



12 Things To Do In The Crane Valley

Activities To Get You Out Into Nature



LET'S GO
OUTSIDE AND
LEARN



12 Things To Do In The Crane Valley

The Crane Valley covers 125km² over 5 boroughs, there are 5 rivers (as well as other tributaries) with 60km of river corridors and over 2000 hectares of parks and greenspaces. There are plenty of places to go and explore.


We have created our 12 Things To Do In The Crane Valley activity set as an interactive way to get out and enjoy, explore and enrich the catchment, whether you choose to stay more local or visit areas further afield.

Each activity/challenge can be done individually or alongside each other. You can do as many or as few as you like- the main goal is to have fun! We have included links to helpful guides, websites and ideas to kickstart your activities, use these as a guide to help explore and learn about the catchment.

As you carry out the 12 Things To Do In The Crane Valley, send over any photos, thoughts and experiences to us- we'd love to hear from you.

Email us at info@lgoal.org.uk

Look out for photos on:

 [@cranephotochallenge](https://www.instagram.com/cranephotochallenge)

 [@CranePhotoChallenge \(@photo_crane\)](https://twitter.com/CranePhotoChallenge)



Who are we?

Let's Go Outside and Learn CIC connects local communities with the nature on their doorstep. We introduce people to the natural environment, show the benefits of improved health and wellbeing that spending time outdoors offers, and bring people together to make new friends.

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12 Things To Do In The Crane Valley

Did you know there are loads of things you can do **outdoors** in the Crane Valley? The catchment contains several waterways including the Yeading Brook, the River Crane, the Duke of Northumberland's River, the Portlane Brook and Longford River. There are lots of associated green spaces.

We have created a list of **activities and challenges** to try in the Crane Valley's many parks and greenspaces. Do these for leisure, to learn and to support your health and wellbeing. There's one for each month of the year but you can do them whenever you like. Look for the activity sheets which explore these ideas further.

Explore

Try visiting somewhere in the catchment that you haven't been to before. Walk/cycle a route that connects multiple areas

Capture the Scene

Take some photos, paint or draw scenes inspired by the green spaces or river. Once you have captured your favourite places tag us if you share them on social media, we'd love to see them.

Be active!

Exercising outdoors is great for our health and wellbeing. There are loads of places to walk, cycle and play sports in the catchment. Explore new routes to get to work, school, the shops. Why not visit friends using a green route along the river corridor?

Heritage Hunt

The Crane catchment has a fascinating history. There's lots to learn about the industrial history of the lower Crane and Duke of Northumberland's River. Have you seen the moated farmhouse at Headstone, or explored the ancient parish church at Cranford Park or the ice house at Silverhall Park?

Enjoy

Explore the river corridor and take a picnic to enjoy when you've found the perfect spot (be sure to take away your litter once you've finished). Take your friends and family so that they can enjoy it too

Make your map

What would your unique map of the Crane catchment look like? Include landmarks important to you, the location of special memories, your favourite trees or dog walk. How many new places can you add to your map? Share it with us, we'd love to see your creations!

Volunteer

Giving some spare time volunteering is a great way to keep active, be part of a community, learn new skills and make a difference. There are lots of opportunities to join in and to improve the green spaces and the river

Join the Community

Make contact with your local group! There are plenty of community activities and free events in the catchment walks and talks, community events and citizen science. If your local park has a Friends group you can connect with them to find out what's going on near you.

Share

Tell your friends and family about the catchment and its green spaces. Pick a point on the map and explore together. Invite them to come along with you for a walk, cycle ride or picnic. Go bird spotting, look for minibeasts, visit the woods or gather blackberries together.

Get close to nature

Connect with the living world by exploring the wildlife corridor along the river. Visit a nature reserve, go bird watching, or just sit in a green space and savour the experience.

Work on your wellbeing

Spend time in the catchment observing nature, meditating or exercising. Go for a slow walk, or just stop and watch the world go by. Meet friends and family, talk to park users and enjoy being there, no matter what the weather is doing.

Discover

Find out more about your catchment: look at maps to see where the rivers come from and go. Research the plants, creatures or places you've seen in the green spaces. Explore the local history or visit the unofficial art gallery at Pevensey Nature Reserve. There's something for everyone!

