



Dear Members,

As I reflect upon the year just gone I note the importance placed by many speakers and participants on populating projects with the right people, and that they should have mutually strong, positive relationships. It's called leadership and teamwork.

The year under review commenced with our Annual Conference on the topic of Project Personalities, at which we tested the theory that projects have specific characteristics at different stages and that these require different forms of leadership and team dynamics. It was a bold move to be so experimental with the conference and I believe the Executive Team and the

researchers from Hinton & Co are to be congratulated on delivering a useful event. The conclusion was that the concept of a "Project Personality", and especially recognising the transition between the "Command and Control" regime required during the execution phase and the "Co-operative" regime required during integration and commissioning, were useful in stimulating discussions and finding consensus amongst diverse project teams.

Later in the year I was lucky enough to be present when Roger Madelin spoke at the Case Study seminar on the King's Cross development. Roger spoke with real conviction about the reasons behind the

success of this development. Not least of which was the "continuity of key people in key posts" and sharing joint objectives across all parties. "It's all about people, relationships and trust," he concluded. I was so taken with Roger's strong views that I invited him to repeat these thoughts at a small dinner I hosted for Member Chief Executives at the Reform Club in February. Roger captured the rest of the guests in telling us how it had taken over a decade for the King's Cross development to take form and throughout that time he was a constant presence – so much so that he was considered to epitomise the project from whatever position it was viewed – the classic Champion role.

Project success was the theme of a half day seminar held in January 2011. The morning contrasted two very different projects – the construction of Camp Bastion in Afghanistan and the delivery of the Manchester Metrolink Expansion. One of the conclusions of the day was that having confidence in the people delivering the project is more important for project success than the business case. At the end of this particular seminar we were addressed by Ian Watmore from the Cabinet Office who told us how Government is aiming to improve the delivery of major government projects through the establishment of the Major Projects Authority. Our Executive Director told him that we would not charge for the use of our acronym and that we could offer him some left over corporate logo designs if he was in need!

Still on the theme of relationships, in January each year we run a programme called "Rising Stars" which is aimed at individuals at the beginning of their career. One of the objectives of the programme is to help the delegates to establish

effective, cross-disciplinary, cross-sectoral relationships and a network of contacts which will stay with them throughout their career. It is very satisfying when we see delegates many years later reporting that they are still in touch with their fellow "Rising Star Alumni" and they have contributed considerably to the Board's thinking on our Programme of Events.

Our seminar in February on the topic of Crossrail provided invaluable insights into how to initiate major public sector projects. Sir Mike Hodgkinson of Transport for London summarised the day by saying, "If you need government money for a very large project you should make sure you have a united crusade," underlining once more the importance of developing sound relationships with your project partners.

In March we held a full day's discussion about Regulated Projects. Once again the theme of sound business relationships was repeated. In his concluding remarks Jonathan Chapman, Head of Strategic Planning, Balfour Beatty plc said that

"without trust, openness and sharing you cannot be successful. Trust the client, trust the supply chain and work with the whole delivery team." He also reminded us that to do this requires humility on all sides.

Membership Associations are no different from Major Projects – people and relationships are just as important to us. We are keen to strengthen our relationships with all of our Members, to ensure that you feel you have a home within the Association and that this can contribute to your professional life as well as the success of your employer. And we hope that we demonstrate a little humility when we seek your input and ideas to our programme of events and take heed of your feedback.

We also hope that the strength of the MPA network will help us all to ride this particular financial and economic storm.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. Walmsley". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Sir Robert Walmsley KCB
Chairman
Major Projects Association