

2018 Walks & Talks Review

Friends of the River Crane (FORCE)
www.force.org.uk / email info@force.org.uk
Registered Charity No. 1155971
Registered Company No 8383410

Contents

Introduction	1
Walk and Talk Topics & Target Audience	1
Promotion	1
Governance Structure	2
Event Metrics	2
Schedule of Events	3
Event Metrics : Attendance	6
Event Metrics : Bookings and No Shows	8
Event Metrics : Membership Attendance	10
Event Metrics : Publicity	11
Event Metrics : Feedback	12
Conclusion	13
Appendix 1 Feedback Comments from Attendees	14

Introduction

FORCE conducted a series of 11 Walks & Talks in 2018 with support from friends and partner organisations. FORCE raises awareness of the lower Crane Valley to local people by highlighting the ecology to promote the open spaces as a community asset. The W&T events explored the environmental value of the river corridor, emphasising health, wellbeing and leisure opportunities, plus helping people to learn about the flora, fauna and history.

Past experience in Crane Park has shown increased involvement of the local community leads to more use of the green space and, as a result, the people using the space feel safer.

Walk and Talk Topics & Target Audience

The sessions were targeted at local residents, plus some specific social groups e.g. organisations supporting older people, families and children. They were scheduled across the week with a particular eye to coincide with national events e.g. Big Butterfly Count, International Dawn Chorus, school holidays. An important remit of the project was that all events would be free of charge to attendees to ensure no-one would be precluded on the basis of income.

The walks & talks had a wide range of topics to reach the target audience within themes of :

- a. Ecology
- b. Family
- c. History

These events furthered FORCE Objects :

1. To operate for the benefit of the public, and with other interested parties, to protect and enhance the environment of the River Crane, the Duke of Northumberland's River, their corridors and surrounding open spaces within the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames and its environs, for the benefit of the eco-system, residents and visitors; and
2. To advance the education of the public in the ecology, conservation, protection and improvement of the environment of the River Crane, the Duke of Northumberland's River, their corridors and surrounding open spaces within the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames and its environs.

Promotion

Promotion of the events this year included :

1. Posters displayed locally, in parks, and London Boroughs of Richmond and Hounslow noticeboards
2. Electronic media
 - o FORCE website
 - o FORCE Facebook and Twitter
 - o Eventbrite
 - o LBRuT website
3. Email notification to members
4. Via other environmental networks eg SWLEN, TCV who further disseminated via their communication channels
5. 500 events leaflets distributed through libraries, local fairs, and other organisations.

Governance Structure

Funding for the 2018 W&T programme was within FORCE budgets.

All walks were set up and administered by FORCE. Events on specific topics or locales were led by partners or expert knowledge holders as noted below in the table of events.

Event Metrics

Monitoring was undertaken to evaluate take-up of events, attendance and inculcate feedback to evaluate success rates of event types.

Registration for the W&Ts was requested via Eventbrite to gather contact information and aid communications. A few people preferred personal contact where not able to use computers. Total attendance was recorded for all events. Some events had a limited number of places due to the locale e.g. bat walk.

The Registration Form recorded actual attendance and event metrics. However, it was not always fully completed as attendees may not register or only complete certain information, omitting other. Additionally GDPR was introduced in May 2018 so the registration form was updated slightly in response, and some data gathered is not commensurate across the year. Hence, the data presented in this report is for indicative review rather than absolute values which limits its use for comparative purposes. E.g. Someone may attend the W&T but not answer 'member' question so these two data sets are not immediately comparable nor commensurate. Also there was so much rain on one walk that the registration form was washed out !

Feedback was inculcated from attendees, plus those who had registered for the walk via Eventbrite who failed to show up. Although less feedback was received this year, this subjective response data is interesting in itself. The questions for permission to contact contact/follow up with attendees were often not answered on the registration form, probably partly due to wariness as there was so much GDPR publicity this year. Also regular attendees have answered previous years so maybe have nothing new to add. See Appendix 1.