Explore

The Crane Valley spans across 5 West London boroughs: Ealing, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow and Richmond Upon Thames. It covers 125km², with 60km of river corridors and over 2000 hectares of greenspaces (including nature reserves, parks and woodlands). The catchment includes a number of rivers:

- The River Crane
- The Yeading Brook
- The Longford River
- The Portlane Brook
- The Duke of Northumberland's River

Such a vast catchment means there are plenty of chances to explore places close to home and visit those further afield.



There are several established walking routes with sections in the Crane Valley.

- [The London Loop](#) (sections 9 & 10)
- [The Dog-Rose Ramble](#)
- [The Hillingdon Trail](#)
- [Willow Tree Wander](#)

The Friends of the River Crane Environment (FORCE) have devised and mapped informal walking routes within the lower Crane catchment. All of these maps can be downloaded for free by visiting

<https://www.force.org.uk/discover/>



Why not try FORCE's family challenge whilst out exploring?

<https://www.force.org.uk/discover/family-challenge/>

Tick off a few more of our 12 things to do in the Crane whilst exploring. Take part in our photo scavenger hunt and show us what you find, have a picnic or if you find a spot you love- see if there's a chance to do some volunteer work in it!

Capture the Scene

No matter where you are in the catchment, there's always something to photograph. From the smallest bugs to the fields and rivers, nature is an inspiring place to be in. Take part in our photo scavenger hunt and send us your pictures so we can share them.

Photo Scavenger Hunt

Crane Valley: Capture the Scene

Join us in carrying out this nature photo scavenger hunt whilst you're out and about in your local parks and greenspaces

- Flowers
- Wildlife
- Leaves
- Colour
- Look up
- Look down
- Moving
- Water
- Seasons
- My favourite place

Bonus finds

- Something you didn't expect to see
- Something that concerns you
- Something you want to be protected

E-mail your favourite photos to cranechallenge@lgoal.org.uk
Please include your name, the location of the picture and what word it's for. If you're submitting a photo from the bonus section or for your favourite place, let us know why too!



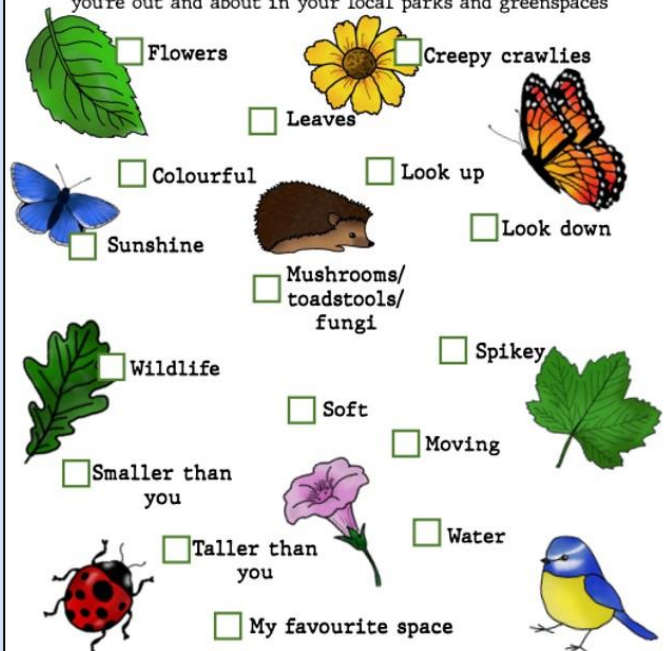
Look out for photos on:
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 CranePhotoChallenge (@photo_crane)



Photo Scavenger Hunt (Kids Version)

Crane Valley: Capture the Scene

Join us in carrying out this nature photo scavenger hunt whilst you're out and about in your local parks and greenspaces





E-mail your favourite photos to cranechallenge@lgoal.org.uk
Please include your name, the location of the picture and what word it's for. If you're submitting a photo for 'my favourite space' let us know why it's your favourite!

Look out for photos on:
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E-mail your favourite photos to info@lgoal.org.uk Please include your name, the location of the picture and what word from the scavenger hunt it goes with.

Look out for photos on:
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Crane Valley: Capture the Scene

Join us in carrying out this nature photo scavenger hunt whilst you're out and about in your local parks and greenspaces



Flowers



Creepy crawlies

Leaves



Look up

Colourful

Look down



Sunshine

Mushrooms/
toadstools/
fungi

Spikey



Wildlife

Soft



Moving

Smaller than
you



Water

Taller than
you




My favourite space



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Be Active!

