

Crane Valley School's Visioning Workshops

Summer 2023



LET'S GO
OUTSIDE AND
LEARN

Let's Go Outside and Learn ran a set of one-off workshops with young people in the Lower Crane Catchment. These sessions were intended to find out how young people relate to their local parks and greenspaces, and the waterways of the Crane.

We wanted to understand what young people envisage for the future of these green and blue spaces. How would they want these spaces to be improved, and how do they imagine parks and natural environments should be taken care of?

Young people are key users of these spaces but tend to be underrepresented in decision making. We think that it's vitally important to listen to the voices of young people, who will be tomorrow's policy-makers, community-leaders, park users, etc.

This is part of a larger initiative with the Crane Valley Partnership and the New Citizenship Project, with support from Thames Water.



The Wider Project

These workshops were run as part of a wider project run by **New Citizenship Project (NCP)**.

In the spring and summer of 2023, NCP led 3 workshops bringing together community groups and policy-makers came together to share experiences, learn from each other and envision how they could all better work together-policy-makers, community groups, and local residents, businesses and organisations - to care for the Crane Valley.

The gatherings were commissioned by Crane Valley Partnership, which aims to restore the Crane Valley (home to one of London's most natural river systems), conserve surrounding habitats and improve public access so that nearby communities can enjoy contact with the natural world. LGOaL and Habitats & Heritage partnered with NCP for this project.

To read about the workshops and the hopes and goals that came from them, take a look at the link below:

<https://cranevalley.notion.site/cranevalley/Our-Hopes-for-the-Crane-Valley-58575467b87d4122892c9f42aab375ca>



Who & Where

Between March-July 2023, LGOaL ran 4 workshops in the Lower Crane Catchment (3 with schools and 1 with a Scout group) with the to understand what young people envisage for the future of green and blue spaces within the catchment/ near them.

Workshops were either held on school grounds or parks close by. Heathland School visited Hounslow Heath and Twickenham School went to Crane Park (both of these parks are directly next to the schools). The students from Turing House School stayed on school grounds in the playing field which overlooks Heathfield Rec & Jubilee Meadow. The workshop with the Scouts was held in their hut, however they had all been out in Crane Park and Kneller Gardens for past nature based Scout visits/activities so we go them to think about these areas.



Heathland School litter picking on Hounslow Heath

School/ Group	No. of Participants	Age Range
Turing House School	20	11-12
Twickenham School	10	11-12
Heathland School	13	14-17
2nd Teddington Scout Group	21	8-13

Total number of participants: 64



Twickenham School participants

The Workshop

The workshop started with a 15minute litter pick in the open spaces the groups were taken to as a way to get the participants to look closely at the areas they were in.

The groups were given worksheets which posed four key questions to get them thinking about the green/bluespaces they were in or frequented. They were able to break into smaller groups to discuss as they filled in the answers, LGOaL staff and teachers/leaders also went around to aid/prompt discussions.

The four key questions were:

- 1) Describe how you feel about the landscape you see today.**
- 2) List the plants and animals that have a home in the landscape today.**
- 3) Describe how the landscape could be improved in the future.**
- 4) Describe how people will use the landscape in the future.**

Once they had completed the questions, the participants reconvened for a discussion on their likes and dislikes of the areas they were in (as well as parks they went to in their own time too), using sticky notes to create a board of their answers. Whilst stating dislikes, we got the groups to think of and discuss ways these negatives could be improved. These answers were also put on sticky notes to create a class board of improvements.

The participants the got the chance to take what they had discussed and thought of in the previous tasks and **draw their vision for the future of the park.**

What I like



(Word cloud generated from answers from all 4 workshops)

What I don't like



(Word cloud generated from answers from all 4 workshops)

How can we improve the area?



(Word cloud generated from answers from all 4 workshops)

Key Themes

Numerous themes emerged, with some stand-out examples:



1. Cleaner parks and rivers
2. Safety
3. A space for nature
4. Accessibility for all
5. Facilities



1. Litter/ cleaner parks and rivers

Key Themes

The key issue that all participants brought up was **litter in parks**, with many being put off by how much was around even if there were some bins available. They thought that providing more bins, including recycling bins, could help mitigate the issue. In order to help, they also suggested regular litter picking sessions and/or having access to community litter pickers kept at the parks as well as more focused river clean up sessions. They also thought having anti-littering campaigns and penalties for littering would be beneficial.



Parks should have more bins



Anti-litter signs and fines for littering

1. Litter/ cleaner parks and rivers

Our hopes

- more bins, including recycling bins to help mitigate the issue.
- More people will get involved in litter picking sessions and river clean ups
- access to community litter pickers kept at the parks.
- More awareness around the impact of littering through campaigns
- penalties for littering would be beneficial.