Schedule of Events

Walk and Talk	Walk Owner	Leader	Date Held 2018
Birds & Photography on the Duke of Northumberland's River	Dan Keel	Dan Keel Frances Bennett	Saturday 20 January
Loop Walk between Hanworth & Feltham	FORCE	Frances Bennett Jane Satchwell	Saturday 24 February
Winter bird walk along the River Crane	FORCE	Keith Martin	Sunday 25 February
Mindfulness Walk along the River Crane	SpaceToBe	Andrea Hosfeld	Saturday 21 April
Celebration of the Dawn Chorus <i>on International Dawn Chorus Day</i>	FORCE	Keith Martin	Sunday 6 May
Lower Crane River Walk	postponed	Frances Bennett	Saturday 26 May
River Dipping for Invertebrates in the River Crane	FORCE	Alison Horwood Joe Pecorelli Alan Charles	Saturday 23 June
Butterfly Walk along the River Crane <i>during The Big Butterfly Count Week</i>	FORCE	Jane Satchwell, Frances Bennett	Wednesday 25 July
Bug Hunt for children	FORCE	Frances Bennett	Saturday 11 August
Model Making for Children	FORCE	Paul Smith Frances Bennett	Saturday 11 August
Bat Walk along the River Crane	Philip Briggs	Philip Briggs	Friday 31 August
Mindfulness Walk along the River Crane	SpaceToBe	Andrea Hosfeld	Sunday 16 September
Knights, Ghosts & Autumn Colours Walk in Cranford Park. NB: this event is not included in the matrix being led by Cranford Friends so no data was available	Cranford Park Friends	Bob Barton	Saturday 3 November
Walk from Kneller to Isleworth with pub	Cancelled : rugby day	Frances Bennett Jane Satchwell	Saturday 17 November

Most W&Ts were scheduled on a Saturday to enable as many people to attend and gain as much attendance as possible outside of working hours. During the school holidays a few were scheduled during the week aiming at children activities and learning.

Walks & Talks Annual Review 2018

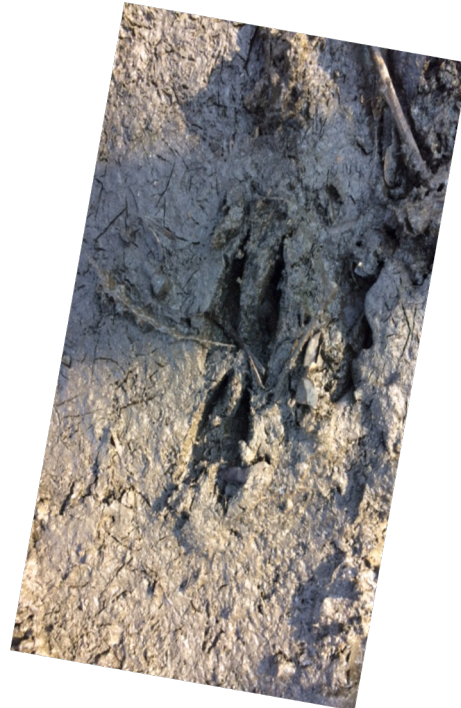
Thirteen walks were planned in 2018, but one was postponed due to lack of Trustee availability, and another cancelled as it was to be held on a day when there was a major rugby event so local infrastructure and paths would be congested already.

Another aim was to hold walks further upstream in the River Crane catchment area. Cranford Park Friends were unable to hold one specifically for FORCE but kindly volunteered free attendance at a scheduled walk 'Knights, Ghosts & Autumn Colours Walk'. This was broadcast to the membership and added to the FORCE website.



Photo of folk on Feltham Loop walk in January.