Being outdoors surrounded by nature has been shown to improve overall mental health and can help ward off seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

Outdoor exercise challenges your body more than working out on a flat indoor surface. It doesn't matter if it's gentle exercise such as walking, or more intense training sessions.

Best of all, outdoor exercise is free! No need for gym memberships when you can access public parks/ greenspaces instead.

Looking for motivation? Why not try:

- Going out for a walk- exercise can be as simple as going for a short walk, take a look at our Explore tab to find some links to walks you can do in the Crane Catchment
- [Parkrun](#) -a 5km run held every Saturday (take it at your own pace, there are no expectations on your time, or whether you walk or run or jog)
- Outdoor circuits- incorporate circuit activities in your walks. Check out [Shape](#) and [Piedmont](#) for some example sets



Health walks in your borough:

- [Ealing](#)
- [Harrow](#)
- [Hillingdon](#)
- [Hounslow](#)
- [Richmond](#)

There are free to use outdoor gyms located in parks in all boroughs too.

Exercise that makes a difference

You can get active outside and give back to your community. Practical conservation volunteering (e.g. habitat management) is a great low impact way to exercise your whole body. Many greenspaces have a local friends group attached to them who will hold volunteer days, have a look online to see if yours has a group attached (<https://habitatsandheritage.org.uk/get-involved/partners-and-groups/>).

The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) run weekly Green Gyms, find out more about them [here](#) and see if there are any near you. They also run other volunteering sessions, go to <https://www.tcv.org.uk/find-tcv/> to find one you could join.

Heritage Hunt

The Crane Valley is full of history. From old manor houses to gunpowder mills, the catchment has seen it all.

Cranford House

[Cranford House](#) once stood within Cranford Park, now the stable block is the most complete part of the house remaining. It was home to the Countess Berkeley who, after accusations of perjury regarding the claimed date of her marriage, had an escape tunnel constructed under the park.

Headstone Manor

The Grade I listed [Headstone Manor](#) is the earliest surviving timber-framed building in Middlesex with construction beginning in 1310. The site is now the home of Harrow Museum.



Gunpowder Mills

Throughout history, the Crane has been used as a source of power to run [mills](#) which used water power for an industrial process, including flour milling, sword making, as well as the best known local industry of gunpowder. You can find remains of these mills in Donkey Woods, Brazil Mill Woods. Visit Crane Park to see the [Tower](#), the only remaining building of the Hounslow Gunpowder Mills. The Duke of Northumberland's Rivers were built to feed the Mills on the River Crane. Take a walk along them to find out more.

Kilmorey Mausoleum

Near the end of the catchment you will find the Kilmorey Mausoleum built in the style of an ancient Egyptian monument in the 1850s. Find out more on how to visit [here](#).



Silverhall Park

Silverhall Park lies on the Duke of Northumberland's River and was once the garden of a grand house Silver Hall. You can still see the original gate and an icehouse within the grounds. Other remains of the once grand landscape are the trees in the park.

These are just a few examples of the catchment's vast history. See what local history you can find out about your area- we'd love to hear about your discoveries!

Enjoy

“There are few things so pleasant as a picnic eaten in perfect comfort.”

Somerset Maugham

Picnicking is one of the UK's most enjoyable summer traditions, with the average Brit picnicking at least three times a year. In fact, since 2010 there has been an annual **National Picnic Week** held in the **last week in June every year**. Picnics are a great way of socializing and taking advantage of any open spaces in your local area over the warmer months of the year (even when it's raining!)

Leave No Trace

- Help keep our rivers, parks and greenspaces litter-free by taking all your rubbish home to dispose of
- Don't use bbqs/ open fires/ any fire hazard risk equipment in public greenspaces

Check out Parks for London [‘Picnic in, Pack it out: a guide to a sustainable, litter-free picnic’](#) for tips

Fun Fact

The Guinness World Record for the largest picnic was set on 20th June 200- in Portugal where 22,232 people gathered at the Parque da Bela Vista.

Fun Fact

Whilst picnics seem to be a rather British tradition, it was actually the French who started the modern fashion for picnics when they opened their royal parks to the public after the revolution of 1789.



