

## Schedule 7 : Project Evaluation Report Big Green Fund project for the River Crane Corridor Marginal Habitat projects

### 1. Background

Name of project

Big Green Fund – the development of areas of marginal habitat

Location of project

Four sites along the lower Crane valley:

- Donkey Wood
- Pevensey Road
- Little Park
- Mill Road

A map showing these four locations is included below.



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#### 2. Outputs of the project

##### Description of Project area prior to undertaking the Project

There are four distinct areas under this part of the project.

**Donkey Wood (DW):** an area of around 6 hectares extending as a corridor of around 100 metres width along the River Crane. It has great environmental and historical value but has suffered from neglect for many years and was little used at the start of the project.

**Pevensey Road Nature Reserve (PRNR):** an area of around 10 hectares which was designated as a nature reserve over 20 years ago but had suffered from neglect in the last decade and was little used by local people.

**Little Park (LP):** a narrow strip of land on the opposite side of the river from PRNR and covering around 2 hectares. This area had been essentially abandoned to public use and was neglected with its environmental value compromised by dense vegetation and invasive species.

**Mill Road (MR):** part of Crane Park and covering around 6 hectares. Around one hectare of this had been effectively cut off from public use by fencing and become overgrown and a litter trap. Other parts were in reasonable condition but with the potential for significant improvement.

##### Description of the works undertaken as a result of the Project

##### Project Outcomes

Amount (hectares) of green space and public realm improved	24 ha
Amount (hectares) of new green infrastructure created (related to the ALGG functions)	
No. and types of linkages and connections to existing green spaces, neighbourhoods and the public transport network.	4
Length (metres) of walking and cycling routes created or upgraded	2000
No. of new or enhanced visitor facilities / attractions	4
Amount (cubic metres) of new flood storage capacity	DW – 150 PRNR – 300 MR – 50
No. and range of stakeholder groups involved in the planning of projects	London Borough of Richmond, London Borough of Hounslow, The Conservation Volunteers, Environment Agency, Crane Valley Partnership, FORCE, Environment Trust of Richmond, Borough of Twickenham Local History Society, HLHS 9 in total

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No. of heritage assets or area of biodiversity action plan habitat restored or enhanced	Enhanced habitat across 24 Ha
Increase in visitor numbers (actual and projected)	5 times increase – based on survey data from PRNR
No. of additional jobs or accredited training opportunities created	2 jobs – TCV green gym
No. of volunteer hours provided	~ 10,000 hours
Other quantitative measures of economic uplift or activity (e.g. income generated through pay-to-use facilities)	

#### Description of contribution of the project towards each of the All London Green Grid Objectives

##### **Access to open space**

These four open spaces are located along the lower Crane valley. Two of the four spaces (Little Park and part of the Mill Road site) were essentially abandoned with little or no public access and a steady build up of rubbish. Pevensey Road Nature Reserve was still in use but numbers were very low and initial weekend surveys counted around 20 to 30 people per day, the majority of whom were using the site as an access route for illegal motor-cross use. The remaining parts of Mill Road and the Donkey Wood site were in regular use but access was at least partly constrained by poorly maintained pathways and lack of signage and public information. The project has included:

- Repair to the boardwalk through Donkey Wood and addition of a further 50 metres
- Creation and distribution of a new leaflet map (4000 copies) that details the Donkey Wood site, its history and environmental value. See Appendix A.
- Provision of signage and mapping for the site – not yet installed
- Provision of a new shared use cycle path for around 500 metres through Pevensey Road NR as part of a wider cycle path initiative
- Improvement of around 1000 metres of walking paths through the PRNR site
- Creation and distribution of a new leaflet map (4000 copies) that details the Pevensey Road NR and Little Park sites, their history and environmental value
- Provision of signage and mapping for the two sites – not yet installed
- Creation of a new pathway for around 500 metres through the full length of the Little Park site – not yet completed
- Provision of a new pedestrian bridge across the river to link the PRNR and LP sites - commissioned but not yet installed
- Removal of fencing around 1 hectare of the Mill Road site and returning this to public use
- Improving the pathways through the remainder of the Mill Road site
- Provision of on site mapping and signage for the Mill Road site – commissioned but not yet installed

As a result of these and other works the spaces themselves, and the links between them, are becoming much more widely known and better used by local people.

