



PRESS RELEASE – 13th February 2026

Exceptional volunteer receives a Thames rivers environmental award

A volunteer in the Crane Valley who has been volunteering for more than 30 years to improve his local river has been awarded the prestigious Thames Rivers Trust Peter Spillett Award.

Ian Mc Kinnon a regular volunteer for Friends of the River Crane Environment (FORCE) said it had come as a 'Complete surprise' when he was told he was to receive the environmental award from Thames River Trust (TRT).

Miles Morgan, TRT CEO met Ian this week at Crane Park, Twickenham during a FORCE conservation task for water vole habitat improvements that Ian has been spearheading. Miles Morgan said, 'Ian is hugely deserving of this award. He is an inspiration and a valuable asset to the Crane, its wildlife and the community. Committed volunteers such as Ian are making a real and sustained difference, particularly with projects like this for endangered species.'

The award was created by Thames Rivers Trust (TRT) to celebrate the late Peter Spillett, a Trustee for more than 10 years, who cared passionately about improving the Thames rivers and the wildlife that they sustain. His widow Yvette de Garis joined TRT's Miles Morgan on the banks of the Crane and presented winner Ian with the engraved silver salver award. Yvette said, 'It's a real privilege to honour someone who has put so much into the Crane and delivered such amazing results.' She expressed how important wildlife and the Thames rivers were to Peter; and the projects that groups like FORCE undertake.

Ian's voluntary work has enhanced the biodiversity value of the lower Crane valley, from leading the water vole restoration programme which has resulted in a new colony of water voles being released and establishing themselves in and around Crane Park Island, to producing kingfisher nesting banks to help this iconic river bird have increased opportunities to breed successfully. He has also actively contributed to restoring meadows, hedgerows and woodlands.

Rob Gray, Director at Crane Valley Community Interest Company who nominated Ian said, 'He is highly skilled and motivated, as well as being intensely practical and reliable. Most visits in and around Crane Park you will find him doing his thing, everyone knows and respects him, and the place would look very different without his care and attention.'

The annual award opens for nomination for this year's entries on 1st April and will again be seeking nominations for an outstanding individual who works or volunteers with a Rivers Trust or another NGO delivering projects for the environmental good of rivers in the Thames River Basin. More details can be found on the Thames Rivers Trust website. /END

Our Mission To bring together organisations across the Thames River Basin and foster collaborative working to benefit the environment, wildlife and communities

Our Vision is for a vibrant and healthy Thames River Basin

Registered charity number 295138 www.thamesriverstrust.org.uk

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Image: Presentation of the prestigious environmental accolade, the Thames Rivers Trust Peter Spillett Award 2026 to Ian McKinnon Friends of the River Crane Environment (FORCE) volunteer.

Pictured left to right: Thames Rivers Trust CEO Miles Morgan, Ian McKinnon, Yvette de Garis and Rob Gray.

To the Editor: High resolution image attached to the email.
For more information, please contact Anna Forbes TRT Administrator

Email info@thamesrivertrust.org.uk or telephone 07780381709.

Link to award webpage: [Thames Rivers Trust Peter Spillett Award – Thames Rivers Trust](#)

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