Visit <https://www.nationalpicnicweek.co.uk> to find out more and for some recipe ideas for your next picnic. Let us know your favourite picnic spots in the catchment.

Make Your Map

Whether you want to stick to a more traditional hand drawn map or create one online, think about places you would want to highlight for your ideal map of the catchment. Think about your map as a tool for storytelling, recording your memories, a tool for self-discovery or as a diary of places that you have visited.

You can think **big** or **small**- do you want to plot points all throughout the catchment or focus on your favourite space? We'd love to see it all.

Perhaps you could plot interesting things you've seen whilst out and about, historical landmarks, or places you just love to visit. Do you have a preferred route around your local park that you think others could enjoy too? Map this out and get friends to try it. How about making a map of places in the catchment you haven't visited yet but would like to? Check them off as you go.

Share your map with us at
info@lgoal.org.uk

You can make maps out of almost anything or practically nothing. They can be works of art or practical tools. Maps can be any shape, flat or 3D, cover large areas or small. They can be as accurate or abstract as you want. They can be funny, quirky, artistic. They can record anything that you want them to.



Here are just a few examples to help inspire your map creation

- Look for online software to create on your computer. [Google MyMaps](#) is a free, simple mapping tool
- Use this handy guide to make a treasure map <https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Treasure-Map>
- Create an illustrated map (hand draw or design one digitally), use these guides as a starting point in how to create one [here](#) and [here](#)
- Make a map of words <https://mappinglondon.co.uk/2012/just-the-letters/>

Volunteer

If you have spare time and would like to support a good cause, why not search for volunteering activities in your area?

Volunteering is a great way to keep active, be part of a community and learn new things; plus, it can be fun and rewarding! You can use it to meet new people, learn new skills, build a career, get fit or as an excuse to spend time in some amazing parks.

It feels great to work together to achieve something meaningful, contributing with others to improve habitats. You could help by collecting litter, planting trees and maintaining green spaces, buildings habitats, or collecting data and information about species living in your area.



There are loads of volunteering opportunities in the Crane Valley including:

- Green Gyms
- Practical conservation or landscaping
- Litter-picking
- Train as a citizen scientist and contribute to vital monitoring projects

You can find volunteering opportunities that are regular and longer-term, or one-offs and drop-in sessions, so there's bound to be something that suits you, whether you're completing a Duke of Edinburgh award, have recently retired from full-time work, or are looking for a way to develop your skills and confidence.

The Crane Valley Partnership have a list of local organisations you can volunteer with [here](#), or contact [Habitats and Heritage](#) for more information on opportunities in your area. You can also carry out your own volunteering without joining a group- why not have a walk and litter pick as you go (please dispose of rubbish responsibly)

We'd love to hear about your volunteer experience, send us your photos and let us know what you got up to!

Join the Community

Get out and about, make the most of your area and meet people who share your interests!



There are lots of ways to participate in your community. In addition to volunteering, there are activities and free events taking place in the catchment year-round: Twilight bat walks, morning buggy strolls, interesting talks, crafting sessions – and more.

Check out the events listed on the websites of the [Crane Valley Partnership](#), [Let's Go Outside and Learn](#) and [Habitats and Heritage](#) and see what's happening in the catchment.

Join a local Friends' Group

If your local park or green space has a Friends' group, you could join in – there are many benefits.

- Joining means you'll **be in the loop** about events and activities.
- Joining a Friends' group also allows you to **have a say in decisions** about your local greenspaces.
- The more members Friends' groups have, the better they can **represent their communities**, and the more influence they have in decision-making.
- They are **open to all** who want to make a positive impact locally.

How?

Friends' groups post flyers on park noticeboards, have a look when you next visit. The Crane Valley Partnership also has a list of community groups in each area of the catchment. Subscribe to their newsletter to hear about other opportunities and what else is happening in the catchment

<https://www.cran山谷.org.uk/get-involved/>

Find out who your local Friends' groups are and get in touch!



Share

Spread the word! We think there's plenty worth sharing in the Crane Catchment.

Tell your friends, family and colleagues what you like about the Crane Valley and its green spaces. Have they ever visited?

Invite your friends and family to join you and explore the catchment together.



There are loads of free and affordable ways to make weekends and holidays memorable in your local green spaces.