Our Goals

- Regular litter picking sessions for local people including schools
- Anti littering campaigns

Routes to the goals

- LGOAL to work with community groups and schools to help them to organize regular **litter pickings sessions** in parks and open spaces
- LGOAL to work with schools to develop **anti littering campaigns** which give voice to young people's passion for cleaner parks
- **Social action campaign** by schools to encourage more bins in parks including opportunities for recycling.

2. Safety

Key Themes

As users of the parks, many of the young people brought up feeling unsafe at certain times, with some being afraid to go into parks alone, especially if it is dark. Whilst there are park patrols, many of the young people wanted more regular rounds with more officers. They also thought about adding more lighting to parks- particularly in the winter when it gets dark early (thinking mostly about dog walkers and those who use the park as a walking route). Through discussions, they acknowledged that more lighting could be detrimental to animals such as bats, so they thought of motion sensor lighting (similar to those along the Thames between Twickenham and Richmond) or lights on until a certain time at night.



More lighting in parks

2. Safety

Our hopes

- To make the park a safe place for young people to spend time
- To be able to use the park all year, including in winter months, for activities such as exercise, dog walking or as a walking route.

Our Goals

- More park patrols by council/police
- More lighting for dog walkers and in areas where the park was used as a cut through
- More people in parks to make it safe

Routes to the goals

- Working with the proposed **schools forum** to understand more about young people's concerns for their safety.
- Making representations to Councils as landowners
- Working with the school's forum to develop a **code of conduct for safe use of parks** by young people.
- **Social action campaign** by schools to encourage safe use of parks.
- Exploring technology that can be used in parks motion sensor lighting (similar to those along the Thames between Twickenham and Richmond)

3. A space for nature (wildlife only areas)

Key Themes

Many participants emphasised wanting more plants (particularly trees) and wildlife in local parks, with there being enough space for species to thrive, without too many buildings, people or paths. They came up with the idea nature only spaces, that would be kept 'people free' (with the potential for conservation volunteering in them, but not for use for recreation). They also wanted a mix of wildlife habitats for parks to be as diverse as possible. In order to make it 'fair' they suggested having facilities specifically for people too (see theme 5)



A park just for nature



A park with multiple habitat types as well as a mix of areas for wildlife and for people.

3. A space for nature (wildlife only areas)

Our hopes

- More wildlife in local parks and rivers with there being enough space for species to thrive, without too many buildings, people or paths.
- Nature only spaces, that would be kept 'people free' (with the potential for conservation volunteering in them, but not for use for recreation).
- A diverse mix of wildlife habitats for parks.
- To make it 'fair' there should be facilities specifically for people too (see theme 5)

Our Goals

- More trees
- More places for wildlife to thrive without the interference of people. (People free / Nature only spaces)
- A mix of wildlife habitats.
- More conservation volunteering to manage the spaces

Routes to the goals

- Making representations to Councils as landowners to encourage biodiversity in parks
- Encourage more **conservation volunteering** activities with schools / families
- Working with the school's forum to develop a **social action campaign** by schools to encourage more schools and families in the Crane corridor to get involved with conservation volunteering opportunities.

4. Accessibility for all

Key Themes

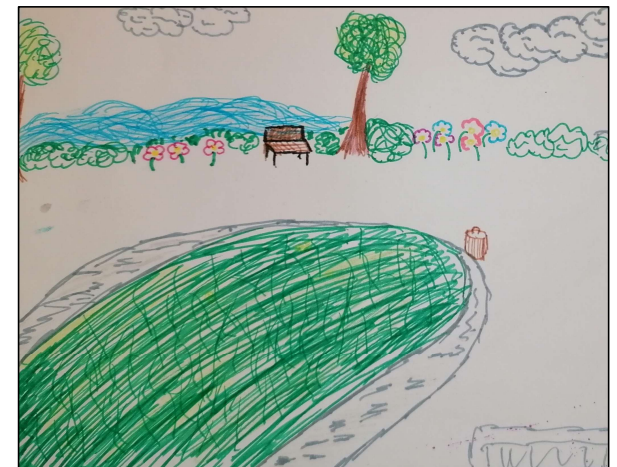
Having walked around the greenspaces, many noticed that the sites were not accessible for all/ some parts were accessible but lack of sealed paths etc in other areas would make it difficult for those with disabilities, walking aids etc to navigate. They wanted existing paths to be well maintained and more paved/ sealed paths added in as current rough mud paths wouldn't be accessible in harsh weather conditions.

They also spotted a lack of benches, making parks inaccessible to those who need regular breaks. Groups thought having more benches at regular intervals would draw more people into the parks as well as having a mix of bench styles (e.g. higher benches, benches with spaces for wheelchairs next to them, regular benches).