Deer tracks in mud



Encouraging interest in water voles



Swans on the River Crane

Event Metrics : Attendance

218 people joined the W&T events in 2018 of whom 39 were children. Total attendance at each event, with 2017 and 2016 attendance figures in (), was:

1. Birds and Photographs on the DNR	16 (15) *
2. Loop Walk between Hanworth and Feltham	18
3. Birds on the DNR	24 (10, 12)
4. Mindfulness Walk in spring	20
5. Celebration of Dawn Chorus	28
6. River Invertebrates	11 (19, 14)
7. Butterfly Walk	21 (19, 18)
8. Big Bug Hunt	13 (14)
9. Model making for children	46 (30, 13)
10. Bat walk	15 (13, 25)
11. Mindfulness Walk in autumn	6 (10, 17)
TOTAL	218

Although this list indicates attendance levels, it cannot be taken as a league table in walk popularity given it masks some days where bad weather deterred people as indicated with * or days when major football or rugby games were being held.

Of the total 218 attendances of people on the walks, there were actually 130 people who registered for several different walks, often family groups.

Attendance levels were broadly similar across the last three years when expressed as the mean number of attendees / walk :

Year	Number of Walks & Talks	Total Attendees	Of Whom Children	Repeat Registrations	Mean number attendees / walk
2016	13	228	63	n/a	17
2017	18	260	60	152	14
2018	11	218	39	130	19

The number of attendees against actual booking numbers, including how many attendees were children, is shown in figure 1 below. Most popular children friendly events were River Invertebrates, Butterfly, Bug Hunt, and Model Making – the latter had 27 children who were playing in the park and joined the session impromptu.

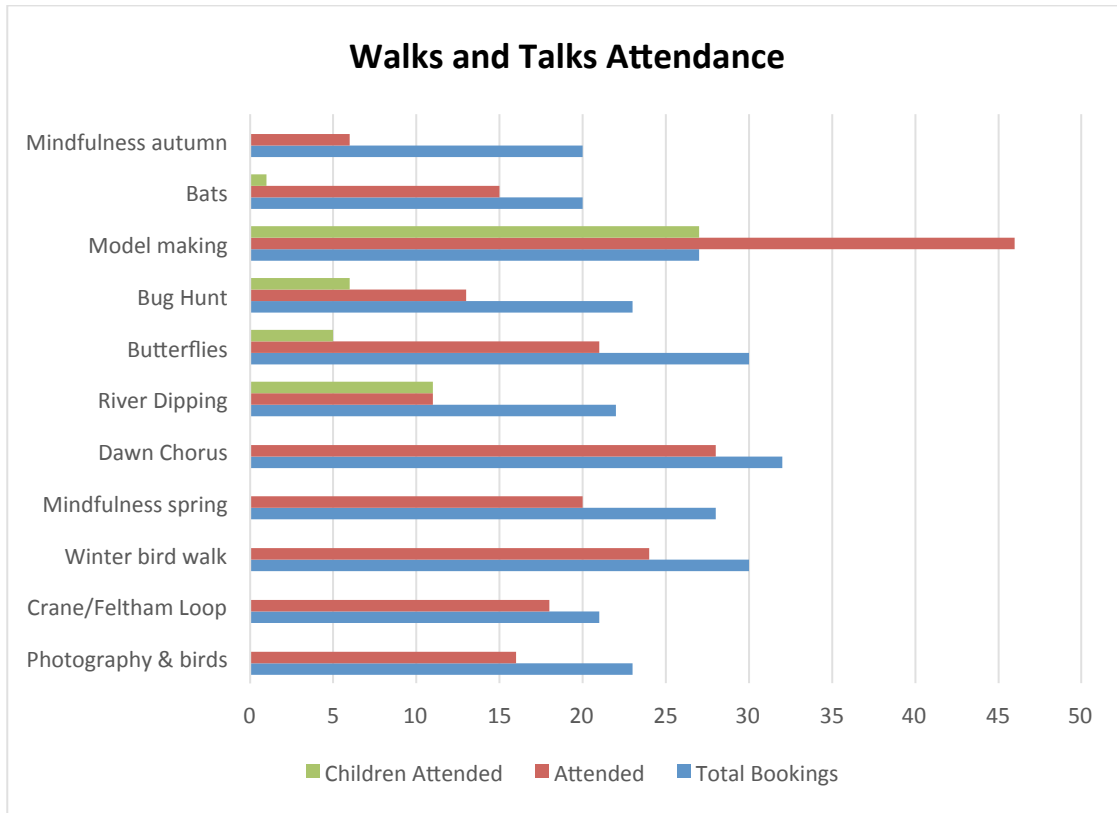


Figure 1. 2018 bookings and number of actual attendees of whom children.

