



CONSERVATORS OF THE RIVER CAM

FEBRUARY 2025 – CONSERVANCY UPDATES

1. Chair's update

The contract for Baits Bite is now signed in its final form after much delay and the enabling work is now underway.

The Conservators took the decision last year to have a single contract for both the enabling and the stabilisation works with a break clause between the two. This has held back progress and Conservators will consider suitable alternatives to this strategy for any future work.

Executive Committee update

The Exec. is now up and running, and has helped with the signing of the contract and job spec for the business consultant as well as giving strategic advice.

Wider engagement involvement

With a smaller Conservators' Committee and the Exec in place, individual Conservators are now able to take a more active role in the Conservancy. Individual Conservators have taken the lead on matters once overseen by committees such as the Baits Bite Project, Audit, Regulatory matters as well as matters to do with the Clayhithe site. I hope that Conservators will step up when asked to help out with particular aspects of the Conservancy's work – for example, coming up in 2025 is the business review and Conservators are asked to assist in that work which will involve consultation, investigation of income, Byelaw review, operational expenditure and much more.

2. CEO update

Forming a partnership approach to Jesus lock island

A 12-month review survey of Jesus lock island is proposed, and a request was made to local Members of Parliament to support the Conservancy in this approach as well as to the EA, Cambridge City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. In support a local MP has reached out to these organisations urging co-operation. A match funding approach was proposed regarding the JLI survey and EA and City are on board with this approach. A meeting has been arranged to discuss this with Cambridgeshire County Council next week. A joint party meeting has been arranged between the represented organisations in early April to take the proposal forward.

It is hoped that this will begin the formation of a joint approach to the wider issue of repair at Jesus lock island and hopefully long-term support for the Conservancy.

Clayhithe Depot Lease

Due to recent contractual changes, it has become necessary to review the Clayhithe depot lease with a view to appropriate rental fees. It is proposed that a 12-month interim deed of variation is offered to the tenants for the Depot, with an annual rental fee and a further charge to be made representing current site utility costs. Considerations have been made regarding the tenants plans



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for the site, and for the review of Conservancy requirements for Clayhithe due to take place this year.

Anglian Pass Partnership

Positive relationships continue between the Middle Level Commissioners (MLC) and the Environment Agency (EA). The coming annual Anglian Pass will increase by CPI + 2% as per the continuing arrangement. Applications are made through the EA who will also ensure that customers are aware they must check on partner sites for closures prior to the purchase of the pass, the goal is for links to respective authorities websites to be provided for user ease. Partners are following the Conservancy's progress in addressing local partnerships for financial support regarding infrastructure.

Approaches have also been made to partners regarding weed cutting support on the lower river (downstream from Baits Bite Lock) once the season begins, prior to the opening of Baits Bite Lock.

Audit Progress

Now Conservators have agreed to the status of the Conservancy as a "going concern", for the following 12 months, auditors have requested some verifications on that basis and will review their comments/advice once these have been received. We are working hard to get this finalised as soon as possible.

Operational Matters

- Berky harvester remains out of action, however there is progress being made regarding necessary repairs.
- Annual Registration Renewals are in hand and will be sent out on the last working day of February 2025.
- RPO has been confronted with both supportive comment and negative feedback while on patrol from boaters.
- Updates to the website have been made with reference to the fee increases for 2025/26, and statement regarding the Conservators position on refunds/rebates/compensation.