

Rewild London (Phase 2) - The Yeading Brook Unbound

Project Summary

Although much of what was fields around the Yeading Brook at the start of the twentieth century had become Metroland estates before World War II, this being preceded by the main changes to its open course, what would have been a significant ecological and hydrological feature in the landscape was treated more as an engineered over-deep, steep-banked drain; the ongoing loss of soft surface across the catchment, resulting in heavy surface run off and associated water quality impacts.

These were compounded by the burying of tributary streams, imposition of hard paths in too close proximity to bank edges, the planting of unsuitable species, the spreading of invasive non-natives and general neglect - other than where interested individuals and volunteer groups have sought to make a difference.

The result is that the brook - which should be a delight – is in woefully poor condition. A start to address the situation has been made with the recent Headstone Manor flood relief projects and a planned scheme for Yeading Walk - making this the ideal time to follow up on the western arm of the Yeading Brook, to address community group aspirations and the wider vision for the Crane Valley catchment – which necessarily depends on positive change being made in this upstream section.

As part of the Crane Valley Partnership and in collaboration with local groups and volunteers, Yeading Brook Unbound will make lasting changes - both major and minor - to the brook, its margins and adjoining areas within SINCS, parks and neighbouring allotments along its course - targeting locations and issues where greatest benefit can be achieved and incorporating or preparing the way for additional interventions to ensure nature's recovery along the Yeading whilst raising awareness and support - and engaging a wider community in its management, monitoring and ongoing improvement.

Alongside making much needed, positive intervention on the ground, YBU will have a significant people focus, seeking in particular to involve community group members in survey, management and reporting activities that presently don't occur and to establish groups where these are lacking, growing an involved, enthusiastic, and well-supported volunteer taskforce to care for individual sites and the Yeading Brook as a whole, and to share their expertise and help more widely and monitor and respond to changes over time. This will be critical to the project's legacy and to influencing more nature and climate positive engagement.

Bid Documentation & Timeline

10th October 2022 – Initial discussions with Stakeholders (Friends of Headstone Manor Park, Friends of Yeading Walk. Friends of Roxbourne Park)

27th October 2022 – Teams Meeting with Stakeholders (Friends of Headstone Manor Park, Friends of Yeading Walk. Friends of Roxbourne Park)

01st November 2022 till 14th November 2022 – Site Meetings with Stakeholders (Friends of Headstone Manor Park, Friends of Yeading Walk. Friends of Roxbourne Park)

28th November 2022 – Official Bid Submitted

06th February 2023 – Confirmation of successful bid (Press Embargo until World Rewilding Day on 20th March 2023)

14th February 2023 – Yeading Brook Unbound – Introduction Meeting

Items discussed – Full concept of the project and the proposed programme over the next 12 months, Report on what has been done in preparation of the works, introduction of group representatives to each other, & general Question and Answer session.

20th March 2023 – Press Release - <https://www.wildlondon.org.uk/news/rewild-london-fund-successful-applicants-announced>

23rd March 2023 – MoRPh Citizen Science training provided by Cartographer (Attended by Representatives from Friends of Headstone Manor Park & Friends of Yeading Walk)

28th March 2023 – Project Board appointed Dragana Knezevic (representing Hillingdon's interests Roxbourne Park), Michael Bradshaw (Harrow's Flood Risk Manager), Joe Pecorelli (Zoological Society of London), Steve Bolsover (Harrow Nature Conservation Forum), Stephen Mills (Harrow Parks), allotments representative yet to be appointed. Initial Board Meeting to Schedule for w/c 08th May 2023

05th April 2023 – Site Visit to Headstone Allotments to discuss alterations to the banks of The Yeading Brook.