Table 1 shows seasonal consideration of the average number of people attending walks. Notably average attendance was similar across three seasons, with a slight dip in autumn when only one walk was held. It is encouraging that there is steady attendance through the year and people enjoy being outside despite inclement weather at some events, snowy days and heavy rain.

Season	Number of Events	Number of Attendees	Average per event
Winter	3	58	19
Spring	2	48	24
Summer	5	106	21
Autumn	1	6	6

Table 1. Average attendees at walks within seasons

Event Metrics : Bookings and No Shows

100% of bookings were via Eventbrite in 2018, as in 2017 showing up-take of this method of booking. Minimal queries were received via the FORCE events email address from the website.

Of 276 bookings made :

- 176 Eventbrite registrations attended
- 73 failed to attend the event; 26% which is disappointing but slightly better than last two years where it was over 30%.
- an additional 42 people just showed up on the day; particularly on the Bug Hunt and Model Making in August. As soon as children saw the activity, they came tumbling in.

The relative translation of bookings into attendance levels is shown in Figure 2 below. The Dawn Chorus, Birds & Photography on DNR, Bats, and Crane/Feltham Loop walk had large translation rates. Highest rates of non-attendance can be seen to be autumn Mindfulness walk, River Dipping, and Butterfly walks. In these instances the weather was excellent so there was no obvious reason for the lack of attendance.

The no-show rate is disappointing, particularly as Eventbrite reminds people 48 hours in advance giving plenty of time to cancel the booking. FORCE reminder emails have been sent for walks, including enumerating how many people fail to show up and how this impacts others who want to go but may not be able to when numbers are limited, so requesting people to cancel their registrations if their plans have changed. Given the no show rate has been about 30% in the last three years, then this may be considered normal for this type of free event and incorporated into future walks planning.

Conversely, the Model Making which was an interactive events successfully attracted families passing with many children turning up on the day swelling numbers.



Bug hunters !