Check out the rest of our 12 Things to Do list for inspiration

You could...

- Go for a walk or cycle ride together.
- Take your guests on a tour of your favourite spots.
- Make a picnic and find a scenic spot to enjoy it.
- Attend an organised event or volunteering activity.
- Go bird spotting, or look for minibeasts: how many species can you find?
- Identify different trees and wildflowers.
- Go on a history trail and find signs of the Crane's industrial past.
- Pick a point on the map and explore together.
- Share your discoveries, photos and thoughts on social media

Get Close To Nature

Running through West London like a green and blue ribbon, the Crane Valley forms a vital natural corridor within an urban environment: it's an important habitat for loads of species of plants and animals, and a great place to encounter wildlife.



Connect with the living world by exploring this wonderful wildlife corridor. Visit a nature reserve, go bird watching, or just sit in a green space for a while and savour the experience. The Crane Valley Partnership have produced a list of the [nature reserves](#), to help you plan your own wildlife wander.

How many different birds can you see or hear?

Want to contribute to species monitoring? You can report your wildlife sightings to the London Wildlife Trust. This data helps them keep track of what's living in the area, what is thriving and what's under threat:

<https://www.wildlondon.org.uk/campaign/record-your-sightings>



Walk on the Wild Side

There are several well-established walking routes in the Catchment that allow you to explore the waterways and their surroundings away from built-up areas:

- [The London Loop](#): This huge orbital route encompasses beautiful stretches of countryside and waterways in the Crane Catchment.
- [The Dog-Rose Ramble](#): hills, rivers and canals. A varied walk for more confident ramblers!
- [The Hillingdon Trail](#): 20 miles of beautiful country parks and woodlands, something for everyone.

Work On Your Wellbeing

Spending time in nature is good for you!

Studies suggest that contact with nature can be beneficial to your mental and physical health. Why not try spending a bit more time outdoors each week?

There are plenty of relaxing, healthy things to do in the Crane Valley.

Make time for a nature-break today!

Take a **leisurely stroll** through the catchment's interconnecting greenspaces or parks, noticing what looks different each time you visit. The British Heart Foundation has a [list of free walking apps](#) to guide and inspire you.

Be mindful in nature: You don't have to sit with your eyes closed, but try paying attention to how your senses respond to the natural environment around you. Search for outdoor mindfulness activities for more inspiration and guidance, there are lots of guides available online.



Cloud-watching: whether you identify types of cloud or just observe the shapes, watching clouds drift by for a few minutes can be a pleasant way to relax. The [UK Met Office](#) has information about different types of clouds.



Go '**Forest bathing**': *Shinrin-yoku* is the Japanese name for the practice of 'forest bathing'. This doesn't mean going for a dip, but is a way of spending time amongst trees – it can involve sitting, lying down, walking or mindful breathing, for just a few minutes or a couple of hours.

Be social: meet friends and family, talk to other park-visitors and enjoy being there, no matter what the weather is doing.

Tell us how you use the Crane

Discover

What is a water catchment? It's a way to describe the land that forms the drainage for a particular river or river corridors.

There is so much to learn about our water catchment, and the more attention you pay, the more questions you might have! How much do you know about the Crane Catchment?

Learn about your catchment

Look at a map to find the River Crane, Yeading Brook, Duke of Northumberland's River: see where they come from and where they go.