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#### **Conservation of the natural environment**

The improvement of the environmental value of these sites has been a major objective. The key measures implemented were:

- Creation of 15 new small backwater ponds in DW
- Creation of around a hectare of managed coppice alder wet woodland in DW
- Rehabilitation of one disused backwater channel (of around 100 metres) and the creation of a new feeder channel (200 metres) through DW
- Creation of three new large backwater ponds in PRNR
- Laying around 200 metres of heavily overgrown hedge along the margin of PRNR
- Enhanced management to around 2 hectares of unimproved meadow in PRNR
- Releasing over a dozen mature fruit trees from heavy ivy growth in PRNR
- Removal of invasive species – particularly balsam, knotweed and hogweed - from all sites
- Planting marginal native species at all sites
- Laying around 350 metres of native hedgerow in the Mill Road site
- Enhanced management and planting for six marginal wetland scrapes at MR
- Creation of around 350 metres of enhanced in-river and marginal habitat at the Mill Road site – work ongoing
- Creation of a new kingfisher nesting bank at the MR site
- Creation of new invertebrate banks and hibernacula at the MR site
- Installation of several large beetle loggeries using locally derived wood
- Increasing public awareness of the environmental value of the sites through leaflets, on site notice boards, training and volunteer days, and “walks and talks” throughout the year
- A Woodland Archaeology investigation was carried out that provided baseline information on the age, character and value of the key trees within each of the four areas

#### **Adaptation to climate change**

This has not been an overt objective of the project, though there are a number of spin off benefits regarding climate change such as:

- More wildlife habitat and better links between habitat areas
- Increased flood storage capacity
- Improved walking and cycling paths – with increased use – leading to reduced car use
- Enhanced local environmental and community resource so less need to travel to meet this need
- More naturalised river system and marginal habitat helping to retain silt, water pollution and carbon load
- On site retention of arising natural materials for environmental re-use – thereby minimizing transport miles for import and export of materials

#### **Sustainable travel connections**

The project worked on four distinct areas along the River Crane corridor – and the improvement to access through these four sites is detailed in the section above on access. The combined effect of these works is to improve the overall value of the River Crane corridor, its attractiveness and value as a sustainable travel connection for west London.

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#### **Distinctive destinations**

These four sites all have considerable intrinsic value and the project has sought to reveal this value – as well as to add to it through creating new and enhanced environmental features. The value lies in their attractive appearance as well as their distinctive history and character. The on site signage, as well as the leaflets and maps, outline these characteristics, and follow on work with local historians and others is helping to piece together more parts of this story. The overall purpose is to enhance the value and appeal of these local spaces for a local community of over one hundred thousand people who live within a short walk of them.

#### **Healthy living**

Healthy living and lifestyles of local people have been enhanced through this project by:

- Enhancing the value of local spaces for walking, exploring and cycling – and encouraging more people to use and appreciate them
- As these spaces are part of a linear green chain they are used by many people to travel to and from work and school – and for many forms of outdoor exercise
- Setting up a weekly green gym with TCV in Pevensey Road Nature Reserve. This provides gentle managed exercise for local people by enhancing their surroundings and works by referral from local health and social services.
- Providing at least 10000 hours of volunteer work – enhancing the health and social cohesion of many local people – and the appreciation of others who witness this work and are encouraged towards their own pro-social actions

#### **Sustainable food production**

This was not an overt objective of the project. However, through the project work we have:

- Provided plants for the Green Corridor local native species nursery – with a view to this providing replacement and additional plants for the site areas over time
- Discovered and re-habilitated around a dozen veteran fruit trees which will hopefully be used as a food source by local people

#### **Green skills, and sustainable design and management**

The project has:

- Provided around 10000 hours of volunteer working
- Enhanced local skills in hedge laying, habitat creation and open space management
- Provided training, walks and talks, and information boards/leaflets, to enhance the wider knowledge base of environmental and heritage matters for local people
- The project components have used and re-used local materials wherever possible

It is hoped that the skills and management practices developed through this series of projects will be applied and developed on other sites up and down the Crane corridor.