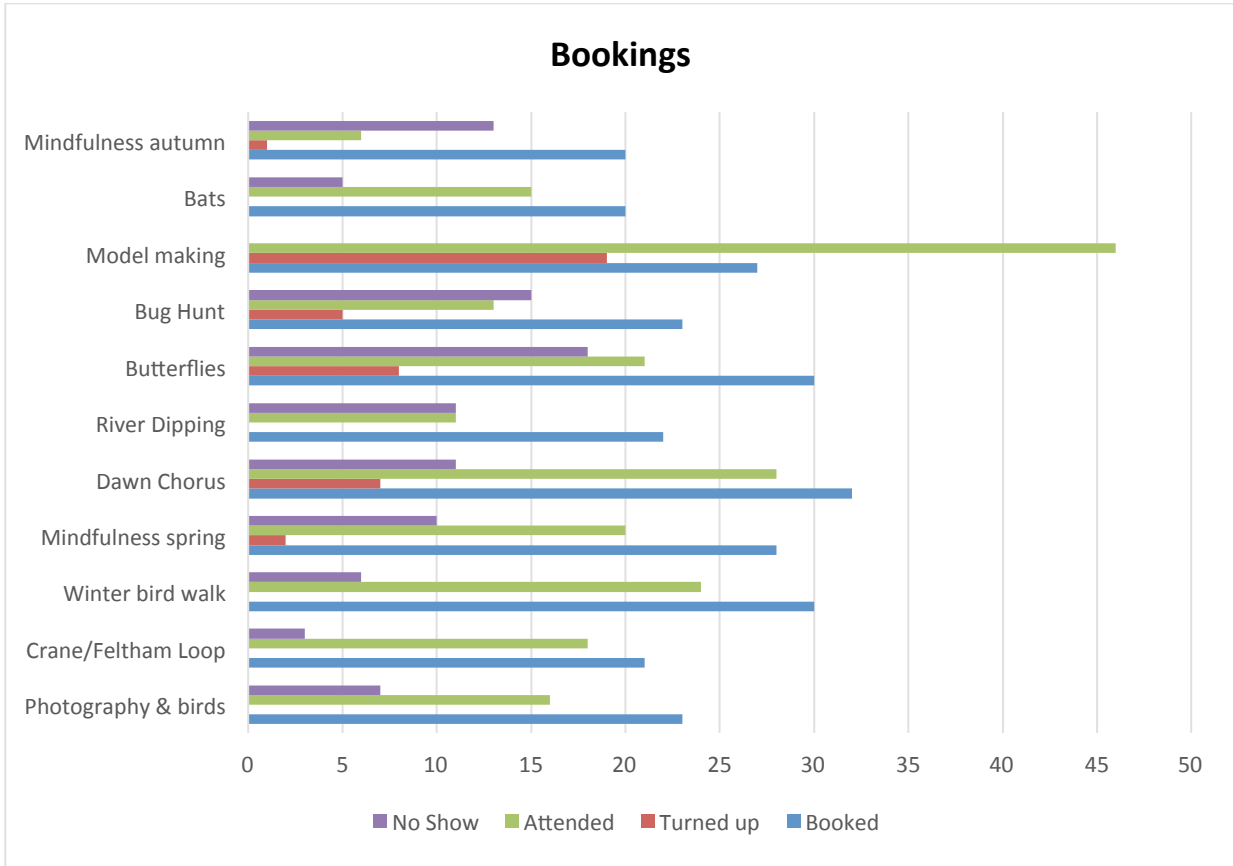


Figure 2 : Number of bookings, attendees and No shows i.e. folk who booked but then didn't show up. 'Turned up' are people who came along on the day without booking or were passing by and decided to join in.

Event Metrics : Membership Attendance

Attendees are asked at each event about their FORCE membership status. 82 people were already members showing positive support of these events by core membership. About 27 indicated that they weren't members. 9 people subsequently joined FORCE as a member following a Walk & Talk.

When asked if the Membership Secretary could contact them :

- 20 answered positively indicating they could be interested in becoming a member.
- 59 people didn't answer the question maybe because they didn't want any communication about membership. Notably this question was that most frequently left incomplete on the registration form.
- 9 declined to have the Membership Secretary contact them.

