

Huge crane in Matlock named as project reaches one third completion

- Construction reaches a third complete after 150 working days and 25 sheet piles installed
- Project to restore flood protection for 50 homes and businesses in the Derbyshire town

The name of the huge 800-tonne crane that has graced the Matlock landscape since the beginning of August will be unveiled by the Mayor of Matlock, Councillor Paul Cruise, at a naming ceremony on Wednesday 28 September.

Following a family-fun 'Name the Crane Day' held on 10 August, over 1,400 people have cast their vote for their favourite name, either in person or online. The well-attended event raised £500 in charity donations for Air Ambulance.

Over 100 different names were suggested for the crane and the public were invited to vote from the top 5 shortlisted. The overwhelming majority (63%) favoured 'Lifty McShifty'. The winning name will be displayed on the crane itself as well as posters erected around the site.

The competition winner will be awarded with prizes donated by Ainscough Crane Hire Ltd and Heights of Abraham at the naming ceremony at 12:30pm on Wednesday 28 September. Also in attendance will be Sarah Dines, MP for Derbyshire Dales, and the Civic Chairman of Derbyshire Dales District Council, Councillor Graham Elliott, as well as other community leaders.

The crane is situated on the A6 and is being used to assist in carrying out work to reinstate the River Derwent flood defences. 600 2-tonne bags were lifted into the river to form a working platform for piling works to take place.

25 sheet piles have so far been placed, with a further 37 scheduled for installation by the end of October, to make the defences winter ready and plug the gap created by the collapse of a flood wall following the February floods this year.

Two special piling machines called 'Giken Supercrush' are on site to place the piles deep into the limestone bedrock; this is a slow process due to the sheer hardness of the bedrock and it has to be done carefully.

Naomi Doughty, Project Manager for the Environment Agency, said:

"Progress on the Matlock flood defence work is going well, and we have now completed 150 working days, so we are around one third through the main construction works. If the weather remains favourable, we will keep going with the aim of building the flood wall by early next year.

"We understand there are only 8 'Giken Supercrush' machines in the country

and 2 of these are at Matlock! Last week we hosted a visit from the Japanese manufacturer to review the progress, so we've had international interest in our project!

"The Derbyshire limestone is proving a hard nut to crack but we're rising to the challenge under the technical guidance of national and international industry experts.

"We're grateful to the community for their continued support and understanding whilst we build these essential flood defence works and apologise for temporary disruption caused by the construction works."

The initial cost estimates of the project are between £3.5million to £5million due to access being severely restricted. This will benefit over 50 homes and businesses by reinstating the River Derwent flood defences.

The Environment Agency is working in partnership with Derbyshire County Council and Derbyshire Dales District Council to reinstate the river flood protection following the collapse of a wall behind businesses on Crown Square, Matlock after the February 2022 storms compromised the defences and left Matlock vulnerable to river flooding.

Following the collapse of the privately owned wall, an immediate repair was carried out by placing over 50 rock-filled bags in the River Derwent using a large crane situated on the A6. Further flood prevention work was carried out in April which involved lifting an additional 100 2-tonne rock-filled bags by a large crane situated on the A6 into the River Derwent to reduce erosion and limit damage to the Environment Agency flood wall that sits next to the collapsed privately owned wall.

The A6 between Matlock Bridge and the train station car park is now closed to all users (pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles) until completion of the new flood defence in 2023. This allows for the huge crane to be situated on the A6 to carry out the work on reinstating the flood defences. All north and southbound traffic can now use Matlock Bridge.

About the crane

As rigged at Matlock, the Liebherr LTM 1750 crane weighs a total of 350 tonnes. This is approximately the weight of a fully loaded Boeing 747.

The 800 tonne label is in regards to its maximum lifting potential. This is around the same as 5 blue whales.

The largest lift planned at Matlock is approximately 20 tonnes, the equivalent of 4 elephants. The extra lifting capacity of the crane is needed due to the distance from the body of the crane, situated on the A6, to the far side of the river.

The crane is 22m long and 12m wide.

The crane arrived in road format, weighing over 100 tonnes, and required 4 artic wagons to carry the equipment. It then required a smaller (55 tonne)

crane to set it up.

The crane is taller than the wingspan of a Boeing 747, taller than the Leaning Tower of Pisa, and about $\frac{3}{4}$ the height of Big Ben.