A lack of clear signage (e.g. maps of the park, clear signs showing the name of the park at the entrance) also impacted accessibility, especially for those with learning difficulties, as it could make parks difficult to find and navigate in once there.



Benches should be placed at regular intervals in parks



There should be sealed/ manmade paths as well as adequate seating to make parks more accessible

4. Accessibility for all

Our hopes

- To make the parks accessible for everyone all year including those that have mobility problems or are disabled.
- To provide facilities for everyone so that more people use the parks and can visit the river.

Our Goals

- Existing paths to be well maintained and more paved / sealed paths added into the network in busy parks, as rough paths would be muddy and not be accessible in harsh weather conditions.
- More benches. A lack of benches make parks inaccessible to those who need regular breaks.
- Groups thought having more benches at regular intervals would draw more people into the parks.
- A mix of bench styles (e.g. higher benches, benches with spaces for wheelchairs next to them, etc).
- Clearer signage at park entrances. Maps within the parks

Routes to the goals

- Work with young people so that they can making representations to Councils as landowners to encourage more facilities (including benches) in parks
- Working with the school's forum to develop a **social action campaign** targeted at people with disabilities to encourage their use of parks.

5. Facilities

Key Themes

The young people all agreed that having facilities- especially toilets, water stations and cafes- was important for parks. Having such facilities would draw more people into the spaces as well as allowing park users to spend longer in the park. Some young people were unsure of adding more buildings around the parks, so they thought about ways to reduce environmental impact of the hubs by making them as eco-friendly as possible (e.g. solar panels for electricity, recycling bins etc)

Outdoor facilities such as sports facilities and community gardens were also considered as a way to draw a wider range of people into parks by supplying activities/ a place for them to occur.



Facilities (such as cafes) will be a way to draw in people who may not currently use the park



Making the buildings as eco-friendly as possible (e.g. solar panels for electricity)

5. Facilities

Our hopes

- To make the parks accessible for everyone all year by including facilities such as toilets, water stations and cafés where possible.
- To provide facilities that reduce environmental impact of the hubs by making them as ecofriendly as possible (e.g. solar panels for electricity, recycling bins etc)

Our Goals

- To promote the benefits of parks with facilities such as toilets, cafés and water stations to parks managers.

Routes to the goals

- Work with young people so that they can making representations to Councils as landowners to encourage more facilities in parks

Action Plans

The young people were keen to get stuck in with **practical solutions**, with many wanting LGOaL to help facilitate litter picks and conservation sessions.

LGOaL can work with schools/ young people to:

- litter pick more
- develop and enhance habitats
- develop social action e.g citizen science activities, design campaigns (e.g. anti-littering)
- give the schools a baseline for practical sessions (e.g. facilitate a few with the idea that the schools take over to have ongoing work such as regular litterpicking)

LGOaL will be running a **schools forum**, initially with the schools who participated in the workshops with the scope to open it up to more schools in further years. The forum will be used to get students/the schools to work together to come up with a social action campaigns that reflect their visions for the catchment/their green and blue spaces.

Opportunities for developing awareness raising projects with schools that could link to the Public Engagement Strategy.



Young people participating in practical conservation work (top-bottom: tree planting, stag beetle loggery building, litter picking)

We're grateful to the Crane Fund for their support on this project



Appendices

Turing House School

What I like

I like the green space, it is beautiful

I like all the trees

peaceful

I like how we don't touch the wildlife (have wildlife areas)

wildlife

enough playgrounds

Trees

The calmness of the parks

I like the quiet

enough open space

The nature

We've got a lot of bins to prevent rubbish

Wall for graffiti

I like the plants and the space to use for sports

What I don't like

Litter

I don't like people killing animals

Not enough ponds/ streams

I don't like how much plastic there is

Lack of volley ball (limited sports facilities)

Twickenham School

What I like

What I don't like

I like how you can come here freely

I like the flowers and the rivers

litter

Needs to be safer and cleaned more

Not many bins and a lot of trash on the ground

I like the:
-flowers
-nature
-lakes
-life

Very habitable for animals

The river

I don't like the litter people throw away

There is dog poo

Lots of litter

It's loud (cars from the road nearby)

birds

I like the dogs that walk past you because they look so happy

It's a good space for dogs

Lots of rubbish

Doesn't always feel safe- there needs to be park rangers

Not very safe

Twickenham School

How can we improve the area?