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### **3. Community involvement**

#### Description of how the community has been involved in the project

The local community has been directly involved in the delivery of the project by:

- Local community and environmental groups being a part of the project steering group – providing advice, review and project delivery services
- Around 10000 hours of local community delivery through practical work on site
- Local inputs and responses – largely favourable – have been received on the works as they have progressed on site
- information has been provided to a wider network of people through occasional press releases and Facebook updates for example
- Working with a local school (Waldegrave) to curate an exhibition of local history
- Providing 10 free walks, led by experts, introducing the wildlife and history of the local parks to members of the community

Temporary boards have been installed on each of the four sites explaining the works being undertaken – and these are re-produced in Appendix B

#### Description of how volunteers have been involved in the project

Volunteers have been a mainstay of the project including:

- Active support on the steering group as representatives of local interests
- 10,000 hours of volunteer work in delivering project components
- Volunteers have led on public engagement on “walks and talks” and with school groups for example

#### Description of future involvement of the community/volunteers

It is anticipated that local volunteer groups will be working on these sites in the long term, helping to provide site monitoring, maintenance and improvement works.

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### **4. Maintenance and long term aspirations**

#### Description of how the project will be maintained including organisations involved and funding streams

The four sites are each included within the maintenance programmes for the two local authorities. Additional works will be provided through volunteer activities. It is anticipated that regular and cumulative improvement works will be carried out using some of the mechanisms developed and trialled through these projects. The overall programme of work is currently scheduled to continue until 2016.

#### Description of any planned further work

Not all the works listed above have been completed. Ongoing and future works include:

- Installation of permanent site boards
- Installation of a new bridge to link the two sites
- Further river improvement works at Mill Road

It is anticipated that further works will be identified and developed for funding bids by the project teams over future years through the active engagement of the Crane Valley partnership.

It is also expected that the lessons learned on these four sites can be adapted and applied to other sites up and down the River Crane corridor in the years to come with the overall objective of improving the environmental and community value of the 2000 hectares of river corridor.

### **5. Photographs and films**

Before and after photos must be provided with your Project Evaluation Report. These are included at Appendix C.

Although it is not a requirement of the project, we encourage those involved in the project to make a short film about the improvements made to the site/surrounding area. Films will be made available for public viewing through [london.gov.uk](http://london.gov.uk).

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### Appendix A – Donkey Wood Leaflet





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### Appendix B – Big Green Fund Information Boards

#### Mill Road Improvements

You may have noticed a series of site improvement and maintenance works on this site over the last year. These are part of an ongoing commitment to improve the green spaces along the River Crane for both people and wildlife with further work planned over the next 12 months. The programme is outlined below:

- Weir removal: completed in 2013
- Archaeological investigation at the Mill Site: completed in 2014
- Opening the Mill Site to public use and associated environmental improvements: 2014
- Bridge improvement works: completed in 2014
- Installation of two carved benches: completed in 2014
- Maintenance and improvement of six wetland scrapes: largely completed
- Laying of the hedge: working through winters of 2014, 2015 with completion in winter 2016
- Woodland management works: started and due for completion in 2016
- River and backwater habitat improvements: due for completion by end 2015
- Permanent site information boards: installation in 2015



These works are managed by London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames and supported by TCV and FORCE through the Crane Valley Partnership. Funding by London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Thames Water Fund and the GLA Big Green Fund. For more information contact [parks@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:parks@richmond.gov.uk)



#### Willow Way Improvements

There have been a series of site improvement works on this site over the last year. These are part of an ongoing commitment to improve the green spaces along the River Crane for both people and wildlife with further works planned over the next year.