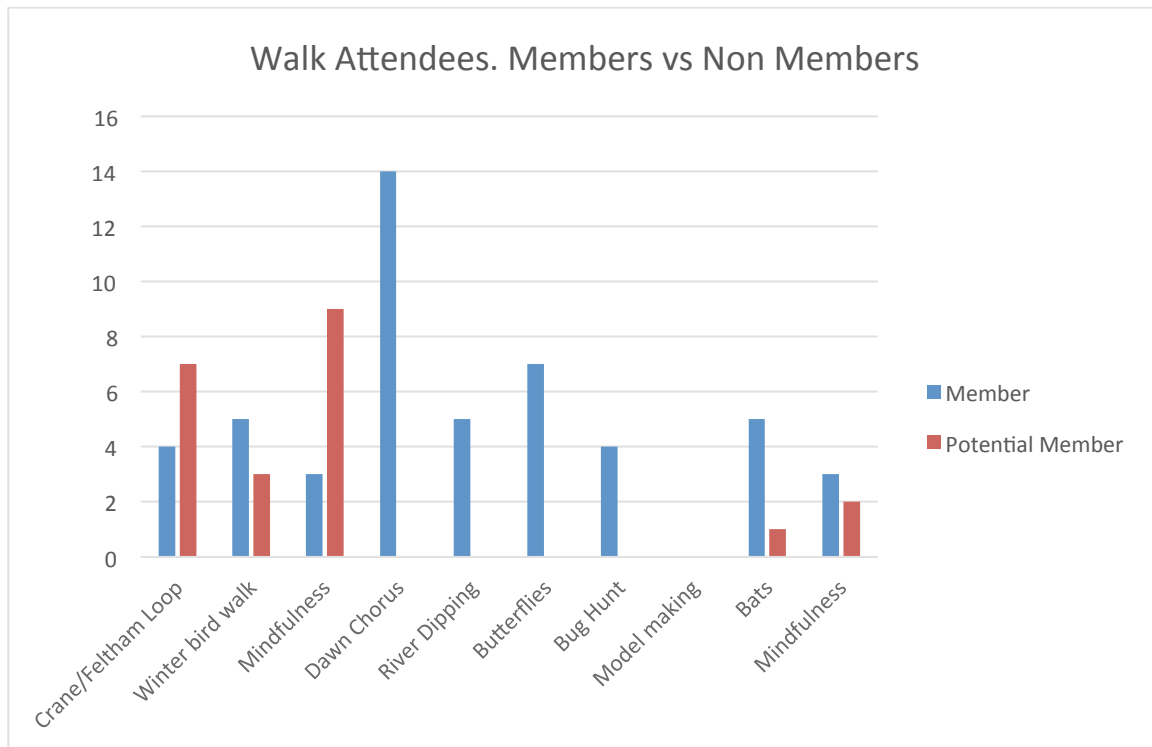


Figure 3 : Attendees already members of FORCE and those interested in becoming members.

Invitations were sent to those who answered positively indicating how they could become a member and explaining that FORCE's strength is its membership body for local representation. Also the email asking for feedback included details of how to become a member too.

A translation of 9 new members from 20 interested is very good.

Event Metrics : Publicity

People were asked where they had learnt of the event to understand which publicity or news avenues were most successful. Only 61 responses were given, but these were interesting :

- 57% heard via FORCE, namely
 - 28% email
 - 13% website
 - 5% member
 - 8% leaflet
 - 3% whilst on previous FORCE activities
- 7% via personal contact
- 10% Facebook and Twitter
- 8% was Web (non-specific answer so source of information is unknown)
- 8% Green websites and partners. Those noted were SWLEN, The Conservation Volunteers, Richmond events website
- 2% used Eventbrite to search for events
- 8% Other, HOOP, Grapevine, Soc Med,

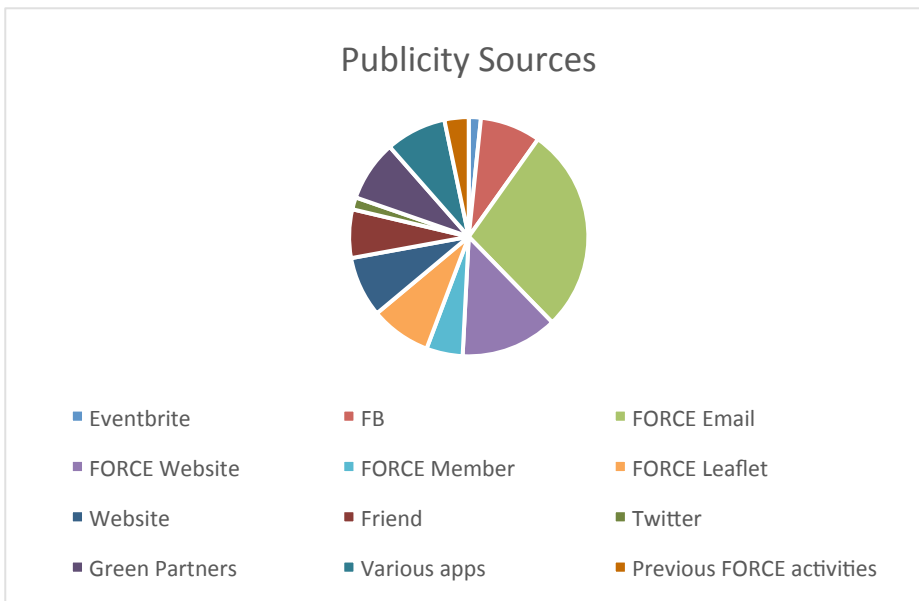


Table 5 : Source of Event Information from Registration Form.

