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FROM: Vanessa Smith, Chair, Friends of Northcote Nature Reserve

**TREE PLANTING INAUGURATES NEW NATURE RESERVE FOR ISLEWORTH**

On Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December, local residents planted 8 British trees to mark the inauguration of the new Northcote Nature Reserve in Isleworth.

The Nature Reserve is the northernmost point of the recently announced [Lower Crane Restoration Project](#), which aims to restore 3 km of riverside paths and create a more natural river along the adjacent river Crane.

The trees, planted during [National Tree Week](#), have been chosen to be bee and bird friendly and were donated by The Conservation Foundation through the [Trees for Sacred Spaces](#) project, which is supported by the Mayor of London. The donation was arranged via local All Souls Church, which supports the new nature reserve project.

Originally a recreation ground for the Worplesdon housing estate, the park had deteriorated until local residents formed [Friends of Northcote Nature Reserve](#) to save it.

Working with Hounslow Council, an ambitious vision and outline proposal has been designed to turn the space into a new nature reserve, to be enjoyed by all.

The proposed landscaping plan includes a wildflower meadow, kingfisher and water vole habitats, a bird/wildlife hide, heritage fruit trees and fruit bearing sun walls – a nod to the area's market garden history.

Also featured is a backwater inlet that brings the adjacent river Crane into the nature reserve, with a reed bed, marginal planting and terracing.

In developing the plans the group has worked closely with the Environment Agency. The appointed Design Consultants have assembled a strong team of expert ecologists and river engineers to contribute to the process.

Friends group Chair Vanessa Smith said: "We want this to be a place that ALL local people can enjoy, from dog walkers to those with young children, elderly people and local schools."

Work on creating the nature reserve is scheduled to begin in spring 2018, ahead of the seasonal habitat activity. Habitat and species analysis over spring and summer will feed into the detailed design of the later landscaping and river phases, planned for later in 2018.

*PICTURES: 1: Vanessa Smith, Chair of Friends of Northcote Nature Reserve and Rev Richard Frank of All Souls 2. Children of local residents*

*Cont/*

**Further information**

- You can see the existing layout [here](#) of the open space here and detailed plans for the new Nature Reserve [here](#).
- The trees planted are native British species Common Hawthorn, Whitebeam and Strawberry (Arbutus), all flowering and berry-bearing varieties.
- With more than half of local authorities set to [sell off parks and green spaces](#) or outsource their management, the new Northcote Nature Reserve is bucking the trend with the regeneration of a neglected space, to be enjoyed by all.
- Northcote Nature Reserve is situated off the cul de sac end of Northcote Avenue, Isleworth, TW7 7JQ. The access track is alongside the Hounslow Furniture Project, opposite the allotment gates.
- It borders the tidal stretch of the River Crane, London's most westerly Thames tributary and designated a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation.
- The Nature Reserve has been designed by London architects [Astronaut Kawada](#) and their team of ecologists and engineers. They have worked closely with the Environment Agency, London Wildlife Trust, Friends of River Crane Environment and the Tidal Crane Association to develop the plans.
- The space is the subject of a Village Green Application by residents, the outcome of which has not yet been decided.
- As the River Crane marks the boundary between Richmond and Hounslow boroughs, the project includes, and will serve, residents from both boroughs.
- The Friends Group includes not only local residents but supporters from nearby All Souls Church and Pebbles Nursery as well as local schools, environmental groups and those with an interest in local nature conservation.
- Rev Richard Frank has been Vicar of All Souls [www.allsoulschurch.org.uk](http://www.allsoulschurch.org.uk) for the past 12 years and is also Area Dean for the Borough of Hounslow.

**Website:** [www.e-voice.org.uk/fonnr/](http://www.e-voice.org.uk/fonnr/)

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