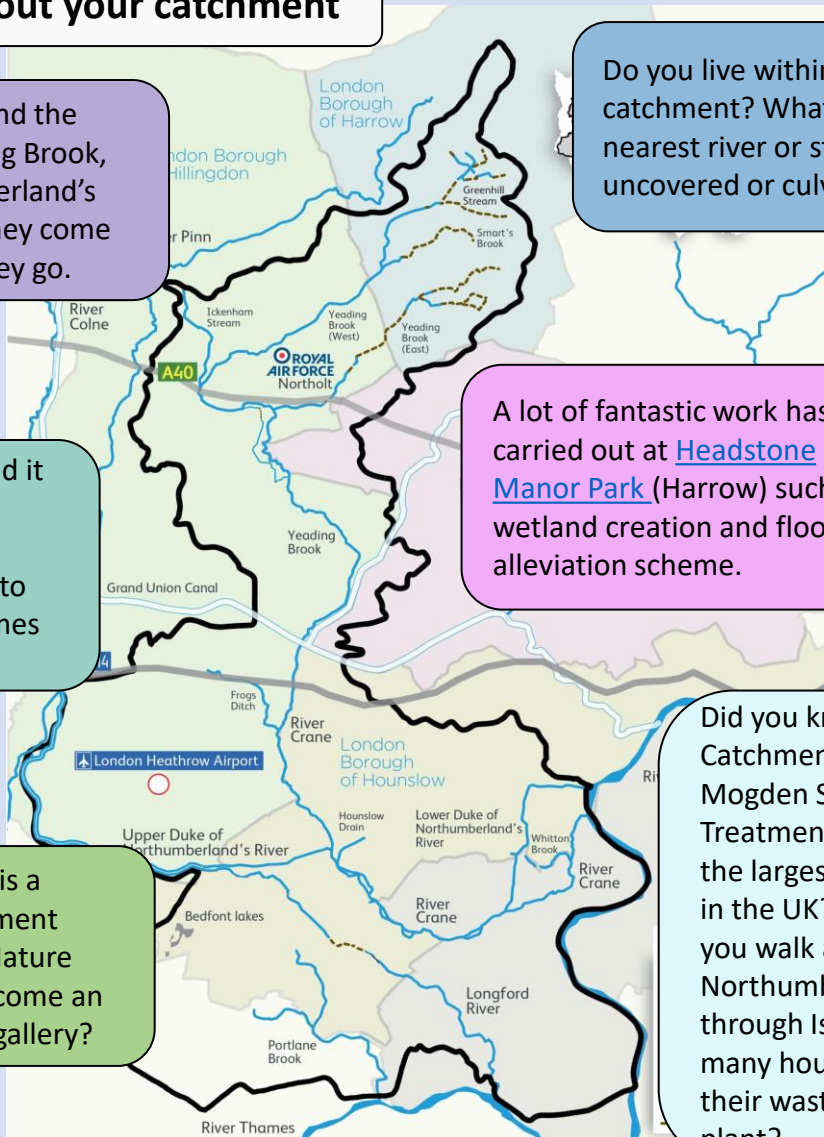
How long would it take a twig dropped in the Yeading Brook to reach the Thames Barrier?

Did you know there is a disused water treatment works in Pevensey Nature Reserve that has become an unofficial street art gallery?

Do you live within the catchment? What is your nearest river or stream? Is it uncovered or culverted?

A lot of fantastic work has been carried out at [Headstone Manor Park](#) (Harrow) such as wetland creation and flood alleviation scheme.

Did you know the Crane Catchment is home to Mogden Sewage Treatment Works, one of the largest sewage works in the UK? You can see it if you walk along the Duke of Northumberland's River through Isleworth. How many households send their waste water to this plant?



Notice the connections

Next time you walk around your area, notice the street drains: within the Crane Catchment, these could be draining directly into one of the waterways such as the River Crane or the Yeading Brook.

When you walk along the river, keep a lookout for 'outfalls'. These are pipes bringing water from surface drains into the rivers and streams. If you see something that looks like pollution at an outfall site, you can report it!

<https://www.thameswater.co.uk/help/emergencies/pollution>

Smarter Water Catchments and Other Partners

Smarter Water Catchments Initiative

The Crane catchment has been selected as the urban pilot for Thames Water's Smarter Water Catchments (SWC) initiative.

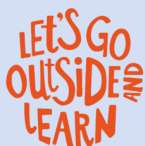
Catchment management can offer better value and greater benefits than more traditional hard-engineered solutions. However, it's usually restricted to an individual organisation working to address a single issue. In comparison, the idea of a Smarter Water Catchment is to take a systems-based view of the environment, collectively addressing multiple challenges, working with multiple stakeholders and co-delivering solutions that make the most of opportunities on an even bigger scale.