Event Metrics : Feedback

Attendee feedback was quite poor this year with only 8 people replying. FORCE relies on peoples' responses to identify both favourites and improvement areas so this is quite disappointing. Feedback comments are listed in Appendix 1.

Favourable comments :

1. The bird walks, including the first time offered Dawn Chorus received several favourable comments.
2. Expert leaders and knowledge sharing was appreciated
3. Getting up at some stupid hour on a weekend morning was wonderful

Improvements suggested:

1. Would be nice for someone to talk about the incredible diversity of fish
2. A tree walk
3. River dipping and children's activities during weekdays in the school holidays.
4. A walk about useful plants growing in the park
5. A 'three parks' walk for the future, taking in Hanworth Park, Feltham Marshalling Yard and Hounslow Heath.

Follow up actions to these for 2019 are :

1. Arranging a walk about River Life
2. Previous tree walks have been very poorly attended, requiring an alternative approach.
3. River dipping, photography and butterfly walks are set for 2019.
4. A useful plants is being considered but also considering the impact of using plants from the environment which can have detrimental impacts
5. A 'three parks' walk is being looked at for 2020 as the 2019 schedule was already full.

An indirect measurement of feedback is whether people return for more than one walk. This is a significant statistic as it shows that they were interested enough to learn more and had enjoyed earlier walks. Of the total 218 different attendees (excluding FORCE Trustees) :

- 27 people attended 2 events (12%)
- 12 people attended 3 events (5%)
- 10 people attended 4 events (4%)

Conclusion

The 2018 Walks and Talks was a successful season in terms of the numbers of people who joined the walks, spread of subject matter, and meeting the charitable objects of FORCE. At times the weather was challenging. The January Bird & Photography walk along the DNR was very wet so many folk opted out, whereas the long hot summer drew many people to join the Butterfly Walk only to find few butterflies as the dry weather had impacted the blossoming of flowers but they all still enjoyed themselves immensely with one youngster writing a blog for the FORCE website.

Notable from the W&T information gathered was :

1. This analysis fed into the decision making for the 2019 W&T schedule :
 - a. Popularity indicators to guide which W&Ts to hold.
 - b. Maintain the number of W&Ts to about one a month. FORCE also holds Volunteer Days and Community Learning events so more than 2 events a month requires a high amount of Trustee input.
 - c. Focus on children events in summer holidays
 - d. Build on national events e.g. Big Butterfly Count, Dawn Chorus event, Rivers Week.
 - e. Broadcast walks being held by partners or like-minded organisations to broaden availability to FORCE members.
 - f. Encourage other Friends groups to hold their own events to extend the reach.
2. Improvements suggested by walkers were incorporated where possible and others are being looked at for subsequent years.
3. 73 people who booked for a W&T failed to show up (26%), even with a Eventbrite or FORCE reminder sent 48 hours beforehand. This is a high proportion and disappointing, especially at those events where number of places are limited. Although this shortfall was mitigated somewhat as 42 people just showed up on the day on some walks.
4. The W&Ts gave experts a local forum to share their knowledge and their reach to the public too. FORCE are grateful for their support.
5. The number of walkers becoming FORCE members is low but nine joined this year. It must be said that many are already members, whereas others are obviously not interested in becoming so. Previously stated actions will continue :
 - a. Explain at events that membership makes a difference and is very reasonable, give out membership forms.
 - b. Email attendees inviting membership along with updates of further W&Ts.
6. A wide range of topics were presented so meeting FORCE objects to advance the education of the public in the ecology, conservation, protection and improvement of the environment of the River Crane and the Duke of Northumberland's River. Feedback showed that this was achieved : so much intelligent knowledge and enthusiasm to make the outings a real treat '.

Appendix 1 Feedback Comments from Attendees

Feedback was inculcated to gauge the success of an event and future improvements. However, there was not much feedback received compared to previous years.

