

## River Crane Sanctuary

Friday night, last post, August 2016, a planning notice dropped through our door. Perfect timing with school holidays begun and the Council over stretched financially and understaffed in vital areas.

The sound of building works seemed to be everywhere in Twickenham and nowhere to hide even when we return to our homes with non-stop permitted development as well as major building projects invading our environment. Aircraft noise overhead, traffic jamming our roads and air quality poor.

Thank goodness for our open spaces. The 'green lung' through our dense urbanisation. Our parks and rivers at least give us respite and nature a chance to replenish.

Where was this building going to be situated? On the banks of the River Crane on Metropolitan Open Land – Green Space next to Trafalgar School Playing field in The Meadway.

Trafalgar School was a necessary building for our children and community and the playing field was allowed to take up some of the designated MOL. We have seen how pressure then grows to build more classrooms on sports fields so we have to be prepared for more loss of open space here in the future.

Why is this loss of habitat so important at this spot on the River Crane corridor? Mainly because it is at one of the narrowest parts of the river and therefore vulnerable to pollution and human impact on the connectivity and biodiversity of the region. Major roads transverse the river pathway and this fact with light pollution can be a hindrance to bats, birds and other wildlife migrating along the river to feed and breed. Any additional impact such as buildings/human domestication of wild spaces can be a 'tipping point' to the health of our flora and fauna as many naturalists are now highlighting in the media. Once it is gone it does not come back.

The 2016 application ref.16/2815 is on an uninhabited one- acre plot which is a Sanctuary for nature. It is a valuable community asset which we must protect for future generations. We understand that it has been rejected but may be appealed.

Friday night, last post, July 2017 another planning notice arrives. Planning ref.17/2759/Ful. Property developers propose to knock down a block of garages in Churchview Road also adjacent to Trafalgar School Playing field and erect three new houses. We have lost back gardens to development in Churchview Road already along with a new build row of Mews houses and a new vicarage to add to the seventy five flats in the development portfolio. Take a look at google maps to see the in-filling and new developments in this area which all feed onto the busy Staines Road.

Housing is badly needed but will the benefit of these houses outweigh the further loss of habitat in this rare 'wild' space on the river crane corridor? An ancient hedgerow with established nesting birds and fruiting trees flourishes here. Bats, swoop behind the garages in a dark sky to feed. It is a haven for birds, butterflies and nature away from human impact. Take a look at the photos on the River Crane Sanctuary site to see the variety of Flora and Fauna that exists here and feeds into the rest of the public areas along the river corridor for our enjoyment.

If you agree with us that this is worth defending then please join our River Crane Sanctuary supporters by visiting the site and help us keep a watchful eye along the Sanctuary route to maintain this Green Space for our community and for the protection of its Flora and Fauna for future generations. Sammi Macqueen