

Reclaiming the Riverside April 23 – Sept 23

Thames Water: Smarter Water Catchments Programme. River Crane Catchment

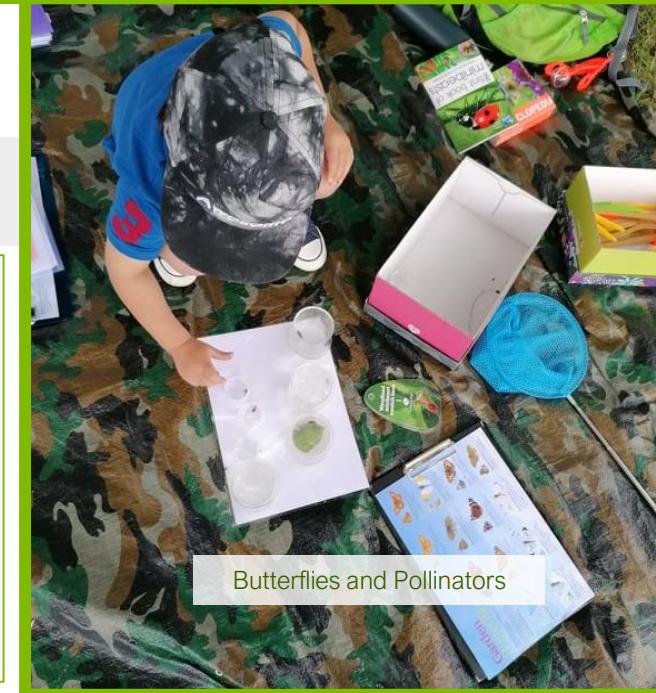
Project Description

The project represents a 6-month extension of the original "Reclaiming the Riverside" initiative carried out along the River Crane at Cranford, West London. Its primary objectives were to deliver numerous environmental and socio-health wellbeing benefits, with a strong emphasis on enhancing biodiversity along the river and priority grassland habitat in Avenue Park, Cranford. The project aimed to connect an additional 260 local residents with nature through nature-based activities, practical volunteering, and citizen science initiatives. **Start date:** 01/04/2023 **End date:** 30/09/2023.

Lessons Learnt

Challenges arose due to staff turnover, impacting project continuity. Both partners experienced staff departures during the project, resulting in an underspend vs. the budget which will be spent by the end of December 23.

Additionally, certain activities struggled to attract any volunteers and attendance to events can be impacted by weather.



Butterflies and Pollinators

Outcomes

The project effectively addressed various action points outlined in the River Crane Smarter Water Catchment plan, specifically focusing on partnership collaboration, habitat enhancement, river flow improvement, public access to green/blue spaces, and promoting public awareness and participation.

By continuing to engage residents and community stakeholders, the project fostered a sense of community stewardship and responsibility for the river corridor and associated green spaces in the project area.

Notable achievements include:

- 342 participants engaged
- 49 volunteers involved
- 720 meters of waterway enhanced
- 157,600 square meters of green space improved
- Change in management of one open space to include wildflower meadows
- Collaboration with two schools and social action work with Cranford Community College resulting in a consultation on playground improvements led by Hounslow Council and funding for improvements.

Project Highlights

LGOAL organised three community events, leading to greater community engagement than initially estimated.

The project fostered stronger existing contacts and established new connections within the local community, as well as securing commitment to the project from Hounslow Council through the Thriving Communities Fund. It employed a local community member in a marketing role, enhancing engagement with community groups.

A notable social action initiative with Cranford Community College involved year seven and sixth form students:

- Year seven students designed a new park, presenting their plan to the council as part of the consultation process for funding allocation. This initiative emphasized the importance of the young people's ideas and voices being heard.
- Sixth form students created colors from natural materials which were incorporated into consultations and management plans.

Future Plans

While the project has concluded, engagement is continuing and LGOAL is working with partners to look for funding in the long term. LGOAL and TCV express interest in growing food in the park to educate the community on gardening and harvesting. They also aspire to secure additional funding to continue their engagement with schools and families in the area. Furthermore, they envision the potential for the green spaces and river corridor to become a cherished community asset in Cranford, contributing to leisure and health. They will persist with collaborative efforts with residents, businesses, and policy-makers to enrich the lives of local residents and cultivate a shared sense of responsibility for the project area's natural resources.



Natural colours created by sixth form students