Feedback 1

What you liked about the walk. **The people were great and very relaxed. Good information from the FORCE leaders....The 'expert' butterfly information was interesting; Frances is just amazing with Crane knowledge and trees etc...and I loved the bee talk from Jane**
What you disliked too ! **Nothing really.....maybe could have a sit down drink/social on a suitable walk but this one was too hot and people wanted to end when it did.**
What topics you would like. **I love Trees so would like a tree walk.**
Locations you would like the walks and talks to be held ? **Anywhere along the River Crane.....perhaps hire the Crane Community Hall for indoor talk and then a walk or vice versa?**

Feedback 2

Both J and I came on two walks so far this year:

mildfulness walking
dawn chorus

We loved them both and getting up at some stupid hour on a weekend morning was wonderful. I was so impressed at the turnout!

I love the fact that you have such good contacts for guiding the events - so much intelligent knowledge and enthusiasm to make the outings a real treat. I cannot think of any downsides - if there were any then they must have been insignificant as I cannot remember them now. The River Crane is a wonderful place and any walks involving wildlife - flora and fauna - are right up my street.

Feedback 3

What you liked about the walk.

It was something I would not have done on my own. I went on my own as friends and family could not come and I felt OK about this. It was very informative and friendly.

What you disliked too !

- There wasn't anything I disliked.

What topics you would like.

- I went on a dawn chorus walk which was really interesting. I have no knowledge of bird and bird song so really enjoyed hearing about what was what.
- Anything about local wildlife in interesting.
- I had wanted to sign up for a bat walk but it is already full.
- I enjoyed turning up for the dawn chorus walk as I would not enter the park at this time otherwise. Twilight walks would be good and there is safety on numbers.

Locations you would like the walks and talks to be held ?

Anywhere in the Hanworth and Twickenham areas.

Feedback 4

“Would be nice for someone to talk about the incredible diversity of fish that it used to hold, memorable catches etc and their view of the future prospects. I know there are a more than a couple members that have fished it for decades and have vast knowledge that would be nice to share”

Feedback 5

I liked the bird watching walk for the following reasons:

At a dreary time of year...

It was a fun thing to do despite the rain.

It felt good to be in nature, and learn about a new local walk.

I really enjoyed the local 'tales from the riverbank' - i.e: eels, kingfishers.

It was flexible when you could leave the walk

Good to meet other nature lovers and members of FORCE.

If you are looking for other themes for walks, I'd be happy to discuss ideas for assisting a botanist in art walks (e.g.:drawing, tile making etc) direct from nature.

Feedback 6

It was my first bird watching walk ever and our guide was great. I did not dislike anything. I feel a bit bad about contributing to FORCE with my yearly pound but not volunteering or attending more events. Is having too much work a good excuse? I am not sure but perhaps I can join more walks and events in the future. If I manage to do that I would be able then to express an opinion that is grounded on experience.

Feedback 7

Thank you for all the walks and activities you organise. This year I have especially enjoyed the bird walks. The man leading them is so good at sharing his knowledge. I would like more around the Tower and the island. Sometime ago I went on interesting walks focusing on the history of the area and another on useful plants growing in the park. I would also like to see river dipping and children's activities during weekdays in the school holidays. I am about to go to the website and join up.

Feedback 8

just as a follow-on the last walk I did with you was the three rivers with Frances, and I did it in reverse a couple of weeks ago on the bike. It struck me that there could be a 'three parks' walk for the future, taking in Hanworth Park, Feltham Marshalling Yard and Hounslow Heath, just an idea. I'm not sure what is happening with Hanworth Park House, trying to glean some more information, but if we could synchronise with any open days might make an attractive and informative day. Just a few suggestions possibly as under, and could perhaps be included as add-ons or broken down into smaller sections-

- Longford River, incl. Hanworth Park

- Crane to Colne via DNR/Longford, perhaps splitting walk using train to Feltham/return using train from Staines

- inclusion of the elusive Feltham Marshalling Yards in a Crane walk instead of the signposted route across the Heath- higher up the Crane valley the other tributary, Roxbourne ?
That would seem to cover the Crane catchment ?