The programme is outlined below:

- Removing accumulated rubbish and opening up the site again for public use: largely completed
- Installing new kissing gates and a pathway through the site: largely completed
- Working with local schools to plant a new hedge along the fence line: to be completed next winter
- Removal of Japanese knotweed: work ongoing with spraying three times per year
- River and backwater habitat improvements: due for completion by end 2015
- Permanent site information boards: installation in 2015



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### Donkey Wood Improvements

You may have noticed a series of site improvement and maintenance works on this site over the last year. These are part of an ongoing commitment to improve the green spaces along the River Crane for both people and wildlife with further work planned over the next 12 months. The programme is outlined below:

- Archaeological investigation: completed
- Extension to the boardwalk: completed in summer 2014
- Pollarding of the alder in the wet woodland: completed in summer 2014
- Leaflet for Donkey Wood and Brazil Mill Wood: completed in winter 2014
- Permanent site information maps: installation in 2015
- Creation of improved wet woodland habitat using the run-off water from Heathrow Airport: work started and due for completion in 2015
- Creation of new backwater areas, ponds and wetlands to improve the environmental value of the site: works started and due for completion in 2015



These works are managed by London Borough of Hounslow and supported by TCV and FORCE through the Crane Valley Partnership. Funding by London Borough of Hounslow, Greater London Authority Big Green Fund and Thames Water Fund.



### Little Park Improvements

You may have noticed a series of site improvement and maintenance works on this site over the last year. These are part of an ongoing commitment to improve the green spaces along the River Crane for both people and wildlife with further work planned over the next 12 months.

The programme is outlined below:

- Rubbish clearance: 2014 and winter of 2015
- Footpath improvements: ongoing and due for completion in 2016
- Woodland management works: due for completion in 2016
- Footbridge to link the site with Pevensey Nature Reserve: planned for 2015
- Leaflet for this site and Pevensey: completed in 2013
- Permanent site information maps: installation in 2016



These works are managed by London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames and supported by TCV and FORCE through the Crane Valley Partnership. Funding by London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames, Forestry Commission and GLA Big Green Fund. More Information is available from parks@richmond.gov.uk



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### Pevensey Nature Reserve Improvements

You may have noticed a series of site improvement and maintenance works on this site over the last year. These are part of an ongoing commitment to improve the green spaces along the River Crane for both people and wildlife with further work planned over the next 12 months. The programme is outlined below:

- Leaflet for the site: completed in 2013
- Cycle path: installed in 2014
- Carved bench: installed in 2014
- Footpath improvements: ongoing
- Fruit tree management: ongoing
- Footbridge to link the site with Little Park: planned for 2015
- Backwater ponds and marginal wetland creation: largely completed in 2013
- Permanent site information maps: installation planned for 2015

Ongoing maintenance of the site is through the TCV Green Gym which meets weekly on Monday from 11am to 2pm. To take part in this activity please contact [n.ward@tcv.org.uk](mailto:n.ward@tcv.org.uk)

These works are managed by London Borough of Hounslow and supported by TCV and FORCE through the Crane Valley Partnership. Funding by London Borough of Hounslow, Transport for London and GLA Big Green Fund.



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### Appendix C – Photos of Big Green Funded Activities

#### Donkey Wood : Boardwalk laying - before and after



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**Donkey Wood - Creating an ephemeral pond before and during**



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**Pevensey Road : Making a bridge – before and after**



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**Little Park : New Steps**



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**Mill Road : Clearing the Reed Bed channel – before and after**





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### Mill Road - Hedge laying before and after



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### Mill Road : Plant Nursery - before and after



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**Mill Road : Schools hedge planting**

