also seems to be moving towards a positive conclusion – the pathway is installed and TCV have done three volunteer days there recently with a FORCE day to follow on October 8th. FORCE have not yet confirmation of when it will open but hope it will be before the end of the year.
- Finally, a real success story – TCV's Richmond Green Gym closed last year due to lack of funding. Just last week it re-started, with funding secured by FORCE from Thames Water, and will be meeting every Wednesday to work at Mereway, Meadway Orchard and other local sites.

## III. Forthcoming projects

There are also several exciting (or daunting) issues in the offing, depending upon you point of view:

- Heathrow and the third runway. We are working with the Crane and the Colne Valley partnerships to agree a common approach to mitigating impacts and delivering net benefits from any development
- CVP review. Crane Valley Partnership is reviewing its structure and objectives for the next ten years, engaging external consultants to produce a report by the end of the year, and FORCE is taking a lead role in advising them
- TW's "smarter catchment" initiative. Thames Water has selected the Crane as a pilot for testing how to better manage water supply and effluent issues on a catchment scale, the first time this will have been done on an urban system, due to start in earnest in 2020. We are hopeful this initiative will lead to a better managed and more wildlife friendly river
- Lower Crane Restoration. Finally, a vision plan has been prepared that shows how the lower Crane between Kneller Gardens and the Thames could be greatly enhanced as an environmental and community asset. This plan is due to be launched in the next few weeks and will be followed by further detailed study as well as some small scale installations to demonstrate the benefits.

The Chair said that none of this work could be achieved without the support and encouragement of our members and thanked them for their continued active engagement and interest.

### 3.3 Members addressed the following questions to trustees:

When will Twickenham Junction Rough be opened to the public? The chair replied that there were areas of contamination which were currently being addressed. Following this the legal agreements will be put in place to enable the land to be transferred into council ownership. Another member asked if the path can be used at the moment as it had been laid? The chair replied that it was not yet open to the public.

Another member asked about the continuing pollution in the river. The chair discussed the problem of misconnected drains and said that 1000 of these misconnections had been corrected. There were plans for a further 5 years of investment in this programme. The chair also discussed Thames Water Smarter Catchment plans which FORCE was engaging with. The chair stated that he was quietly optimistic that engaging with this process would have great benefits for the River Crane.

### 3.4 Portfolio work

Trustees gave an overview of the work of the charity over the last year. The slides from these presentation can be found on the FORCE website <https://www.force.org.uk/who-are-we/charity-reports/>

## 4. **Appointment of charity trustees**

- a) Members were asked to confirm the appointment of Charity Trustees and elect those retiring in rotation. Jane Satchwell, Gary Backler, Frances Bennett (Secretary) and Tim Elson are retiring in rotation and re-standing as trustee. The election of these members was proposed by Martin O'Gara and seconded by John Simpson.

- b) Members are asked to confirm the appointment of two new trustees Alan Charles and Alison Horwood who have spent 12 months as co-opted members of the trustee board. The election of these members was proposed by Gary Backler and seconded by Tim Elson.
- c) The chair told members that the trustees would also welcome the opportunity to co-opt members to the trustee board in a nonexecutive role. FORCE is also looking for a book keeper.

5. **Membership fees**

The Chair told members that membership fees currently stand at £5 for an individual, £8 for a household and £10 for corporate members. The charity uses this income to support running costs. The treasurer recommended that the fees give the charity sufficient income and should remain at the current rate. They are supplemented by donations from members.

The chair said that this year trustees are looking at the possibility of paying fees online and producing a new membership leaflet.

6. **Members proposed resolutions**

No resolutions were proposed

7. **Any other business**

No other matters were brought to the attention of trustees.

8. **Close of formal business**

The chair thanked members for their support and invited them to stay to hear a talk by Katy Cox a local historian about the history of Hanworth Farm.

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