Weekly litter
picking sessions

We can put more
bins around so
that people can
put their litter in
there

Smoother
ground/paths

Community litter
picks

More
police/park
patrol for safety

More public bins

More benches

More bike lock
stations

Add more bins

More bins

Cut the grass
more

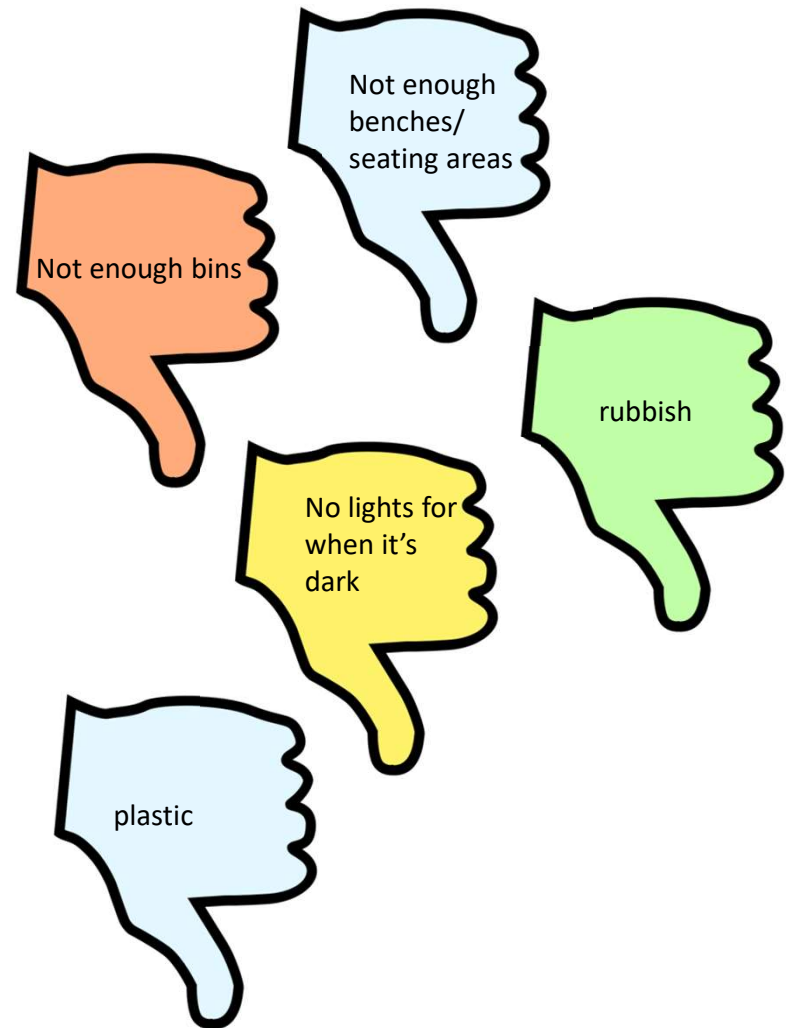
Fences so it's
more safe

Heathland School

What I like



What I don't like



Heathland School

How can we improve the area?

Better infrastructure (to get people to the park)- e.g. car park to make it more accessible to those with disabilities

More benches (particularly for the elderly)

Toilet facilities

We need recycling bins in parks

Water stations for birds/ wildlife

Directions/ map of park

More bins/ recycling bins

Community orchard/garden

toilets

Skate park

Manmade paths for easy access/ for those with mobility issues

Better footpaths

More recycling bins

Café

Water taps

Dog spaces

benches

A little pond for birds

Street lights

Areas to plant

To make it feel more safe
-cctv
-fences around wildlife to keep it safe

Table tennis (next to outdoor gym)

Tennis courts

Park watch/ patrol (like neighbourhood watch but for parks)

Heathland School

How can we improve the area?
(Continued)

More benches

More accessible paths

More wildlife/flowers

More paths

Water stations
(e.g. fountains/
taps)

Bird feeders

Natural pond

More trash cans

pond

Café/ facilities

More seating

Running track

Months where dogs
can't be off lead (or
specific areas in the
parks)

Fruit trees for
the public

Water fountains

2nd Teddington Scouts

What I like

What I don't like

- The river
- Going reminds me of my childhood memories
- The outdoor gym
- the large clearings where you can picnic
- it is home to many typical English animals
- River
- It has nice trails and paths to walk
- Trees
- trees
- Grass
- it's a common place everybody goes to and loves
- green landscape and pretty flowers
- The rivers
- Birds

- Litter
- People destroying plants
- Not enough bins
- flooding
- Litter
- Litter
- grenades

2nd Teddington Scouts

How can we improve the area?

Less dog poo- parks should have dog poo bag dispensers so people who forget their bags don't have an excuse to not pick it up

Penalty for littering

More bins

More bins

Hedgehog homes

Fines for littering

Nature only areas

More bins/
recycling bins

Anti-litter signs

Cafes/ hubs

Sports facilities

River clean-ups

River clean-ups

Café

River clean-ups

Wildlife reintroduction

Birdhouses

Wolves (wildlife reintroduction)

Less dog walkers

River clean-up
(less rubbish,
less pollution)

Areas to plant

Make more nature spaces (that people can't go in)

More bins (and specific recycling bins)