

River Restoration on the Lower Crane

The Parks Team at London Borough of Richmond-Upon-Thames are pleased to announce another forthcoming river restoration project on the Lower Crane in Twickenham. The project will follow the principles of the successful pilot project undertaken at Twickenham Rifle and Pistol Club in 2021, involving a breakout of the artificial concrete riverbank in addition to various in-channel improvements including the creation of artificial vegetated berms.

The overall aim of the project, which is being undertaken in partnership with Friends of River Crane Environment (FORCE), Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and the Environment Agency, is to re-naturalise the section of river channel which flows along the southern edge of Mereway Nature Park, which has been historically widened, straightened and artificially re-inforced.

Project inputs

- The main feature of the project is the removal of a section of concrete bank on the north side of the river and regrading of the land behind to create a backwater shelf that can naturally flood at higher water levels;
- On the opposite bank, a new berm will be created using rock rolls, coir pallets or another suitable alternative and imported wetland soils, to narrow the river and create an area for vegetation;
- Addition of gravels throughout the restored section;
- Creation of a meandering dual-flow channel (narrowed channel) extending approximately 80m downstream of the backwater, using artificial berms from the eastern end of the old Mereway Day Centre site downstream to the western end of the Greggs bakery site;
- Features will be planted with typical wetland plants of these types of areas on the Crane.

Project outcomes

- By removing part of the concrete bank, the scheme will increase flood storage in the Crane, holding up more water at this location and slowing flows further down the catchment, reducing flood risk;
- This increase in flood storage will create the capacity to create other installations of natural vegetation – such as the berm to be installed here or coir rolls as installed along the Duke of Northumberland's River - to be done in-channel;
- The backwater and berm's wetland vegetation will benefit biodiversity, including fish, waterfowl and invertebrates;
- Residents and visitors will be able to enjoy a more natural outlook on this part of the Crane. This will raise awareness of the benefits of river restoration.

Next steps

- *The appointed contractor has completed the designs and submitted a Flood Risk Activities Permit (FRAP) application to the Environment Agency in November 2023.*

- *The expected response time for the FRAP is approximately 2-months. No in-channel works can begin until the FRAP is received.*
- *Once the FRAP is received, the restoration works will begin. This is expected to be mid-January to early February 2024.*



An example of what the breakout and backwater will look like, taken at Twickenham Rifle Club, 2023.



A plan showing the design of the backwater.