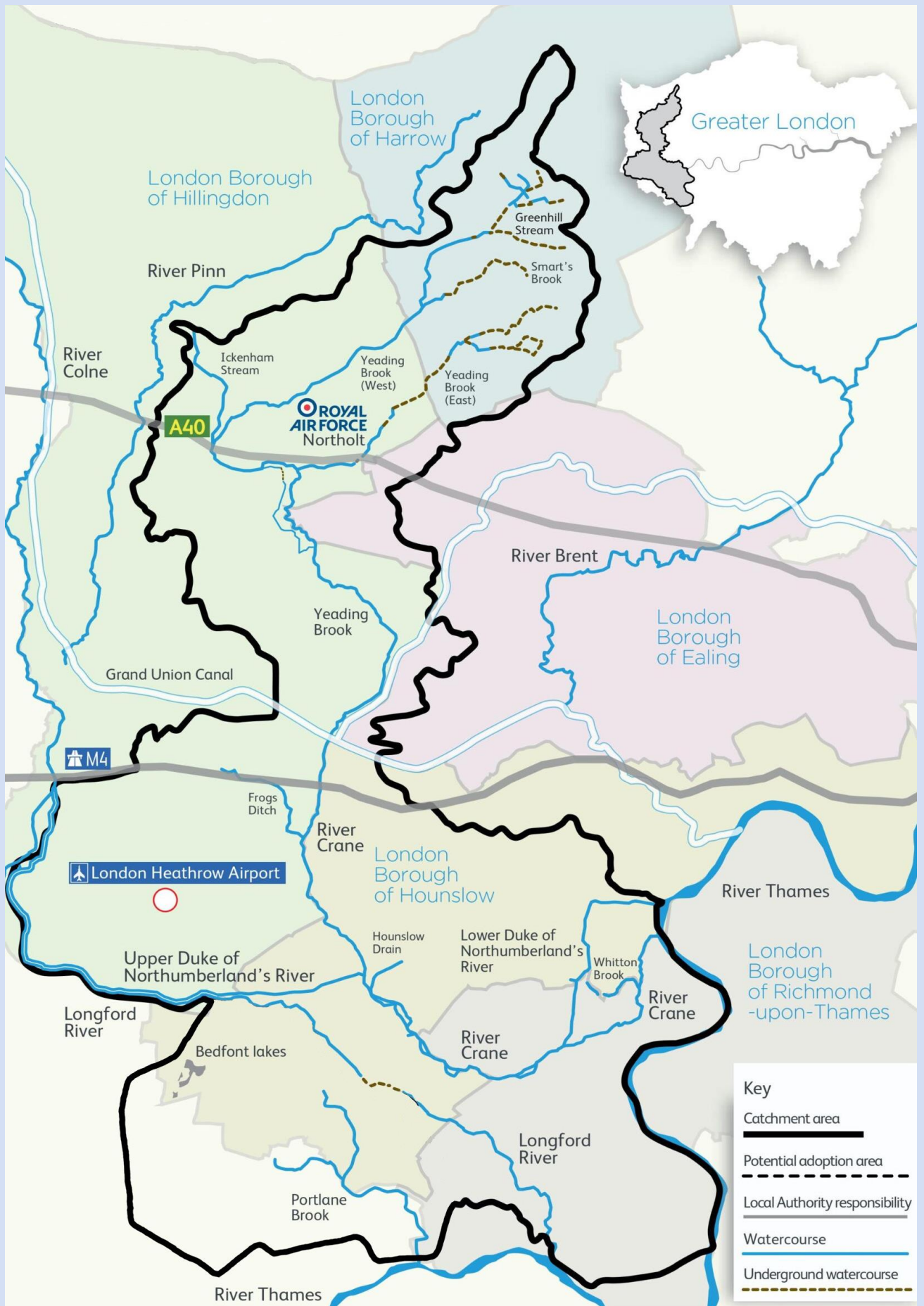
Please contact the Crane Valley Partnership (CVP) for any questions or comments about the River Crane Catchment: cvp@cvcic.org.uk

Or visit their website: <https://www.cranevalley.org.uk/>

For information about the Smarter Water Catchment programme contact Thames Water: partnerships@thameswater.co.uk

Or visit their website: <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/about-us/responsibility/smarter-water-catchments>







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Email: info@lgoal.org.uk

Website: <https://www.lgoal.org/>

Habitats & Heritage is the local charity that acts for the natural and historic environment in south and west London. Our mission is to protect and restore our threatened rivers, green spaces, parks and historic built environment for the benefit of the whole community, for this and future generations. The synergy between habitats and heritage goals lies at the heart of what we do.

Email: hello@habitatsandheritage.org.uk

Website: <https://habitatsandheritage.org.uk/>

